

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

ESB

Support person present: No

1. My name is ESB My date of birth is 1984. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. When I was born I had the surname ESB, but after mum met my step father, she changed our surnames to ESB
3. When I was about four or five my mum met and he was part of the family until I was about twelve years old. While we were in the family home there was food but never a lot and there were lots of times I was left hungry. It was really horrible staying with him as he was very violent to us all.
4. I was about six when was born and mum said she did not want any more children to him. She went to hospital and got sterilised. That was not fully successful and was born the next year.
5. I grew up with my mother, and my younger siblings and at Tranent. My biological father was but he divorced my mum before I was aged two. Growing up I did not have any memories of him being there. I was told later that he was an alcoholic and spent most of the money he had on drink, rather than on the family.

[APG]

6. When we first stayed with [REDACTED] the atmosphere was quite good. He used to give me treats like Cadbury fudge bars. That changed and I found him to be an extremely violent man. Mum became more and more depressed with everything that was happening and I ended up looking after her and making sure my younger siblings were okay.
7. Mum has a rare genetic disorder [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] She worked in Asda at the checkout, where she met [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] who was a security guard. My mum struggled to hold down a job because of the disorder.
8. I did try to contact my biological father when I was about ten years old. I got his phone number from my aunt but it was answered by an older lady and I was told he was not in and not to phone there again.
9. When mum went into hospital when [REDACTED] was being born. My nana, [REDACTED] was at the house checking on us. She told me she was lying on the couch and [REDACTED] came down the stairs naked. She was mortified. I found out later she told my papa but his response was to tell her to keep out of it and not to tell my mum as she did not need the pressure while dealing with a new born. This would have been around the same time he lost his job with [REDACTED] I think again for exposing himself.
10. When I was about seven years old, [REDACTED] was shouting at me for something, and the next thing I knew he was chasing me. I ran and hid under my bed (where I remember spending lots of time hiding there). [REDACTED] was so angry that he couldn't reach me that he threw a stapler at me under the bed and struck me on the forehead. I remember bleeding and being left scratched and bruised above one of my eyebrows (I can't remember which side).
11. When I went to school, St Martin's Primary School in Tranent, my friends noticed the big scratch on my head and asked what happened. I told them and the teachers I had fallen and hit my head into a door. I remember my nana turned up at school one day when my mum told her what had happened. She was shouting a lot to find out what

he had done. I remember feeling so ashamed in front of classmates and teachers who looked at me with sympathy.

12. The violence became so regular that when we were at school I can remember saying to my friend that things were a little better as he had not battered me for a while. Her reply was that she had been battered again just the night before. That was how our lives were at that time, living from one beating to the next. There was a real culture of violence where I lived. I would often hear shouting and crying from the neighbours house downstairs from us. This is why I thought that violence and abuse was a normal part of childhood.
13. [REDACTED] worked as a bus driver first for [REDACTED] and then with [REDACTED] whose buses covered the outlying districts around Edinburgh. Around the time [REDACTED] was born we found out that [REDACTED] had got himself in trouble with [REDACTED] and lost his job. He did not tell us but I found out later that he was exposing himself again. This became a big problem with him. He even exposed himself to a friend of my Mum. I think the police may have been involved but I am not certain if he was charged.
14. [REDACTED] violence got worse and he would hit mum. Sometimes if I was there I would try to protect her from the beatings but he just got more violent with me and would beat me. I can remember [REDACTED] often tried to jump in and stop the violence, I was amazed at how fearless he was. He was so small but that did not stop [REDACTED] from beating him or me and mum.
15. There was one occasion where he had a large kitchen knife and he threw it across the hall, at mum and just missed her head. I can remember he would grab my hand in the kitchen and lay it on the table, with my fingers splayed. He would then use the knife to stab at the table between my fingers. He would start slow and speed up, just missing my fingers. There were other times he had been slapping me on the thighs so often that I was blistering, I still remember the sting. There were other times he would get his belt, hold it between both hands and snap it between his hands, then use it to hit me with it.

16. The things that [REDACTED] did were not just physical, I often suffered from urine infections and some problems down below. Mum wanted to take me to the doctor but [REDACTED] said no. My nana wanted me to go when she heard about it and I think I was eventually taken and got some of the banana flavoured antibiotics.
17. I can remember one time in the bedroom and [REDACTED] was doing things to me. Papa came into the room and saw what [REDACTED] was doing, but he left the room again just shaking his head. [REDACTED] threatened that if I ever told anyone he would kill my mum and my Nana. This went on from around the time [REDACTED] was born until I was about eleven.
18. I remember when [REDACTED] was about three years old and she was suffering from constipation. She was in a lot of pain and the doctor had given some tablets which were to be administered anally. Mum was going to take her into the room to administer the tablets but [REDACTED] stopped her. He then took [REDACTED] into the room and we could hear a lot of crying. I knew there was nothing I could do. When he brought her out she was like a ghost. Later [REDACTED] became completely mute, she would only whisper to me and [REDACTED] so we could translate what she was saying. We all had issues with speech and seen speech therapists in primary school.
19. If I was in my room and he was looking for me, I would hide under the bed as it was a cabin style and he could not reach me. If he leaned under and tried to get at me I would use some broken pencils to scratch him in the hand to get him to leave me alone.
20. Nana did try to keep in touch with us and help where she could, but avoided being alone with [REDACTED]. Papa used to take me to the Brownies but that stopped when I was about ten years old as he and Nana were divorced.
21. Prior to moving to Tranent, we were in a smaller house in Danderhall. I went to Danderhall Primary School and then when we moved I went to Tranent Primary, our local school. This was when I was still in Primary One.

