

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FZS [REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name is FZS [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1953. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I was born in Edinburgh and my parents lived in [REDACTED] Newington. My dad was a commercial artist and my mother taught ballet for the [REDACTED] School of Dancing in [REDACTED]. She was a ballerina and a linguist as well. In the early sixties they bought this huge house [REDACTED] Kirkcudbright. We used to go down on holiday there a lot. There was a connection there from my grandparents who were also quite well known painters. I have a sister who is ten years older than me and a brother who is five years younger. My mother had lost a child who was a still birth and when I was about ten they wanted to adopt so my younger sister was adopted by them. She is of Nigerian heritage. It is from there I get my caring and protective side.
3. I left school with about six O'Grades and a Higher. I have got financial planning certificates but they're out of vogue now. They wouldn't stand up to 2022 specifications. My older brother and I went to Daniel Stewarts on Queensferry Road and my older sister went to George Watsons for Ladies. I ended up at Portobello High because we had moved from [REDACTED] to Duddingston and the school was literally just down the road. It made more sense for me to go there.
4. I played a lot of sports and if people ask what I was good at I was good at running, rugby, football and fostering. I have had three careers which were in forestry, financial services and fostering. I went to Kirkcudbright to live and some of my friends down

there had come out of forestry college and we decided to set up our own little forestry business. Basically it wasn't very great. It wasn't organised, I was only twenty years old and still playing rugby then. I played for the local team in [REDACTED] but I was more than decent and the coach there had played for Langholm in the first division. I am going back to 1974 and he persuaded me to go and play for them. I got really badly injured and couldn't work in forestry because every time I went out my knee would fill up with fluid. I went to the doctors down there and they said there was nothing they could do down there and I would be better going back to Edinburgh.

5. I returned to Edinburgh and stayed with my brother and his family for a while before I got a flat [REDACTED] at Portobello. A friend worked in the parks and he got me into forestry there which was really good.
6. It is through my rugby that I met my wife FZT [REDACTED] about 44 years ago, I think the date was 19 October 1978. We are from different backgrounds. She is from Forfar and was a midwife. That is where FZT [REDACTED] gets her love of babies and her love of children. The caring instinct in FZT [REDACTED] is just phenomenal. We both have this thing about no baby is asked to be born and being an underdog. We have always wanted to be on their side and to protect them.
7. We got married on [REDACTED] 1979 at that time FZT [REDACTED] was staying with her friend at [REDACTED] in a flat which was rented and one of my rugby pals had bought a flat on [REDACTED]. He was my best man and is no longer with us. We moved in there but when we realised FZT [REDACTED] was pregnant. Our twins were born on [REDACTED] 1979. I saw this job at Dalmeny Estate working for the [REDACTED] I got the job and for the first five and a bit years we lived there. It was really hard work and was like going to a place that was two hundred years behind the times. That was where the twins were brought up and then my other son came along. Somehow I met my friend from the park again and he suggested that I come back. At the same time I was offered that job a house came up in Mortonhall so that is what we did. We returned and that was in 1984 because [REDACTED] my youngest son, was three months old. We lived there for ten years.

8. We had a right to buy and we made an awful lot of money when we sold our house and we moved one hundred yards to a detached house with four bedrooms and front and back gardens in 1994. We have lived in that house ever since. I had my swimming certificates such as my bronze medallion and teacher's certificate and when FZT was on maternity leave I saw this job at [REDACTED] as a lifeguard which was part-time so I got that. I was there for six months until FZT went back to her job as a midwife. She worked a Friday night and sometimes a Saturday night. I meet one of my best friends from Porty who worked for [REDACTED]. He gave me an interview and I got the job. I changed from forestry into a financial advisor, it was just unbelievable, it was phenomenal. I was there for a lot of years and I worked hard at it because you could make decent money.

Becoming a Foster Carer

9. We started fostering in 1996 until [REDACTED] 2019. We started when our boys were a bit older and we had had our daughter [REDACTED]. FZT always thought it was good for our children to see other children that are maybe less fortunate and again it is this caring side that is in FZT and myself that is just a natural instinct. FZT is the most amazing person I have ever met in my life and to be denigrated in the way that this statement we are here to talk about reads is just not true. It is just awful.
10. Before then FZT had started doing day care in 1994-2003. The first case was in [REDACTED] 1994 and it was a young mother who was eighteen who had triplets and an older toddler. That was two days a week with her children [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and two days with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. In [REDACTED] 1996 we had other day cares called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and they just lived near us. In [REDACTED] 1996 we had really nice kids who we still hear from every Christmas. They were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and their mum had cancer. She had no back-up to keep their work going. That finished in [REDACTED] 1996. In [REDACTED] 1996 there was another two. I think one of them was called [REDACTED]. In [REDACTED] 1996 FZT had a child called [REDACTED] on day care and this is on top of fostering. [REDACTED] rarely came in [REDACTED] 1996 and [REDACTED] 1997. In [REDACTED] 1997 she was better at coming but stopped in [REDACTED] 1997.

11. Part of the reason we wanted to foster was to show our kids less fortunate children and also because we are caring people. For FZT it is just a natural instinct in her.
12. The process to become a foster carer included going on a training course which was weekend work as well. Where they had the course was close to us and about half way through they asked us to take triplets before we had completed the course. Our liaison worker at that time was an amazing woman called Maggie Harvey. She was our social worker.
13. First contact to foster was by FZT so I don't know who that was with and before we knew it we were starting the process but that is so long ago I can't quite remember. The local social work was [REDACTED] at Howdenhall Road and it was a children's unit until fairly recently I think. Maggie Harvey worked from there and if there were any forms or paperwork [REDACTED] It would be FZT who did all the first steps of becoming a foster carer.
14. Nobody ever mentioned that we needed any qualifications or experience to become a foster carer.
15. I believe there were checks carried out for me and FZT I believe they had gone into a fairly in depth history from every address we had been at to get the disclosure stuff done. Maggie Harvey was one of the most thorough social workers I have ever met. Our house was checked as well. As far as I know they would have gone for references as well.
16. I think the process took six months or maybe a year because some of the courses were staggered over a period of time. FZT has got the timeline, she has all of that. A lot of the application stuff went through FZT initially so I don't know a lot about that process or exact dates.
17. I believe there were ongoing checks and assessments made after we were approved. Maggie Harvey came to the house and so did the social workers for the children we cared for. Our house was full of people every day from social workers, health visitors

and social work assistants who were coming to collect children for contacts and things if I couldn't do them. It was an open door and we opened our door to FZU as well. FZU is the adoptive mother of FZV a child we cared for until her adoption. She has given a statement to the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry making allegations about me and FZT. Maybe we have been too open and maybe we have been naïve.

18. In hindsight with what has happened here I don't think any of the training covers the real threat of allegations. I might be wrong and they do it now. I don't think they did it with us but any allegations gets to a point you are basically abandoned and left on your own with no say. That is the worst thing after working with the department for so long to suddenly basically be abandoned. I can't believe the way we have been treated.

Training

19. The training was all about situations like what would you do in this situation and they would give an example of a family that had problems with their children and ask you how you would solve these problems.
20. We absolutely received training about children who were coping with things like abuse, neglect and bereavement. It wasn't covered at the initial training. I can't remember anything like that but I have been on so many different courses such as the Skylight course it is staggering. I have brought details of some of the training with me and would like to share one course I did with the Inquiry because I found it really interesting. It was on resilience, I can't remember the year I did it, and was about 'iceberging'. Basically if you have an iceberg what you see is the small part at the top but the larger part under the water is what you cannot see. It was about what was really going on underneath and to build up a child's resistance. I just find that sort of stuff really interesting and fascinating.
21. We did the social pedagogy for social workers 'Head, Heart and Hands'. That course took a long time. I got a certificate and I think it was an SVQ. That was amazing. I did

a two day orientation course over [REDACTED] 2013. I got chosen to go on to it and it doesn't sound much actually but I went on to do a further eight days spread over the best part of a year. I learned so much and it was basically about social pedagogy but it is showing the child the risk. It is like taking a child to the cliff edge but not letting it drop off. Loads and loads of games, how to distract and how to think in a social pedagogy way. I took that on board and I would go home and tell [REDACTED] FZT If she was on a course that I wasn't on she would report back to me and vice versa.

22. Things changed when this lady called Holly Van Gulden who was American became their leading expert at that time in child understanding. What she taught us was phenomenal and I was able to use her training for one of our little boys who came. We had another expert come to our house to tell us more about Holly Van Gulden's teachings. Stuff like [REDACTED] FZT used to wear a muslin teacloth type thing so [REDACTED] could smell it. It was things like that. Having a sooky blanket or a soft toy that they liked to carry about with them. She did this thing when we first met her that if we had anything on us that was precious to us like a ring, photograph, phone or bank cards we had to take it off and put it under the chair so it is away from you. We were to see how long it was before we wanted to start picking it up. It was stuff like that and I just find that sort of stuff amazing.
23. One of the courses I did in [REDACTED] 2002 was a men only Men in Foster Care. It was two foster carers who took the course with sixteen foster carers from all over Scotland who attended. That was the only time the threat of allegations was brought up and it turned out that eight out of the sixteen men there had some sort of allegations made against them. I thought that that was never going to happen to me. Basically the team leader said the longer you do fostering and the more children you care for the more likely you are to end up with an allegation. I thought to myself how could it happen but it has so they were right.
24. We did get child protection training and I will have details of it in the paperwork I have brought with me. It was mostly babies we looked after and a lot of child protection is common sense.

25. I think there would have been training on disciplining children and it was all distraction. We have never punished a child. How can you punish a baby?
26. I also used skills I had learned for my swimming teaching such as you never teach a negative point. You say do this and do this and I have taken this point on for fostering. That is what we had to do with little FZV as she was always on the go. She had a lot of energy and it was always 'FZV come and do this'. The social pedagogy was a lot of games and I played a lot of games with FZV at that time.
27. I don't think there was training for different types of fostering such as short-term and long-term.
28. In the statement that FZU has given to the Inquiry it said that FZT had said she hadn't done a training session in ten years which is untrue. I have a list of the training and the training was brilliant.
29. I think the training has been mind-blowing. I can't fault the department on that and I can only thank the department for all of that.
30. We were given written guidance and handouts as well and to be honest there were all sorts of things. I can't remember who would have given us these things but it would have been a liaison worker at that time. We have had quite a few liaison workers.
31. We were possibly give verbal guidance or instruction which would have come from the social work department.
32. I think the training was good and some of the on-going courses were just brilliant. I remember one year Edinburgh social work had produced this brochure which was full of courses and you could actually pick a course you wanted to go on. I did some courses. I don't think we had to do any of these courses unlike some others where we had to do them for our training. FZT and I were interested so we wanted to do courses. Liaison workers would also tell us about courses that were coming up and tell us it was a good idea to do all or some of them but we didn't have to do them.

Foster Care Arrangements

33. We certainly didn't consider ourselves employed as foster carers. I seem to remember when I was really young foster carers were employed by the Foreign Office or something like that. I think so but I could be a hundred miles off. I never understood why it wasn't an employed job but it just wasn't. FZT took on all of that side but I would say I saw us as being self-employed.
34. We were registered for children from birth up to five years old. We did do respite and I think there was a boy called [REDACTED] who came. He was two years old and he came to give his foster carer a break. I think the foster carer fell pregnant and we were asked to take [REDACTED] until his mum was able. After he went home he would come to us for respite for years after and it just came to a natural end because he was older. I think that was one of our strengths was being happy to work with parents to reunite them. That was one of the great things seeing them going for a good adoption or reunited with their parents. We liked working with parents and potential adoptees.
35. A lot of the babies we had were drug addicted babies and it was because of FZT skills as a midwife we were asked to take a lot. There is no way that we got to choose if it was long or short term. I think we probably chose the age range of the children we fostered but that was agreed and what we suited. I think Maggie Harvey would say that we have got a skilled midwife and with all these drug addicted babies needing fostered it is only right that the department uses us. I think FZT and Maggie maybe had joint agreement on the age of the children we fostered. It was about FZT skills and also the fact that FZT loved babies. I can't put into words that instinct in her and that is why she was a midwife. She is also a general nurse.
36. I can't think we were ever asked to foster any children outwith our agreed age range. There were some that were close but we were never asked to take a ten year old or a teenager. We never did anything like that. We never had to take a child to school but we did take them to nursery.

