

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

EXC

Support person present: No

1. My name is EXC although I prefer to be called EXC. My surname when I was in care was EXC. I was married previously and at that time I used the surname EXC. My date of birth is 1970. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My dad is and my mother was or My mum is dead and my dad is still alive. He is 71 years old roughly and if my mum was still alive she would have been about the same age. I was the oldest and then there was my sister who was born in 1971, who was born in 1976 or 1977, who was born in 1981 and then there was who was born in 1987. They are all still alive.
3. Before there was another child called who was born in 1973. I have vague memories of a baby being in the house however he was adopted when he was three years old. I don't know where is now although I have tried to find him. He may not be with us but he is still very much in my heart. and I have the same parents. and have a different father and his name is I also have another sister who was born in 1982 and she has the same dad as me but a different mum whose name is. has a brother who is not my dad's biological son but he was brought up as our step-brother.

My dad raised him as his own. There is another child, I had a step-brother called [REDACTED] who is [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] brother and he was [REDACTED] son.

4. Probably my earliest memory was living in Dalry in Edinburgh. My address was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] which was a flat which was four up. I lived there with my mum, dad and sister. Memory wise it wasn't very good. My dad worked and I always remember my mum being home. He worked as an ice-cream salesman and he had a van although I cannot remember him having a van at that particular time. I did know at that age my dad worked and he came home after the 10:00 pm news every night. I am assuming he did have a van though because 10:00 pm would be when he would have to stop working because you weren't really allowed to have the van out after this time.
5. I remember my mum always being scared of my dad. We just lived in fear of him really. I remember a lot of violence towards my mother. At that point I don't really remember him being violent to me or my sister. We got smacked if we were bad but nothing unacceptable. My mum used to keep me up until the ten o'clock news because she was scared in that house. I remember I had a bed wetting problem and that seemed to be a huge issue in the home. I was always getting into trouble for it. It is just something that sticks in my memory. I remember being bribed by my dad with a Mars Bar as they were trying to use it to stop me. They said if I didn't wet the bed that night then I would get the Mars Bar in the morning but I wet the bed and [REDACTED] got it. I remember having to go to what we called the Bendix with my mum with my pishy sheets. I had to put them through the wringer because I had wet them so I had to do the hard work.
6. I remember going to Sunday school and Church. I remember going to Dalry Primary School when I stayed here but I went to seven different primary schools in my childhood as we moved about a lot. I remember going to the swimming pool because that is where we bathed as we didn't have a bath at the house we only had a toilet.
7. The last night I remember living in [REDACTED] was my dad had beaten my mum so she waited until he fell asleep before she fled the house with me and [REDACTED]. I

remember us running towards where the old swimming pool was, there were some stairs which we ran down and past Dalry Primary School.

8. I don't believe social services were involved with us at that address and I can't remember police being involved then either.
9. I don't remember every single address we stayed at but what I can remember is every single move and the area we moved to in Edinburgh. From Dalry we moved to my mum's mum, my nana, for a period of time. I think it was Wester Hailes my mum took us to. After that my mum and dad got back together again and we moved to Clovenstone. I am not sure about the length of times we stayed anywhere but I'm guessing it wouldn't have been for very long.
10. I went to Clovenstone Primary School when I lived there. When we moved to Clovenstone [REDACTED] was born so it was me, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and my mum and dad. My mum and dad eventually split up. Clovenstone was actually worse than Dalry with the physical violence. I remember getting beaten by my father with a belt for wetting the bed. Me and [REDACTED] pretty much got belted for being bad and we were terrified of my dad. In this particular house I have lots of bad memories. My dad left and we were left with my mum.
11. My dad had taken up with another woman called [REDACTED] so we knew that was it, they were never going to get back together again. My mum got a new boyfriend who I knew as [REDACTED]. He was a bingo caller. My dad had contact with us and had access one day a week. I think it was a Wednesday when he would come and pick us up. All I can say is life was horrendous and this would have been the period that social services came into our life. I don't know if I can describe how we were living we were unfed, unwashed, neglected and uncared for.
12. My mum was a single parent and she was not coping. She was pretty much an alcoholic and that was the same for my dad. Social services would have definitely been aware of that at that point. My mum was pretty much out of control and she can't cope financially or emotionally and she is pretty much off the rails really. She was

drinking and bringing men back to the house. She would go out and leave me to babysit the kids even though I was only about seven years old. We were witnessing stuff that children should never have witnessed. I think to help her financially she rented out one of the bedrooms to a lodger so her and her boyfriend moved in. Mum wasn't paying the bills and the gas and electricity got cut off so we moved into my nana's. This was a back and forward thing we would get cut off and go to my nana's and then once it was back on move back to Clovenstone. In my nana's there was thirteen adults and children staying in that house and sometimes it would have been more. There was pretty much no room for a family of four. I still went to the same school when we were at my nana's as it was pretty much in the same area. School didn't seem to pick up on what was all going on at home.

