

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

EXG

Support person present: No

1. My name is EXG My surname when I was a child was EXG I was baptised EXG I didn't get my birth certificate until I was eighteen and my middle name isn't actually on my birth certificate. My date of birth is 1965. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before care

2. My mum's name was and my dad's name was I was the youngest of eleven children. The oldest is then there's , and then me. Six of us were still staying at home when my mum died of cancer. She died in the when I was seven years old. My dad left after my mum died so my elder sister, tried to keep us all together. At that time I was at St. Columba's Primary School in Viewpark, North Lanarkshire. I liked school, but I used to follow my older brother, We were wee buggers and we'd skip school. We would ask my big sister for money. She'd just got married to She was sixteen and she couldn't really cope.
3. When we were initially staying with we had two double beds. and I were in the one room. There was social work involvement at that time because they bought us bunk beds. There were five of us and they bought two sets of bunk beds. I never had a bed. was too stinky, hit me, and I fought so I slept in with and I were just weans. The three of us could be bad to each other, but we still played and went out and about on adventures. was the leader because he was the oldest. He was about two or three years older than me.

4. The summer after my mum died, they decided to split us up. I don't know who made the decision. I think social work were involved because a social worker came to visit before my mum died. We were fostered to the older siblings, but I don't know whether it was my older siblings or social work who made that decision. There were meetings about it, but we were always out in the lobby. I ended up staying with [REDACTED], my oldest brother, in Cumbernauld. I was eight when that happened. Two of my sisters went to another brother in Bellshill and the other two stayed with another brother in the original family home. Social workers would just appear. I can't remember names of social workers at that time. I wouldn't be involved in any decisions social work made. I would have been out of the road. They used to appear once every six months if you were lucky.

Foster care, [REDACTED], Cumbernauld

5. When I went to Cumbernauld, I was part of the family. I was there for about a year and a half, two years before I ended up in a home. I had red hair and one of my brother's weans had red hair, so that was why my brother and his wife took me. They thought nobody would know and I'd look like part of the family. They had twin girls as well. I liked staying there. It was great. Although I missed my brothers and sisters, my sister [REDACTED] used to come through and babysit so I had contact with her. [REDACTED] would take me to Viewpark, where I'd see [REDACTED] I didn't get to see [REDACTED] so much because she was in Bellshill, but I still got to see her.
6. I had to move schools when I went to Cumbernauld. My brother's children weren't being brought up Catholic. They went to a Protestant school and I went to a Catholic school, St. Joseph's. They got me into a music group in the chapel. I learned to play the recorder and to read music and that way, I got to go to chapel every Sunday. It was [REDACTED], as was my school, so I just walked by myself. I was in a swimming club and I was a champion swimmer. I was happy enough at my brother's and I was doing well. I can't remember seeing social workers at that time.
7. My big brother got into bother and ended up in the jail, but at the time I didn't know what was going on. I was told that he was away to the rigs for six months. When he came out of prison, my sister-in-law and my brother weren't going to get back together.

I think my brother was at her door to try and get back in the house. Meanwhile, the teacher kept me behind after school to help with a frieze. I thought I saw my brother go by the school. My two pals went away and came back. They told me that [REDACTED] was banging the door, trying to get into the house. Somebody came to the school for me. It was like emergency foster care. They gave me my dinner. I stayed there until it was dark and then I went back to my sister-in-law's. I can't remember if I was told what was happening.

8. I think it was the next day or the day after that I went into a home. It wasn't long afterwards anyway. My sister-in-law, [REDACTED] told me that she had split up with my brother. Social services had decided that there was a risk to me in case [REDACTED] used me to get back into the house. Because of that, I was being put into a home. I remember being really upset when [REDACTED] told me. I think I was in shock.

Smyllum, Lanark

9. I was nine or ten years old when I went into Smyllum. It was ran by nuns. They were all dressed in black and wore habits. There was a big driveway leading up to Smyllum. It was out in the country and it had grounds and lots of trees. There was a swing park round the back. When you went in the front door, there were stairs. When you went up the stairs, you got into my unit or house. We weren't really allowed to use the front door so we would use the back door. There was another building at the side that was a different home. It was part of Smyllum, but there were different children in there.
10. I know that there were three houses. There were different Sisters in charge of the different houses. I don't know who was in overall charge. There were other nuns there as well. There were older nuns, but we didn't see them. They had their own area. I could see them having their meals from my bed. Because I have sisters called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], I get mixed up about the name of the Sister in charge of my house. I don't know whether it was Sister ^{zIAG} [REDACTED], Sister ^{zIAG} [REDACTED] or Sister ^{zIAG} [REDACTED]. Sister had a room on our floor and she stayed there all the time. She was always floating about.

11. There were staff in my house as well as the Sister. One of them was called [REDACTED] ACV [REDACTED]. She lived in the village, just next to Smyllum. I remember her putting her coat on to go home at night, so she didn't stay over. There was an Irish staff member who may have been called [REDACTED] IAN [REDACTED]. She stayed over, but I'm not sure whether that was just at the weekends. I once walked in on her with a face mask on and she was lying on her bed. There were staff who stayed over and staff who didn't. The staff helped do the dinners and lunches. They did the cooking and the washing and made sure we were all ready for school, that kind of thing.
12. There were about twenty children in my group. I think my group might have been called Ogilvie, but I'm not sure. The bedrooms on my floor were given colours. The green room had three children in it. There were twins in that room, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They were younger than me and they weren't at school yet. They stood out to me because they reminded me of my brother's twin girls. One was dark-haired and one was blonde-haired, just like my brother's girls. There was another girl in that room, whose little sister, [REDACTED] was in my room. I didn't think she was looking after those twins well enough and I wanted to look after them. I was missing my wee sisters, my brother's twins.
13. There was a blue room, which had about two or three beds in it. There were also about two boys' rooms, but I wasn't allowed in there. I was in the lilac room. The other children in my group were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], who were sisters. They were at Our Lady's High School in Motherwell. [REDACTED] was about fourteen and [REDACTED] was the eldest, about fifteen, sixteen. There was another girl called [REDACTED] who was also a bit older than me. I remember she had shingles when I was there because she had to put powder on it. There was another girl who was older than me, but I didn't have anything to do with her at all. There was a wee dark-haired girl of about four, but I didn't have a lot of contact with her either.