22. One of the teachers at Tranent Primary, Mrs [REDACTED] I knew she didn't like me because I was the smelly kid and she would shout a lot. It was so bad she would get one of the older girls, [REDACTED] to grab me by the ear and drag me along the corridor. I told mum what was happening. She went to the school but they did nothing about it. Because of the bullying mum moved me to St Martin's Primary, still in Tranent, and I really enjoyed my time at that school. I was in Primary two, maybe Primary Three then.
23. My education at primary school was quite bad. I did have a Learning Support Teacher at St Martins, Mrs McGonigle. She had the patience of a saint. I would do my reading in her room. I remember being so scared of being alone, one time Mrs McGonigle left the classroom for a few minutes and I was on my own I wet myself. She treated me with care and respect and sorted me out with a change of clothes. She found I was having problems with maths. Later in my life, at University, I was diagnosed with Dyscalculia. Along with a small issue with Dyslexia, it meant that I was always held back in school. It affects me to this day.
24. When I was about ten maybe eleven we moved into a bungalow at [REDACTED] in Ormiston and I transferred Ormiston Primary.
25. Mum had a friend called [REDACTED] and they used visit at each other's houses regularly. [REDACTED] was happily married with a family. One day she told mum that she could not have [REDACTED] at the house anymore. When mum asked what was wrong, [REDACTED] told her that [REDACTED] showed her his scars from his army days and exposed himself to her. He was just brazen about this flashing.
26. When I went to Ormiston Primary I never saw any of my friends from Tranent. The girls at Ormiston would bully me as I was not from that area. One of them hit me in the face and I got a fat lip as a result. We were sent to the Headmistress's Office. At that time I was living constantly with violence, at home and now at school. There was no respite. I had stopped caring about being hurt and did not want to be here anymore.
27. Around this time [REDACTED] was about to leave us. He was decorating the bathroom and he told mum that when he finished that job he was moving out as he had met another

woman, [REDACTED]. At that time even though we lived with the violence we were upset as he was the nearest thing we had to a father.

28. Later mum was seeing a guy called [REDACTED], who was single and lived across the road. Every Friday she would disappear from the house to be with him and I was left to look after my brother and sister. I told her that if she bought me a bag of chips and some Hooch I would babysit for her. There was no heating and we were always cold. We would just sit on the settee with a duvet and watch television. The thought of going across the road did not enter my mind as I was too cold.
29. One of my friends pointed out that I was smelling like pies. I was just starting puberty and I went home and told my mum. She then told me that I might need to use deodorant. I didn't even know about it beforehand.
30. One Friday we were in the house and again there was nothing to eat in the cupboards. I phoned my Nana and told her I had had enough. I packed all of our clothes into bin bags and Nana came in a taxi to collect us and take us to her house at Loanhead. She had now met [REDACTED] and was married to him. We didn't even tell mum we were leaving.
31. I am not sure how long we stayed at Nana's and I was just getting comfortable when it was decided we were to go into care. I don't remember having to go to school while we were there, so it wasn't long. I did not see my mother during that time. I am not sure if it was her that reported matters to the social work, or if it was Nana or the school.
32. When I was told we were to be placed in care, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were being put in a separate foster home from me. The social worker, Marie-Anne McLennan, made arrangements for me to visit where they were going. I was so sad at having to let them go but she said it was because I needed a rest and to look after myself and not have to look after everyone else. I never lived with them again.

33. When I was placed into care mum signed a Section 25 form for the supervision order. Thereafter all the decisions about placements and movements were made by the social work department in consultation with Children's Hearings.

Foster Care, Prestonpans

34. I was taken to a house in Prestonpans, where I was to be looked after by an older man and his wife. I do not remember their names at this time. They also had another foster daughter. She had been fostered for a long time and they eventually adopted her. She was about three years older than me. They also had an older son and daughter who were grown up and stayed in their own homes. I once met the daughter and her son.
35. When I was staying with the family they continued to foster babies as an emergency. I can remember taking a baby out for walks. They slept in the mum and dad's room.
36. It was in the evening when we moved there. They seemed a really nice happy family. I think my going there was driven more by the mother, but the father was less keen. I understood I was to be there for three weeks but it ended up being a year.

Routine at foster care, Prestonpans

37. When I arrived I saw it was a three bedroomed terraced house. I was given my own room to stay there which was to the back of the house. My mother had moved house again and was actually staying in a house in the same street.
38. I did not sleep well the first night. The room was all white walls, furniture and bedding. It was like a blank canvas for whoever moved in there. At night they were quite strict about what time I was to go to bed. Even if I was at the caravan it would be the same. One weekend when we were at the caravan I won a Karaoke competition, but still had to go back to the caravan at my set time. The foster daughter was allowed to go to bed at any time she chose.