13. I remember my nana threw my mum out and we ended up in my aunt [REDACTED] and uncle's [REDACTED] at [REDACTED], Edinburgh. I am not sure what year this was but I went to Craigmuir Primary. [REDACTED] was my mother's brother and [REDACTED] her sister in law. Things were great. My aunt [REDACTED] was pretty much a fantastic woman who wouldn't see anything bad happen to us. We got bathed, we got fed and I felt no pressure there really. I am not going to say I liked school. I always had an issue moving school because I had to tell them my name. When I had to stand up and say my name was EXC [REDACTED] everybody would laugh. It was something I feared and had a major issue with. That is why I want to be called EXC [REDACTED]. If I could change my name I would but I am going to respect my parent's choice. Things happened so quickly. My memory is being in Pilton for a good bit of time but it could have been three months. Although we weren't there that long I only have good memories about there.
14. For some strange reason the electricity and gas supplies were reinstated again in Clovenstone so we had to go back there and I went back to Clovenstone Primary. That kind of instability was pretty much how my life was. Everything could be all right at 3:00 pm and by 3:30 pm life was hell because of my mum drinking alcohol. Life resumes as normal for us and my mum being my mum keeps taking the alcohol. Things at home are really bad, mum keeps drinking and bringing these men home and she is not looking after us or feeding us. I ran away from home around [REDACTED] 1980 when I was ten because I couldn't cope. I ran away to my dad's and he has obviously

called the social worker. That is when I was put into Calder Grove. I don't know why but for some reason something tells me that the social work department didn't want me with my dad. Something happened but I don't know what, I remember an incident but I am not sure. Pretty much in my care records, not that they have said as much but there are concerns there. There were comments like 'Mr [REDACTED] is spending too much time with [REDACTED] EXC [REDACTED]'. It is like they don't agree with him for some reason.

15. We had three social workers in total. Caroline Hedges was one, Keith Adam was another one and I am not sure of the other lady and they were all from area ten which was the Wester Hailes office. The only reason I remember Caroline's name is because I got my care records. I remember Keith Adam clearly but I don't really remember the female social workers.
16. My dad would get access visits so quite often he would come and take us away but when we came back to mum's house she wouldn't be in to receive us. I am not going to say that my dad didn't want us, I don't think my dad was in the position to keep us. This is the point that social work are definitely involved. My memory was that I went to Templedean Children's home first and then Calder Grove however I know from my records that I am wrong and that I went to Calder Grove first.

Calder Grove Children's Home, Edinburgh

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Calder Grove Children's Home, Edinburgh

26. I don't know why I left Calder Grove but reading my records it was decided that I had to go home and be with my mum. I don't know who was involved in this decision. Mum was still at Clovenstone and it was back to hell from the minute I went back. It was just the same, my mum was constantly drunk. That was just life and how it was.
27. I do remember people coming to Clovenstone to visit and I remember this woman who I think was Caroline Hedges. To let you understand my mum was pretty manipulative and she would know they were coming as they would have lettered her to tell her they were coming. If they were coming she would be pretty much sober and probably would have tidied up or made me do it. She was prepared for them and we would be warned not to tell them anything that happened or we would get battered.

28. I also remember times that she was drunk when they came. If they had come unannounced it was because my dad was constantly on the phone to the social work department to let them know that my mum was an unfit mother. On those occasions she was pretty much under the influence of alcohol when they arrived. They never took any action. When I say under the influence I mean really bad and one hundred percent they should have taken action. I remember even as a child thinking to myself how was she getting away with this and why are we living like this.
29. Her drunkenness happened all the time and the only day I remember my mum being sober would be a Sunday. She did drink on a Sunday but on a Sunday I don't know why she wasn't as bad. I don't know if it was the shops shut early on a Sunday or they didn't sell alcohol on that day. I just don't know why but on a Sunday she was less drunk. It wasn't anything religious my mum was not religious. She got paid on a Monday so probably money would have been a factor in that.
30. My mum just wasn't coping and on top of that she had my dad on her case. She had many boyfriends. [REDACTED] was one and he was in and out her life around this time. He was a weirdo, he wasn't right in the head. There was no physical abuse with him but there was name calling and emotional abuse. He wasn't a nice man. Then just before we went to Templedean she has taken up with [REDACTED]. He wasn't living with us but he was around and the alcohol is getting worse. He was horrible, he was quite a wee man and one of my most vivid memories of him was his shoes. He wore these brown shoes that kind of turned up at the front. To this day I hate shoes, I have an issue with shoes as it was embarrassing.
31. I remember my mum and dad taking us to the social work office one day. It was pretty much agreed that neither mum or dad could look after us so we were put into care by our parents voluntarily giving us up to social work. My mum couldn't cope and was out of control and my dad wasn't in a position to take us. I remember this happening. I just remember my mum and dad sitting there not talking to each other. I remember there being a hate presence between them. Mum had explained to us that we would be going into a children's home. Then there was me, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and them just leaving us there. [REDACTED] was only wee he was just a tot. We had to get a medical before

going into the home and I remember getting taken to the doctors. I remember Keith Adam was now our social worker. He became involved with us just before we went to Templedean, say in the [REDACTED] 1980 although it could have been a bit before then.