37. We were totally devastated when Maggie Harvey left and I think she went to Scottish Adoption. I can't remember exactly how long we had her for but it was a few years then we had another really good liaison worker who worked part-time. I have forgotten her name. We also had Hilary Marsh, Lesley Davis, and Babs whose surname I forget, Lauren Moss who was Australian, another English lady who were back to Peterborough after a few months and there were another couple whose names I can't recall but they didn't stay long.
38. I don't think we got any other support other than from social work.
39. Up until the allegations were made I think the support we got from social work was mixed. I think when it started off it was brilliant and then when the liaison workers started leaving there were always gaps. I think the Australian girl was there for a couple of years and then she had to go back to Australia and then Kerry Higgins was only there for a year or so. Maybe she was there slightly longer but she went to the hospital which is where [REDACTED] social worker worked. FZT reckoned the hospital social workers were top drawer and she always said to Kerry as a joke that they were good to work for and that is where she went. That was during everything going on with the allegations and that kind of pulled the rug away from our feet as well.
40. I viewed foster care as a profession and FZT passionately views it as a profession. There was one time I know she was told she wasn't a professional and that really hurt her. It was when I was on the social pedagogy course there was a mixture of social workers and foster carers on it. That was something one of the social workers brought up. They didn't know why they were on this course with foster carers because they didn't appreciate that is was a professional job. The most cutting remark was when I phoned a home insurance company trying to get a better deal and when they went through everything the lady asked if we had any other form of income. I told her we were foster carers from newborn up to five. She said that's not a job, that they don't count that as a job or even a profession. In fact she said it is not even an occupation and that they class it as a lifestyle choice. That hurt me. Twenty plus years and you are not getting the recognition.

41. I absolutely believe that foster carers should have child care qualifications.
42. When I think about what can be changed about the work arrangements I don't see how you can when it is 24/7. I think that is one of the reasons that employment status is not offered because how would you pay someone for working these hours. They couldn't afford it.

Financial Support

43. FZT and I have never made a penny out of fostering. All the money that we earned ourselves and we got from fostering we spent on our own children and our foster children. We financially disadvantaged ourselves to do fostering. FZT could have carried on working as a midwife but she took early retirement and when I had passed over my fiftieth birthday that was when [REDACTED] collapsed. I had a few interviews for other financial jobs but once you are over fifty it is very difficult, if not impossible, to get another job. We just felt we liked doing the fostering and it is fine as we had money behind us.
44. FZT knows more about the financial support we got. It would be broken down and I am sure you got a maintenance fee, pocket money and clothing allowance. FZT would get a pay slip which would be paid by the social work department. It used to come as a cheque and eventually it went straight into the bank. It was always in FZT name. It was just something I never got involved with. I just did the 'tooting and the froing'
45. A lot of the time if you wanted a buggy, cot or something like that they would provide that. They would provide a catalogue from Mothercare and as long as we chose the cheapest of whatever we had asked for they would organise it and I would go and collect it. Clothes and toys were not provided.
46. FZT would know more about how we used the money. What I can say about FZT is the amount of clothes and stuff like that that she would order for looked after children was a lot. It certainly didn't go to our own children. Every penny and more from our side would be spent on the foster children.

47. I think by and large the financial support was adequate. You know how they have these independent foster companies who tend to take on older children that are damaged but their rate of pay is colossal compared to ordinary foster carers. They don't get any help with material things whereas fostering for the department you do. There were things like when taking a child for a contact or if you had to take a child to a place you got a travel expense. I think you got something like forty pence a mile so FZT would always do the mileage. I always remember Maggie Harvey saying that if you are looking to foster you won't make money from it. It was never anything I ever considered but I am not saying I would have done it for nothing.

Foster Home Household

48. We had our four children living at home when we started fostering. would have been five, ten and the twins were fifteen.
49. I wouldn't say the children would have had any preparation other than we would have talked to them. There wasn't any training or anything like that. We had discussed it with them and they were all for it. Prior to all of these allegations all four of them would have gone into fostering.
50. We only ever fostered in our second house in Mortonhall which is Edinburgh, I can describe our house comfortably and it is nothing like FZU is suggesting in her statement. It is a four bedroomed detached house with a five metre by five metre conservatory at the back which is full of toys still to this day. There are three bedrooms upstairs, a double and two singles. Downstairs there is another bedroom, kitchen, utility room and a detached garage. I put a driveway in a few years ago. I think the landscaper who did it for me said it was fifty square metres. When we bought this house we made a lot of money on the house we sold and we ploughed it back in to buy this one.
51. I would say my house was in good condition. In her statement FZU has said some really derogatory things about our house however on one of the surprise visits

Lauren Moss, our liaison worker, described our house as immaculate. Any social worker would tell you it was full of toys. FZU goes on about there being no toys in the bathroom which is just nonsense.

52. There were no changes made to our house to specifically accommodate foster children. One of the things FZU said is that FZV couldn't get out because there was a stairgate at the top of the stairs. Maybe there should have been a gate at the top of the stairs and if it was required then I apologise for that. We had a joiner specifically make a stair gate at the bottom of the stairs which was wooden and it folded so that it could be lifted. Our little ones were never moving which was the thing. It was just there but it wasn't to stop any child getting to the bathroom or anything like that. The bathroom was downstairs.

Children Fostered

53. I think there were 72 children we looked after but it was fifty odd that we fostered and 22 at day care and respite. Most of the children were newborns and by and large we kept them up to about a year old. By that time they were either going home to be reunited with their parents or they went for adoption.
54. I would say the most we fostered at any one time would be two but there might have been one time we had an extra one in. We were 'stretched' which is what I think social work called it but it would only be for a short time. We had a Nigerian girl called [REDACTED] for a short while.
55. I didn't know any of the children before they came to us for fostering.
56. All the children we fostered came to us from the local social work department in Edinburgh.
57. We didn't change any of the foster kids' names. We had a little baby girl who was drug addicted and her social worker was absolutely brilliant. We had her for about six or seven months and the adoptive parents unknown to the department changed her

name. It wasn't a very nice thing to do because of the secretive way they did it. The baby's name was [REDACTED] and the mum was [REDACTED]. They were from travelling stock. This couple who adopted her had already adopted a boy and they changed her name to [REDACTED]. It has always stuck in my mind because these were just people who wanted [REDACTED] and didn't want anything to do with what her background was or the fact that her mother specifically wanted her to be called that. They wouldn't respect that and they did it behind the social workers back.

58. Our first foster placement was [REDACTED]. It may have been about 1997 but it may have been before that. There were so many so it's not easy to remember. I think that we fostered more than fifty children and it was about seventy if you include the respite. Every one of these children that we have looked after all have a voice and indirectly they have been affected by these allegations as well.

Placement Preparation

59. The amount of notice we got before a child was placed in our care was very mixed. It could range from minutes, 1-2 hours or maybe longer such as 2-3 days or months. Maybe we were linked with a baby that hadn't been born and that was the case with [REDACTED] FZV. We were linked to another baby and I got a phone call from social work saying they were now going to have to give us [REDACTED] FZV instead. We were told we would have to break the link with the other baby. I have got to say that if things hadn't panned out that way and with the way things developed with our little [REDACTED] FZV another foster carer would be sitting here. That's what I think.
60. It was generally drug addicted babies who were matched to us. I think it is fair to say that as when I look at the names of the children who came to us most of them were drug addicted.
61. The amount of background information we got about a child varied. I think we got information about [REDACTED] and eventually we got information about [REDACTED] FZV

62. As an example we looked after two sisters that were seriously damaged and I have got to say they were put upon us. The social worker brought them up at six o'clock at night or maybe later and they had slept in his car from Leith all the way to Mortonhall which is a heck of a distance in the traffic at that time of night. He said we would be fine with them and as he went out put the paperwork on the table. If we had read the paperwork we wouldn't have agreed to take the girls because the older sister was possibly abused by the grandad and she hated older men. She was either three or four and her sister was younger. The mother had health issues and really serious mental health issues. It just didn't work and these are the only ones that we have asked to be removed. I was taking them down from Mortonhall to nursery at the Fort and in the car it was just awful. It was terrible because she just hated older men. I couldn't believe it when they agreed to move them and gave them to a foster care couple where the guy was older than me. There was nothing wrong with this couple other than it was an older man. On top of that their house was full. They had their daughter who was some sort of social worker living in the house, a son who was older and another foster child that they permanently fostered. I know that the sister's placement broke down after about a year or so because we met the foster carers at a funeral.
63. When you have a drug addicted baby you got medical records because you have to know what medication they are on. We had to know what doses to give. I remember a child called [REDACTED] had to be given stuff called Carobel or something like that to thicken the milk and we had to know all of that. There were lots of things we had to know. We had this little baby girl whose mother was from Ireland and the poor woman died not long after giving birth. The baby had a lot of things wrong with her and at one point she had eighteen different specialists. She had a cleft palate, she was drug addicted and she had something wrong with her sight. It was terrible. We had to know the medication she was on. The cleft palate nurse came to the house because it is a different way to bottle feed a baby with that condition. It's a soft bottle and you have to get the technique right because if you don't the milk just gushes out.
64. Most of the babies we fostered were new born babies so we didn't have pre-meets or introductions. I can't really think that we met any of the children who were a bit older

before they came to us. For instance these two sisters I have already mentioned just appeared on very short notice. I am assuming social work thought that it was FZS and FZT and they had all the equipment there.

65. I do think there could be some changes made about how a child is placed. I think the foster carers should know specifically what they are being asked to look after and I think that after the placement ends there should be more meetings between the parents or adoptive parents and foster carers. I think that any concerns that anyone has, including social work, should be covered over a longer period of time. I think what happens is that this one is going for adoption boom next one in. That means social work can close their file on that child but I believe that social work are overwhelmed. I do think that's the case. I don't say they are taking advantage but they push the boat out. I don't think they mean to do it but the situation that they find themselves in that's what happening and what has happened.

Daily Routine and Sleeping Arrangements

66. When we got a new born baby, particularly a drug addicted baby, they would sleep in a cot in our bedroom. When you are looking at two or four hourly feeds in the middle of the night that worked for us. That is what we did with our own children when they were young babies. I didn't mind doing the two or three o'clock feeds and then FZT would take over at six or seven in the morning.
67. If they were with us for a long time then they slept in a cot in the downstairs bedroom. Some of the older ones slept in one of the bedrooms in a cot. I can't think of many of them going into a bed. I think FZV eventually went into a bed in bedroom but she liked her cot. I am not one hundred percent sure on that because I don't think shared her room.
68. There was a time when the twins had left the house but upstairs we had a room, as did and . That left the bedroom downstairs for the looked after children.

Washing and Bathing

69. We have a bathroom with a bath, shower, toilet and wash hand basin.

Clothes and Shoes

70. We provided the clothes for the kids. FZT was forever spending money on clothes for the children but if the parents wanted them dressed in their clothes that is what we did as well. That was one thing that FZU has never got her head round that that is what you need to do. If there was a contact we would have probably dressed them in the clothes that the parents had left because they had specifically wanted that. A lot of parents wanted to give their children clothes which is fair enough.
71. We absolutely had specific clothes for specific kids.

Mealtimes

72. FZT cooked and prepared the food.
73. I don't think there was a time that any of the kids didn't like the food. Feeding was never an issue in terms of the kids as FZT always had homemade stuff. She made all her own food.
74. We had a little boy called [REDACTED] who was a bit older than the FZV I have just discussed and he used to smear his food. I asked the department if they could get us a better high chair because the plastic one was getting food trapped. They provided a Scandinavian highchair that was made of wood. We could take the cushions out and wash them in the washing machine. The wooden frame and tray were easier to clean and didn't get the food he was smearing trapped. He was another one that we didn't know too much about his background before he came to us. We eventually had his little sister come stay with us a few years later.

Leisure Time

75. I have photos on my iPad and phone showing that the house was full of toys and I can show the Inquiry these photographs at any time if they request them. The house is still full of toys for my grandchildren.
76. When I was on the social pedagogy course I learned games to play with children and one of them was 'Laurel and Hardy easy nose' where you do stuff like touching your nose and clapping your hands. It is really difficult and FZV and I would do this an awful lot. We were hopeless at it but it was a good laugh.
77. The garden was a safe place for the children to play.
78. [REDACTED] had been a drug addicted baby whose little brain was over stimulated. When he was still on the changing mat he would wave his hands and ankles about. I remember saying something to FZT that when he gets to the stage he is on his feet he is going to run about a bit. That was exactly what he did and we had to get deer fencing in the back garden to stop him climbing the fence. He had this little plastic toolbox and the day after we had it done he went out to the garden and had his screwdriver out trying to unscrew the fencing. He was amazing. We had to get a 'Houdini car seat' for him because if we put him in an ordinary car seat you would be driving along, look in the mirror and he was gone. He would get out and hide behind the back panel. It was stuff like that and it was when you were driving. You ought to have seen his face when we put him into the Houdini car seat but it only took him three weeks to work out how to get out.

Trips and Holidays

79. When we had [REDACTED] staying with us we had booked a weeks holiday up north in a chalet at Forres. We had [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], me and FZT. The chalet was £600 a week. I had hired a Ford Galaxy to get us all there and that was £600 for the week and the department paid half of the car hire for me. I think we went up to Forres twice for a holiday.