39. The foster parents had a book of all the kids they had fostered. The father would tell me the reasons for each of them leaving and what each of them had done wrong when they stayed with them. I was not happy being in this book.
40. The parents made it clear to me that the other girl was their daughter and that I was just there for a short time. They made her out to be the good one and that I was the bad one. They quite regularly gave her some money but they did not want to give me any. The daughter was smoking at that time and I also began smoking at that time.

Food

41. In the morning the table was laid out in preparation for breakfast with all the bowls ready. At each meal time the mother, daughter and myself ate together but the father ate by himself. I had issues with food as I was not fed properly by my mother and had difficulty eating in front of anyone. That lasted most of my early life.
42. The meals the family provided were large portions, again something I was not used to. I could not eat as much as they were providing. The father would make comments about how much was being wasted.
43. If I was having school lunches they gave me money for that. As I was never hungry there, I did not eat the school lunches and spent the money on cigarettes.
44. There were phone calls made to the house from various members of my family. The foster parents were not happy with this and asked me to speak with the family and ask them not to phone the house so much. I know there is a comment in the records from my foster mother saying there were too many calls. Most of the family stopped but my Nana probably phoned more.

Clothing

45. Although I had some of my own clothes the mother would take me to Adams Shop, where her daughter worked. She got me a set of new clothes and was able to get discount because of her daughter. It might not have been the style I would have chosen but they were new. I did not want to complain as they were looking after me.

Religion

46. The foster parents were quite religious but they did not go to church. They did not make me go.

Schooling

47. I went to Ross High School when I stayed with the couple. I got the bus to school. When I was there I would be asked where I had come from and I would tell them I was staying with my aunt.
48. After having been there for a short time, they said it would be better if I transferred to the local high School, Preston Lodge. I enjoyed the people I met at Preston Lodge. There was a big mix in the group I was friends with. Most of them were being bullied for different reasons, but mainly because of their sexuality. We were all drawn together because of our issues. A lot of us from that group are still friends. [REDACTED] was one of the people I hung around with a lot and still regard as one of my best friends.

Bed Wetting

49. I did suffer bed wetting a couple of times when I was in their care. The father would rant at me saying that I was too old for that. The mother was much more sympathetic and tried to get me to relax.

Healthcare

50. When I was in foster care I don't remember having to see any dentist or a doctor for any reason. I did suffer from stomach problems during that time.

Trips

51. The family had a caravan at Thurston Manor, Dunbar. We would go down there some weekends and my nana on the alternate weekend. Eventually it was just the caravan at weekends. I remember there was a sort of club house on the caravan site. The adopted daughter and I would go and see the father there. He would give her a pound but would not give me anything. I found that quite hurtful.
52. Nana and [REDACTED] were able to come and visit me. We were at the caravan for my thirteenth birthday and I had been given a nice coat by my foster family.
53. Eventually I was allowed to go home at weekends, but I just decided that I would go to the caravan with the family. It was always happy times there. It was around this time that I had my first drink of vodka and was seeing my first boyfriend.

Birthdays/Christmas

54. Just before Christmas I had been talking about wanting a typewriter and when it came to Christmas day they had got one for as a present. This was the most amazing thing I had ever been given at that time.

Visits

55. One Saturday when I was visiting mum she took me to a psychic night. She also bought me a set of Tarot cards. When the foster parents saw the Tarot cards they said it was evil. The mother even brought the sister in and they all treated me like I had brought the devil into the house. I had to get rid of the cards. The father said that if anything happened to his wife, he would blame me.

[APG]

56. From that day, I started imagining the devil was in the house. The daughter started tying a home-made crucifix into my hair when we went out. Sometimes I would waken during the night thinking the devil was following me. I was having night tremors and the father would come into the room and shout at me.
57. During my time in foster care I would occasionally see my social worker, Carol Lassenger. At one of the last meetings she would take me to McDonalds and was asking me why I was stealing from the house. She just assumed I was stealing and I tried to tell her I wasn't stealing anything.
58. I did not see [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] at all when I was there. I later learned they had been placed in two or three different places, first it was a woman named [REDACTED] then one named [REDACTED] and one place which was in North Berwick. For us at that time in our life, this was so far away. I did ask the social work if I could see them. I was crying a lot when I thought about them but the social work kept putting it off. I can't remember the exact reasons just that they were putting it off.

Abuse at Foster Care, Prestonpans

59. When I was at the house in Tranent for a little while things began to go missing in the house. First it was some money, then some cigarettes. Although I had started smoking by that time, I never stole anything to fund it, or anything else. The parents would sit me down in the kitchen and ask me all sorts of questions. They even got my nana involved. I kept telling them I had taken nothing.
60. Not long after Christmas, during the night the father would come into my room and warned me about typing at that time of the night. It was usually about one or two in the morning. I told him I was not typing and that it was sitting on the other side of the room. I never used it at night, but he just kept appearing. I was so scared of him coming in during the night. Eventually they took it out of the room.