Routine at Smyllum

First Day

14. It was [REDACTED] when I went to Smyllum. [REDACTED] was with me, but I don't know who took me there. I remember driving up and seeing the castle. I remember it being massive. It looked really rich and fancy when we went in. When I arrived, I was allowed a cup of coffee and a biscuit. I was given it by the Sisters. I wouldn't take anything unless I was told. They were being all nice, "You can take a biscuit, take another biscuit." I thought it was okay. [REDACTED] said they'd be back to see me and not to worry. The Sisters were all smiley and happy and I thought it wasn't too bad.
15. They took me and showed me to my dormitory. It wasn't so rich and fancy upstairs. I was shown where my bed would be. The rest of the children weren't there. They were at school. I took all my clothes and toys with me. I don't know where my belongings went. My clothes were taken off me. Just about everything was taken off me. I don't know who, but someone put my clothes into two drawers in the dormitory. I remember seeing my coat later on. I was told it was too wee for me and it would go to somebody else. I never really had any clothes left. Whether I was growing or not, I don't know. I remember there was panelling on the walls which opened up and the clothes were kept in there.

Mornings and Bedtime

16. All the bedrooms were given a colour. There was green, blue and I was in lilac. There were about six beds in my room. We were all different ages. The dark-headed girl would go to bed before the rest of us because she was much younger. She would be sleeping by the time we got to bed. A lot of the time I never went to sleep at bedtime. I had a torch and I used to read under my blankets and under my bed. I was caught with my torch and it was taken off me.
17. I swapped my bed. I took all my stuff out of my room and put it into the twins' room. I took the girl who was in there's stuff out and put it into my room. Their bedding was coming off their quilts. I'd sewed it back up for them to make it nice for them. The girl in there was getting them to do things for her and bullying them. Sister pulled me up

for swapping. I told her that I wanted to stay with the twins and that I missed my wee sisters. It was the only time that the Sister was nice to me. She said she'd keep an eye on the girl in that room and tell her that she had to behave. The Sister spoke to me about my mum. She asked if I could remember what she looked like. I said I could and she told me to picture her in my head and talk to her if I missed her. That was the only nice thing she ever said to me.

18. Our bedrooms were slightly higher than one level up, although you only went up one flight of stairs to get to them. From my bed, I could look down and see Sisters eating their dinners so we were up quite high. They got different food from us. They would have soup and rolls and lovely food. It looked nice, compared to what we got. There was a ground level below that.
19. I had a wee unit next to my bed which wasn't much higher than the bed. It had shelves in it. I put my toys in a drawer in the bottom. I also put my clothes in there. There was a chair next to my bed as well and that's where I would put my school uniform. Everybody put their school uniform over their chair. The school uniform was provided by Smyllum. It was a blue shirt and skirt and I think there was a tie.
20. Staff would come in the morning and get us up. The older children left for school earlier, so they were already away. [REDACTED] wet the bed. I remember the sheets coming off her bed and she would be standing, waiting for a bath in the morning. There were a few children queuing for a bath, so I think they must have wet the bed. I don't know whether there was a punishment for wetting the bed. We'd get up, get washed and clean our teeth. A staff member would supervise us doing that. There would be weans waiting for the baths. I didn't realise at the time that it was because they'd wet themselves. We had to get up and get ready like wee soldiers. It was all regimented. We went to Mass and then we came back to the unit for our breakfast.

Mealtimes/food

21. We all ate meals together in the dining room, which was on the ground floor. There were five or six tables there. We set the tables at night for the following morning. I think we just sat where there was an empty seat. There would be stuff left on the table. I remember the milk being on the table. Breakfast was fine. I could eat porridge. We

didn't get a choice for breakfast, but it didn't bother me. We would go back to the house for lunch. Lunch was usually similar to what you got for school dinners, maybe soup and a pudding. It was basic food. I didn't like the curry and the chicken supreme because I'd never eaten things like that before. I was forced to eat them.

Washing and bathing

22. When you came out of my bedroom, there was a corridor and the wash area was at the end. There were sinks all along the wall. I can't remember the toilet, but it must have been in there. I'm sure there were two baths. There was a partition, but it didn't go all the way up to the ceiling. I can only remember going for a bath once at Smyllum. I don't know how many times I went for a bath, so I can't remember the routine for that.

Clothing

23. Most of my clothes were taken off me when I arrived. I remember my fancy three quarter length, suede coat being taken off me. I saw it in the cupboard, which was behind the wood-panelling. When you opened the panel, there were hundreds of clothes behind it. I don't know whether it was taken off me because it was too small for me or whether it was for somebody else. If something was too small for you, you would get someone else's.
24. I remember needing clothes for the Christmas party. The staff came out with a couple of things and I tried them on. I didn't get to pick them. My school uniform was somebody else's before it was mine. It was a skirt and blue shirt and I think there was a tie as well. I don't know whether our names were on our clothes, but I think I got my own uniform back after the staff had washed and ironed it. I was away for the weekend so I'm not sure what happened with that.

School

25. The school house was on the grounds, up the hill. All the children in Smyllum went to the primary school there. The school was ancient. It was all dark wood and floors. It had trap doors and things in it, where people hid during the war. We were shown the

trap doors and I always wondered why. I thought it might be where we were put if we misbehaved.

26. The desks all came up and joined onto each other. The classes sat in rows, Primary 7, Primary 6, Primary 5 and Primary 4. I can't remember the name of the teacher but she wasn't much of a teacher. She was dark haired and looked a bit like Dame Edna. She was a horrible woman. She didn't have a nice word to say about anybody. She came in from the outside. There was a class next door for five and six year olds. The teacher for the wee ones was much nicer. We used to hear those children laughing.
27. The teacher would set us work. We would give it to her to get it marked and she was just crabbit if we questioned anything. I remember questioning something. I said I'd done it before at my previous school. She told me I had to do it again. We used to get these books, like wee test books. I remember getting higher than the people next to me. Somebody else would mark it and give you your book back. I said, "Miss, they marked that wrong and it should have been right." I was cracking up because it meant I should have got the top mark, higher than the Primary 7 children even though I was Primary 5. The teacher wasn't interested. She was just dismissive. We were never praised.
28. It was coming up to Christmas and there was a lot of singing. I showed one of the wee ones where the words were. That was the only time the teacher was ever nice to me, because I was helping the wee ones. We were shown TV at school. We all liked 'Singing Together'. We also watched 'How We Used To Live'. There was nothing to push us, nothing to make us want to learn and progress. I can't remember art or anything like that. It was just workbook after workbook. We had to read the Catechism and sit and shut up. We didn't get any homework.
29. We had breaks and went out to play. There was a concrete yard outside the school. We went back to our groups for lunch. We'd then have a bit of a playtime and play tig and things like that. The teacher would come out and ring the bell. PE was horrible. We were all in the same room and the boys and the girls had to strip. It was embarrassing. We would wear whatever ugly shorts and t-shirt were there and it felt horrible. We would run around in our bare feet. There was nothing compared to a normal primary school. I normally loved PE, but not in there.