80. We regularly took the kids away. We went down to visit my late mother and we went to visit one of FZT sisters in Inverness. My older sister had an organic farm at Inch in Aberdeenshire and when they saw one of our kids called [REDACTED] they wanted to adopt her.
81. FZT had another sister who married a farmer type guy and stayed in Cupar Angus. We would take them there and have lots of photographs. It's an amazing house with amazing views over the Strathmore valley. It was fantastic for children so we took a lot of them there. Just about four or five miles along the road there is a place called Piperdam and we used to take them there for lunch. There's ducks and things like that for them to see. We went there a lot.
82. My older sister lost her husband which was at time we had [REDACTED] so I had thought I would like to take her away. It was also our 28th wedding anniversary so I had thought I could take [REDACTED] me, FZT and my sister to Fuerteventura but social work couldn't get a passport because the social work guy just didn't do it basically. That was close to when [REDACTED] was being moved on but we could have done it and then when we got home [REDACTED] could have moved on. I ended up just taking my sister away.
83. Trying to get a passport for a looked after child was not easy. It was the same for little FZV we are talking about today. When our son [REDACTED] got married he got married in Cyprus and he wanted FZV to come. Again the passport thing was a problem and FZV had to stay with FZT sister [REDACTED] who stayed at our house for a week.
84. That was another thing about the department, they didn't say getting a passport couldn't be done. I think sometimes they couldn't be bothered. I don't know if it was difficult to get parent's signatures and documents but I just thought it was like getting a passport now. I think if they had put a bit of effort in they could have done it although I appreciate it wouldn't have been as easy as getting one for our own children.

Healthcare

85. FZT would deal with any health care stuff for the kids. We had different types of health care professionals in all the time. It was almost on a daily basis that there was someone coming to see a child about something. We had physiotherapists, health visitors and people like that. They were there pretty constant.
86. We would register the kids with the doctors at Gracemount and if they were registered at another GP's surgery I think they maybe were transferred eventually to ours at Gracemount.
87. I don't know FZT kept records of everything. For example the time when one of the foster kids, stopped breathing on us, FZT would be at the hospital for hours and then I would go down and sit with him. She would come home and write notes. She made a large amount of notes and I would say to her that nobody has time to read all that and suggest she just do bullet points. All her records are detailed and I think it is the generation FZT and I come from. You have to record everything as it is and not give an 'it will do' standard. That seems to be a phrase I have heard when they are talking about records nowadays.

Christmas and Birthdays

88. At Christmastime the amount of toys that were bought for the kids was unbelievable. What I did a few years ago was I bought a Christmas tree for the front of our garden. At Christmastime what we did was decorate it in lights and the idea was for Santa Claus to come up the steps.

Discipline

89. No children were physically punished.

Relationship with Foster Children

90. Every child that we looked after we treated like our own. Their routines and everyday life was more or less a re-hash of what we had done with our own children.
91. We showed the children affection and we categorically gave them emotional support. We were always there for them at all times.
92. Our own children had a brilliant relationship with the foster kids. Our children adored the kids and looked upon them as part of the family.
93. My oldest grandson [REDACTED] is called after one of our foster children. He was a drug addicted baby that we got and I think he had about another six brothers. We had him from birth and he was the most amazing little chap ever. He never stopped smiling and when you took him out to Costco or a walk or something like that he was always smiling at people and everyone commented on him. He is a very handsome man now. Then his brother [REDACTED] came along and we fostered him. He was a drug addicted baby as well so we had six in the house, our four children, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. It wasn't quite two years we had them and we all wanted to keep [REDACTED] but it just wasn't practical. Also, we went into fostering trying to help looked after children find a new home or to be reunited with their parents. If we had adopted [REDACTED] that would have all stopped.
94. The relationship between [REDACTED] FZT me and the kids was absolutely amazing. I can't say anything else other than they were like our kids.
95. The foster kids were not treated any differently than we had treated our own kids. The routines that we had for our own children were the same routines we had for the foster kids. We are actually really boring because we have done the same things for twenty plus years as well as our own children.

Contact with Family (other than siblings)

96. Any contact the foster kids had with their family was set up by the social work department. They used to have spreadsheets with the contact details for maybe a couple of weeks that had been agreed and we followed that.
97. FZT would record things on the contact sheets about what had happened but I don't know what has happened to all of them.
98. We preferred to do the contacts in the house but some would be away at different venues and it was always supervised by a social work assistant.
99. We would speak to foster childrens' parents and they were allowed to phone regularly. mother used to phone every night about six when he was still up and he would hear her voice on the phone. I don't think FZV mum and dad ever phoned but other parents did.
100. I can't really say that it was the case that any of the foster kids would be given updates or information about their family mostly because they were all so young.
101. I can't say we were encouraged or discouraged by the childrens' social workers to try and encourage contact between the children and their parents. They would listen to our views if we had any on family contact.
102. was a child in our care. His two sisters were in Hawick and they arranged contact in Peebles which was like a half way point for and who were the parents. They had to get from Pilton to Peebles by bus and they never missed a contact which is quite remarkable really. What they had wanted to do was have a social work assistant come to our house to collect and drive down to Peebles without me or FZT being there. They wanted him to have contact with his sisters in a place he didn't know with no-one around him he would know either. It wasn't the same social work assistant who would come each time. Thinking of the Holly Van Gulden training FZT said that one of us should be there for . It was like a soft play area that they had the contact in. They agreed to that and what happened was a social work assistant would come to our house and I would run and the assistant to the

meeting place and that went on for months. [REDACTED] had a really good social worker who was an Irish lady called Lou Hampton and she was absolutely brilliant.

103. We had one little boy called [REDACTED] who came to us from another carer because they were convinced he was a drug addicted baby because he screamed all the time. We were asked to take him because they just couldn't handle it and their own children were getting upset with him. When he came to us and he woke up and started screaming [FZT] and I knew it wasn't a drug addicted baby. It wasn't the scream you get from a drug addicted baby it was just how he was. One night after we got him I was looking out the conservatory and I could see this head moving and looking over our fence which is just a bit over six feet high. I told [FZT] and it turns out it was [REDACTED] dad [REDACTED] who had followed the carer bringing [REDACTED] to our house. Our address was meant to be withheld. I have never met a family like them. They were South Africans living here but [REDACTED] eventually went to his Uncle [REDACTED] and we still hear from them a lot. [REDACTED] mother [REDACTED] had another four children to [REDACTED] [FZT] went to a meeting in Wester Hailes about [REDACTED] and at that time [REDACTED] was working in a care home for the elderly. He brought a patient in the car who had dementia and she had got out of the car. This is the sort of thing [REDACTED] would do. Our address was withheld from them because [REDACTED] had been a bit violent in the past. [REDACTED] found us easily but it didn't matter as nothing happened.

104. Other times when our address should have been withheld that's not been the case. One of the most alarming times was when we had an Irish new born baby called [REDACTED] She wasn't a drug addicted baby but her mother had serious mental health issues and there was stuff about the IRA and guns in the paperwork. They housed her mum across the main road from us. I never met or saw the mother but [FZT] was going to the local shops and she bumped into her. I was doing a contact over at Gilmerton and I think that was with [FZV] As I came out of the contact this car drew up beside me and this man rolled down the window and took my photograph. That was really alarming because this woman had been threatening everybody and there was this information about guns and all that. I don't think there is such a thing as confidentiality.

105. The other little boy we had for such a long time was [REDACTED] and he was a fantastic wee boy. Our address was withheld from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who were his parents. For months they were sending all the paperwork out to us and to them with our address on it. They never noticed so nothing happened. His parents never came to our house for contact but I don't think they would have shown up in any case. FZT [REDACTED] did the contacts when they were having contact with him and that was down at Craigmillar. On 23 December she was taking [REDACTED] to a contact there and got him into the car drove down to Craigmillar. They had this huge iron gate and I don't know how she managed it but she caved in all the doors on the gate and the parents never showed. This was typical as there was a lot of no shows with them.
106. I was at the discharge meeting for another child [REDACTED] at the hospital. I think there was a policeman there and he said our address was not to be disclosed because of the company her mother kept. One of her partners was a criminal and had been in jail. It then turns out that [REDACTED] mother was at school with my son. It was just unbelievable as she knew [REDACTED] and where we lived. I had said at the meeting that we didn't want to transport a drug addicted baby out in a car to a strange room because that is what unsettles them. That is why we liked to do the contacts at our house.
107. When I consider if I think anything should be changed about family contacts I think it really depends on the circumstances of each family visit. FZV [REDACTED] parents were hostile to everything, to us and the department. It is how you work within a framework like that and that's when you have a problem I suppose. When you are taking a small child to a room what use is that? You want to be in a relaxed environment for the child and the parents as well so they are more relaxed. By and large that is what we tried to do. Social work could certainly look at how they arrange contacts and where but every case is different.

Siblings

108. It was possible to get siblings. I have already mentioned the two sisters we got and we never got the paperwork beforehand. If we had read it we wouldn't have taken them for their sakes as well as our own. We had [REDACTED] and then we had [REDACTED] who came.

██████ was a new born and they were with us together for nine months. Technically that was one of the reasons we couldn't consider keeping ██████ because we would have also had to take ██████ and that would have been ridiculous because of the numbers in our household. With ██████ his two sisters placements broke down and then ██████ had another little baby girl called ██████ who was an absolute delight. FZT ██████ got a phone call because we had a space. Social work asked us if we would work with the ██████ parents again and we agreed.

109. We had a little boy called ██████ who was wonderful and ██████ the little baby who had the cleft palate and was drug addicted. ██████ parents managed to adopt both ██████ and ██████ so technically they were brother and sister. It is a remarkable story.
110. The foster children we had did not have regular contact with their siblings without their parents being involved. That was one thing that FZT ██████ wanted to happen. ██████ had brothers and sisters and the department wouldn't allow contact. The adoptive mum who we still see and keep in touch with was wanting that. I think they have managed to meet up with one of the brothers a couple of times but not the other ones. I do not know the department's reason for not wanting ██████ to have contact with her siblings.
111. When I think about what I would change about foster children having contact with their siblings I would say that wherever possible they should have contact with each other. It is only right. If it is possible it should happen but I know sometimes it might not be. I don't think it should be a definite no.

Visitors

112. I would say that the foster kids' social workers would visit them at our house quite regularly. The only one that didn't unfortunately was Chris Jack. There was an eight month gap before he visited FZV ██████ but by and large I would say they visited enough.
113. During these visits the social worker would ask how things were going basically. They would ask us and watch what was happening.

114. If the children were old enough they would speak to them. I would say it would be all three or four of us together. I don't think they specifically took them away and spoke to them, or us, individually.
115. I know our social worker was meant to visit us monthly but often it was more than that. I think that is fair to say.
116. Those visits were about seeing how things were going and they would tell us about any updates on the children. I think they would also speak to the children if they were old enough.
117. Every day, for years, our house had different people coming in and it was sometimes difficult to remember who was who. There was one time we had two children and it was maybe a girl called [REDACTED] and FZV [REDACTED] and we were doing eight contacts a week between Monday and Thursday. That was transporting them to Wester Hailes and other places. That is how I went through a Mitsubishi Space Wagon, Volkswagen Sharan, Hyundai Trajet, a car that FZT [REDACTED] used and a Land Rover Discovery.
118. No-one else came to visit or inspect our house but I remember Lauren Moss doing a couple of unannounced visits. I know that other social workers did unannounced visits but sometimes they would come round and maybe have a look around the house or whatever and they would log that as an unannounced visit as well.
119. When I think about what could change about visits I think there are set time limits when they need to come which was two a year for unannounced visits. Why not make these unannounced visits more often?

Review of Care/placement

120. I don't think social work carried out any reviews about children staying with us. The only time we have ever asked for children to be moved were the two sisters I have already spoken about. I don't remember anybody when we had [REDACTED] or any of the other children coming and asking if we thought they should be moving them on.

121. I never had any input in the care plans for the foster children. That was all done by the department and I know FZT was involved in that. Basically if it could fit into our routines as it were then that is what would happen. The suggestion in FZU statement that FZT called the shots is so far off the mark it's unbelievable, it's ridiculous. I mean what we did is look after the department's children until they said what was happening. Whether they were going up for adoption or going back home and that is basically it.
122. FZT attended any children's hearings. I don't remember being at hearings however I might have been at one with FZV Her mum and dad appealed everything and I think that is what kept FZV with us for so long because every time they were looking to move her on they appealed which is their right.
123. Once the foster children moved on from us we were not kept informed of their progress. If we were it wouldn't have lasted long but a lot of the adopted ones and I recall wanted to keep in touch with FZT in particular for support. We knew what was happening with a lot of them because we received cards. I have a sample of eight cards which are thank you cards or notes of contact from the foster children, adoptive and natural parents. We had children who would also come back for respite so we knew a lot of what was happening with some of the children. The first who I have already mentioned and who is a different child from the referred to in FZU statement, writes every year and she is doing brilliantly well. We get a photograph and it is fantastic. I wish I had brought one of them in.
124. I think it is hard to say if the children we looked after were listened to or not because they were so young. If you were to ask how he felt about his contacts in Peebles he might be have been able to answer that but whether he could verbalise that I don't really know. I remember we met his parents at the bus station and I had in the buggy. As soon as he saw his mum he didn't want to see her so it is difficult. What I can say is that between a new born baby and a mum there is a bond there. That is regardless whether they are a drug addict or the baby is born addicted

to drugs. There is such a strong bond and I think that works for every parent and how that can be broken by the department would be a very difficult thing to do.