Leaving foster care, Preston

61. One weekend I went to mum's house and during that visit we had a fight. I knew that my mum was also speaking with the social work and that things with the foster family had gone too far. I had to go back to the foster parents, but when I contacted them they said for me to wait until the Monday before returning. On the Monday morning the social work phoned me at mum's. When mum came off the phone she was unhappy, because she knew I was settled and was enjoying the visits to the caravan. This meant that my time with the foster family was at an end and I would be staying with mum again.
62. When I also spoke with the social work they were saying they were going to bring my stuff to me. When she came to the house she had picked up my things from the foster parent's house. In the typewriter box were all the dolls and books, but no type writer. I phoned them and the mother said the father had decided the type writer belonged to the house and not to me. I was devastated by this.
63. When I was with mum I felt I had been spoiled in foster care. At mum's I was no longer getting any pocket money, because she had none to give me. It was not long before the atmosphere at mum's was not great and I ended up going back to stay with my nana.
64. Again I was only with my nana for a couple of weeks and she told me that we were going to have to try something different. I did not want to be in a family situation again. It was suggested by the social work that I could go to Pathway Resource Centre, Tranent. I was taken there by Alec, one of the residential care workers, for some tea to allow me and nana see what the place would be like. When I went for the visit I was able to meet a couple of the other kids, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]
65. Nana checked I was happy with going and I told her I was okay with that. When we were back at nana's we had a fallout and I ended up going to Pathway under an emergency order.

Pathway Resource Centre, Tranent

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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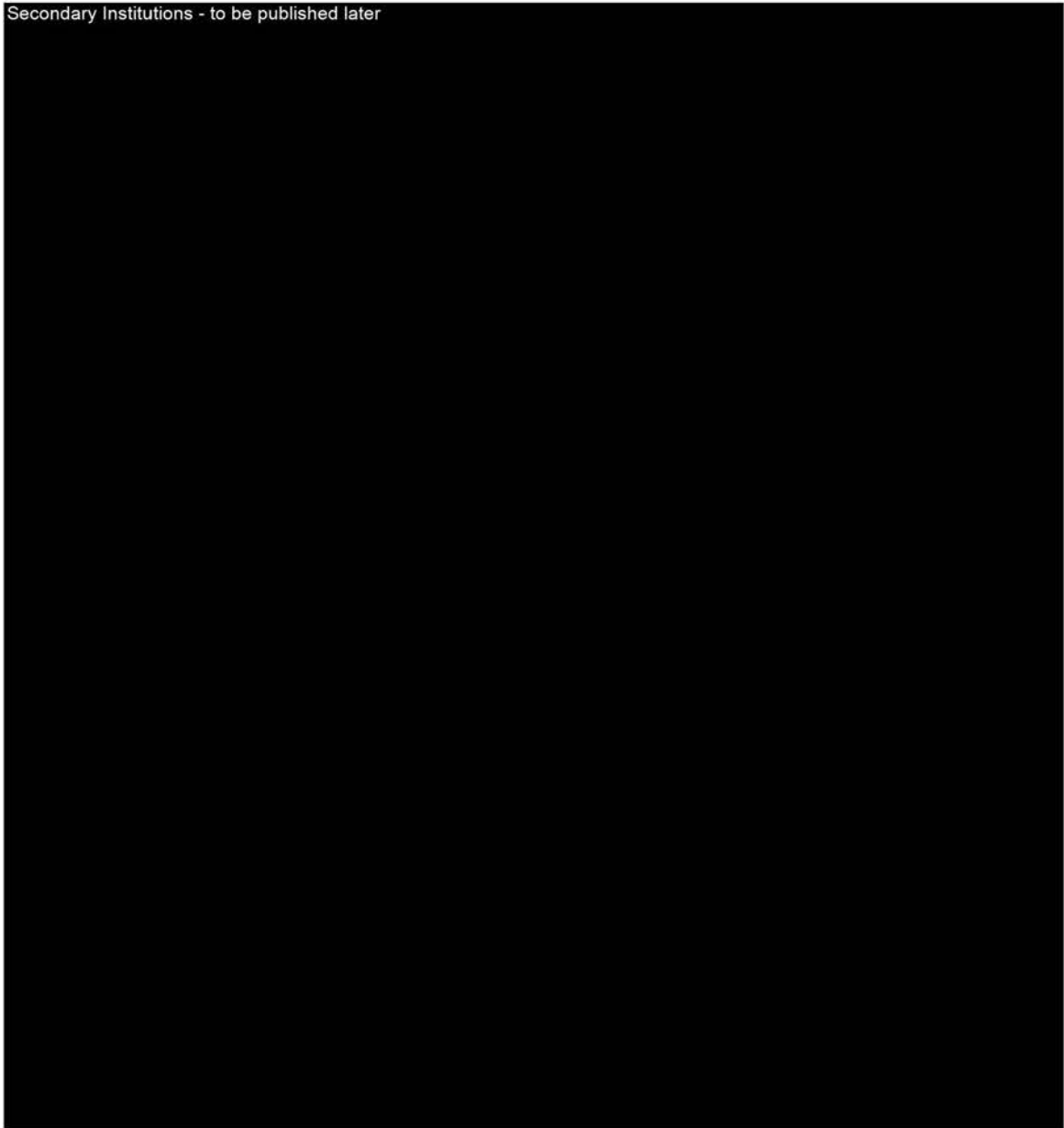
Secondary Institutions - to be published later