30. There was no encouragement of any kind in Smyllum. I could read music before I went there and do the hymns, but there was no encouragement to do that. The only thing we did do is go swimming. The younger school children didn't go, but the rest of us walked to the swimming pool in Lanark. They had to test us for swimming. The guy used a pole in a ring. I told him that I didn't need it. He said I had to use it. I took two strokes and he took it off me. I told him I had a gold medal for being ██████████ Schools champion when I was nine. I used to swim myself at the deep end. I don't think it was every week. I liked going to the swimming. I think it was part of the schools' programme then, that children had to learn to swim. I'd done it in my school in Cumbernauld.

Work/chores

31. I used to polish the shoes for the whole house every day, by the back door. I don't know what everybody else did, but the Sister told me that was my job. I did it at night, after dinner. I didn't mind doing it because I was next to the payphone. I was always hoping that one of my family would phone. After polishing the shoes, I don't think there was much time left before bedtime. Sometimes, I'd go for the milk in the morning. It was in a big giant urn so there were two of us doing it. We had to set the tables for every meal. We also helped with the dishes. All the children did that.

Leisure time

32. I can't really remember doing any activities after school. We were allowed outside, but it was winter when I was there so it was dark. There was a TV room and a playroom on our level. There were some toys in the playroom, but I'm not sure whether I played with them or whether I played with my own stuff. After I'd been there for a while, the Sister took my toys off me. I took a flaky because it was all my own stuff. It was the only stuff I had that was all mine. She said that I had too much. I'd share it with the other children and play with them. It all just got put in the toy box or the cupboard.
33. There were a lot of trees on the grounds and a swing park round the back. I used to go out and climb trees. I was great at climbing up but I could never get back down. I got stuck a couple of times. I fell off a wee tree once and the Sister came to me. I had knocked myself out a bit.

34. We got 25 pence pocket money on a Saturday. We could do what we wanted with it. We were allowed to walk into Lanark, into the town, and buy sweets. We were allowed to go on our own, but it wasn't really that far by the time we got down the driveway and there was usually a staff member around for the little ones. We used to go in wee groups. Some weekends, I got to go to my sister's. It wasn't every weekend because I remember walking around the grounds in tears, thinking, "Why am I here?" I couldn't understand why I had been put there.
35. I had to go down the street for something. It was dark and late. I'm not sure how far away it was from Smyllum. I was with a girl who was about fifteen or sixteen. On the way back up, something freaked me out. I saw somebody running through the trees. I wouldn't walk up the driveway. We walked back down and phoned the Sister to come and get us. She wasn't too pleased.

Trips and Holidays

36. We went to the Kelvin Hall in Glasgow at Christmas time. Students took us and I think it was paid for by the government. We went in a coach. There were two or three of us to each student. We went to the circus. That was a good thing and I enjoyed doing that. I went out for Christmas parties as well.

Birthdays and Christmas

37. There were Christmas parties. I ended up at two or three of them. They were for children up to the age of ten and children from aged eight to twelve, so I ended up the right age for all of them. When they found out, I told them that I was the right age. One of the parties was at the Cartland Bridge Hotel, next to Lanark. It was all children from the home there. We got a dinner and there was a support worker there. It was the first time that I'd tasted coffee in a small cup. I had a thing for coffee and the support worker was showing me the sugar and all that. It was nice. We also went to a Christmas party at a boys' home in Peebles. I think there was country dancing or something, but it wasn't so much fun.
38. They had a big, real Christmas tree in the dining hall at Smyllum. I was away for Christmas day. I went to my sister-in-law's. The children didn't get a lot for Christmas.

There were maybe presents donated. It was like Pound Shop stuff, under the small Christmas tree in the playroom. I was given presents by people at home because I had been in Smyllum. Sister wanted to take them back off me.

39. I got to see my school pals at Christmas time. I remember sitting with my teacher and the other children were asking me what it was like. She'd told them that I was coming back and going to see them. She wanted me to be friendly with my pals and I used to write letters to them.
40. I was in Smyllum for my birthday, but there was no celebration. I can't remember any birthdays being celebrated.

Religious instruction

41. I think we went to Mass every morning, although it could have been because I was there during Lent. The chapel was down the stairs somewhere, in Smyllum. I couldn't describe it. It was boring. Other than at Mass, we said grace before and after meals. When we were in Mass, we had to sit and behave and be quiet.

Visits

42. I had lived with my sister-in-law and her children in Cumbernauld before I went into Smyllum. The only time I got to see my sister-in-law and her family was when I went to stay with them at Christmas time. No other visits were arranged. I felt really lonely. None of my siblings were in Smyllum with me. My sister, [REDACTED] would come from the Uddingston area to Lanark on the 240 bus. It took about an hour and a half. Most weekends, I went to stay with [REDACTED] I got to see my brother and my other sister at [REDACTED] She would take me out on a Friday and then back to Smyllum on a Sunday. Most of the children stayed in Smyllum. I would dread going back on a Sunday. I was lucky because I had people for me. The staff could do what they wanted to the other children because they didn't have anybody.
43. My aunty and uncle would come and take me out as well. Two sets of aunties and uncles wanted to foster me. My big brother came up from Blackpool to see me. The same weekend, [REDACTED] came up to see me on a Friday. Later on, my sister, [REDACTED] told me

that Sister and staff complained about it and said that I had too many visitors. [REDACTED] got a call from the social worker, saying Smyllum had complained about the number of visits I was getting. They said it was upsetting me, but how could it upset me?

44. When I had visitors, I would see them in the playroom. I was allowed to go out with my visitors as well. I remember my aunty and uncle taking me down the street and getting me lots of sweeties. I gave them to all the children in the home. They weren't getting out and they never had any sweets so I wanted to share them. When my brother [REDACTED] visited, he gave me money. I bought myself two pairs of shoes from a shop in Lanark. The shoes that I had come in with didn't fit me. My sister-in-law had given me them and they were too big for me. They were adult shoes for me to grow into. I didn't want to part with them because they were a memory of my sister-in-law.
45. I know there were social workers involved with me before I left my family home. They were still involved in Cumbernauld, but I'm sure it was only the odd visit. In Smyllum, I can't remember having a one-to-one with a social worker. It wasn't always the same social worker. They changed all the time. I do remember a social worker coming to Smyllum in connection to me being fostered. I can't remember the names of any social workers at that time.