125. When I think about what should be changed about being kept informed about a child's welfare I do have thoughts now. Thinking of my own experience and where I now find myself, FZU didn't want us to see FZV and I don't know. I believe that FZV wanted to come back and I don't think she wanted to go. When we had FZV she had about seven other children leave our house and I think in her own mind she knew that was going to happen but she didn't want it. I think she was wanting to see us and for whatever reason I don't think FZU ever took on board the things you have to do like allowing her to wear her own clothes and have her own bedding which is all the Holly Van Gulden stuff that is so important. I don't think she was either interested or wanted to take it on board. Then out of the blue FZU wrote a letter to us saying FZV had been asking for us. I still have this letter. She hadn't informed her own social worker because FZV was still under the department's remit.
126. FZT got in touch with our liaison officer because she went through the proper channels and it turned out that FZU social worker didn't know that she had done this after a year. Eventually we met up at the Helix Park, Falkirk. I don't know if it was texts or over the phone that FZT and FZU had been speaking but what FZV had wanted to do was see our house again. We had bought FZV a proper wooden Wendy House which cost about £700-£800 and she also wanted to see that. She had been saying something about me sitting in my chair and running into my arms which is what happened. After that we met another twice and then FZT met her with her sister down in Earlston because they had FZV horse riding. That was five meetings about a year after she wouldn't let us see her. To go back to the point I think there should be regular meetings about how things are going to cover who has a problem and who hasn't. I don't think that does happen and I think it is probably because it is one in one out for looked after children so it is more to do with the sheer numbers.

Records

127. FZT received guidance on keeping records and she did all that. I never kept any but I would report back to FZT for her to update records.
128. She kept health records and probably other records as well. She wrote everything down.
129. Basically it would be FZT who would have access to these records and if our liaison worker wanted them they could see them. I know that Hilary Marsh came to the house and FZT had records and files going back years. Hilary took a whole stack away and a few months ago Sharon Burns came and took away another stack. FZT had files including a file on [REDACTED] who was [REDACTED] dad. It was all his psychological reports and really sensitive things like that. We had that for years. I don't know why we were given them but we had them.
130. We had a filing cabinet and a bureau which had a snib lock on it for storing records.
131. When a looked after child left some of their records were with us for years and remained in our house until fairly recently.
132. I think what was meant to happen is when the child left the records should be returned to the department. What the department does with them after that I don't know. I expect they will keep them in the child's file. I think every time a liaison worker or social worker came into the house they could have checked to see if there was any paperwork they could take away rather than waiting until there is so much of it and then ten years down the line coming for it. It shouldn't be left with us. Why did we have all that really sensitive paperwork about a child or their parent?

Leaving the Care System

133. Adoptions were done over a matter of weeks. I think we would meet the prospective adoptive parents. There was always a meeting where you could show photographs to the new parents and then there was like a timetable we would all follow. They would come to the house for a short visit. We would then go to their house for a visit and then

they would visit us every day for over a week but it should have been longer in my view. Eventually the child would just be integrated slowly to their new family. Often they would make up a book or photographs of the parents and there would be a story along with it so we could show the looked after child that this was mummy and daddy. The first [REDACTED] we had her mum and dad had photographs of themselves, their house and all the things they did in that house. They were very musical people and they had pianos and violins. When they came they had the same clothes on as in the photographs which is what you are meant to do.

134. FZV [REDACTED] was three years and ten months when she moved. It was the social work department and St Andrews Adoption Agency was involved who made decisions about when children were moving on. FZV [REDACTED] wasn't spoke to in advance of the decision as far as I am aware. She had seen seven other children moving on. I think these children included [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and I think [REDACTED] was there as well and they were almost like her brothers and sisters as it were.
135. [REDACTED] was the little girl from Ireland I have mentioned and we got a phone call from the department before she was adopted to say that there was going to be two police officers coming from Belfast. They were going to do a swab test on [REDACTED] for DNA. Apparently [REDACTED] mum had said that the dad had raped her and they wanted a DNA test done to see if he was the father. These two lady detectives came into our house and of course they had all this stuff with them. FZV [REDACTED] was really interested in them and interacted with them as they were in our house for just under two hours. FZV [REDACTED] had seen people coming into our house and she was half expecting to go away with the two detectives which is the point I am trying to make.
136. Another thing I can tell you was about the first FZV [REDACTED] and if a delivery man came with a parcel she would try and get her coat and go with them. These children had seen all this so many times.
137. I don't really know if we were informed of what was going on during the decision making for children moving on. That was FZT [REDACTED] side of things. She would go to a meeting and it would be about planning and FZT [REDACTED] would try to follow that.

138. We tried to maintain contact with a lot of the children after they moved. That was one of the great things about fostering is when you get things like the thank you cards you get a lot back from that.
139. I bought stepping stones with squirrels and birds, a couple of sun stones and I bought a compass stone. The compass stone was for when they eventually left us we would show them what direction they were going in. This was stuff I had picked up from the training I had been on.
140. I am not aware of any of our foster children being given the option to remain with us. Every foster care placement has a remit and our remit was 1-5 years so if we had kept anyone on over that age we would have had to change the remit. Would we have kept [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] or a lot of them if they were over five? I would have if there was no-one in the pipeline, if there was no prospective adoptive parents or no chance of them going back home.
141. Social work never asked us to take older kids but I think we were what they called stretched a couple of times when we had more than two kids staying with us.
142. The little boy [REDACTED] we had was adopted and the parents seemed to be perfect. They lived in Cumbernauld. We were writing and we met a few times. They also came to our house. FZT [REDACTED] got a letter from the mum to say that it was better to let things go so we never heard anything for years until I think six or seven months ago FZT [REDACTED] got a phone call from one of her colleagues at the hospital. She said there was a young man there who was asking for her and that he had been fostered by us. She asked if it was okay to give him FZT [REDACTED] number and she agreed. It turns out that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and his mother were domestically abused and the parents split up. When children leave us FZT [REDACTED] prepares a photograph memory box and it turns out that for years [REDACTED] had been trying to find us but he is living in Dalbeattie. He now texts all the time, particularly to [REDACTED] as he considers her a sister. He has been miserable and he says every time he opens his memory box he cries. I just get so upset about this and feel for poor [REDACTED]. All this was happening before this file was closed and we couldn't say anything.

We have had a couple of FaceTimes and we have arranged to meet him a few times because my oldest sister lives near him. It has not happened yet but we will meet up with him. I think if we had just kept [REDACTED] he would have been okay, it is just terrible.

Complaints

143. I do not know the procedures of the local authority if anyone wanted to make a complaint about their service or any aspect of a child's care. If I did know I have forgotten.

Convictions

144. I have no previous convictions.

Allegations of Abuse

Awareness of Abuse

145. I was never aware of any behaviour that I considered to be abuse of a foster child whilst in foster care.

Allegations of Abuse for which there has been no Criminal Conviction

146. I have never been the subject of a complaint of alleged abuse of a foster child other than the allegations involving FZU [REDACTED] and FZV [REDACTED]
147. Kerry Higgins our liaison worker had phoned on [REDACTED] 2019 to say that something had come up and that she needed to come and speak to us. Later that evening our little gorgeous [REDACTED] was sitting in her highchair having her dinner when Kerry

Higgins and her senior, who was Sharon Burns, arrived. When I had been looking back at the paperwork it was Sharon Burns who had been signing things off although I had never met her. Sharon Burns said there had been an allegation that is being investigated and they were going to have to take [REDACTED]. She said they couldn't tell us anything. I asked her what she was talking about and she said she couldn't tell us anything and she gave either me or FZT [REDACTED] a leaflet. She said that was the phone numbers for the Fostering Network and that we needed to phone them. They were wrong it was an out of date leaflet. The next minute she said they were going to have to take [REDACTED] away and [REDACTED] social worker was waiting outside. Then they brought her into our house and they asked us to get her clothes and things like that. Next they just uplifted her without a bye-or-leave. They then said they would be back in a couple of days or something like that.

148. One of our friends was a respite carer who just lives up the road and she had done respite for [REDACTED] so that is where they took her. This lady was a friend of ours but they didn't tell her anything.
149. Sharon Burns said to us that we hadn't to tell anybody and if anybody asked just say a generic thing. I didn't understand what the heck she meant. Poor [REDACTED]. That was it. I was numb and I am still numb.
150. What actually happened after that was social work sent me a payslip asking for £500. All the payslips had always been in FZT [REDACTED] name. I paid that but I don't know what it was for. I think it was for money paid to us from the date the allegation was made until the point they asked for that money. Then they came back and said they would pay the maintenance fee until this was resolved. This felt better because we thought they must know that this was nonsense because apparently if there is an allegation against a foster carer you don't get anything. You don't get a re-numeration at all. We got our payment until 6 August 2021.
151. Another really hurtful thing that happened is a few weeks after they took [REDACTED] away Neil Bruce came to the house. He said he couldn't speak over the phone because it was a sensitive matter. I think he came twice, once with Kerry Higgins. He

wanted my childrens' addresses and phone numbers but not [REDACTED] because he didn't have any children. He didn't say that that was going over to the police. I don't believe he said that and if he did I apologise. He also said, and I am still not clear on this, but I understood he told me I couldn't see my grandchildren. That killed both FZT and I and still leaves me very upset now.

152. My son [REDACTED] phoned after that and told us that someone from the police and a social worker had come to his house and the social worker had asked if he had any concerns about me. Of course [REDACTED] had said obviously not. They asked if my grandchildren had ever slept overnight which of course they had done plenty of times. Then they went to [REDACTED] my other son and did the same there before doing the same at my daughters in the Borders.

153. We never saw our grandchildren for weeks afterwards. It was advice from the police it wasn't in stone but Neil Bruce said it was to do with the insurance that I couldn't see them. Apparently the police said it was only advice and I don't know which one is right. I have never heard anyone say that we can go and see our grandchildren and that was even after the interview.

154. One of the things that is very upsetting in the statement from FZU [REDACTED] is she said the police hadn't taken any of my devices. I brought my iPad and my phone to the interview with the Inquiry.

Reporting to Police/Criminal Proceedings

155. There was no abuse of foster children made to the police whilst they were in our care.

156. I am assuming FZU [REDACTED] must have reported the abuse to the police but I have no idea where that was done. They wouldn't tell us anything, literally nothing.

157. FZT [REDACTED] and I were interviewed by the police at Livingston Police Station on 17 October 2019. The reason it was in Livingston was because Levy & McRae, our solicitors, are

in Glasgow and it might have been St Leonards which is just down the road from us but it was easier for the solicitors to arrange a halfway point.

158. We were taken into a room at the police station and these allegations were read out to me by PC Calibero or some name like that. I nearly collapsed and then we went into another room where it was recorded. The lawyer had said just to say no comment. Somehow I managed to do that so we had a no comment interview and we weren't charged or anything. Nothing happened we were just released afterwards. From the beginning of July until the just before the police interviewed us in October we didn't know what it was about. Sergeant Gordon Cooper phoned our house and I think that was the beginning of October. I don't know the date for certain but FZT has a timeline. When he said it was about FZV that was the first time we heard who this was all about. Up until that point we knew nothing and it affected both our mental health.
159. I was terrified and that was the most terrifying thing I have done in my life for absolutely nothing. After the interview they let me sit for a while and there was a lady police officer who kind of helped me through from the back to go to the front of the station. I was trying to say to her to promise me that they would rescue FZV now but I couldn't get the words out. I totally lost my power of speech for ten minutes. I could hardly stand so she kindly got me a cup of coffee. We didn't know what to think and we thought it was finished because Levy & McRae said that would be it.
160. Four weeks later to the day of the police interview I had to collect FZT from the Commonwealth Pool and my daughter phoned. She said she had had a policeman on the phone and he had asked her if it was all right if he asked her a question. He said it was about the investigation and she said that she thought it was all dealt with. He said it was but they were just dotting the 'i's' and crossing the 't's'. He asked her if there was any member of our family called [REDACTED]. She told him there wasn't and that was basically all he said.
161. We were just wondering what was going on so I got a report though Disclosure Scotland in February I think. It looks like as soon as FZU was told that this was getting ready to be finished with she started coming away with all this other stuff. For

instance this guy [REDACTED] whoever he was but he doesn't exist. It went on and on and we never heard anything. Having read FZU [REDACTED] statement it looks like that was the case.

162. I have a timeline somewhere of the emails that FZT [REDACTED] sent to Chris Shaw and they go back and forward until he eventually confirmed that they had closed the file. Then we actually got a phone call from [REDACTED] who we fostered and did respite for his Uncle [REDACTED]. He said the police had phoned and asked him about stuff and if he had any concerns. Of course he put them well straight.
163. I have got to say that the police were the only ones that have been fair in this. They were sympathetic and I could see they were sympathetic. I can see in the report from FZU [REDACTED] what Sergeant Cooper thinks. I can read between the lines. I am not that daft. I think he thinks it is rubbish and just not true. Also in one of the documents I have it has got that the police couldn't make up their minds who was saying what between FZU [REDACTED] and FZV [REDACTED]. That is one of the reasons why they have left it unresolved.