Templedean Hall Children's Home, Haddington

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Templedean Hall, Haddington

65. The home was closing and closed just shortly after we left. Decisions were made about where everyone was to go. It was decided that my mother was fit and well to take the three of us. She was now living with [REDACTED] at [REDACTED], Dalkeith. On [REDACTED] 1982 [REDACTED] came and picked us up in his laundry van. We never really knew him, I think we had only met him briefly and we certainly didn't know he was in my mother's life. It was as good as a stranger coming to pick us up. My mother didn't come. I can remember that day like yesterday because I was terrified but it turned out to be okay.

66. It was a one bedroomed flat at [REDACTED], it had a living room, kitchen and bathroom. In the living room there was a double bed, a couch and a coal fire. Social

workers done a damn good job as there was no electricity and no gas. We left the home and went into hell. It was me, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], mum and [REDACTED]. My mum and [REDACTED] were drinking heavily. They would go out at night and lock us in the house. I remember we were terrified in case there was a fire and didn't know how we would get out.

67. [REDACTED] was abusive to us and would hit me and my sister and skelp [REDACTED]. He was violent to my mum. He was just horrible. We were terrified and we would just sit in the bedroom scared when they went out. They would make us go out and collect firewood for the fire as there was no money for coal. They made us go and pick tatties for money and the money we made was used for them to buy drink. [REDACTED] had had a job at the beginning but he lost it drink driving. He was a driver for a laundry firm. Pretty much there was never really any food and if there was it had to get cooked on the coal fire.
68. I slipped back into the role of being the carer in the house. My mum and [REDACTED] fought all the time and he would physically throw us out. I recall on one occasion that [REDACTED] threw us out and my mum had to pitch a tent in a field and that is where we slept. We had nowhere else to go. She must have borrowed the tent from someone she knew. She would beg him to let us back in and he would let us in and the same thing would happen two days later. Often she would end up having to go through to Edinburgh. I remember she would walk into a police station and it would have to be the police who would take us back to my Nana's. She would report that [REDACTED] had hit her but she reported him only when it suited her.
69. Social services were still involved at that point. I was a child and my mouth felt like a typewriter. If someone peed in the street I would tell you and I remember telling Keith that she was still drinking, that I hated [REDACTED] and that he was bad to us. It just fell on deaf ears. Keith visited quite frequently not just to Dalkeith. I remember him also coming to my nana's as well when we were there. I remember telling him everything when I was a child. I never told him private stuff like the sexual abuse but I told him everything else.

70. Keith was pretty much the only social worker I remember around this time. I can't one hundred percent remember telling him about [REDACTED] hurting us but there is an incident in my care records that he slapped [REDACTED]. That was probably the only time that he got caught. My mum probably threatened us not to tell Keith about getting hit by [REDACTED] and if we did we would have got battered by her. Nothing got done and I know I told him absolutely everything that was going on with my mum. It was hell, I loved her but I just couldn't cope with it. I was her mother and I was [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] mother. I remember hoping that by telling Keith what was happening he would make sure we had gas and electricity and to make everything all right.
71. By the end of 1982 approximately we moved back to my nana's but my nana had enough of my mum and threw her out. My mum got another house in Sighthill, Edinburgh. We moved into that house with a camp bed, that was it, it was all we had. That was for me, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and my mum so that was how life in that house in Sighthill started and it didn't get much better. Mum and [REDACTED] slept in the camp bed and me and [REDACTED] slept on the floor. Eventually she got furniture but my point is the social work department must have known that that was how we were living and again nothing was done. Keith was visiting us at that house. I don't know what the legislation was back then but is right that three children share a room with their mother with only a camp bed to sleep on. Should they not have checked there was gas and electricity? My mum had another baby in 1981 called [REDACTED] and by this time she has taken up with [REDACTED] who was the father.
72. My dad wasn't around much. I don't know what happened but we didn't see him when we were living in Dalkeith. Dad and [REDACTED] didn't get on. It is written in my care records that there was a fight between my dad, his girlfriend [REDACTED] and my mum and [REDACTED]. What father would get on with an abusive alcoholic?
73. It was from Sighthill that I went into foster care. It was just too much and I just went myself. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] stayed with mum. Life in Sighthill was the same as everywhere else with my mum drinking. There was an incident that happened with my dad and I don't want to go into it but I was at Wester Hailes Education Centre High School. My friend had been involved in the incident and she told the whole school what

happened and that developed with me getting a nickname. I was horrified and I couldn't cope or go back to that school. I just wasn't coping. Social services were aware of the incident. I had a children's panel because I wasn't going to school or going out the door. I basically couldn't live in that area any more. I told the panel that day that I couldn't stay with my mum anymore, that I had had enough and that I was bringing up a baby that wasn't mine. I know she was my sister but I couldn't cope. Life was just so bad. They made the decision that I would go to foster care.