Healthcare

46. When I fell out of the tree and banged my head, the Sister just asked if I was alright and that was it. I didn't get sick when I was there. I never saw a nurse or a dentist. The only person I remember being sick was [REDACTED]. I remember her having shingles. I didn't know what it was. She had to put powdery stuff on it. She was basically administering it herself. She was about eleven. She was the first child I met at Smyllum because she was off school with shingles when I got there. I don't remember there being a matron or a doctor looking after our health, just the Sister. I didn't see a dentist.

Abuse at Smyllum

Force feeding

47. We were given curry within the first month of me being in Smyllum. I'm sure it was packet curry. I'd never seen that type of food before. I remember wondering what it was. It was boiled rice and this stuff. I took a taste of it. It had sultanas in it and it was rotten. I told the Sister that I didn't like it but she told me to eat it. I told her that I couldn't eat it and that I didn't like it. I was forced to eat it. The Sister stood right over me. She said I was nothing but spoiled. She said, "Eat it. You're too fussy. You've been spoiled. Don't waste good food."
48. The next thing, I vomited and I had to sit and eat it in front of everybody. I was being told, "It's good food. Eat it. You've got to eat it. This is what you've got to eat." It didn't matter that I'd vomited. It didn't matter, anything. It was absolutely disgusting. All the other children were away. My group was away. The older children came in. The Sister said, "She's not to move until she eats it." I can still taste it and I can still smell it.
49. After that, any time there was dinner, I knew from up the stairs what it was because I could smell it. When it was curry, I would think, "Here we go." It was put down in front of me, knowing that I would vomit and knowing that I had to eat it. The other meal that was just as bad was chicken supreme. They used to go to the cash and carry and buy all the food, so there were only so many dinners that they made. It could have been once a week we had chicken supreme or curry and it was absolutely disgusting. The Sister in charge of my group would stand over me and tell me to get it eaten. Even if I was gagging and boking, I had to put it back in my mouth again.
50. I think I was sick two, maybe three times. After a while, I would sit there and refuse to eat it. I wouldn't put it anywhere near my mouth at all. I wasn't going to vomit any more. The Sister in charge of my group would tell me that I was ungrateful and spoiled. The older children came in. It was [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They took my dinner off my plate and ate it for me. It was cold by the time they came in, but they helped me. I don't think the Sister was aware they were doing that.

51. We would come home for lunch because the school was on the grounds. Once, we had Eve's pudding and I asked for more. The staff said, "Oh, we've found something EXG likes." They made a fool of me. I thought they were going to give me it to see how much they could give me before I vomited again, that's what it felt like. I wasn't a fussy eater, I'd just never eaten rice unless it was rice pudding. I'd never tasted a curry or anything like that. The smell will never leave me. Never.

Physical abuse

52. Things happened during the night. Boys on my floor got battered in the wash room. ■■■■■ was definitely one of them. ■■■■■ might have been battered as well, but I'm not sure who the other one was. I could hear them being hit with something because you could hear it swishing. It was echoing. I heard them screaming, "Please, Sister. Stop, Sister. I'm sorry, Sister." I would sit on my bed, holding my blankets. I was terrified. I knew it was ■■■■■'s voice. That happened three or four times in the six months that I was there. ■■■■■ was battered at least twice in that time by the Sister. I don't know what he was being hit with. ■■■■■ was older than me, maybe ten or eleven. I still don't know what any wean could do to deserve that. I don't know who the other boy was because all I could hear was the voice and we didn't have much to do with the boys.
53. I think one of the times it happened was at the weekend and I just happened to be there. I'm sure the Irish member of staff was there because her room was right next to my dormitory.
54. In the morning, we just got up. There was no sound. I can't remember any sound. Getting washed and brushing our teeth, nobody was talking. Everything was just so quiet, even on the way to school. ■■■■■ was there, but nobody opened their mouths. We didn't want to let on that we knew, but we all knew. There was no way you could avoid hearing it. Nobody said anything, just head down and get up to school. That was the way we went, head down, go to school and take whatever was coming. We were too scared to open our mouths in case we'd be next. We couldn't say anything to anybody. We were like wee soldiers. I never saw any marks on the boys because we all kept our heads down. I'll never forget it. I'll never forget those boys' screams.

Sexual abuse

55. Theresa McGrane was sexually abused at Smyllum, but I didn't realise it until I was older. When I was there, we were talking to each other. She was describing how the Father was abusing her. I thought she was talking about her dad. She said she could feel him inside her tummy. Later on in life, I was studying childcare at college and we went through abuse. They said that at that time, the children were taken away from the home rather than the abuser. I thought that it must have been her dad and that was why Theresa and her sister ended up in care.

56. When the Inquiry started, Theresa McGrane waived her anonymity. I saw her on the internet about two or three years ago. There was a video of her saying things. When I heard her statement, I realised she was talking about me being made to eat my own vomit. She knew what had happened to me at the dinner table because she used to eat my dinner for me. She also disclosed that her arm was broken, but that happened long before I was there. When I got there, Theresa was fourteen and she'd been there a lot longer. When she'd spoken about Father, I thought she was talking about her dad but when I saw the video, I realised she had been abused by a priest. I never saw any sexual abuse at Smyllum. When Theresa told me what happened, she was talking about things that had happened to her when she was younger, before I went to Smyllum.

Reporting of abuse at Smyllum

57. The force feeding only stopped when my big sister caught Sister doing it. She came early on a Friday to collect me for the weekend. It ended up that I would just get a spoonful of curry and a spoonful of rice for my dinner. I refused point blank to eat it. I was sitting with the big children. The tears were dripping down my face. My big sister walked in and asked what was wrong with me. They told her that I wasn't eating my dinner. ■■■ asked me what was wrong and I said that I couldn't eat it. She said, "She can't eat this. She's not been brought up with rice. She hasn't got a clue." I was allowed to go away. Up until then, the big children had been eating it for me.