Specific Allegations that have been made to the Inquiry

164. FZU [REDACTED] has said in her statement that she has given to the Inquiry ".... FZT [REDACTED] told me during the co-ordination week that FZV [REDACTED] birth parents had made a complaint about her and FZS [REDACTED] I didn't think anything of it because it is apparently common for birth parents to complain about foster carers." My oldest twin [REDACTED] got married at the City Chambers and I had my nieces and nephews from Inverness, the Borders and Coupar Angus staying the night. My nephew smokes roll-ups and he had left a roll-up in the conservatory behind a photograph or something. During a contact with FZV [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] her parents, were in the conservatory and FZT [REDACTED] could see through from our kitchen. She used to keep an eye on them from the kitchen. Unknown to us they had found this roll-up, put it up on its end and photographed it. At a meeting FZV [REDACTED] granny had suddenly said they had this photograph and that we had been smoking cannabis. That is what this complaint was about and of course it wasn't cannabis. What actually happened was the department wanted the roll-up and they

were going to say it was them because it was them who were cannabis users. It was a roll-up it was nothing like what they smoke with cannabis which is a joint. That was why the contacts at our house with FZV parents stopped because we couldn't have them back in the house again. That was their fault basically I suppose.

165. FZU has said *".....She had on new clothes. I didn't like the clothes because I thought they were inappropriate for her age. She was wearing an animal print dress. It was almost like the dress was sexy. It's my personal view and someone else might think differently. All of FZV clothes seemed to be black, grey and animal print. Normally, the wee girls you see have colourful clothes. However, FZT and FZS had made a real effort."* There is absolutely no truth in that. I am asked what I remember about the person making this allegation. In her statement she said it was an adoption day we first met and I did two adoption days for FZV and one for another child. The two for FZV were in Dundee in the Carnegie Hall and the other was at Hamilton Town Hall for. An adoption day is for prospective adopter parents and they go along on the understanding that the children who are being offered have been difficult to place. As a foster carer you go slightly earlier than the parents would arrive and sign in with your name and title. There are rows of tables with stands with photographs of them and a little bit about them. All these parents come in and there are social workers there. There wasn't many other foster carers at any of the ones I was at. If someone shows an interest in FZV then I am there to tell them a little bit about her. On the first one for FZV there was no interest although I did speak to prospective parents. They would follow up any interest with the particular social worker who is arranging the adoption. There are other social workers there who ask questions on behalf of prospective parents who are not there. I spoke to a few of them that first time but there was no interest in FZV. Because there was no interest someone from the social work department sent someone to come to our house and make a DVD. I think FZU is alluding that we set this up but it was the department that videoed FZV, FZT and our house and the sort of things FZV did.

166. On the second day when I got there and had signed in and went up they had FZV stand at the bottom where I was standing. It was at an angle and all these prospective parents were just streaming in and you wouldn't believe how many people there are

at these days. It's gobsmacking how many there is. They were just bypassing FZV so I said to the social worker that they had FZV at an angle and everybody was just walking past her so I went down and brought her up to where I was and had her picture square on. I was speaking to people when FZU appeared. I went to speak to FZT and what FZU was asking wasn't what all the other prospective parents or social workers would ask. They would always ask what FZV needs were. I can remember FZU not asking that but she asked if it would be held against her that she was a single parent, was there an adoption allowance, how much was it and would she get help to allow her to attend a lot of medical appointments. I don't remember her asking much about FZV. That's what I can remember but she is saying stuff like I have got a beer belly and we got on. We didn't not get on. She was just someone I met. I was pleased for FZV that we would eventually find somebody and some of the things she is saying is confusing. Why would we back her into a corner in our house? What is she talking about?

167. FZU had also said *"I spent an hour there. It was a really tough hour. The idea was that I spend an hour with FZV but I didn't get to because FZT wouldn't let me. She was in my face, talking really fast and loudly. FZT talked about her children. She wouldn't let me sit beside FZV without her being there. FZS was talking to me as well. When FZV talked to me, they talked over her. I almost physically couldn't leave because I was in a corner and they were standing over me, talking at me and questioning me. It felt like an interrogation."* No. I can remember that day and it was nothing like that. I don't know why she is saying that. I have no idea why she is saying that but it did not happen.

168. FZU has also said *"There were lots of toys. FZT and FZS had another foster child called [REDACTED] who was about eighteen months old. They let [REDACTED] crawl around the floor but I felt I had to spend most of my time stopping [REDACTED] from putting things in her mouth. They told me things about [REDACTED] family which I thought was inappropriate and FZS said she would end up being nothing but a hoody. FZS and FZT talked about other kids they had fostered."* [REDACTED] was ten months, she wasn't moving and what she is saying didn't happen. I have no idea why FZU has said this and what is going through her thoughts. I don't know why.

169. FZU [REDACTED] has said *"The second day I went for lunch. That day was the same as the first day, in terms of FZT [REDACTED] and FZS [REDACTED] being odd. FZV [REDACTED] didn't eat and FZT [REDACTED] said she was fussy and it was hard to get her to eat. I thought that was understandable. The third day I took FZV [REDACTED] out for a walk on my own. FZT [REDACTED] was anxious and very loud....."* Nope, that didn't happen. She might have taken her for a walk but the other stuff didn't happen. I don't know what angle she is coming from in that at all. I have no idea.
170. FZU [REDACTED] has also said *"The fourth day I went for dinner and bath time to understand FZV [REDACTED] routine. That's when it all changed. Dinner was fine but FZV [REDACTED] didn't eat again. It came to bath time and I was surprised to hear that FZS [REDACTED] was responsible for all personal care, bathing, washing, changing of nappies and pull up nappies, dressing and undressing. When I was going through the adoption process, I had been told that foster carers are supposed to safe-guard themselves. For example, if you have foster carers of each gender then they should bath the same gender and the door should be ajar, or at least these tasks should be shared. FZT [REDACTED] and FZS [REDACTED] were doing the complete opposite which seemed strange."* I have read that and none of it is true. None of it is right. The part about me being responsible for all personal care is just not true. The part *"bathing, washing, changing of nappies and pull up nappies, dressing and undressing."* is just not true. All of it is not true. For one thing I don't think FZV [REDACTED] ever had pull-ups on. I mean it is just not true. We were a team so I would maybe bath a baby and FZT [REDACTED] was ready to bath the other. I was not the main carer like she is trying to make out, we were joint carers and the department knew all our routines. The department knew everything about us. I can only think she is just trying to demonise us for some reason. It is basically some sort of persecution but I just don't know why, I have no idea.
171. I know that these allegations have been made by FZU [REDACTED] about FZV [REDACTED] and I can say I have never abused FZV [REDACTED] I have never punished or sanctioned a punishment on FZV [REDACTED] in any way.
172. It is definitely not possible that the passage of time has affected my recollection.

173. FZU [REDACTED] has also said "FZS [REDACTED] described the bath time routine and I sat on a stool in the bathroom. FZV [REDACTED] went in the bath with the baby [REDACTED] FZS [REDACTED] filled the bath like a puddle and the water didn't even cover her legs. There were no bubbles or toys and the water was cold. FZV [REDACTED] was allowed to pee in the bath. After that, FZS [REDACTED] gave FZV [REDACTED] her toothbrush and she dipped it the bath water and brushed her teeth." None of that happened, none. I have no idea why she is saying these things. It was the case that they would come to the house to see these routines and we would have done a bath routine. I don't specifically remember this bath time as it would have just been a normal one. FZU [REDACTED] was there for a bath time routine but it was not like she is saying. It is just not true. A usual routine was FZV [REDACTED] would have a normal bath, FZT [REDACTED] would towel dry her and dress her before she went to bed. She would not have a bath with [REDACTED]. As FZV [REDACTED] got older she went into the bath but we had a baby bath for the babies so it was a bigger child in first then I would run the baby bath which you clip onto the bath. I don't know why she has said any of this I really don't.

174. FZU [REDACTED] has also said "FZS [REDACTED] washed FZV [REDACTED] with a cloth, when she could have washed herself. I had an uneasy feeling and it was horrible to watch. It was odd but I didn't say anything because it was FZS [REDACTED] house. FZV [REDACTED] was quite different at bath time. At the time I thought she was embarrassed and excitable. Both kids were watching FZS [REDACTED] and looking at him as if they were waiting or preparing for something. I couldn't say what that was." I don't understand that and that never happened. I prided myself on our children not being scared of water and that was going back to the iceberg theory. I tried to make sure with all our looked after children the last thing they were scared of was running water or a bath. We did have one wee boy who had lost the power of speech because his dad had threatened him with a cigarette in the bath. I felt it was one of my skills if you like. [REDACTED] was scared of a bath when he came but when he went he was absolutely fine. I don't know why FZU [REDACTED] has said this but it just didn't happen.

175. FZU [REDACTED] has also said "We went back into the living room after FZV [REDACTED] got out of the bath and FZV [REDACTED] was running about naked. FZS [REDACTED] put her pyjamas on her. FZV [REDACTED] was still running about and it was chaotic. FZT [REDACTED] said she had to dry FZV [REDACTED] hair and tried to get FZV [REDACTED] to come to her and calm down. You could see the stress on FZT [REDACTED] face.

She started shouting at FZV grabbed her by the top of her arm, pulled her over and jammed her in-between her legs. FZT put the hairdryer on and FZV was crying. FZT made no attempt not to tug FZV hair. It was a terrible way to handle a child. It was obvious this was the bedtime routine." None of that happened or is anything like how we treated or how FZT treated FZV none of it. If it was as bad as she said then presumably she would have said something. I would have said something if that was going to be my new child. It did not happen. I have no idea why she would have said these things at all. I just don't know. I am totally bamboozled by the whole thing. This has grown arms and legs since the police station and this is just extra stuff that has been added in I think.

176. FZU has also said "The fifth day FZV visited me at my house for lunch. FZT and FZS brought her. The visit was for a couple of hours and I had the upper hand because it was my home. It was a bit easier going and really nice to have FZV in my house. FZT interrogated me about very personal matters, for example me being single and my financial position. She still made negative comments to FZV saying she would be spoiled. FZS and FZT couldn't be happy for her. It was disappointing because I had thought it would good for the foster carers to be a part of FZV life in the future. As I got to know FZT that wasn't going to happen." Well none of that is true. If she had the upper hand I don't know what she means by that. I can only say no and that never happened. I'm sorry but I cannot explain why she has said these things. I wish I could but I can't.

177. The day that she is talking about having the upper hand, what was arranged between FZT and FZU is that FZT would phone or text to say that we were leaving the house. She had given really good instructions how to get to her house and how long it would take. It was forty odd, maybe 45 minutes away. We let her know that we were leaving Mortonhall and when we got to her house she wasn't there. FZT said it was ten minutes but I know it was longer, it was between 15-20 minutes, before FZU FZU showed up in her car. She got out the car with a packet of toilet rolls telling us that she had run out. I am asking the question now why anybody expecting their new child at a specific time would be late at their own house? FZV was getting anxious

because she knew where she was going. All for toilet rolls. Whatever else she says happened when she had the upper hand, whatever that means, never happened.

178. FZU [REDACTED] has also said *"The only thing that happened on the sixth day was that FZV [REDACTED] didn't make it to the toilet once. FZT [REDACTED] hadn't given me a change of clothes or let me know that FZV [REDACTED] was still learning to go to the toilet on time. When we got back, I said to FZT [REDACTED] that FZV [REDACTED] had a wee bit of pee in her pants. FZT [REDACTED] said she would get that later. I said FZV [REDACTED] pants were wet but FZT [REDACTED] let her sit in wet pants. I was heartbroken leaving FZV [REDACTED] there. I didn't understand until later why I was having those feelings."* I have no idea what she is talking about. I have absolutely no idea about that at all and FZT [REDACTED] would never ever leave a child with wet pants.
179. FZU [REDACTED] has also said *"A friend of mine passed away and I had to change the co-ordination week plans to go to the funeral. My social worker suggested that we ask if FZV [REDACTED] if could move in earlier with me, since she was asking to. I asked FZT [REDACTED] if we could change the plan when I dropped FZV [REDACTED] off. I said I couldn't do Friday and, before I could say why, FZT [REDACTED] flipped. She started shouting at me."* As for the so called week when we were passing FZV [REDACTED] over you have to check with FZT [REDACTED] for this but she blames FZT [REDACTED] for it being difficult but it wasn't FZT [REDACTED] fault or mine. It just wasn't. She phoned one night at half past seven to say she couldn't come the next day because she had a funeral in Greenock. This is at half past seven at night and FZU [REDACTED] was asking to change the arrangements again. We are not allowed to do that. Foster carers can't change set down in stone arrangements and we had nobody to phone to say this is what is happening. At 5 o'clock on a Friday you are not going to get a hold of social work. She says stuff like we didn't want her to move on but we were happy for FZV [REDACTED] to move on. The bottom line is that I don't think that FZU [REDACTED] wanted to take on any advice about anything we offered or could offer.
180. FZU [REDACTED] has further said *"From day one, I noticed things that were worrying. There were things like FZV [REDACTED] shouting at the cat using adult language such as, "How dare you," and "Get down from there, you're a stupid cat" and having aggressive body language when she did this. FZV [REDACTED] had road rage in the car and would shout out at*

other drivers, "What are you doing woman?" How am I supposed to answer that? I'm sorry but that is just nonsense. No, the answer is no to it all. It doesn't make sense.

