

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FOV [REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name is FOV [REDACTED] and my date of birth is [REDACTED] 1966. My contact details are known to the inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I have three older brothers, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Our mum couldn't cope, having given birth to seven children so close together. She did her best but she couldn't cope half the time. Our dad was a nightmare so that's why she got rid of him. Our dad was not a very nice man at all.
3. Before we were taken into care permanently, we were looked after temporarily by the [REDACTED] family. We ended up with them years later. I think we ended up there because my mum was pregnant and she had to go into hospital. There was no abuse there. I was about two, I was in a pram. I was very young, so all I remember is sitting outside eating a yoghurt.
4. Anyway my mother left us many times to go out for the night, so we went across the road to speak to the neighbour and our neighbour called the police. My mum left us unattended as she had gone out for the night. She kept leaving us to go out drinking or dancing or a combination of both. I think it was just too much, having seven children.

5. My dad wasn't about at this time because my mum got divorced from him because he was an absolute tyrant. He was a horrible individual, as I found out later. There were quite a few of us. I was the third youngest.
6. We went across the road to neighbours. I think we'd been there before. They called the police and social workers came. It was then that we went in to Redhall.

Redhall Children's Home, Edinburgh

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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The ^{FPC-FPE} ██████████, Livingston – Foster care

9. After Redhall, I was placed with the ^{FPC-FPE} ██████████ Livingston. I don't know why I was placed there. That was one of my longest placements. I was there between the age of 5 and 9. ^{FPE} ██████████ and ^{FPC} ██████████ were in their fifties. When I arrived there, she already had grey hair.
10. I went with my sister ██████████ and a number of other children. There was me, ██████████, a girl called ██████████, another older boy and then ██████████ their own adopted son. ██████████

was disabled and in a wheel chair. [REDACTED]. There was also a brother and sister. I think the brother was called [REDACTED], that's all I can remember. There were about seven children, from my age up to seventeen. One guy was into David Bowie and he was much older.

Routine at the [REDACTED] FPC-FPE

11. I got on okay with the other children in the house. At first, I was in a room with my sister, [REDACTED]. We were in bunk beds. That was until she ran away.
12. For the first year at the [REDACTED] FPC-FPE I was in rubber pants and a nappy. I remember it digging into to me. I wet myself for the first year. I was six years old and I was in a high chair. I couldn't use a knife and fork. I used a spoon to eat, because they said I couldn't use a knife and fork. I was never taught how to use a knife and fork.

Food

13. Sunday dinners were meat and potatoes and stuff. The meat was horrible and had lots of fat on it. They would say you had to eat it. The worst was mushy peas with vinegar. If you didn't eat your dinner, you had to eat it at the next meal. They'd give it to you again at breakfast time.
14. The food was alright the rest of the week. The German biscuits were alright. But there wasn't enough food and it was boiled to within an inch of its life. During the week, if it was term time, I'd go to school. I don't remember the breakfast, except the time when we were given vinegary peas from the night before. I think I had cereal, maybe toast, sometime porridge and grapefruit. I think I washed my face then put my school uniform on.

Schooling

15. I was at St Andrew's Primary School. I had remedial teaching. I was a bit slow because I found out later that I'm dyslexic. I had a good primary school teacher, Miss Hughes. I think school was okay. And then you'd get home.
- I don't remember if they bought me clothes or anything. I had a pair of red trousers and I had t-shirts. I did have a school uniform with shoes. If you grew out of your shoes, that was ok. I was a Catholic. I think the nuns helped out with my dress when I had my first communion.

Leisure time

16. I used colouring books. We had a tortoise called Toby. I remember we had a gang hut that we'd go out to play in during the summer. We used to go and annoy a poor wee couple across the road. The guy made us a wooden gun. There was nothing great, really. I remember having a sale of work. I put a blanket out and sold stuff. We had made perfume out of petals. I don't think Christian Dior or any of these folk needed to worry about their profit margins.

Running away

17. My sister ran away and she never came back. She'd seen me being beaten. She told the social workers what was happening and they came to visit me. They said, "FOV [REDACTED] come and we'll have a chat with you." But I was too scared. I didn't know if they would take me somewhere else right away or if they'd leave me there to get another beating. So I just said, "No, no, it never happened."
18. I did run away once with another girl. I think it was [REDACTED]'s sister. I ran away to Leith. We walked all the way from Livingston to Leith, but they found us. I think I was about ten at the time.

Inspections

19. To avoid beatings, I used to go to the toilet on the carpet. Then the social workers came and took notes. I think they had a look at the stains on the carpet. I can't remember what was said to the social workers but I don't remember [FPC-FPE] ever telling the social workers that they didn't allow me to go to the toilet. I do remember them showing the social workers the stains on the carpet and I felt ashamed.