58. I was quite stubborn. I think it was because [REDACTED] had come in and seen the Sister and she had stood up for me. I knew the older girls were standing up for me too. I think the Sister was more scared of me than some of the other children because she knew that I was getting away for the weekends. I think I got more leeway because she was scared that I would open my mouth, but at the same time I was terrified to open my mouth. I didn't tell anybody about it for years.

Leaving Smyllum

59. I was in Smyllum for six months. Both of my aunties wanted to foster me. They were my mum's sisters. When they found out that I was in the home, they wanted to do something to help. I was trying to work out who was nearer to my brothers and sisters. I chose the aunty who I thought was nearer to the rest of my family. The social workers allowed me to pick. The move didn't happen overnight. They visited me in the home first. I then went to my aunty and uncle's for one or two weekends. My aunty and uncle collected me from Smyllum.
60. Before my mum died, something had happened to me at my aunty [REDACTED]'s house. I was about five or six. I was staying there with my sister [REDACTED], who is about a year older than me. I don't know why we were staying there, but maybe our mum was in hospital. [REDACTED] and I were in one bed and my cousins were in the other bed. They were older than us. Somehow it came about that I had to go in beside one and [REDACTED] had to go in beside the other. [REDACTED] asked me to touch him and I did. [REDACTED] was asked to touch [REDACTED] but she didn't. We ended up back in our own beds. The next day, [REDACTED] and I were talking to each other and we spoke about what had happened. We said we should just forget about it.
61. When I was in Smyllum, I knew that my Aunty [REDACTED]'s wasn't that far away because I had been there before. My Aunty [REDACTED] was also nice. I knew I would be able to see [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and I knew where they were. I chose to go to my Aunty [REDACTED]'s. I shouldn't have but I did. I left Smyllum at the end of [REDACTED].

██████████, ██████████, Coatbridge

62. I had a birthday just before going to my aunty and uncle's. I think it was my tenth or eleventh birthday but I'm not sure. My aunty and uncle were nice to me. They had three children, but ██████████ was a lot older, about eighteen. ██████████ was about two years older than me and ██████████ was about four years older than me. Everything was fine for a while, but it ended up not being fine. When I came out of Smyllum, my aunty told me that ██████████ had bought me an ██████████ for my birthday. I thought that maybe he just liked me.

Routine at the ██████████

Mornings and Bedtime

63. I had a nice room. I shared with my big cousin, ██████████. She had one bed and I had another bed. I had a nice duvet, wardrobe and drawers.

School

64. I went to Columba High School in Coatbridge. It wasn't far from where I lived. In my first year, I got As. After the abuse started, all my marks went down to Cs, Ds and Es within that six to eight months. I've got my school reports in my house. You can see the difference before and after the abuse started.
65. My housemaster, who may have been called Mr Timmons, took me into his office. He asked me if there was anything going on. He knew something was wrong but I couldn't tell him. It was difficult because he was a man and I was only in his room for about five minutes. The school knew that I was fostered. I think he did the right thing and referred me to the social work because shortly afterwards I had to go and see a social worker in Coatbridge.
66. I started skipping school. I would walk from Coatbridge to Viewpark. I would take my pals with me. We would run across the M8 motorway. We would cut through the graveyard, across the M8, over the farm and through the glen. My aunty and uncle

didn't know. I would write my own letters to the school with curly bits on the handwriting. I wasn't bad or cheeky at school. I got my head down and got on with things as much as I could so the fact I was skipping school wasn't noticed.

Visits/social work involvement

67. After I was taken into my teacher's office at school, I was told that I had to go to the social work department in Coatbridge. I had to go by myself to see some social worker. My pals walked me to the corner because it was in a bit of Coatbridge that I didn't know. I only knew how to walk to school and walk back again.
68. I went in with a social worker. She said, "Hello." I can't remember her asking me anything. I can't even remember any conversation with her so it was pointless. She took me home to my aunty and uncle's in her car. They were upset that I had been spoken to without them being there.
69. A social worker would come to the house about every six months. They would say, "How are you doing? Is everything fine?" That was it. They would basically ask how my schoolwork was and how I was behaving at school. They would see my school reports. My aunty and uncle were always present when social workers spoke to me. I never spoke to them alone. They never asked me why my school grades changed from straight As to Cs, Ds and Es. They put it down to me being a teenager and making bad choices. It was put down to me being bad.

Running away

70. I ran away from my aunty's. My boy cousins were calling me names and saying things that I didn't understand. They were making a fool of me. They would say things like, "Buttocks," in front of their friends. I didn't know what they were talking about. I ran to my big sister, [REDACTED] She didn't have a phone so I remember being at the phone box and telling my aunty that I wasn't coming back. Apparently, my uncle took a flaky with the boys and said that they'd behave themselves. I think that was before my cousin touched me.

Discipline

71. My uncle was quite strict. I wasn't allowed to wear nail varnish. I wasn't allowed to lie down on my belly and watch telly with my legs up or anything like that. I had to sit perfectly. I gave my pal [REDACTED] the house phone number. He was a pal, not a boyfriend in that sense. My Uncle said there would be no boys phoning me. Page three used to get put into the fire.
72. When my behaviour deteriorated, my aunty and uncle didn't give me pocket money. I never had any money. I ended up in my sister's house. The previous week, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had been shoplifting in Glasgow. I decided to go with them. I had no Christmas presents because I had no pocket money since September. I got caught and I was put into a cell. I was thirteen. [REDACTED] was sixteen so he was put into the men's section. The police asked him what was wrong with me. They thought I had taken drugs. They didn't believe I was only thirteen because of my height. [REDACTED] told them that I was in shock. They didn't listen. They just stuck me in a cell.
73. Two lassies came in. They were eighteen but they were pretending they were fifteen. They were professional shoplifters and they went out every weekend. They were nice to me when they found out my age. They said that I shouldn't be in there. I spent three or four hours in the cell until they chucked us out. I don't even remember getting a drink of water. I went back to my sister, [REDACTED]. She was going to kill us. I didn't want to go back to my aunt and uncle's but [REDACTED] persuaded me to go back.
74. That happened just before Christmas. My aunt and uncle didn't want me there. I didn't get any presents for Christmas. That was my punishment. I left shortly afterwards, some time after Christmas.

Abuse at the [REDACTED]

75. I don't know 100% when it started to happen. I think it might have been in the summer when my cousin, [REDACTED], went away to Benidorm. Either when she was in Spain or she was away for a weekend, I woke up and somebody was touching me. I froze. I didn't know what was going on. I can still remember seeing the light coming through and my

cousin, [REDACTED] going out the door. I don't know how often it happened and I don't know how long it went on for. I just remember lying in my bed, greeting. I had a teddy bear and I remember cuddling my teddy bear, wondering what I should do. He'd be hiding at the bottom of my bed and down the side of my bed at different times.

