

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

EFI

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is EFI. My surname when I was a child was EFI. My date of birth is 1947. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My mother was and my father was. I have four sisters and two brothers. The oldest is who is five years older than me, then there's who is three years older and then who was known as and who was about two years older. died when she was young. After there is me and then who is about four years younger than me, who is six years younger, and who is nine years younger than me.
3. We stayed at near Falkirk. It was a downstairs flat in a four-in-a-block with two bedrooms and a small kitchen off the livingroom. The lady up the stair was called Mrs Rankine and I think she looked after us a bit.
4. I remember my father always being drunk, fighting with his brothers and beating up my mother. He was a pig. He was a coalminer and spent his money on his drink and his fags. He used to come home drunk and climb through the window and and I would let him in our bed. He was always naked, but then none of us wore pyjamas. He would put our legs between his legs to keep us warm, although he never touched us sexually.

5. Our mother couldn't look after us properly, there were too many of us for her to cope with. I later learned that when I was just a baby my mother had been pouring a cup of tea or something and she accidentally poured it over my head. I still have the scars.
6. My father took a knife to my sister [REDACTED] once when she was about seven. He had asked her to go and get his socks and she swore at him and told him to get them himself and he slashed her leg with a bread knife. [REDACTED] was taken to the doctor and, although she wouldn't say what had happened because she was scared, the doctor knew what was going on.
7. We never had toys or anything like that, I never had socks on my feet and there was never any food in the house. We were always hungry. There was never a fire and we would burn a little bit of paper just to get a two-second heat.
8. I must have started school while I was still with my parents, but I can't remember.
9. In 1952, when I was five years old, my older sisters and I were taken away to a children's home. As far as I remember, Mrs Rankine up the stairs told us that our father had sexually abused one of us. I don't know which one, or how she thought that, only that it wasn't me or [REDACTED]
10. My daughter [REDACTED] has since got my records because I wanted to find out why we were put into care. I didn't want to think that my dad was a paedophile. The records say that we were taken care because we weren't getting taken care of. It was pure neglect.
11. I remember us being taken somewhere, but I can't remember if it was a hospital or a court, all I have a memory of is a big white room. Apparently we had been taken to hospital at one time because my aunt [REDACTED] had died with TB and we had to be checked too. That's why I think this big white room was a hospital, but I also have a memory of a man asking me while we were there who I wanted to stay with and I said "my daddy".

12. The only time I remember there being any social work involved with us was on the night we left for the children's home. Two social workers came to the house for us, Miss Heron and Mr Macdonald.
13. I remember getting washed in the little corner sink and being in my pants and my vest when my mum told Mr Macdonald that they weren't going to take me. He told my mother that they were taking all the girls and that was it. Nobody explained what was happening or where we were going.
14. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] stayed with our parents when we left. [REDACTED] was just a baby at that time and slept in the bottom drawer.

Whinwell Brae Children's Home, Stirling

15. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Whinwell Brae Children's Home

51. We were at Whinwell Brae for over a year and in 1953 or 1954 we were moved into foster care in Aberdeenshire. I don't know why we were moved or who decided where we were going.

52. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

53. Mr Macdonald gave us all a present the day we were leaving and I got two coat hangers that were covered in plastic. I don't remember what my sisters got. I kept those coat hangers all my life, although they've since been thrown away by someone.

54. After that, Mr Macdonald and Miss Heron drove my sisters and me up to Aberdeen. [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and I were all put in the car and told we were getting taken to a place in the country and that was it.

Foster care with EHF-SPO [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] Aberdeenshire

55. [REDACTED] was in the middle of the country, [REDACTED] in Aberdeenshire. It was just a little farmhouse with a bit of land where there were cows, geese, chickens, a cat and a dog. There were also horses and sheep in the next fields, although they didn't belong to us.

56. The people who fostered us were EHF [REDACTED] who we called EHF [REDACTED], and her husband [REDACTED] who we called [REDACTED]. I would think they would have been in their forties. She was a witch, but he was a nice man. It was like he was lost though and he had an awful sad face all the time. He didn't stick up for us, he couldn't even stick up for himself.

57. EHF-SPO [REDACTED] were fostering other children when we arrived and more came and went over the years. When we arrived there was [REDACTED] who was about fifteen and a bit handicapped, and there was [REDACTED] who was about ten. [REDACTED] was just a skivvy, treated like a slave, but [REDACTED] had been with them since she was

six weeks old and she was treated like she was [EHF] s own. [EHF] made that quite plain.

58. There was also a boy there called [REDACTED] who had been fostered by [EHF] before us. He had gone to the army and then came back to live at [REDACTED] I'm not sure what age he would have been when we arrived, maybe about eighteen. He had red hair and a flattened nose.
59. Inside the house there was a kitchen, a sitting room where we ate, four bedrooms and a bathroom. [EHF-SPO] had one of the bedrooms, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] shared a room, [REDACTED] had his own room and the two [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and I shared a room.