Christmas and Birthdays

20. Christmas was ok. We had some presents. I think they said they were from Santa. I can't remember any birthdays. I do remember Mrs [FPE] gave me an Icelandic purse once.

Abuse – [FPC-FPE]

21. [FPC-FPE] was one of the worst places. They put me in cold baths because I'd wet the bed but they wouldn't let me go to the toilet. If I went to the toilet in the middle of the night, I'd get caught and I'd get beaten. Then they would rub my nose in it. They told my sister once that she had to run the cold bath and put me in it. My sister, [FPC-FPE] was about twelve so about six years older than me. She was at high school. I remember her learning German. I think she ran away because of the beatings.
22. They wouldn't let me go to the toilet at bed time. To save me getting a beating or getting my head banged off the wall, I did it on the carpet. I had no choice. Then they discovered that I was doing it on the carpet, so I had to do it in buckets and throw it out of the window.
23. I remember getting my head banged off the wall because I couldn't sleep. The worst stuff was the beatings and not being allowed to go to the toilet. The beatings were carried out by a combination of [FPC-FPE]

24. I witnessed one kid being thrown down the stairs. I can't remember whether it was FPC or FPE, but they threw him down the stairs because he stole some Haliborange. He could have died.
25. I remember another child called [REDACTED]. I think she'd just had her wisdom tooth out. FPC [REDACTED] punched her or slapped her so hard that she was crying or screaming. I don't know why he did that. I don't know what it was with these people, they were just crazy and quite cruel.
26. FPC-FPE [REDACTED] took us to a place called Opportunity House in the Borders. We were with other children who were physically and mentally disabled. One memory I have of that place is being made to get in a bath after a child had left excrement in it.
27. Mrs FPE [REDACTED] bought me a lovely cardigan. I accidentally put a hole in it. I got a beating for that. My sister left when she'd had enough. She told the social workers, but I was too terrified to tell them in case I got another beating.
28. I witnessed something at FPC-FPE [REDACTED] that I didn't know was wrong at the time. I was only 6 or 7. I witnessed [REDACTED] and his natural sister having sex. They were having sexual relations. I'm quite ashamed, but I'd had other experiences myself and I didn't know it was wrong.
29. The mother was an absolute cow but he was an absolute sadist as well. You couldn't really win. The beatings, the lack of food and having to eat it again the next morning and not being allowed to go to the toilet were the worst things. I don't know what they wanted us to do about going to the toilet. I don't know why the social workers entrusted already damaged children to them. I think the social workers were quite lax in the type of people they used. I wouldn't have let them run a bath, never mind look after a child.

Abuse at father's house (whilst living at the [FPC-FPE])

30. My dad got access to me again when I was staying at the [FPC-FPE] God knows why they let him have access to me. He'd already had my sister taken away from him because he'd interfered with her.
31. I think my dad had been doing stuff to my brother because my brother thought that having sex with me was love. That's what he told me. I think I made it known or somehow the [FPC-FPE] found out because I remember my foster mum saying, "You are sharing a bed with your brother." And I said, "Yeah." So I don't know if she told social workers but I think it was a while before I got to go back.

Leaving the [FPC-FPE]

32. The [FPC-FPE] got too old to look after us. They retired and just left. I don't even remember them saying goodbye. They didn't even say they were going, they just left. Mrs [FPE]'s sister came and looked after us. She was alright. She was a nice woman. I can't remember her name.

Ferniehill Children's Home, 2 Ferniehill Street, Edinburgh

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Abuse at my father's house (whilst living at Ferniehill)

65. I had no visits from anyone in my family whilst I was at Ferniehill. I was allowed to go and visit my father. I would stay with him every other weekend. At first, it was supervised by social workers. Then they must have decided that he was alright after all.
66. That's when my dad raped me. He attempted to have sex with me. I thought he'd wet himself. There was stuff and it came down my leg and he said I'd wet myself. I was going regularly to my dad's at that time.
67. My other sister, [REDACTED], was raped by my dad. She found out years later that he wasn't her natural father.
68. My brothers and my sister [REDACTED] were living with my dad. I was sharing a bed with my brother and that's when he tried to have sex with me. My brother had sex with me at my dad's house. My other brother, [REDACTED] also tried to have sex with me but I wouldn't let him. My dad was having sex with my sister and I was trying to protect her by sleeping next to her.
69. My brothers' names are [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] is the youngest. I found out later that my dad had abused [REDACTED]. He is the one that tried to have sex with me. He thought that was love. That sort of explains his mixed up behaviour.
70. I don't understand why my sister, [REDACTED], was allowed to go and visit my father. She had been removed from his care and put into that home at Niddrie Marischal

because of his abuse and then she was allowed to go and visit him. They couldn't quite prove it, but it was enough to remove her.