St Katharine's Secure Unit, Edinburgh

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later



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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Pathway Resource Centre, Tranent

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Foster Care, Prestonpans

165. I tried living with a foster family in Prestonpans. To start with I really enjoyed myself and part of that good atmosphere was I was allowed to lounge about in the house in my pyjamas. They also had a boy, [REDACTED] who they fostered. This family had a daughter who lived in Tranent and she had a baby. Sometimes rather than going to school I would visit her and her baby.
166. This placement did not last long when I was not happy about being in the school. I was only there for about three months before we were back at the Panel. The foster father, [REDACTED] told the panel I was no longer attending school and this was impacting on their time with their family. I think they could not cope with the hassle and were only interested in fostering if there were no issues and happy to take the money. [REDACTED] did not present them with any problems. The Panel then sent me back to Pathways. I know someone who is now being fostered by the family and he is happy there, but he does not cause any issues.

Pathway Resource Centre, Tranent

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Moore House Care, Bathgate

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Moore House Care, Bathgate

191. I found it was quite common that as soon as people turned the age of sixteen they were put out of the home they had been placed in and then abandoned by the social services.
192. I was coming up to my sixteenth birthday and I was due to be at another Panel. Moore House just wanted me out of their care and moved into adult services. I was told the only place available was Cauvin House, supported accommodation. Lorraine Grady was there for me and she told the panel that I was looking to go to College. The panel removed the supervision order. She tried to get me a placement in East Lothian but there was nothing available.
193. Before I went to Cauvin House I had [REDACTED] and was in hospital for a little while. A nurse tried to give me some advice saying I would be better going there rather than adult services. Some of the staff helped me and sat me down. They showed me

that that was not helping my situation. It was not long after that I moved to Cauvin House.

Cauvin House, Leith

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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[REDACTED] From Cauvin House until I left care there were many places I spent a short time at and the timeline for them is a bit confused.

208. I was taken to the YPU where I was hoping to get a placement. The social work department said that I was not getting a placement there. They put me up in a bed and breakfast hotel in Dunbar. I remember during my time there my [REDACTED] [REDACTED] from the self-harming. During that time I was still having night tremors. I did not last long there and was kicked out of this bed and breakfast.

209. I remember being in Tranent and meeting a guy I had known years before. He was asking how I was doing and when I told him I was just signing on, he said that was

what he thought. I was really hurt with this reply. I think I might have been in the Tranmare bed and breakfast, but that is closed down now.

210. I phoned Lorraine Grady and told her I was in a mess and needing help. That same day she got me a ticket for the train to Edinburgh. It was arranged through the social work to put me up with a landlady, [REDACTED] in Portobello. They paid her twenty pounds per night for me to stay. I was there for a while and then the social work managed to find me a placement in Haddington. The year I spent with [REDACTED] was when I was able to get all the drink and drugs out of my system. But it took most of that time for me to get better, maybe have a dip and then get better again. She even helped convince me to go back to school. I then started going to Holyrood High School.
211. When I was at [REDACTED] I told her some of the things that happened to me by [REDACTED] and later disclosed this to my mum and nana. Everybody felt guilty about not having reported anything at the time. My mum still apologises to this day. He caused so much hurt and damage.
212. Around the time I was staying in Portobello I met [REDACTED], my husband. He was eighteen and from a nice background. I left [REDACTED] place and was given my own flat. I was about nineteen then. I was really bad with [REDACTED] at that time and would be shouting at him a lot. We ended up splitting up.
213. Not long after that I met a boy [REDACTED] and was with him for around six months. He was the one that gave me the encouragement to go back to College to learn to be a residential care officer. I split with [REDACTED] and I was back taking tablets.

NCH, Action for Children, Haddington

214. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
- [REDACTED]

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Foster Care, Supported Accommodation, Musselburgh

217. I lived for a short time in foster care at the Supported Accommodation at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Musselburgh. This was a half-way house.

Routine at Supported Accommodation, Musselburgh

218. The girl who previously bullied me at Ormiston Primary School and gave me a fat lip was now friends with one of the girls in this supported accommodation. When she came to visit at the home her and that other girl would annoy me by throwing stones at my window. The girl from Ormiston would also threaten to hurt me.

219. I can remember that there was one time [REDACTED] my brother, came to visit me and while he was with me some of the others were taking drugs, more than just cannabis. I then spoke with their foster parents in North Berwick and told them if I was to see the kids again I would just visit them rather than them coming to me.