181. FZU [REDACTED] has also said "I was told FZV [REDACTED] was fairly toilet trained during the day but not at night time, so FZV [REDACTED] wore a pull up nappy to bed. I noticed in the mornings that, perhaps understandably, FZV [REDACTED] was too scared to come out of her room. FZV [REDACTED] would sit in a corner and defecate in her pull up in the morning when she was awake. She wasn't incontinent at night. I thought it was odd and spoke to my social worker about it." How am I supposed to answer that as it is just not true? FZV [REDACTED] was possibly the best sleeper at night that we have ever had. There was never any of this prior to FZV [REDACTED] leaving us so I really don't know what she is talking about. I don't know why she would say these things. I wish I could but I don't know why FZU [REDACTED] has come away with all of this stuff. I really don't know why she is like this and there is no reason for her to be like this.
182. FZU [REDACTED] has said "FZV [REDACTED] would be playing with a baby doll and, in an affectionate way, say things like, "Come here, you wee bastard." Another day, FZV [REDACTED] said to either a doll or the cat, "Come here, little tits." Both times, I asked what she'd said and she said it again. Both times, I asked where she heard that and FZV [REDACTED] said that was what FZS [REDACTED] calls [REDACTED]. She said FZS [REDACTED] called [REDACTED] "little tits" when he was giving her a bath." That's just not true and it is language that I do not use I have never used that language that it is just totally alien to me. When you think about it how am I meant to answer it when it is not true? I have no idea why FZU [REDACTED] would say that. I have no idea why but I think when you start reading the full statement you can see the avenue she is going down.
183. FZU [REDACTED] has also said "If FZV [REDACTED] spilled a glass of water, she would cower her head and start shaking. It was like she was waiting for a consequence and there was a fear reaction. It was the same if there was a loud noise or a gasp. FZV [REDACTED] behaviour was starting to really worry me." And then she said "FZV [REDACTED] had never lived with her birth family. To me, she could only have learned these things from FZS [REDACTED] or FZT [REDACTED] or people that she'd met in the placement." It is just not true. Why would it be true? It is just not.

I have no idea what her angle is, I just do not know. If a child was treated in such a way then I suppose it would be abuse but she wasn't.

184. FZU goes on to say "When FZV first moved in, her toenails hadn't been cut. The nails were curling in because they were so long. FZV clothes came in the standard black bag that you hear about foster children having. Her clothes had holes in them, were covered in stains and the seams were coming away. It painted a horrible picture. She came with toys but most had been given to her by her birth family." That is one of the biggest insults in all of this and it is simply not true. It just didn't happen.
185. FZU further says "Then, one night I was giving FZV a bath. I can't remember the date but it is in an email. FZV had to get out to go to the toilet. I was helping her get back in the bath and she slipped because she was wet and soapy. I put my arm out and caught her, on the buttocks. My arm just touched her. FZV got really upset and started screaming. She was saying, "Mummy, you smacked my bum." And "I was confused as to how FZV knew what smacking a bum was and why she was interpreting what had happened as a smack. A child of that age wouldn't know unless they had been smacked. I explained I was trying to catch her and said I was sorry. I asked if anyone had smacked her bum and she said FZT and FZS both smacked her bum." Never and again none of that is true. I appreciate I can't say that FZV didn't say that to FZU but that never happened to FZV in our house. Again I have no idea why and when she has said this. I suppose that if this had happened to a child it would be abuse, of course it is.
186. FZU goes on to say "About a week after the bath incident, we were in the car and FZV was getting distressed and saying she didn't want to go back to FZT and FZS. She was the opposite of a grieving child. This happened on several occasions when she would scream and kick getting into my car, "Don't take me back there, I don't want to go back". This happened for months and in front of friends and family." I think that this is not true and I have a letter from FZU that she hasn't dated but it was early 2016 and I would like to read this letter out as my response. It says "Dear FZT and FZS FZV is doing brilliantly and is thriving. She has gained eight pounds since

moving in" FZV is like a stick, her mum is really tiny and small made. FZV is just the same. It is in her make-up and genetics. "...and the health visitor has said that her weight and height are in the same percentile. Although she seemed to be having difficulty with her loss at the beginning she is now having a healthy reaction and misses you both. She wore her FZV necklace at her birthday party and at Christmas" FZT gave her this necklace with her name on it.

187. The letter goes on to say "She got spoiled rotten and has a new kitten to look after. Thank you so much for the photo albums she loves them and enjoys showing them off. Thank you also for the memory box which will be treasured forever." There was a memory box full of things from her birth parents and from FZT and I. We had made a photo album of her life with us and I think there was in excess of over 200 photographs. "She is learning tennis, ballet and yoga and going to gymnastics and has made new friends. She is desperate to start nursery next week and so am I. Best wishes FZU FZU PS She talks about you both all the time." With the letter FZU sent a photograph.

188. After that FZT sent a letter of reply dated 24 October 2016 and it stated "Dear FZU FZU and FZV too, it was lovely to hear from your and how everything is going well. It goes without saying we really miss FZV too a lot. It is so quiet without her. You both were in our thoughts a lot especially in the period over FZV and Christmas festivities. Thank you for the lovely pictures and card and drawings. FZV you are as lovely as ever. Hope you are enjoying your new nursery. Sending FZV a big kiss and cuddle from us both. Take care FZT and FZS"

189. The next letter must be a reply from 2016 from FZU "Dear FZT and FZS I hope you are doing well. As you know it has been a year since FZV moved in and finally she seems to be experiencing a healthy loss for you both that I think everyone expected to happen a lot sooner. She is expressing this loss well and misses you both deeply. She has expressed on a number of occasions lately that she would like to visit you both. I think this is great news and for me it is a relief to see that FZV is now feeling and communicating her loss in an appropriate way. I have done a lot of work with her on her life story work which has been sadly set back by the

confusion of contact with her birth parents which has continued to this day." Before going to live with FZU [REDACTED] FZV [REDACTED] was having contact four times a year with her birth parents.

190. The letter goes on to say "She has had a tough time. I didn't want to call you out of the blue to ask you this but I think it would be good for her understanding and managing her loss if we could come and visit you both? However, I understand that this may be extremely difficult for you given the time that has passed, the allegations and her refusal to see you up to this point. She is aware that you both love her very much and wanted to see her. She is also aware of the reason she hasn't seen you is because she didn't want to however she is happy and seems relieved at the thought of seeing you both now. If it is too difficult for you both I completely understand but if you would like to call me to discuss my number is still....."
191. The letter goes on to say "FZV [REDACTED] is normally asleep by seven thirty and is at nursery full days Tuesday-Friday if that is a better way for calling. FZV [REDACTED] has made a picture for you and her cat Ezra. She has asked me to write 'I love you'. Hopefully speak soon, best wishes FZU [REDACTED]"
192. I have become very upset reading this letter again and I wish I hadn't. This was a year afterwards. How could she do this to us, my children, my grandchildren and to FZV [REDACTED]? FZT [REDACTED] has written out a timeline of the visits after that. There were five. How could we hurt a child, any child, let alone FZV [REDACTED]? Even two of my granddaughters were great friends with FZV [REDACTED], particularly [REDACTED] who was the same age and went to the same nursery. I used to take them together. If anything like this was going on it would have been picked up right away.
193. FZU [REDACTED] has also said in her statement to the Inquiry"..... *I was copied into an email with a summary of the FZS-FZT [REDACTED] response, on 29 October 2015. There are a lot of people copied into the email who I don't know. I still have a copy of the email*" and "*I'm not a professional and I don't work in this field but even I can see that, what I would call their excuses, are quite clearly excuses. The FZS-FZT [REDACTED] said they played a game with FZV [REDACTED] which involved smacking her bum.....*" FZT [REDACTED] had alluded to that but when

FZV was running up the stairs she would gently tap her bum but that's all it was. There wasn't smacking, smacking, smacking or anything like that going on. That was it. It wasn't anything and FZT was told later on not to use that word.

194. FZU has gone on to say *"FZV repeatedly described being smacked or hit in the foster home by FZT and FZS. She said FZT would tug her hair and hit her on the head with the hairbrush when she was getting her hair brushed. When I asked why FZT did that, FZV said it was because she was annoying and stupid."* None of that is true, none of it. I have no idea why she would say these things.

195. FZU has also said *"FZV said she was not allowed to come out of her room in the morning. She said she would tiptoe into FZT bedroom, would get a smack and be sent back to her room. FZV repeatedly described her bedroom door being locked and, at my house, was terrified of the door being shut. The hall light always had to be on."* None of that is true. There is no lock on any of our bedroom doors. What she is saying there none of it is true or happened. Again I have no idea why she would say these things.

196. FZU has said *"FZV repeatedly described being shut behind the gate at the top of the stairs. The toilet was downstairs in FZS and FZT house and FZV wasn't allowed out of her room or past the gate to go to the toilet. That was why she had a pull up nappy on at night."* None of that is true it is just simply not true. I have already spoken about our stair gate being at the bottom of the stairs. I have no idea why she would come away with stuff like that.

197. FZU had also said *"FZV has a scar below her bottom lip and on her chin where she had plastic surgery for a burst lip, when she was two and half years old. This wasn't in the social work records and I wasn't told about it until I met the foster carers. I was told she was standing on a stool, washing dishes, and she slipped off and bumped her mouth."* and *"That's not the story FZV tells. She is very distressed and unclear about what happened and gives different versions of where and when it happened. One time, she said it was outside in the garden on a hard bit of pavement and she was pushed. Another time she said it was in the kitchen and she was pushed."*

FZV would also say that it was an accident. I don't know if that's because she was told to say it was an accident." Basically none of that is true except that FZV did used to help FZT prepare food at the sink and she had a stool which she slipped off. All the other stuff is simply not true. I think she did possibly get plastic surgery and it was reported. I don't understand why she says it is not in the records I'd be amazed if it is not. There is a photograph that FZU sent where FZV had apparently fallen in the playground at the school. She had been in an area where she shouldn't have been and she had broken her nose and bruised her eyes. That's the sort of thing that FZV could do and that is why you had to be so careful with FZV because she had no idea that she could fall and hurt herself. That is why we were very careful with her that way. Yes she slipped off the stool, it was actually a child's training step that you would use to train them to use the toilet. I wasn't there when she slipped. FZV liked doing stuff like that. FZT did a lot of baking and FZV was interested in stuff like that.

198. FZU further says "In November 2015, FZV started to meet some of my close friends. One of my male friends came to meet her and brought her a big teddy. FZV was excited to meet him. I left them in the living room while I made coffee and I heard my friend shouting for me. I ran back in. FZV was standing in front of him, had pulled down her pants and leggings and had bent over to display her bum to him. My friend panicked and didn't know what to do." What am I supposed to answer to that? I don't know why she would do that. I don't know and I can't give an explanation for that. The time that FZV was with us she never displayed any behaviours like that. She left us on 2015. How can I say what happened, I can't. She never had any behaviour like that with us and if that was the case why would she write letters that I have referred to? If this was going on prior to these letters then it doesn't make sense. None of these allegations make sense and they didn't happen, that's the bottom line. FZT and I have never harmed a child let alone FZV. The things she is saying there are just beyond belief.

199. FZU has said "In January 2016 when FZV was four years old, the nursery teacher at FZV nursery asked to speak to me. She said there was an incident where FZV grabbed a little boy in his privates, over his clothes. I was shocked. Nursery said the boy and his parents were alright but they had to report it to social work in Edinburgh

because FZV was still legally under their care.” She never showed any sexualised behaviour like that ever. She just didn’t. I am asked if she was shown any sexualised behaviour like that and she was not.

200. FZU has said ‘FZV and I got into a routine where she would run into my room in the morning and we would talk and cuddle in my bed. It was at these times she would say random things. FZV said to me that FZS came into her room, did a ‘roly-poly’ on her and it really hurt. That gave me a sinking feeling in my stomach. It was hard to get her to elaborate on that. To FZV a ‘roly-poly’ was a forward roll because she was doing gymnastics then.” FZV was doing gymnastics. FZT took her to Gracemount to the gymnastics and ‘roly-poly’ is not a word that the coaches use for gymnastics. The only time that I heard the expression ‘roly-poly’ was when FZU came to the house with FZV and that must have been one of the first visits. FZV was running about and she wanted to go to the conservatory and I took FZV in. She saw it was just the same with all her toys. As we came out this to me is the only time I heard that word ‘roly-poly’ was when it was used by FZU. She asked FZV if she had been playing ‘roly-poly’ with me. I can remember thinking ‘roly-poly’ what does that mean? I have never used that expression and I have never said ‘roly-poly’ to any child or anybody. Again, what does ‘roly-poly’ mean to FZU? Maybe somebody wants to ask that question to her because it was her that used it. As I said she has used this word ‘roly-poly’ for gymnastics but that is not a word a gymnastic coach would use. These are the sort of things that are so far off the mark it’s unbelievable.