71. I didn't tell anybody about my father or brothers abusing me at the time. It was years until I told anyone. Nothing ever happened to my dad about this and he's dead now.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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The [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Edinburgh – foster care

73. After Ferniehill, I went to live with the [REDACTED]. Mrs [REDACTED] was a single mother. She had three daughters, [REDACTED], who had left home, [REDACTED] and another daughter about the same age as me.

74. She was a bit too religious. She was a Catholic. She didn't eat properly. She would live on Ryvitas. It was alright there, but it wasn't a very nice area – we got burgled. I was there for about a year. The food was alright there.

75. That was where I met [REDACTED] again. We spoke about Ferniehill.

Secondary Institutions

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

GBV-SPO

Edinburgh – foster care

76. GBV-SPO had five of their own children, and It was ok there. It was a bit too suffocating, but Mrs heart was in the right place. She was very religious. They were a good family though and I still keep in touch with them. I had enough food and it was a nice house.
77. I hadn't lived with a family for a while. The other children were all the GBV-SPO children. I left because I kept fighting with their son, We were too close in age. We get on alright now. I think it broke down on both sides. I don't really remember how it came about that I left the GBV-SPO
78. My social worker Hilary said, "What kind of place would you like?" I said I'd like somewhere with a big family, a nice house, a cat and a dog. Hilary was really nice. She was going to adopt me at one point, but I don't know what happened there.

The – foster care

79. The social workers took me to meet and . They were great, although I did fight with the other kids. I was with them until was killed two weeks before Christmas, otherwise they were going to keep me. She was in a collision with a drink driver. I was taken away because couldn't cope. He was having to look after his own children and then go to work.

The , Edinburgh – foster care

80. I went back to the house again. That was bloody hell. was being cremated, which I didn't think was the most sensitive thing. The house was freezing, so I was freezing and depressed. There was a child there with severe learning difficulties. There was a young black

man called [REDACTED] who worked in a jewellers. No-one spoke to me about how sad I was feeling. It was a horrible place.

81. Nobody ever sat down and talked to me about my grief at losing [REDACTED]. It was just piled on with all the other crap that I had to deal with.
82. My teacher, Fiona Durkin, at St Thomas Aquinas said to me something like, "You shouldn't be grieving because it's the [REDACTED] who have lost their mother". I felt like punching her lights out.
83. My home economics teacher was going to try and adopt me. She was worried I might be moved to another school. All in all, I attended six different schools. I was at two high schools, Liberton and St Thomas Aquinas. Nobody diagnosed that I was dyslexic until a couple of years ago.

Canaan Lodge Children's Home, 35 Canaan Lane, Edinburgh

84. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
[REDACTED]
85. [REDACTED]

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Canaan Lodge

94. I left Canaan Lodge in about 1983. I was about 16. They tried to put me into another foster home. They found one nearby in Morningside. I didn't want to go there, as they'd just lost a child. I was still very upset about losing [REDACTED] and I didn't want to go to a family with a dead child. My face erupted and my skin was covered in blotches because I was so stressed. I couldn't get the social workers to understand. Eventually, they listened to me when my face erupted and I didn't have to go.

GBW-SPO [REDACTED]

Edinburgh – foster care

95. I'm not too sure where I went next, but I think it was to [REDACTED] Mr [REDACTED] was a right so and so. He was a police man. He worked at [REDACTED] Gardens. They would make me do all the ironing. I didn't like it. I complained about it. They were

stopped from fostering because they tried to adopt a child in Aberdeen rather than Edinburgh. I wasn't there for very long.

The Red House, Musselburgh

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Reporting of abuse

98. I didn't feel there was any point in reporting abuse at the time. Other kids tried and they didn't get anywhere. I was too scared.
99. I reported the abuse at the West End Police Station in Edinburgh. I think that was in the 1980's. There was a police investigation years ago. DCI Gunderson informed me that the investigation had cost him £700. I was really angry. I phoned my foster father who was a judge by then. He said that the police officer should never have told me that and it was nothing to do with me.
100. I never reported anything about the abuse by my dad.


Other action taken

101.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later



Leaving care

102. When I was about 16 or 17, I'd had enough of it. I thought that if this was their version of care then they could shove it. I thought I could look after myself. I'd already learned to cook. I managed to get a place at the YWCA, Randolph Crescent, Edinburgh. It was quite nice and it was a reasonable price, although there was an attempted suicide when a woman  I was there for about a year.