Foster Care, EXD-SPO, Livingston

74. I would have been around fourteen at this time. EXD-SPO had two kids of their own staying with them and also their nephew. The house had four bedrooms and it was an up and down house. I had my own room, EXD-SPO had their own room, their daughter also had her own room and the two boys shared. was the nephew and I think he was a year or two younger than me. I believe was the son of brother and he had reared him on his own but then couldn't really cope so took him on. Their son was called who was about seven and their daughter was about four and for the life of me I cannot remember her name.
75. Things were fine and I didn't have an issue fitting in with a family like this. I was probably much like a new big sister. I got on well with the kids. Initially I got on fine with the parents. I found them to be all right and they treated me with respect. didn't work and she was recovering from some sort of kidney illness. EXD worked. He was ex-army but I cannot recall where he worked.
76. I knew emergency meant that I wouldn't be here on a long term basis. Keith explained that to me and I knew not to get myself too comfy. I didn't know how long I would be there for though and no-one gave a time frame. I ended up staying from 1984 for over a year.
77. I don't recall them being affectionate towards me and I would say there was an obvious difference to how they treated me compared to their own children. They were the mum

and dad to their own kids and I was a visitor so to speak. [REDACTED] was their nephew so [REDACTED] were actually different towards me and [REDACTED] than they were to their own kids. I am not going to say that there was special treatment but we could tell that we didn't belong to them as such. I don't think it bothered me as I think I was old enough to understand.

Routine at Foster Care, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], Livingston

First day

78. I went into foster care straight from my children's panel. Keith took me. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] were emergency foster parents and I was introduced to them and it was explained to me I would be staying with them on a short term basis because they were emergency foster carers. I was then shown my room and that was pretty much it really.

Mornings and bedtime

79. I was pretty much left to my own devices and I could do more or less what I wanted. Of course I would have to get up and go to school.

Mealtimes/Food

80. I got plenty of food and had no problems as it was all decent. They respected me by asking if I liked what was for a meal and if I didn't like it I just had to tell them. There was no punishment or issue if I didn't like the food.

Washing/bathing

81. I had no problems with this as I was pretty much left to my own devices.

Clothing/uniform

82. I am aware that they received money for me staying there. I think there was some sort of money given to [REDACTED] either weekly or monthly and she told me that I would have an allowance of such and such and that if I needed anything I would need to wait until the money was available. If the money was available we would go and get whatever it was I needed.

Leisure time

83. I made friends and I would go out with them. There were rules though and I would have to be in by 9:00 pm. I feel I was well looked after.
84. I don't really remember what I did with them. I didn't have a bike or anything like that. They didn't really give me gifts. I didn't really do things with them but we would go to places like the Almondvale Shopping Centre and sometimes we would go to the Copper Tun for tea. That was a pub up the road and I remember going there.

Pocket Money/Allowance

85. I am aware that I was given pocket money which I only know because I read it in my care records. I don't know how much and I am assuming I got it weekly. I bought cigarettes with it.

Schooling

86. I went to Deans High School in Livingston which was another school for me. School was all right but again I didn't like school because of how much I had been moving about.

Healthcare / medication

87. I don't think I had to see a doctor or had any issues that needed medical attention.

Work

88. I was a pretty helpful teenager so after school I would help about the house, do the ironing, maybe go to the shops for them and help look after the kids. I didn't have to do these things I just helped out.

Birthdays and Christmas

89. I was there for a birthday but I just can't recall birthdays very well.

Smoking Permission

90. I was allowed to smoke in their house although they didn't smoke. I was only thirteen or fourteen. I could openly smoke in the house. I remember Keith explaining to them that I smoked so obviously if Keith allowed it then they allowed it. I remember smoking and when I think back now it is weird I was allowed to do this. It is even recorded in my care records.

Family Contact

91. I wasn't really speaking to my dad because of the situation that had happened before I went to foster care.
92. My mum didn't come to visit, I don't think it was allowed. I remember my sister maybe came to stay once or twice for a weekend. I would go and visit my mum who had moved to Stirling. It wouldn't be every weekend maybe once a month. I would get the bus and would stay one or two nights. I am really not sure if it was arranged through social work but I would think it would have been ok'd through them and arranged with EXD-SPO [REDACTED] and also my mum.

Running away

93. I didn't run away from here.

Contact with Social Worker

94. Keith was still my social worker and I saw him quite a few times when I was with EXD-SPO but I am not sure just how much time I spent with him. I thought Keith was quite nerdy. He was big and tall and spoke quite posh. Generally he was a social worker and he was all right. I don't think he had any real care or concern for me. Sometimes I just thought he didn't care and that he thought I was just a nuisance.