Supported Accommodation, Musselburgh

220. I went from the half-way house at Edenhall Road into my own flat at [REDACTED] Musselburgh. I would have been about eighteen at that time.
221. The next place I stayed at was at [REDACTED] Musselburgh. Again that was my own flat.
222. I got quite religious and got in touch with the Catholic church and they helped get me help at Hermanflat, Haddington. They also brought me some food, clothes and cigarettes when I was there. It was not long after that that I was given my Confirmation at the church. I would have been about nineteen then.

Life after being in care

223. I left school when I was nineteen. I was a late leaver because I had been held back a year to try and catch up. I managed to get my certificates, two intermediates and one higher in sixth year.
224. When I left school I started working in banking with Halifax/Bank of Scotland. I was there for about a year when I went back to College. I went to Jewel and Esk Valley to study Social Care to try and get my HNC. During the work some memories were triggered and I could not complete the course and had to leave the college.
225. When I was at College I started having some mental health issues after leaving the course. I was already going to charity shops for some clothes and had no money left to pay my bills or buy any food. Even my nana when she visited would give me some money for the electricity meter. I was so depressed I just stayed in the house all day. I was back taking sleeping tablets and again not only at night but in the day when I woke. One day a neighbour found my door open at [REDACTED] and found me not well inside. She telephoned for an ambulance and I was taken into hospital. I was then transferred again to Hermand flat again. I was there a couple of times for help.

[APG]

226. Prior to being in hospital I was back in touch with my biological father and had a brief relationship with him and the family. I visited him at his house with his new family. I can remember my step gran sitting with my young sister on her lap. She was saying how special she was and that she was my Dad's only daughter. At that time they would not even tell the rest of the family who I was. As far they were aware I was an old friend of dad.
227. When I was still in the hospital I was on the phone to my dad. I decided to try and tell him about some of the things that had happened to me. I disclosed to him about [REDACTED] and that the abuse was not just physical but that other things had happened as well. Dad finished the call by saying he had to go. I felt horrible about the result of telling him about those things. Not long after our contact broke down. We did get back in touch and he eventually told his kids who I was. But in the end I was the one who was making all the contact.
228. When my daughter [REDACTED] was born, dad's partner, [REDACTED] got back in touch. She would visit and give me some money for clothes for [REDACTED]. I can remember my dad had tattoos of the names of all his children on his arms but not me. I knew this and wanted him to make his mind up what kind of relationship he wanted. He said he was going to be all in. Dad did come to [REDACTED] christening but that was the last day I saw him. I never seen him again. As far as I know he is still in Bonnyrigg living with his second family.
229. His daughter [REDACTED] did later try and contact me through Facebook and I saw there were lots of photographs with my dad. I could not take it and the relationship did not work out and I ended up having to block her and the rest of the family. It still hurts how things worked out.
230. When I was later employed as a residential care officer I did eventually get to work in the secure unit at [REDACTED]. At one point I felt so empowering inside as I was given the task of looking after someone who was in room [REDACTED] where I had been placed. Although my mind was reacting to it I still had to remain professional. I can remember when I was staying in the unit the staff would always walk about with the

keys hanging from their trousers. When I went to work there I made a conscious decision not to do that and kept them in my pocket.

231. I was glad to work in the secure unit as this helped me. My key worker from my time at St Katharine's, Tom, was still working in the unit. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
When I arrived as a worker he was really pleased to see how well I had done for myself.

232. One of the jobs I had was with a high profile company which I would rather not name. A very high level member of staff there was being totally inappropriate with his behaviour to me. He would come up to me and touch my thigh. He would also come over and ask what perfume I was wearing and proceed to smell my neck. My whole body froze with him being in my space. We were at an event and there were young people and children were. He was making suggestions that a boy and girl there should be together. Not wanting to make it any more awkward for the young people I said nothing. I reported him to my manager but he did not believe me and brushed it off as "that's just him". I could not work in that atmosphere and ended up having to leave the organisation as a result of this. I found out later that not long after I reported him to the Board (I then met an independent lawyer appointed by the Board who took a statement) that he left the company. I wrote a letter to the member of staff detailing just how inappropriate his behaviour was and told him how unacceptable this was, especially given his role. It transpired that others had made complaints, one young person had reported his behaviour to me, she said he kept hugging her and it made her really uncomfortable, he continued to do this even after she told him not to. It took me a long time to tell my husband [REDACTED] about this. When we did talk about it we decided not to report it to the police as we did not want things made public, which may have affected how I could continue with the campaign for children's rights. I am not aware of where he is now but know many care experienced people and staff who have left the organisation as a result of his behaviour.