201. FZU goes on to say “As we got into 2016, the behaviours continued. FZV talked about weird things. For example, she said to me she was going to stab me in the bum hole or she was going to get a fork and stab me in the heart. FZV talked a lot about monsters. I wondered what she had been watching on TV at the foster carers. FZV was terrified of the police and said the police would come and get her if she was naughty. I had to work on that with her, so she would see the police as someone you would go to for help.” I don’t know anything about that. It is just absolute nonsense.

202. FZU also said ‘FZV was very physical with my body. There was a Looked After Child Review meeting with the nursery manager, keyworker, me and Sarah

Goulding. The keyworker said FZV was over familiar with the keyworker's breasts and trying to put her hands down the keyworker's top. I didn't know how age appropriate that was and, at the meeting, Sarah said it was normal. At that time, I was defending FZV too and I might have said, "Wasn't it normal exploration?" She never showed that behaviour when she was with us. In the disclosure report I got, and I don't particularly want to say this, I think it was in 2017 that FZV disclosed an assault allegation against FZU. That was investigated and that was prior to her adoption. I think it was sorted out. Again I don't think she mentions that. I don't know what is going on here with this woman. I really don't. I don't know why she is coming away with all of this stuff but FZV didn't show any sexualised behaviours in our time.

203. FZU has also said "I noticed that when we were in the company of men, FZV was overly touchy and affectionate with them. Examples are FZV sitting on men's knees when she doesn't know the man, trying to put her hands in the man's pockets to feel their privates or putting her hand down their shirt. I would have to remove FZV from them." As well as "We went on a trip to Butlins and stopped overnight at my male cousin's home. FZV wanted to sit on his knee. She was crawling all over him and tried to feel his genitals. It was awkward because what she did was very subtle and it wasn't quite clear what she was doing. It was hard to correct because you didn't want to make a big deal of it and embarrass her." She never showed any signs of that type of behaviour ever.

204. FZU has said "When FZV started school, some things started to change. One day after school, we were watching TV. FZV mounted my leg and rubbed her vagina on it in a sexualised way. I stood up immediately and asked her what she was doing. I didn't mention this to the social workers at this stage because I was embarrassed and thought maybe she was playing. This kept happening and I was really concerned." FZV was definitely not showing any signs of this type of behaviour when she was with us.

205. FZU has further said FZV had moved schools in the summer of 2018 and we moved house in March 2019 when FZV was seven years old. After we moved, the really horrible stuff started happening and FZV started disclosing sexual abuse

- in detail. FZV has told me in the last few months that, during the co-ordination week, FZS told her if she told me anything, he would come to the house in the middle of the night, break in, stab me in the heart and kill me and FZV. On reflection it is likely FZV only began to disclose what happened to her because we moved house and she knew FZS couldn't break in and kill her." Well that's just not true, just not true. I can't explain why these things have been said. I have no idea why this is happening or being said but certainly that is not true.
206. FZU then said "Then FZV began to masturbate herself several times a day, for example in the living room. I asked CAMHS if that was age and stage appropriate. It began to impact FZV daily life, for example we would run late for school because I couldn't get FZV out of bed. FZV made comments about men which were sexualised. For example, she said men on TV were handsome but they were all middle-aged men and older. It was as if she was sexually attracted to these men." She absolutely did not show any behaviour like that at all.
207. FZU then said "On 23 May 2019, I was tucking FZV into bed. This was the first detailed disclosure but FZV was talking about it as if it was a dream. She said she'd had bad dreams and didn't want to go to sleep. The bad dreams were about men making her lick their bums. I asked who was making her do that and she said her friend [redacted] I said," Oh really, [redacted] was making you?" and FZV said no, it was FZS and he had a really hairy willy. A child that age is not going to dream about that out of their imagination." I have no idea why FZV would say stuff like that.
208. FZU further said "On 4 June 2019, FZV was feeding her rabbits and asked me if boy rabbits had willies. She repeated that FZS had a really hairy willy. She said, "You can't even see his willy, it's that hairy and it's grey." FZV said she loved men because they were handsome and gave her lollipops." I have no idea why she would say stuff like that. No idea at all. I really don't.
209. FZU then said "The disclosures continued. It was as if FZV was testing me to see what my reaction would be. The sexualised behaviours at home were getting worse. One day FZV was quiet and withdrawn. I asked what was on her mind. FZV

told me she was having bad dreams about FZS showing her his willy. She demonstrated and had one hand on her groin, the other on her head and she was thrusting and dancing. FZV said FZS put his willy in her face and it was smelly." Nothing like that ever happened and that just never happened. I have no idea why this has been said.

210. FZU has said 'FZV said when she was having a bath, FZS took his clothes off, came into the bath and peed in the bath. She said he put runny soap on her hair that came down onto her face and into her eyes. FZV said she didn't like FZS. This was the first time that FZV was verbalising that she didn't like the foster carers.' None of this is true and it didn't happen. I don't know why it has been said. It didn't happen, none of this has happened not one iota and I can't really say any more than that. Can you imagine what FZT and I have gone through and for nothing? Absolutely nothing. I don't know why and I don't know how. I don't know why FZV has come away with stuff like that, if she has. I don't know why FZU has done this. For the life of me I don't know but what I want and what FZT wants is for FZV to be safe and we want to know what's happened to our [REDACTED]. We want this resolved not just for my children and my grandchildren or FZT but we want it resolved for FZV. We are powerless. We are powerless to defend ourselves against this type of thing. That is wrong. I fully understand privileged protection and I fully endorse it but when it's malicious and unfounded then at some point it needs to be challenged. Not just for my sake, FZT sake, my family's sake and my children's sake but for other foster carers as well. That is one of the reasons why I was happy to speak to the Inquiry because what I am trying to do is stand up for other foster carers. Why FZU is going down this avenue I don't know.

211. FZU has said "On 3 July 2019, we were in the car. Subsequently, a lot of disclosures took place in the car where we didn't have eye contact. FZV said she had a day dream of a speech bubble with FZS face in it. She said it was a warning FZS was going to come and get her. FZV said FZS made her angry and that he made her unconscious. She told me unconscious meant you felt uncomfortable and weird." What does that actually mean? Again, I don't know why FZV would say that, I really don't. If she did? I have no idea why that was said.

212. FZU [REDACTED] has also said "The police interviewed FZV [REDACTED] on 9 July 2019 and, after they left, she said that FZS [REDACTED] had touched her privates in a bad way. FZV [REDACTED] demonstrated by pulling her trousers up really hard at the groin area. She said FZS [REDACTED] would pull on her privates really hard and it really hurt. I said I was sorry and this shouldn't have happened to her. FZV [REDACTED] collapsed on the floor and started crying. It was a hard day." It is just nonsense that I would do stuff like that. I have no idea why this would be said. It didn't happen that's for sure, absolutely.
213. FZU [REDACTED] has also said "FZV [REDACTED] then told me that FZS [REDACTED] hurt her privates. She said FZS [REDACTED] and FZS [REDACTED] cousin touched her privates, together, and FZS [REDACTED] told his cousin to touch her vagina. She said FZS [REDACTED] cousin touched her vagina and it really hurt. FZV [REDACTED] then said that FZS [REDACTED] cousin told FZS [REDACTED] to touch "where her baby comes out of". She said FZS [REDACTED] pushed in with his fingers hard and it really hurt. FZV [REDACTED] told me she cried and they told her to go to bed, nothing happened and stop whining. She said FZS [REDACTED] cousin came round to FZS [REDACTED] house a lot and this happened more than once. When FZV [REDACTED] called someone a cousin, it could mean they were a family friend." Simply none of that is true. I have no idea why it has been said. I don't have a cousin. That is the question they asked my daughter, is there a [REDACTED]? There is no [REDACTED] in our circle. To say that that happened a lot is just beyond belief. It's just not true. It is more than not true.
214. FZU [REDACTED] further said "On 13 July 2019, FZV [REDACTED] was quiet and tired. She said she couldn't sleep because she couldn't get it out of her head. She demonstrated by taking her pants down, saying FZS [REDACTED] took his trousers and pants down and grabbed her. She said she tried to get away from him but couldn't. She said he put his willy in her bum cheeks and she demonstrated a thrusting action. FZV [REDACTED] said he was slow and then went fast, it was really sore and she couldn't get away." It's just not true. I have no idea why this would be said. I don't know why she is coming away with this stuff. Of course I accept if a child was treated in this way it would be abuse.
215. FZU [REDACTED] has said "Then, FZV [REDACTED] said FZS [REDACTED] told her to go to bed, say nothing happened and be quiet about it to FZT [REDACTED] This happened when she was watching

children's television and FZT was out for a walk. FZV told me that she told FZT what happened because she was upset and crying. FZT said she was talking rubbish and she was to go to bed." Just never happened and it is not true.

216. FZU has said "On 24 July 2019, the night before the second police interview, I checked with FZV that she was still okay to talk to the police. FZV repeated what she had disclosed already but in more detail. She told me FZS cousin came into her room and kept touching her vagina. She said FZS and his cousin took turns, in a pattern. FZV put her hands over her vagina and they pulled her hands away." Well it never happened it's just not true.

217. FZU has also said "FZV said FZS hurt her bum while watching TV every day. She said he went slow then fast until he was "done", when he would "wipe the goo and walk away". FZV said the goo was on her bum and she knew when he was finished because he would walk away. FZS said to her nothing happened and she wasn't to tell anyone. When she told FZT FZT said she would have seen it happen and FZV must be making it up. FZV described FZS having bad breath, not talking and just breathing all the time." None of that is true, none of it.

218. FZU has further said "On 9 December 2019, FZV began to disclose more in terms of physical abuse. She described FZS picking her up by the hips, throwing her in the air and landing on a table. This happened in the living room. FZV described the pattern of the table and what it was made of. FZV told me FZS threw her against the wall in her bedroom. She said she had shower gel deliberately put in her face and eyes at bath time because she was being naughty. FZV said baby spoons were forced in her mouth and throat to make her eat. She didn't say which of the FZS-FZT had done that." None of that is true, not one word of it. It never happened. If I had been doing that I would have been found out long before and FZV would be a physical mess. It's just not true and I don't know why that's been said. I really don't. It is extremely hurtful to think that FZT or I would treat our little FZV like that. It's just not true and I can't say anymore. None of these events took place, none of these events happened and I don't know why they have been said. I have no idea why. This is as big a shock to me as it maybe is to the Inquiry staff having to read that out.

219. FZU [REDACTED] has said "FZV [REDACTED] made a lot of disclosures in December 2019, when she was almost eight years old. She said FZS [REDACTED] had slapped her on the face all the time. She repeated that FZS [REDACTED] had thrown her against the wall in her bedroom when she was naughty and against the "flat wall". FZV [REDACTED] repeated that FZS [REDACTED] had done a roly poly on her. I tried to get her to explain what that was but she couldn't or didn't want to. FZV [REDACTED] recalled the incident where she burst her lower lip. She said she couldn't be sure if she slipped but FZS [REDACTED] said to her that she slipped and nothing happened. FZV [REDACTED] said she thinks she was unconscious and I wondered how she knew this word." None of that is true, none of it. Again she has used that word 'roly-poly' and as I said the only time I heard those words were by FZU [REDACTED] but none of these happened. If FZT [REDACTED] or I had been maltreating any child it would have been picked up by the sheer volume of people coming through our house for the kids. The social work assistants collecting FZV [REDACTED] or the nursery would have spotted stuff like that. None of it is true and I don't know what else to say. This is not right with what has happened to me or FZT [REDACTED] to FZV [REDACTED], to my children and my older grandchildren who know a little bit about it. It is not right for other foster carers to have to go through stuff like this particularly when it is malicious.
220. FZU [REDACTED] has said "FZV [REDACTED] said FZT [REDACTED] shouted and threw plates in the kitchen. One time the plate smashed on the floor. FZT [REDACTED] made FZV [REDACTED] sweep it up with her bare hands and withheld the dustpan and brush from her. FZV [REDACTED] cut her hand and has a scar on the palm of her hand from that. FZV [REDACTED] talks a lot about that scar and how she got it." Absolute rubbish, that never happened and I don't know anything about a scar on FZV [REDACTED] hand. That just never happened. It is nonsense.
221. FZU [REDACTED] has also said "Since I last spoke to the police, FZV [REDACTED] has disclosed that FZS [REDACTED] performed oral sex on her. There are other disclosures which are of the same nature as previous disclosures but slightly different. FZV [REDACTED] has begun to disclose psychological and verbal abuse. When I sent FZV [REDACTED] the photo album before adoption, FZS [REDACTED] and FZT [REDACTED] said her new mummy was ugly and fat. They said I had blue eyes and she had brown, so everyone would know I wasn't her real mummy. After I met FZV [REDACTED] the first day, FZS [REDACTED] and FZT [REDACTED] said to her that I was never going to love her." Just

nonsense absolute nonsense. We would never say stuff like that ever. It is just not true and I have no idea why all this has happened. I have no idea.