76. My Aunty was a bit old-fashioned. I had to ask for things like bras. My pal gave me one of hers and it was red. I remember coming home from school and sitting at the dressing table in my bedroom. I was messing about with make-up and brushing my hair. I jumped into [REDACTED]'s bed and opened up her wardrobe. She was bigger than me so I was trying on her t-shirts to see if they would fit me. There was a pair of feet. I screamed. [REDACTED] was under [REDACTED]'s bed, watching me. The next thing his brother [REDACTED] came in and said, "Is he in here?" He was covering up for [REDACTED] and acting as if they were playing a game of hide and seek.
77. I didn't understand any of it. I didn't know what to do. I'm sure I wet myself one night. I think my aunty was scared of [REDACTED] He was in control of the house. If he wanted something, he demanded it and he got it. It was as if she didn't want to rock the boat with him. I didn't want to hurt my aunty by telling her what was happening. I didn't know how to explain what was going on.
78. [REDACTED]'s abuse continued until I left my aunty's house. The last thing I can remember is him trying to kiss me. All I could smell was Buckfast, although I didn't know it was Buckfast at the time. I can still smell it. I can still feel him.

Leaving the [REDACTED]

79. I started drinking, smoking and stealing from the house. My aunty and uncle didn't understand why. I didn't know what was going on with me. I was put out of the house when I was just coming up to fourteen. It was [REDACTED] 1979. My uncle told me not to come back to the house. I had just been too bad. There must have been social work involvement but I have no vivid memories of that.

Staying with various family members

80. I went to stay with my sister [REDACTED] for a wee while. She lived in Uddingston but she didn't really have any room for me. She had two children of her own and my brother [REDACTED] was there as well. I can't remember how long I was there for, but it was only temporary until I got something else. I moved to Cardinal Newman High School. There were people in my class that had been in primary school, so that was alright. I then ended up with my sister [REDACTED] in Viewpark, the area I lived in when I was wee.
81. My sister [REDACTED] was already staying there. She had been fostered by [REDACTED]. It was okay there for a while until we had no gas, no electricity, no food, no money, nothing. My brother-in-law was a gambler. He would cash the allowance cheque they got for me and [REDACTED] at the club. He would take £15 for his pocket money, but then he would also owe money. Everything got spent by him. [REDACTED] was left with the dregs.
82. I told my social worker we had nothing to eat, no clothes to wear, no birthday presents. My social worker at the time was Mr Brown. He used to go to the pub with my brother-in-law. I was told not to open my mouth again. The social worker came in with a birthday present for [REDACTED]. My birthday was on the same day but he didn't bring me anything. A while later, [REDACTED] and her husband were having a party in the house with their pals. I was down the stairs and I drank some vodka. I went to bed and vomited. [REDACTED] asked me what I'd done. I told her that I'd been drinking their vodka. I got up the next day and I was ill. My brother-in-law told me to get out because I'd drank his vodka.
83. I phoned [REDACTED] and she let me stay with her again. [REDACTED] and her husband were trying to set up their own business and they were having financial problems. They didn't want to use the benefit that they got for me on themselves. I ended up moving to my other sister [REDACTED]'s in Glenboig. I was about fifteen, sixteen by this time. [REDACTED] wasn't my favourite sister. Glenboig was a little village in the middle of nowhere. I still went to Cardinal Newman High School. I left the house at 7.30am to go to school and I got home after 5.00pm. I didn't want to change schools again because I'd had enough of moving.

84. It was alright for a while, but [REDACTED] was really miserable. She didn't give me any money. I was a smoker. If I smoked one of [REDACTED]'s fags, I had to give her £1. I didn't get school money or lunch money off her. It was horrible there. I used to borrow a bus ticket from my pals and go to my sister [REDACTED]'s for my lunch. Then I started skipping school again. [REDACTED] told me to come up at the weekends to do ironing and housework. She would give me money for that.
85. [REDACTED] split up with her man and I moved back again. I was still at school and I then moved back to [REDACTED]'s. I messed up my standard grades so I stayed on at school for fifth year to do them again. My dad died when I was in fifth year and I never went back to school. [REDACTED] fell out with me for three months. I didn't have a clue what they were talking about when I was in school. My head was anywhere but where it should have been. I stayed with [REDACTED] until I was nearly eighteen.
86. When I was still at [REDACTED]'s I ended up getting a boyfriend and he knocked lumps out of me. I finally got the courage to say what was happening and that I was getting battered. Six months later, I had been thrown out of [REDACTED]'s. I ended up staying in Viewpark with my brother and his wife. She allowed me to drink and smoke whereas [REDACTED] didn't approve of all that.

Leaving care

87. Throughout the time when I was staying with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and my brother's wife, I was still under the care of social work. I've no time for social workers. They did nothing for me. There was never any support or explanation all the way through it. It was just what happened, take it and shut up. There was nothing to help me leave care and start my own life. There was no support. There was nothing. It was wrong. No social worker ever sat me down when I was fifteen or sixteen to ask me my plans. I think my sister was given some help when she left care. I think they gave her some help with finding somewhere to stay. She ended up going away to London.

Life after leaving care

88. After I left [REDACTED] at the age of eighteen, I stayed with my brother's wife. I was on the housing list for five years. I went on it at the age of seventeen, when I was still under social work care. I was homeless until I was 22. The housing officer at the Civic Centre in Motherwell told me that I'd be housed earlier if I had a baby. My sister was told the same thing on the same day in the next cubicle. We both came out shocked and disgusted. How could we look after a baby in the position that we were in? I was with my sister-in-law for about five years before I got my own flat. I was like a slave in there, doing housework and cleaning. I didn't get married till I was in my thirties. My sisters ended up as single parents. I never wanted that because I saw how hard it was for them.
89. I was okay with my husband and when it was just us and the kids. They were mostly happy days. We had problems when my husband's son abused my daughter. At that time, my husband was a functioning alcoholic. When I went into hospital to have my youngest daughter, I told him not to leave our oldest daughter alone with his son. He did so anyway and I think that's when she was abused. She was two and a half and he was fourteen. We had taken him in so that he didn't have to go into a home. My daughter said things to me that made me realise she was being sexually abused.
90. I told my health visitor and child protection became involved. The police were never involved. We were just left to get on with it. The social workers accused my husband of being the abuser so I was left to decide whether it was my husband or his son. My daughter had nightmares and would wake up terrified. The son's family ostracised us because they said that I was a liar. My husband started drinking when it happened and he never stopped. It affected his kidneys and his liver. He died four years later.
91. I went back to learning in my forties. I went to college. It was only through having my children that I learned about colleges. When my children went to nursery, I got on well with the head. They did courses in the nursery and I realised that I liked to learn. I went on to help other parents to do the taster courses. My husband took ill. I was trying to make a life for myself so that I could support my two children after he had gone. When he died, I went onto a course called Positive Options for Parents. They did things to

build up your self-esteem and self-confidence. They took us round the local colleges and we did courses in different things.