233. After about a year apart I was back with [REDACTED] and had moved into his house in the Gyle area. I was gutted that I had to leave my flat behind. It was only last year that I managed to clear off my rent arrears.
234. I went back to College and managed to complete my HNC course but without the SVQ. It still allowed me to work in the care system. I began working as a home carer in Musselburgh. When I moved in with [REDACTED] and now living in Edinburgh I transferred to work with Family Circle Care who covered the Edinburgh. They were people with MS and a woman who had suffered a brain injury. I was also doing some locum work as a residential care officer. Initially the social work refused to allow me to work in secure accommodation as I was a previous resident. I later found it because they had a previous problem with a former resident who had a relationship with a key worker and they did not want any issues like that again. Initially I agreed with them. Those jobs caused me issues with my back and the pain became too much. After a couple of years of this I had to leave.
235. I decided I wanted a change in direction and wanted to train as an air hostess in London. Again I split up with [REDACTED] as a result. When I went to the course in London I stayed with an air hostess and out of the thirty people on the course I was one of four who qualified. I did not have the confidence I needed and it was not working out. I had been working for a while when [REDACTED] came down to London. We got back together and I returned to Edinburgh. In 2011 we got married.
236. I got a job working at [REDACTED] School as a behaviour support assistant. I was there for about a year but left because of the culture. This was a school for kids with special needs. I was really quiet and calm with the kids. The Head teacher there, [REDACTED] was an angry woman. She would spend a lot of time shouting at staff and the kids. I was not happy with this kind of behaviour and her response to me was I should grow a set balls and learn to deal with the kids. I had an issue with one of the pupils constantly using a whistle. At first I was laughing it off and then I broke and shouted at this boy. I was so cut up with this I was off sick. When I went back the staff were praising me for what I had done, but I was not happy. I apologised to the boy and left that job.

237. I then took on a role with Integrated Support Service which was an organisation helping parents of kids in care and some who may have kids in secure. Even when I talked with parents, some of my time in care came back to me. I do think that I suffer from Survivor's Guilt and this affected my working life. One of the women I worked with Jackie, was really supportive with me and she gave me lots of encouragement. There was a young girl who was on the brink of going into secure and I spoke with her mother. During that conversation I disclosed that I had been in secure accommodation as a child. I was able to use those experiences to help allay some of the fears.
238. I was also doing locum work as a residential care officer again and completing my SVQ 3 course. As a result of cut backs from the local authority we were losing funding. I started looking for a new job around this time.
239. In 2012 I took on a role with Fife Council [REDACTED] in Glenrothes. This was as a senior residential care officer. After taking the job I found out I was pregnant with [REDACTED]. One day at work I was chased by one of the residents. The manager then told me I should not have taken the job while being pregnant.
240. After having been off on maternity leave I changed area and went to work in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Dunfermline.
241. After [REDACTED] first birthday I was in hospital as I was having health issues again. I was then diagnosed with Coeliac disease. This answered a lot of the issues I had been having with food most of my life. At that time my nana was diagnosed with Dementia. When she died something changed in my outlook on my role in the care system.
242. There was one of the young people I was looking after who I treated like a little sister. One day we were working together and she told me she loved me. I knew I could not respond because of boundaries. I didn't say anything but was being reflective in my practice. I then took on a course, Dyadic Development Practice, by Edwina Jack. She talks about the subject of love. I remember being in a bathroom crying about how it was affecting me. Edwina saw me and saw how powerful it had been for me. From

then on I knew that everything I did would be to change the way things happen to kids in care.

243. I went back work in [REDACTED] Dunfermline looking to see if I could put changes in place. I wanted to involved young people more in what we did. One woman, a senior member of staff called [REDACTED] said if she had trouble she just battered the kids, although we were both seniors she had never done that when I was on duty. I did not like this, told her that wasn't right, but she brushed it off and said there was nothing wrong with toy fighting with the children and young people. I complained to management. Nothing happened but it resulted in the other staff (particularly managers) refusing to speak to me. A new manager arrived, [REDACTED] arrived and said that she was dealing with those issues. As far as I know [REDACTED] still looks after children and young people in Fife.
244. I got back in touch with Pathway about sharing my story with young people and did they know anyone who was looking for this kind of input. They told me they were closing the old unit and opening a new home in Musselburgh, but were having some issues with local residents who were opposed to it. The community were thinking the kids would cause issues for them. She told me that the meeting was being held by Who Cares? Scotland Charity. That first night I was too nervous to speak. The second meeting was being held the following week and chaired by someone different. At that meeting I was able to speak to the audience about my time in care. I was dressed well and felt really good about relating my experiences. I was able to assure them there would be no issues.
245. I also gave talks with Care, My Story, based in Paisley. During some of those inputs people would share their stories. During my time there I met some great people who shared their experiences and at one meeting. I became a campaigner for improvements for children in care and I met the First Minister. I was looking to make many changes to help the children.
246. I was getting known as someone who told their story and the charity management took over Care Review meetings, excluding me and many other campaigners from

influencing the changes. I was offered a position on the board of the Care Review by Who Cares? Scotland, but the offer was withdrawn and given to someone else.

247. I then started my own consultancy so I could do more about influencing changes. I continued to have a brilliant working relationship with the Care Review and worked for them at [REDACTED] University about a year with the Care Review as a Participation Officer. They were looking for people to take things forward and I was offered a [REDACTED] position of Stop-Go working group and worked in that role for just over a year. That role finished in [REDACTED] 2020.

248. I was then out of work for about nine months. I applied for a role with the Children's Hearing Scotland, where I can help with changes. Just before December I started working with them. At the moment with the current pandemic situation we are having to work remotely.