Alternative Placement

95. During my time there social work found another set of foster parents who were possibly going to foster me long term. As EXD-SPO were emergency foster parents I had kind of overstayed my welcome. I had been there too long. What I was told was that because I had stayed there so long then EXD-SPO would have to change from emergency to normal carers. That was not something that they wanted as they wanted to continue to be emergency carers.
96. They found the [REDACTED] and there was going to be a transition. I cannot remember their names I just remember they were Mr and Mrs [REDACTED]. Keith introduced me to them. They also lived in [REDACTED] just round the corner from EXD-SPO. It was basically decided that I was going to stay with them but they were going to ease me in. I went and stayed overnight with them and another visit was arranged and then another. My first visit was fine and they seemed nice. It was fine. The visit lasted half an hour or an hour.
97. The next time I stayed overnight which I think happened the following week. It was fine. I don't know if they had an older child but no-one else stayed with them. The next visit I went and the time was arranged. I went to the door and it took them half an hour to answer it. Before I went in I remember feeling that these folks don't really want me because they left me waiting outside for so long. Why would they not answer the door? I got in and the house was literally covered in alcohol which was very different to how it had been before. Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] appeared to have had a party and the remnants

of the alcohol were in the living room and kitchen. They had just got out of their bed and I think it was lunchtime. I was basically to spend the day with them. I remember I froze and I just thought I am not going to stay here, it just reminded me of what I had come from.

98. I cannot remember for sure but I think I went on another visit after that and they were laying down the law. They were telling me I would be going on the pill and there would be no unwanted pregnancies in their house. I cannot remember but I think on this other visit that their use of alcohol was evident then as well. I decided I was not going there to stay. I returned to EXD-SPO and told them and they would have told Keith. When I spoke to Keith afterwards I just told him straight they are not the right people for me. Obviously they have got alcohol issues. It is in my care records that this incident has happened. I just know I couldn't go and live with them and I didn't. I have no idea if they went on to foster any other children. I continued to stay with the EXD-SPO

Discipline

99. There wasn't really any punishment. If I had done something that I shouldn't have done then I would have been spoken to and explained that it wasn't right. They did try to teach me right from wrong.

Abuse at Foster Care, EXD-SPO, Livingston

100. EXD used to beat regularly, not at first, it just seemed that the man had changed. I used to remember him beating but I have no idea why. I just remember being quite a good boy. would be screaming. I couldn't see what was happening as I would be in my room and would be in his but I could hear it. was screaming and I could hear punching. would have been in the house and I am assuming she would also hear it. She wasn't a woman who left the house often. This all started nearer the time I was leaving and I had to make a decision.

101. One day ^{EXD} and I were having a carry on and he groped my breast. I went to my mum's that weekend and I decided I wouldn't go back. I have personally taken his action as intentional. It was like a trigger. I feared what would come next and so I made the decision not to go back.

Leaving Foster Care, ^{EXD-SPO}, ^{EXD-SPO}, Livingston

102. I was nearing my sixteenth birthday when I left and this was after ^{EXD} groped my breast. I made the decision because of what he did to me and because listening to these beatings of ^{EXD-SPO} I was scared. I just feared what was coming next. I just thought he would want to do more things to me and that made me too scared to go back.
103. I can't recall telling my mum about him groping my breast. I know I didn't tell Keith. I was basically just abandoned after that. I remember Keith coming to visit me at my mum's and I was telling him I wasn't going back. Keith made me apologise to ^{EXD-SPO} ^{EXD-SPO} for refusing to go back. He said they were hurt that I would do such a thing. I felt I couldn't go back.
104. I was nearly sixteen and I think I could finish school in December if I was not staying on. I had already been and had an interview for catering college at Livingston and had a place. I was leaving school in December and I was starting college in the August. This was exciting and a good thing for me. I think I left ^{EXD-SPO} in ^{EXD-SPO} which would be just before my sixteenth birthday. I had all that to look forward to but he did what he did so I lost my chance to go to college. My education finished there and I ended up back with my mum. My time in care ended there too.

Life after being in care

105. When I turned sixteen I worked for a wee shop on a youth training scheme. I fell pregnant with my son when I was 16-17 and got married. I basically married the first

person who told me they loved me. I deliberately got pregnant so the pregnancy was planned. I had my son [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] 1987. My mum couldn't even let me have that day to myself because I had [REDACTED] in the morning and she had my brother later the same day. Back in 1987 when I had my son I went to visit [REDACTED] and she and ^{EXD} [REDACTED] had split up. We moved into a house in the [REDACTED] in Stirling. I got a job in the Wimpy and worked my way to become the manager and life was all right. I went on to have my daughter.