92. I decided to do a course to become a teaching assistant. At the time, they wanted a classroom assistant in every class. I passed all my exams and completed the course. There was then a change of government and they decided that they didn't need us. There were 250 applicants for each job. I wasn't getting anywhere so I ended up being a volunteer in schools. I helped immigrant children with their language skills. I would play games, read stories and paint pictures, trying to get them to recognise words. I enjoyed doing that.
93. I did another course in social care about working with communities. It was about helping people in communities to move forward, showing them the right places to go to get help. I passed my Higher National Certificate in that. I then had to go part-time on the course because I was having difficulties with my daughter's behaviour. I did that for a year and then they closed the course. I didn't enjoy studying part-time because I didn't learn in the same way.
94. I didn't do anything for about a year and a half and then I decided to go self-employed as a cleaner. I can clean and clean and clean and clean. That's what I do. I did that for about five years. I stopped doing that because I couldn't cope with that and caring for my sister. The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry started and then I tried to commit suicide. I fell out with my sister and then fell back in with her a few months later. I continued to care for her for another three and a half, four years. I helped her to get her house. I was caring for her, doing my cleaning and my daughter needed me as well. I was being pulled in every direction and it was too much. Since January, I've just been caring for my daughter and doing a little cleaning. My physical health isn't great. I had pneumonia last year. I've got COPD. I know I'm not supposed to work, but I couldn't live without doing some kind of work.

Impact

Education/work

95. I feel as if there was no support to tell me what I could do or what I could achieve after leaving care. There was no support when it came to work or training, nothing at all. It was just finished and that was it. If someone had paid attention to me when I was at school, they'd have wondered what was going on and whether it was more than just being a teenager. I'd gone from As to struggling in such a short period of time. Apart from one teacher, nobody thought to check what had happened to me. Nothing came of that. I only came to learn of colleges as a place of learning when I was in my forties. I went back to education at that time.

Relationships

96. Relationships were difficult because people didn't know that I'd been in a home and I didn't want to tell them. After leaving care and up until I got married, things happened to me in relationships. Things would happen that I didn't want to happen and I felt powerless to stop it. I just felt that I had no control at all to stop them having sex with me. I couldn't say no. I couldn't say anything. I get on alright with men, but they now know not to get too close to me. Maybe because I got married, I am now able to stand up for myself. My husband died fifteen years ago and I've not been in a relationship since. I don't want anybody coming near me because I'm afraid.
97. I know a lot people but I'm not close to anybody. I put on a face. I don't think people would understand. I pretend that I'm okay because as soon as you tell people that you don't feel good, they run away. They don't want to know anyway so what's the point?

Religion

98. I went away from the church for a long time, but I went back. My children have been brought up Catholic. I know there are bad people in every walk of life. I know that as an adult. When I go into church, it can calm me. Prayer in any religion is like meditation.

Self-esteem

99. Everything I've done has always been for other people. I kept everything away from me. Now I'm starting to do things for me, I'm starting to deal with me. I've never thought that I was good enough or that I was worthy of anything. A lot of it goes back to being told that I was spoiled when I was in Smyllum. How could I have been spoiled? I had lost my mammy and my brothers and sisters.
100. I always felt inferior when I was with priests and nuns. I never felt that I was good enough. I felt lower than everyone else. Now I know that we're all the same and that I'm entitled to see people at the same level as me. One of my customers told me to look into people's eyes. I couldn't do it. I would feel all hot, embarrassed, shy and panicky. It took me four years to be able to make eye contact. I feel as if I've not done a lot of understanding about what real life is because I've been stuck in my head.
101. I've always blamed myself for [REDACTED]'s abuse. I've never told anybody about it because it was all my own fault anyway. I just did what I was told. I've done that all my life. Even though I knew that it was wrong. I didn't know what was next, where else I might go. I couldn't fall out with whoever I was staying with because I'd get flung out. I remember one social worker saying to me, "You've done it all yourself. You've made all the decisions yourself." I used to think I was causing all the problems and the reason why they all split up. My brother split up with his wife, then my sister split up with her husband and then my other sister split up with her husband. Everything was my fault. That was how I always felt about myself. I felt like I couldn't put a foot wrong because I'd be put out. I had nowhere else to go. I had to put up with whatever I was asked because I had no choice. Now I know that I've brought up two good weans. I feel better about myself.
102. I'm starting to do things for myself. I've always felt undeserving and not worthy of doing anything for me. I would make do with nothing. I would never spend anything on myself. I would always go without because I've gone without all my life. I'm starting to put myself first. I was my sister's carer. I've got her in a better place and she's got a new, clean house. She's got money in the bank and I helped her with all that. Her children want the money. I was stopping them from going to the bank so they didn't

like me. I couldn't cope with it. I couldn't do anymore for my sister so I gave it up. I told her she'd need to be strong herself. My daughter needs me now so I'm her carer. I'm ticking boxes and clearing things away that aren't good for me. I'm in my fifties and I'm finally making my own decisions about things instead of being a robot.