222. FZU [REDACTED] has said 'FZV [REDACTED] continues to make new disclosures of physical, mental and sexual abuse at the hands of the FZS-FZT [REDACTED] as well as repeating what she has previously disclosed. She is getting older now so she is better able to use vocabulary to describe her experiences. FZV [REDACTED] describes sexual abuse and rape by FZS [REDACTED] as part of her daily routine. She has described how she doesn't like having catarrh in her throat because it reminds her of FZS [REDACTED] goo. She says he would often insert his penis down her throat and push it back and forward until she couldn't breathe and then his goo would come out in her throat. FZV [REDACTED] says when he did this she thought she was going to die. She would choke on the goo and gasp for breath. FZV [REDACTED] has a continuous tick now of clearing her throat and nose.' If that happened then please put me up against a wall and shoot me. It never happened. What a thing to come away with when it is not true. It is beyond disgusting and to say that about me. I have been asked who, in my opinion, has been saying all of this and I think that FZU [REDACTED] FZU [REDACTED] has been coaching FZV [REDACTED]. Going back to that police report they couldn't tell who was saying these things because it was FZU [REDACTED] says FZV [REDACTED] says. FZV [REDACTED] says this but I think she has been encouraged to say it. It is just what I think but I don't know. I mean if I had been doing that stuff they say would FZV [REDACTED] be able to walk? None of these things happened and she was displaying none of this sexualised behaviour when we had her, none.

223. In her statement, FZU [REDACTED] says "I sometimes fantasise about.." Why would you say fantasise, there has to be a clue in there somewhere? One of her first statements when she met me, the way she has described me is wrong, and that I would make a good grandfather figure. How did she know she was going to get FZV [REDACTED]? I didn't know she was going to get FZV [REDACTED]. How could you suddenly come to an opinion on someone like myself that I would be a good grandfather for FZV [REDACTED]? I mean the whole thing and the way she has written it is like a sort of book. The way she describes our house and the personal remarks she makes are so rude and insulting. There are so many assumptions in there and that is why I brought my mobile and I brought my iPad. I was wanting to share, if the Inquiry wanted to see, some of the photographs because she

is saying the police never looked at my devices as she calls them. Anybody can have a look at them and that is why I brought them in.

224. FZU [REDACTED] has said "FZV [REDACTED] describes FZS [REDACTED] being heavy and lying on her when he put his penis in her vagina. She says she could not move or breathe and that FZS [REDACTED] was so heavy that it hurt." It's just not true. It never happened. What else am I meant to say? It never happened. I have no idea why but I have no idea who is actually saying it whether it is FZU [REDACTED] or FZV [REDACTED] but it never happened.
225. FZU [REDACTED] has said "FZV [REDACTED] describes being force fed with a baby spoon on a regular basis. The spoon would be shoved down her throat. At other times FZS [REDACTED] and FZT [REDACTED] would not bother giving her food. She was always hungry." I mean it is just nonsense, it is more than nonsense and it is just not true. I mean we took a great pride in our looked after children. Being well fed and being able to eat well. It is just nonsense. Absolute nonsense. Again I would have no idea why she would be saying that.
226. FZU [REDACTED] has also said "FZV [REDACTED] has been having difficulties with toileting and bowel problems and has been seeing a paediatrician at the hospital for this. Since this has been ongoing she has disclosed that FZS [REDACTED] would not let her go to the toilet and she would then defecate on the floor. FZS [REDACTED] would get angry and hit her and shout at her. He would lift her and throw her down on the toilet seat with no child seat. At other times when she needed to defecate she would be put on the toilet without a child seat and would fall down the toilet and land in her own faeces. Then FZS [REDACTED] would hit her. She said at other times he would shove objects that she describes like sticks up her anus and tell her it was to stop the poo coming out. She said this hurt a lot." If any of that is true just put me against a wall and shoot me. None of that is true and it never happened. If I had been putting a stick up her bottom medically it would have made her unable to walk I suppose. None of that happened. Why that has been said I don't know and again it is beyond belief. Again, it is so hurtful to hear and read it and that someone actually is saying that about me. It is just awful. It's vindictive, it is malicious and it is completely unfounded.

227. FZU [REDACTED] has said "FZV [REDACTED] and I were writing Christmas cards in December 2019. I asked FZV [REDACTED] if she wanted to write a card to anyone and she said FZT [REDACTED] FZV [REDACTED] said FZT [REDACTED] wasn't bad all the time and sometimes she was nice. FZV [REDACTED] then said FZS [REDACTED] hurt people with his willy. I asked what she meant and FZV [REDACTED] said they would have bath time and she would run up the stairs because it wasn't bath time, it was, "willy hurting time." And she also says "FZV [REDACTED] said FZS [REDACTED] put his willy in the baby's bum and then demonstrated, with a dolly, FZS [REDACTED] raping the baby. She made a facial expression that could only be described as an erotic expression. She said the baby was crying and that FZS [REDACTED] did this to the babies, turn by turn. She said this happened a lot." Every word of that is not true and it is nonsense.
228. FZU [REDACTED] has also said "FZV [REDACTED] was able to tell the police what she had told me. She said FZS [REDACTED] cousin was called [REDACTED] but I wasn't convinced and felt she thought she had to say a name. FZV [REDACTED] couldn't describe him because he always wore a hoody and kept the hood up. It was therapeutic for FZV [REDACTED] to tell the police and you could see the physical release in her." It is just not true.
229. FZU [REDACTED] said "FZV [REDACTED] went for a forensic examination and gave a blood test. She was so brave. Sadly, the report was definitive. It said the examination found signs of sexual abuse and penetration and FZV [REDACTED] had damage to her vagina and anal canal. Chris Jack explained to me that it was rare to get a definitive report and the examinations were normally inconclusive." I can't give an explanation for that because I have never sexually abused any child let alone FZV [REDACTED]. If FZV [REDACTED] has been sexually abused it certainly wasn't by me or FZT [REDACTED] in our care or in our house. I am asked if the police spoke to me about that in my interview and I think it was read out. It is just not true. I am not saying that the information is not true but I have never sexually abused FZV [REDACTED]. I think as well that FZT [REDACTED] and FZU [REDACTED] were phoning and texting each other, I can't remember what year it was but it could have been 2017 or 2018. FZU [REDACTED] was in hospital and she asked FZT [REDACTED] and myself if we would help after she came out because she was going to be laid up for a few weeks. We would help her but it seems to be after that that she just went blank and she never got in touch again.

230. To me the questions I ask are what has happened to FZV at that point, who looked after FZV after that during that gap? FZV was never sexually abused by me, hurt by FZT or abused by us. I am not saying that whoever looked after her in that time did anything because I don't know. She stopped communicating after that and then in 2019 that is when they uplifted [REDACTED]. We didn't know anything about it until we went to the Police Station in Livingston. Sergeant Gordon Cooper phoned and spoke to FZT but I have never met him or spoken to him. FZT might have the words he used but I believe he said it was about FZV. That was the first we knew it was about FZV. He also said that we would have to go to the police station to get this done. We got in touch with Levy & McRae and they got in touch with the police and they arranged the no comment interview a couple of weeks later at Livingston. I think one of the reports said she might have been abused but she might not have been. I think that was the sort of words but I am not one hundred percent sure on that. If she has been sexually abused, and I pray to god she hasn't, it certainly wasn't by me. A child at that age it would have been found out. Surely to goodness the people coming into our house would have noticed all of this.
231. There was a really nice social work assistant that used to come and take FZV for the contacts with her birth parents a couple of times a week or maybe more. I can't remember how many times they got contact actually. Until they couldn't come back to our house they had one contact maybe a week. Then it moved to another placed like Gilmerton. Health visitors would have noticed. Surely to god they would have noticed if this had been going on. It is utterly bizarre.
232. Again, FZU is clever. She had some sort of English degree. She told me that the first time I met her as she was at Stirling University on a media English type course. The way she has phrased everything even in the letters that were written, it is all very clever. I mean why describe me as having a beer belly and stuff like that? It is like it is coming from a book. All of it, that is the impression I get.
233. FZU has said in her statement *".....I think, and the police and social workers think, that the reason FZS and FZT only fostered pre-verbal children was that the abuse couldn't be corroborated. The reason they didn't want FZV to be*

adopted and tried to put me off adopting her was because she was older and she could talk.” That is one of the most hurtful things that she has ever said and it is just not true. It is just beyond ridiculous and I don’t know why she has come away with that stuff. The very idea that we would deliberately do it for that, I mean FZT is a skilled midwife. It’s so hurtful and it is just not true. None of it is true not one word.

234. FZU has said “..... A few months after FZV third interview, Chris Jack had told me that was displaying behaviours of the same nature as FZV and the little girl who was removed because of FZV statement, had a forensic examination which wasn’t as definite as FZV but was questionable, as in maybe she had been abused. Chris Jack was being nice by telling me this, saying FZV had done a great thing and social work didn’t think it was just FZV this had happened to.” I don’t know if another girl was forensically examined but apparently so.

De-Registering Process Post Allegations Made

235. After the file was closed by the police Sharon Burns came to our house and said that we would be retiring now. We said no. She said that normally after an allegation it is automatic that you retire and be de-registered. We were looking at winding down at that point but what we wanted to do was give respite for and make sure she was going back to all right. That was our plan and then retire. I was 66-67 years old. They came on and pre-supposed that we would just call it a day and jack it in. Why should we bow down to say that we would retire because of this? The natural instinct in FZT and myself was to care and despite all this we were willing to carry on.
236. Eventually Neil Bruce came to the house and said that we did not have a job and that a de-registration panel would be organised. The first panel was 6 August 2021 and that was when they stopped paying us. It was a zoom meeting and there was a Chairlady, three other social workers and a minute taker. We said that we wanted to appear in front of the meeting which we did do and after hearing everything from us and reading our solicitor’s letter the panel unanimously agreed not to de-register us. They wanted more information about competencies.

237. It went to a decision maker however I have no idea who that was because we never spoke to that person. The decision maker decided to uphold the de-registration but we had the right of appeal.

238. We went back to Levy & McRae and they sent a second letter on our behalf. Again it was a zoom meeting for our appeal which was on 5 November 2021. More or less right away they said they were going to de-register us but during one of the first meetings there had been a meeting between Sharon Burns and the decision maker outwith our hearing meeting. This had been to discuss a point. It was supposed to be an open and transparent process. As far as we were concerned this wasn't the case. At the second meeting they decided to de-register us and there are no grounds to appeal after that. At the last meeting I said to them something like 'they are sitting there as social workers and are they actually happy with what is happening here?' One of the last things that the Chairlady had said was that FZT and I could be champions to change the law. How could we do that? That was it. Everything that our solicitor and his team have written in their letters is absolutely brilliant and that sums up exactly how FZT and I feel and is done much more eloquently than FZT or I could have done.

Helping the Inquiry

239. Foster carers are doing an incredible job. I don't think there is any foster carer would come into the profession, well obviously it is a non-profession, with the aim of harming children. I have been on loads of courses and I have met the most amazing foster carers and social workers and they are much better people than me. I certainly think there needs to be more training. I think FZT had said that two of the courses we did were compulsory but the rest you could pick and choose if you wanted to go on them. The idea of qualifications is a great idea and also having certificates to show you have done the training.

240. How foster carers are remunerated needs to be looked at. I think there are different grades such as specialist foster carers, emergency foster carers and ordinary foster carers. They are all on different rates of remuneration so there needs to be some sort

of equalisation of that. We have taken children and we should have been classed as specialist foster carers which we weren't and that commands a considerably higher rate of pay.

241. I think there needs to be more communication between everybody. There needs to be more formal meetings. Afterwards when you pass a child over for adoption it is like a month later you get to go and make a visit and after that that is it basically. It is only if the new parent or parent want to carry on contact then it is up to them. We have always left that door open. It is up to them and they have kept in contact so many times.
242. It is just this threat for foster carers of malicious allegations that needs to be followed up. This will make sure for the child's sake and the carer's sake in particular that this type of thing will not happen. How you go about organising that I don't know. It is not my remit to tell the social work department what to do. I think that is one of the things that FZU alludes to in her statement that we called the shots. How on earth could we call the shots? One of the reasons that FZV took so long was the birth parents appealing everything. It wasn't because we didn't want FZV to move on or keep her to keep the secret that we were abusing her. It is just nonsense to come away with stuff like that.
243. I know the social work have a process to follow when allegations are made against foster carers but did we feel supported? No we did not. It was basically the silent treatment and them saying they couldn't discuss it but they did continue to pay us the maintenance fee until the date of the first re-registration panel. I think it was £160 per week. I do not remember anyone speaking about our resilience and welfare and if they did I don't remember it. Basically how I have described things is the way we were treated and it is unbelievable to see that side of fostering. That is the side that foster carers don't know enough about but that is the social work system and that is what they followed. If they haven't followed their system well hell mend them. I think FZT phoned the Fostering Network who are based in Glasgow but again there was no actual person coming and asking us how we were feeling and stuff like that.

244. All of this did affect our mental health because we didn't know what the heck was going on. We just didn't know and that played terribly on our minds. I think they need to have better levels of support for foster carers who have allegations made against them if not from social work then from some other organisation.

Other information

245. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed.. .....

Dated... 27/9/22