106. I then went to work for Safeway and got a job there as a dry cleaning supervisor. I had my daughter [REDACTED]. I worked my way up to become a manager in Morrisons and stayed there for 25 years. I got made redundant then my mum was diagnosed with cancer so I took a year out to care for her. She died on [REDACTED] 2016. As far as our relationship went I was always my mother's mother from the day I can remember. She was never a mother, she was never there when I needed her and she was never supportive. She always needed dug out financially and she was always drinking. I loved her because she was my mum. I more or less brought all my brothers and sisters up and more or less had them living with me at some point in their lives.
107. Morrisons asked me back and I went to work there again. My first marriage ended after thirteen years. Just out of the blue he came home and told me he was gay and he was leaving. He left and that was difficult. I met [REDACTED] when [REDACTED] was five and she is now 27. I married [REDACTED] and we have been together all that time. I have four grandchildren.
108. I have actually got a really good relationship with my brothers and sisters. They see me like their mum. I don't see a lot of them because we are all spread out but if any of them needed anything, need support or a shoulder to cry on I would be the one that they would call upon. I am currently not speaking to my sister [REDACTED]. There is no badness in it. She has experienced some sort of mental health problems and I don't agree with how she is dealing with it. She is telling the public all about things on this Facebook page. I am just taking some time out from her. I have been busy supporting my best friend [REDACTED] whose husband died through Covid. I can't cope with two needy people so [REDACTED] needs more support than [REDACTED] at this time. [REDACTED] was at my niece's

baby shower and we made it clear to each other that we love each other and that we are sisters so it is not that I am not speaking to her. I just need time out.

Impact

109. This is the first time I have probably told people about some of the things that have gone on in my life. It feels quite good to get it out and I am hoping after today I will feel a bit lighter.
110. I am 51 years old and I still grieve for the wee lassie I was who had no childhood. That wee girl is still here and I just want her to be at peace. I can't move on until I find out why I didn't matter. We were allowed to live like gypsies, we were starved, and we were stinking and had nits falling out our hair. It is that feeling of I didn't matter because social work knew and could see for themselves what was going on and they didn't do anything. There are documents in my records that show that my dad was pleading with them that my mum wasn't fit to be looking after us. They just left us and this is what I can't move on from. I feel my life doesn't matter to Edinburgh City Council (ECC) or Thomson's Solicitors.
111. On my daughter's sixteenth birthday I sat and broke down and I said to myself 'well done'. My kids have never gone through anything like I went through. I feel I did what I was supposed to do as a mother but on the flip side it just highlights again that my childhood didn't matter to my mother or the authorities.
112. I married the first man who told me he loved me at sixteen and we were married by seventeen. When I had my son I loved that laddie so much I just knew no-one would hurt him. The same when I had my daughter. They were tracked and they were traced, they were not allowed to stay out and I didn't trust anyone with them. No-one could babysit them apart from their grandmother. Life was hard for them because I was so over protective. I was so loving and caring. I know this is because of what I went through.

113. I am still like that with my children and grandchildren. If my daughter goes for a night out I phone or text her and I don't allow my granddaughter to sleep in her own room. She has to sleep with me. It has got to the point that my daughter won't tell me if she is going for a night out. Not to lie to me but she recognises how over protective I am and she tries to manage this while letting her daughter socialise with her relatives. Normally her daughter would stay with me if she goes out but my daughter will arrange for her to go and stay with other relatives. This is me being over protective because of what I went through. I don't want anything to happen to them. I have pushed and made sure they turned out decent, honest human beings.
114. Had my first husband not decided to leave I would have still been with him. That was normal, it was a stable family and it was safe and that is all I wanted. That is how I wanted my mum and dad to be.
115. My education obviously suffered. I was a promising athlete in Dalkeith and getting ready to start competing against other schools. I had dreams, in my young head I was going to Olympics. All the good stuff never happened and I never got any opportunities. My mother decided when she had had too many drinks that she would up and move and social work didn't step in to stop this cycle. I left school with no qualifications and had to teach myself to spell. I can't work out percentages even now but now we have the internet so all that stuff is easier. Moving primary school so often really impacted on my learning and very early I was lagging behind and never caught up. I have made sure my children got educated. They went to one primary school and one high school. My son has a trade and my daughter is at university. I think my children are amazing and I am very proud of them.
116. The impact of ^{EXD} [REDACTED] sexually assaulting was devastating in so many ways. I had plans for a future. I had been accepted to go to college and I often think what my life could have been like. I have no idea where I could have gone, who knows I could have been the next Gordon Ramsay. Instead I had no option but not to return to their house and this meant I lost my college place. That man will never know how much he broke me.

117. I abuse alcohol and this is something I use to help me cope.
118. I have been an adult from a young age and effectively mothered my mum and my siblings and I feel that has stayed with me into my adult life. Even now I know that my siblings, not just my own children, look at me as the mother of the family.
119. I find it hard to trust anyone and that is exhausting.
120. I am not suicidal and wouldn't want anyone to think I was but I have some really dark days. I can have flash backs and certain smells can trigger them off. It can be anything but someone could walk by me and smell of body odour and that is enough. I remember I would smell like that because there was no money for deodorant. In these dark days I can't tell people I know about the things that have happened because I don't want to hurt them. I am hard of hearing and I don't have the confidence to pick a phone up to ask for help. I could quite happily speak to someone unconnected to me. I have spent weeks lying in my bedroom alone trying to cope and deal with some pretty heavy stuff. It is overwhelming and I just feel there is no-one there to help. I feel alone. I don't want to tell my daughter some of the stuff from my childhood, it would hurt and affect her, so I try to hide stuff from her. It is no good waiting a year to speak to someone like a counsellor and the day they give you might not be the day you actually need or are able to talk.