Mental health

103. All my life, I've just tried to pretend things are alright. It never went away. It maybe went away for periods, like when I was drunk. I binge drink. If there's a bottle there, I'll drink it and then I stop. I would take drugs, smoking and cocaine. I've gambled as well. I just move on to different things. I would constantly be on the go, a hundred miles an hour all the time. I'm trying to slow down. I'm doing my best not to drink and not to gamble. I've been trying to learn to change my bad behaviours through my psychologist.
104. I wanted to die at the age of twelve. I've suffered from panic attacks for years. I've been on anti-depressants. I don't eat properly. At one point, I was overeating until I was sick. I was prescribed medicine for that. At other times, I don't eat. Sometimes I withhold food from myself as a punishment when I'm unhappy. I can eat the same thing over and over. I don't like eating in front of people. I get scared that I might choke. I can only eat in restaurants if I have everybody else to my back. I can be very regimented. If I'm doing my lists, I'm fine but if I step outside of them, it's scary. I fall apart when I have to be physically examined.
105. I don't like crowds. I sing nursery rhymes to get me round Tesco. Now it's easier because I have a 24 hour Tesco and it's quieter. I take diazepam before I go on a plane so that I can go to sleep. I have to get on last or I can't breathe. I've learned to drive so that I don't have to get on the bus. Trains are better because they're more airy, but even on trains I pick quiet times to travel.
106. I've always gone at one hundred miles an hour. That's how I cope. I go at a hundred miles per hour and then I crash. I try to fit in as much as I can. When I can't do things because my physical health slows me down it affects my mental health as well.

107. Around the time I saw Theresa McGrane on the internet, I was trying to help my sister. I was filling in forms for her and being knocked back repeatedly. She's an alcoholic. Her house was disgusting. The doctor had written to social work to say that she was living in squalor, asking them to help. They asked me to bring her up but she wouldn't leave the house so they said that they couldn't help us. Then my sister fell out with me. The Inquiry started happening and I couldn't cope with it anymore. I felt so guilty for not giving evidence and supporting everybody else. I tried to commit suicide.
108. My daughters were terrified. They contacted my big brother and I told him that I couldn't cope with everything anymore. He told me I needed to sort myself out. I put it off and put it off and then eventually I went to the doctor. I opened up about some of the things that happened to me but the doctor doesn't know the full extent of it. I had spoken about certain things to the doctor years before. I always got to a certain point when I couldn't speak anymore. It's been going on for years. I've been on what I call my happy pills on and off since my teens.
109. When I was younger, my best friend took her own life and I found her. She had also been abused by her brother and we would speak to one another about our stuff. I started going for counselling after she died, but I fell pregnant soon afterwards. I had to stop the counselling because I couldn't cope with it. I was back at counselling for nearly a year, talking things through. It stopped due to COVID-19. It needs to get finished. It's still in my head, but the counselling was helping. I've seen my doctor recently and asked her if I could see someone again. I think I have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and I need help for the things that have happened to me.

Reporting of abuse

110. When I was about sixteen, I tried to talk to my big sister ■■■ about being sexually abused by ■■■ I didn't understand any of it. I didn't know whether what had happened was normal. I thought it might just be what happened. I didn't go into it all, but I told ■■■ that he used to touch me. She said, "Things happen." I don't know whether something had happened to her growing up.

111. [REDACTED] is a paramedic, an ambulance driver. My daughter took a temperature fit. I was in Monklands Hospital, after my daughter had been seen to. I was waiting to get a taxi home and he saw me. He said, "What are you doing here?" I told him it had nothing to do with him. When I moved to Bellshill, my friend met this fella and he was best friends with my cousin, [REDACTED]. I was about to come out with it, "Why? Why did you do it to me?" I freaked out. I wasn't able to say it to him but I wanted to. He was acting as if nothing had happened. I was then at a family funeral. [REDACTED] was just sitting there, looking all smug. I was ready to say it in front of everybody, "What did you do that to me for?" It was the nearest I ever got and I've never had the opportunity since. Over the years, I've tried. I've been outside the police station, ready to go in and make a complaint. I've never done it. I'm a coward.
112. Two or three years ago, the Inquiry started. I saw a video of Theresa McGrane on the internet, speaking about what happened to her at Smyllum. I was completely shocked. I fell apart. I couldn't cope. I tried to commit suicide. I felt so guilty that I hadn't given evidence to support everybody else, to back them up. I wasn't brave enough to do it when the Inquiry started. I was still living with the, "You need to keep your mouth shut." I eventually made my mind up to come forward to the Inquiry in the hope that it would help them in some way. Theresa McGrane stays in Norway. I've never had any contact with her, but I would like to see her or speak to her. I don't know how to get in contact with her. I feel as if I'm back at nine years old, speaking about it.

Records

113. I've managed to recover my records from Smyllum through Future Pathways. The records just say when I was there. It backed up what I felt, that I was a nothing and that I didn't exist. I'm still waiting to get my records from the Council. I've been waiting nine or ten months now. I'd like to see them. I want to see whether they noticed anything. The social workers never seemed to notice me. They just ticked a box and they were gone.

Lessons to be learned

114. By the time I got older, homes were different from the home that I was in. My sister was in a children's home and it was modern. She had her own room, her own wee sink and wardrobe. The staff would ask her what she wanted for her dinner. She got her pocket money every week. She got brand new school uniforms and she got to go to mainstream school. I thought it was amazing. I didn't understand why I was in Smyllum and a year a half later she was in that home. I was really angry about that. What was the difference? Now I've learned that there was abuse there as well. At the time to me, it looked modern, clean and like the children were well looked after. No matter what it looked like, abuse was still going on there as well.
115. I can't remember any social worker asking how I was feeling or whether I was alright. Nobody ever asked whether I wanted to go back and live somewhere or what I wanted to do. You can talk to children, but they've got to be able to trust you. You can't just expect them to trust you, then when they do trust you put it back in their face. If there's a problem there, they shouldn't be expecting the child to change it without any advice or support. That's what happened to me.
116. Children can tell lies as well, but then I would ask why they're telling lies? There will be something else behind it. There's usually something to make them tell the stories so it's not as if it's completely made up. They use play to speak to children now. They need to be allowed to express themselves for a bit and then you find out what's going on with them. Children can't open up so quickly when they're just being spoken to directly, especially when they don't understand it themselves.

Hopes for the Inquiry

117. I hope that no children will ever be treated badly. The children in care are in care for a reason, not because they want to be there. They're there because they need help. Help them. I grew up without a cuddle. I haven't had a cuddle since my mum died when I was seven. The only person who cuddled me was my husband and someone who shouldn't have been there in the first place. I cuddle my weans every night and

every morning. I tell them that I love them whenever they go out the door. There was no love when I was in care. I was in care but there was no care, nothing. You were put there and fed and clothed but that was it. You were left to wander about on your own. You were still lonely in your head. You got used to it. Children in care need to have love shown to them. They need to be totally protected from all abuse, every shape and every form of it.

118. 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 *13* ~~17~~ / *SEPT* / *2021*.....