249.

[REDACTED]

250. I know if I had done what everyone wanted while I was in care I would have come through okay. I couldn't as I was so badly damaged, it was a really bad time.

Reporting of abuse

251. One of the times I was at the Hermand Flat, Haddington I did try to report some of the incidents involving [REDACTED] to the police. It was around 2001 and I was at Dalkeith Police Station and gave them statements which took many hours. I was advised by the female officer to put things on hold until my depression was more under control. I did go back to Musselburgh Police Station a few years later to progress the inquiry. I was told that the files and all my statements could not be found. I felt that if they did not think it worth keeping there was no point in going through it all again.

252. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Impact

253. When I was at College studying and we came to the Child Abuse Module all the memories of my time in care came flooding back. They were covering all the different types of abuse we would come across. I was having flashbacks, Secondary Institutions - to be published later but all my life in care. I ended up having a nervous breakdown. The manager from the unit, Peter McCluskey, was phoning me and leaving messages. It took a long time before I got back to him. I told him that I had been ill with depression but did go back. I got my qualification but had to wait until later in life to get my SVQ 3.
254. I still get feelings of being ashamed and it is hard for me to remember that I was a child when those things happened to me. It makes me feel horrible and that is why I have difficulty talking about these things.
255. About three years ago I was working with Who Cares? Scotland. I was working with some of the older social workers, one of whom had worked with me as a child. She had a mug with the picture of a typewriter on it. It brought back the memories from my time at the foster home at Tranent. I knew with those memories coming back and other issues with the charity that it was time for me to leave that job.
256. I can remember being at the Book Festival as an adult and there was a woman there talking about her book, A Journey to Forgiveness, which gave details of a time when she had been raped. My friend from my time in care, and I both looked at each other and knew this had also happened to both of us. She had made a complaint and it ended with it going to court and she had to go through the ordeal all over again. I did not want that to be the case with me, I did not want to end up talking about it again in a court.

[APG]

257. I also worked on the Secure Care Strategic Board and we happened to be looking at secure care. This was triggering so many bad memories that I left before the final report was published.
258. My time in care has caused me so much damage. Only now am I capable of putting effort into studying for my degree in Law. I always felt that my time in care and the trauma always kept me back and built up a lack of confidence. I still get triggers from my past which causes bouts of depression. I have been on medication for about a year, but hopefully by the summer I am hoping to be weaned off.
259. I am a bit disappointed with my relationship as it stands at this time with my siblings. We are not as close as we used to be or should have been if we had not been ripped apart as kids. [REDACTED] has gone on to be a nurse in Oxford working on a corona virus ICU ward. [REDACTED] is a qualified computer scientist. We have conversations on What's App, and we do have our fall outs. [REDACTED] is their dad and they know what happened to me. Neither of them want to have children.
260. It took me years to build up the trust with my husband, [REDACTED]. I kept asking if he was going to leave, but I know from what we have been through that will not happen.
261. I did get help from a psychiatric nurse, Tommy Blue, from the YPU. Along with him there was also Dr Selman my GP while I was in Musselburgh. He was brilliant in getting me the right kind of help. He was able to put me in touch with Edenhall Hospital for some help. I think it was because there was depression in his family and he was able to recognise it.

Records

262. I was about thirty when I got some of my care files. Throughout my life mum and I had issues with our relationship. I found out from those records that she had been fighting in the background to get me back, but they were not telling me. When we started getting on again we would go to the cinema regularly. She has two other daughters,

████ who is eighteen and █████ who is thirteen. After all the years of misery we now have the relationship as a family unit, that we should have had.

263. From my records and my memories I have now written my life story down. It is not for publication but just for my own therapy.

Lessons to be learned

264. People in the care industry who are in the role just as a career should not be looking after children. Ego and power have no place in or around the care system. The children should always come first and not money.
265. I still ask the question if there is a need for secure care. I believe that secure just contains children and young people rather than offering the much needed love and care that they need.
266. There is nothing happening for kids who are suffering trauma in care, or those adults who have left care with remaining trauma. There needs to be a person who listens to your needs and understand you while you are in care and after. I think boys and girls in care who are victims of trauma there should be a commitment to get them help.
267. █████ my friend from primary school, knew he was gay from a young age and he was let down by the system. That view of life and around AIDS then, is now being portrayed in the TV programme "It's A Sin". Similar to my Coeliac disease, the other illnesses he suffered from were not diagnosed until later in life and as a result he now suffers from COPD.

Hopes for the Inquiry

268. There needs to be an apology for the mistakes the care system have made. The Government needs to take a responsibility as well as they had those children under

their care. There is also a real injustice for people who attained the age of sixteen and dropped by the Care System. I would also like to see an acknowledgement or memorial for those with care experience that have died whilst in or having just left care. My friend [REDACTED] died of a heroin overdose at just 21 years old and just last week a young person died whilst in care at [REDACTED] Secondary Institute. This happens all too frequently and not enough is done to address trauma whilst children and young people go through the system.

Other information

269. 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 [REDACTED] ESB

Dated 20.04.21

[APG]