Treatment/support

121. I did go to my doctor because I do feel that I need some sort of counselling. He put me on the waiting list for a psychiatrist but because I abuse alcohol the psychiatrist wants nothing to do with me.
122. I have looked online about Future Pathways but pretty much I have taken my sister's experiences to heart. She doesn't feel that they are that hot and that they haven't done anything to help her.

123. I am on a waiting list for some counselling. I don't know exactly what this is for as my head is pickled just now. Rape Crisis put me on a waiting list for counselling for either children who had been in care or it might be for adults who have suffered childhood trauma. I think because of Covid everything is just taking so much longer.

Reporting of Abuse

124. Prior to my mum dying I really couldn't cope with my childhood and what I had been through. Out of respect for this woman, my mother, who didn't deserve it but it is just who I am I hadn't reported anything before then. After her death in 2016 I really started to deal with my past. I couldn't do it when she was alive as I really didn't want to hurt her. It was a conscious decision I made to wait until she died before I did anything about it.
125. The first thing I did was send my Uncle [REDACTED] a text message and basically told him that he had ruined my life by sexually abusing me. I wanted him to apologise. That is really when I started dealing with it. He replied asking me what I was talking about and I told him he knew what I was talking about. Another unfortunate event took me to Rape Crisis and during my counselling it all came out. It was probably a question asked of me that led to it all coming out. I decided that I would report [REDACTED] third party through Rape Crisis. I did that in 2018.
126. Unknown to me my sister had suffered abuse also, not just from [REDACTED] but other men in her life. She had reported everything to the police. She told me that she had told them that she knew I had been abused. How she knew I don't know. Maybe as a child I have told her but I don't remember. She said the police were going to come and take a statement so rather than them coming to take a statement I went myself and reported him. [REDACTED] doesn't know what happened between me and my Uncle [REDACTED] but we have spoken about it in a bit of a code. Edinburgh police have dealt with [REDACTED] and he has been charged. I am not allowed to know what he has been charged with. I know he has been charged with things against me and my sister. He has been up at court and

will be going up again two weeks after my interview with the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry. I don't know if I have to go and I believe he will go to jail if he is found guilty.

127. As far and ^{EXD} [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are concerned they have been dealt with by a police department in Dalkeith. ^{Secondary Institutions - to be published later}

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

128. I don't know what is happening about ^{EXD} [REDACTED]. I don't even know if he is still alive. The police officer who was dealing with it was trying to find him but she has never come back to me with an update. All I know is she is trying to find records to find out where he is. That man will never know what he did to me. He broke me and whether he intended to or not I will never know. I am taking it that he did. I was too scared to go back and that man changed my life forever. What different path could I have taken? Why he was beating his nephew I don't know but I reported that along with the sexual abuse on me. The violence really did affect me, it was what I had been trying to flee.
129. I didn't report [REDACTED] to the police, my sister did. The police came to see me about that and they took a statement from me. It was me who found out he had died and I feel I had to do the police's job to find out that this man was dead. When I told the police officer this she went back and found out how he died and then let my sister know.
130. I know that I gave the police a statement about the incident involving my dad and my friend. That all happened at the time and the police dealt with it although I am not sure what happened but that was in 1983. I have tried to find out and have not been able

to find any record when I requested details. I have not reported my dad for anything else and I would definitely not want to do so.

131. My sister [REDACTED] sent a complaint to ECC and they sent this woman to Wolfcraig to meet with her and deal with the complaints that she had. I was there to support my sister. One of the complaints was about us living in all these houses without gas and electricity. This wasn't an isolated case this was all the houses we lived in. My mum didn't pay the bills so we got cut off. This woman said that she had a document that my mother was two pence in front of her bills. That is lies and I have no idea where that document came from. When I said we used to get locked in the house while my mum went out drinking she said that was normal. This woman actually said it was normal in the day and also said that my mum and dad used to come back with a wee bottle of juice and a packet of crisps for us. We had to tell her that was rubbish, we didn't get these things we got slapped over the head for greeting in relief that they had come back home. Every complaint that [REDACTED] had ECC came back with excuse after excuse. It was disgusting. That is why I felt I had to contact a solicitor because ECC wouldn't speak to us. I sent email after email of complaints. Some were not followed up and I did receive a letter from someone which I didn't understand.