Life after care

103. I did my Youth Training Scheme and then I was unemployed, like I am now. I had my own cleaning business for a while. I trained as a paralegal. I came second in the class and got 95% in my essay. I've tried to get a job as a paralegal, but I can't. They tell me I've not got enough experience, but how do you get experience if nobody will give you a job? Apart from when I had my own business, I've never really worked.
104. The support upon leaving care was rubbish. Once you left, there was no support at all. I did go to Stopover which is a young person's supported accommodation when I was about seventeen. I got some support there because I was effectively homeless. The support workers at Stopover told me about the Pathway Project. You could go

and live there for about 6 weeks and they gave you support. It's not there anymore, which I think is a shame. Through the Pathway Project I found a place to stay for two years.

105. The first adult I spoke to about the abuse was at Stopover, when I was about seventeen.
106. Years later, I told my counsellor about the abuse. I don't go to counselling all the time, but I still go if something traumatic happens. The best counsellors I had were my college counsellor and Christine Meek, who I met through the Bridges Project. They helped me a lot. They listened and they understood what I was saying. They were a constant support and I didn't have to re-explain it all again.
107. I stopped talking to my brothers years ago because they are either sad, bad or mad. My brother [REDACTED] locked his child in a room. The child has severe epilepsy. All my brothers have the surname [REDACTED]. My other sister [REDACTED] went to the police about my brother locking his child in a room, but the police weren't interested.
108. A couple of years ago my sister [REDACTED] moved down to Wales from Edinburgh and one of my brothers [REDACTED] just moved in with her and raped her. She couldn't get rid of him. My sister went mental and ended up in hospital. She tried to [REDACTED]. I don't know if it was reported to police. All three of my brothers have committed abuse on me and on my sister.
109. My sister is ill, she can't help being mad. That incident with my brother really set her off. She caused a fire at a neighbour's house and ended up in a locked prison hospital. I told her she should do what she was told and take her medicine. They wouldn't let her out unless she did that. She's out and a lot better now.
110. My sister ended up in an institution. She was married to a religious tyrant. He held me against my will a couple of years ago, so my father could come and speak to me. She's now remarried.

111. I was in an abusive relationship a couple of years ago and I've never been in another one since. I just left. I haven't been in a relationship since.
112. I have some friends I can rely upon. I still get support from my foster mum, [REDACTED]. And I see [REDACTED] quite a lot.

Reporting of abuse

113. I didn't feel there was any point in reporting abuse at the time. Other kids tried and they didn't get anywhere. I was too scared.
114. I reported the abuse at the West End Police Station in Edinburgh. I think that was in the 1980's. There was a police investigation years ago. DCI Gunderson informed me that the investigation had cost him £700. I was really raging. I phoned my foster father who was a judge by then. He said that the police officer should never have told me that and it was nothing to do with me.

Impact

115. When I went for therapy, my therapist agreed that the worst places were the [REDACTED] FPC-FPE, [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later [REDACTED]. I think I should have been adopted. Instead I always got moved. It's left me with very little or no confidence. I've not had employment for any length of time, except from my own business. I'm also dyslexic and dyspraxic. As soon as you say that, you're discriminated against.
116. I suffered from depression for years and years. I never feel sure whether people are good or bad. Maybe that's the same for everybody. I've had psychotherapy and counselling. I took medication for a time, but I felt like I was emotionally a dead fish. Sometimes I would hurt myself, [REDACTED] I'd go to see [REDACTED] and I'd be white as a sheet, crying. I had a spate of horrendous depression. It's more

manageable now, but sometimes it's still difficult. I don't like to take medication because it made me feel worse.

Records

117. I asked the social work department for my records. They gave them to me, but they had redacted some of them. There wasn't much, just a folder. It just named all the places I'd lived in and various people I was with at the time. There wasn't much information in the records.

Hopes for the Inquiry

118. Children shouldn't be moved around as much as I was. I was in far too many different places. I think I should have been adopted. Instead, I was always getting moved. That also meant I was moved around too many different schools. I didn't even go to school for a time. That shouldn't be the case.
119. I don't understand why my sister was allowed to go back to my dad's house, after she had been removed because they knew of or suspected his abuse. I don't know why they let me go there without supervision.
120. I just wish they had vetted people and chosen better people. From now on, I hope children who are brought up in care are given better placements. People should be properly vetted and checked out. People can present themselves as having a good job or being religious, but hopefully they will be able to ascertain whether they have the best interests of the child at heart and won't do harm.
121. The people running the homes I was in were running them like their own personal fiefdoms, for their own profit or whatever craziness they wanted to put on us. They were allowed to do whatever they wanted. Nobody seemed to be able to do anything about it, even if they were made aware. Nothing was done. I hope there's a much

better vetting system and the people who could do a good job are given every support.

122. We needed extra help, because of what we were going through and what we'd been through. I don't know how you do it, but children should have somewhere to go so that they can tell and be believed. Maybe a combination of kids who have been in care or a panel. I don't know if it's still happening.

Other information

123. 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 24/7/17.....