Records

132. It was about 2019 when I applied for my records. I got them from a data request to somewhere in Edinburgh. My sister had applied to get hers and it was pretty much horrific reading and I just wanted to get mine and see what they said.
133. I have records for Templedean, there is only a wee bit about Calder Grove and there were some records about EXD-SPO [REDACTED] There is also mention about the [REDACTED] and the incident there. Most of it is pretty redacted but my sister has records that are not redacted.
134. There needs to be a lot more. Seven hundred and odd ages and there should have been a lot more. I am pretty much disgusted with ECC about these records and also

how they have communicated with me about complaints I have made. I felt I had no choice but to instruct a solicitor to try and get them to take a civil case against the council. I used Thomson's Solicitors. The solicitor has decided that he is not taking the case any further because he said that my care records don't prove that the council knew that I was being abused. I asked my solicitor to rethink because in a nutshell I wasn't given my human rights as a child. In my opinion it is evident that ECC failed us as children. The solicitor still said no, so what he said was that when the redress scheme opens that will be my best way at getting a sorry from the council and financial compensation. I said to him I wasn't doing this for financial compensation, I want to hold them accountable and get some form of acknowledgement.

135. I get quite passionate about this. I want to know why I am allowed to buy cigarettes. Why didn't anyone intervene and try and stop my addiction at thirteen? Why did my education suffer because I went to seven different primary schools? I don't feel I was given the right to an education and I want to find out why ECC did not step in and say hold on a minute this is not acceptable. I could go on and on, why was I sent out to pick tatties, where was my childhood? I didn't have a childhood and they knew what was going on. They left me to care for children because my mother was an alcoholic.
136. Time after time they saw this and there is police reports too. I know they were saying that EXC is in the house and she will watch the kids and EXC will phone the police if there is anything going to happen. EXC was only eight, nine and ten years old. There are so many records missing, there is a record of us entering the home but no records of any of our time spent there. I think these people who have provided the records have been pretty clever with what they have passed on. I don't think they realise that my sister has these records from before they redacted things. It needs to be understood that I am not doing this for financial compensation if I could sign a waiver and say as much I would. What I want is ten or twenty minutes with ECC. I just want them to sit down and speak with me and explain what went wrong and why my childhood did not matter. If it was a case they were just too busy then tell me that. If it is a case that these were the policies back then then tell me.


Lessons to be Learned

137. I think it is important that when social services fail children, or children feel they have been failed by them, that they meet with them to discuss what was happening, what went wrong or explain why decisions were made. Even if at that meeting it just gives the person who was in care the chance to express how they feel and explain what they believe went wrong. I know this would help me but I also think there must be the chance for social services to learn from this. It would make me feel I had been heard and that I had spoken up for the young child ^{EXC} who wasn't heard way back then.
138. I don't know the process for fostering so I would hope that people are vetted. I am sure that happens nowadays. For instance if social services had obtained character references about the ^{EXD} would they have found out that alcohol was an issue. It clearly was. I noticed it and I was only a child. ^{EXD} was ex-army and vetting should be very thorough using the police and getting lots of character references. If they had done that it could have prevented me experiencing the violence and sexual assault. These sorts of checks can protect children in the future.
139. I also think that foster carers should have clear boundaries about what they can and cannot tell children. For example the ^{EXD} telling me I would be going on the pill. I don't think foster carers should have anything to do with these things and they should never have been discussed with me. I was only a child.
140. Social services need to take action to protect children. Sometimes going into care is far safer and healthy than leaving children at home. If they are going to leave children at home with a parent who is unfit then there has to be a lot of support in place to help that improve and work. In my case if they had actually done more checks. For example they should have a check list that they actually check through. Things like the gas and electricity, it would have been so easy to confirm if they had been cut off. In any case any visit to whichever house we were in would easily have identified that the power and gas were cut off. I don't think that sort of things happens nowadays, I don't think they cut off these services when there are children in the house.

141. I also think that there should have been questions asked about why we kept on moving and why we were regularly changing schools. These are signs that something is not right and social services should be on top of that.
142. I think there needs to be something in place to stop social workers turning a blind eye to things that are not right. Things like that might happen because of their workload or because the legislation doesn't support them. I really don't know why this would happen and perhaps that doesn't happen in this day and age.
143. I think there must have been thousands of children treated like me back in the day and I think it is important that the authorities come forward, acknowledge what has happened and explain why it did.
144. I am not saying that everything is negative about ECC. They never took us off my mum and dad it was my mum and dad who voluntarily gave us away. I know someone who was removed from their parents for less than was going on in my family. This happened when they were five years old until they reached sixteen. This person is about the same age as me but lived in a different area of Scotland. I believe that the parents had alcohol issues and just couldn't cope so the circumstances are relatively similar. I believe they was quite rightly removed from the parents and they went on to have a wonderful life. They got an education, got away on holidays and had so many opportunities. Edinburgh obviously had a different procedure for dealing with children at risk. Surely it should be the same rules and processes across the country?
145. I think there should be some sort of counselling available for those who do come forward to speak about childhood abuse in care or under the care system. Maybe a clinic in Edinburgh where people can be sent. I do not mean any disrespect to Future Pathways but I think the counsellors need to be readily available. That could mean that after I speak with you today I could have an appointment the following week and that just might help people who come forward. Even a place where people could walk in without an appointment at a time they really need someone to talk to.

Other information

146. I have tried my best to explain how things were but I don't think I have even explained the half of it. I don't know if anyone can appreciate just how bad things were living the life we led staying with my mum.
147. 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.....29-10-2021.....