Routine at [REDACTED]

First day

60. I don't remember how I was feeling when we arrived at [REDACTED] but I remember going in. As we drove up the country road toward it, there was a little girl sitting on a dyke by the side of the road, swinging her legs. It turned out she was [REDACTED]
61. We were taken inside where there was another little girl in the kitchen, baking. It turned out she was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] then came in and she and [REDACTED] were given boiled egg and toast to eat. [EHF] never offered us any and now that I'm an adult I can't understand that. We'd been in a car for three or four hours and she never offered us anything to eat or drink.
62. I don't remember the social workers coming into the house, I just remember standing in the doorway and [EHF] saying "What a bonnie wee quine" to me. I had to ask my sister [REDACTED] what she meant because we didn't know what a 'quine' was. I don't remember what happened after that, we were probably shown to our rooms.

Mornings and bedtime

63. There were two beds in my bedroom. I shared a bed settee with [REDACTED] and the two [REDACTED] shared a bed. We didn't have a chest of drawers or a wardrobe, our clothes were in a cardboard box under the bed that we had to pull out. In her room [REDACTED] had her own wardrobe and her own chest of drawers.
64. We probably got up just after 7:00 am, because school was at 8:30 am. EHF [REDACTED] would just come into the room and shout that it was time to get up. As soon as we got up, we had to say prayers at the bedside before getting ourselves dressed. After that we all had to take turns feeding the chickens and milking the cow and then we'd have breakfast.
65. Bedtime was 7:00 pm, summer and winter, every night, even in the holidays. EHF [REDACTED] EHF [REDACTED] would tell us it was bedtime and we had to get ourselves organised. We never had pyjamas, we just wore pants and a vest.

Mealtimes/Food

66. We had our own milk there and our own cheese, butter and vegetables, but we were never fed properly. We were always hungry. I don't know what she did with all the food, because she never gave it to us. We all knew that she got money for looking after us because we found the books once, but it certainly wasn't spent on food.
67. Breakfast was normally just cereal. Sometimes there was porridge that [REDACTED] would make and sometimes it was 'brose', which is oatmeal with boiling water. It's like porridge, but it's not cooked. It's disgusting.
68. On a Sunday we got broth to start with and then boiled beef, boiled turnip and boiled potatoes and carrots. That was fine, but usually during the week we'd come home and get one sausage and one fried egg. There was always a lot of watery soup and a lot of eggs and sometimes there might be a chicken on the table. I was always given the neck of the chicken, that was it. If we were going to have chicken she would tell

██████████ to go and grab one and ██████████ would have to kill it. It was traumatising to watch.

69. She used to bake as well, but we weren't allowed to help, only ██████████ could. I don't know what happened to whatever they made though, we never got anything. They made jam as well and we were allowed to lick the pan, but that was all.
70. EHF ██████████ wore the same apron till the day she died and she kept a key in her pocket for the cupboard where the biscuits were kept. In later years, ██████████'s boyfriend at the time, ██████████ who she eventually married, would come to the house and give EHF ██████████ a packet of chocolate biscuits. Those biscuits would go in the cupboard and the ones he'd brought the week before would be brought out, although we never got them. Then she'd lock the cupboard again and the key would go back in her pocket.

Washing/bathing

71. We got a bath once a week on a Sunday. I don't remember much about bathtime, other than we shared the water and I think ██████████ and I went in at the same time. I do remember when my sisters were older and working we had a 'Raeburn' fire in the kitchen and there would be pans of boiling water on it, so I don't think we can have had hot running water. ██████████ always got her bath first and the rest of us were told by EHF ██████████ to wait until she finished.

72. Otherwise, during the week we just washed our hands and face ourselves and we never had a toothbrush.

Healthcare

73. EHF ██████████ never took us to the dentist, we had to go to the dentist at school. I was petrified of him. I remember when I was about fourteen he accidentally went into my gum and I've hardly been to a dentist since.

74. The local doctor was in [REDACTED] but we never went. After my sister [REDACTED] left she went to the doctor and was diagnosed as malnourished. One time when I was about twelve I accidentally got a wasp in my mouth and it stung me so badly that my tongue was all swollen. I told EHF [REDACTED] and she made me bike to the doctor myself to get some sort of tablet.
75. When I reached puberty I was put in the bathroom with [REDACTED] with a big pad and EHF [REDACTED] told me that [REDACTED] would show me what to do. The pad was so big that I had to tie it in a knot, it was a disgrace. I think we got one pad a day if we were lucky, so we sometimes just had to fold up newspaper or toilet roll if we were at school, because we never had toilet roll at home.

Chores

76. EHF [REDACTED] was just lazy, she did nothing. We girls had to do everything. We had to muck the byre out, milk the cow and scrub the kitchen floor. The bread bin and a pail were kept under a unit and we used to just wipe round about it, but EHF [REDACTED] would come in, lift the pail and see we hadn't done it and make us start again. Our knees were sore with cleaning the kitchen floor.
77. We had to go down to a well and pump our own water and carry it up a big hill back to the house. One time when I went the pump had gone dry and a cow had a pee in the pool of water, but I just had to take it anyway and boil it when I got back.
78. In the winter a Tilley lamp had to be put in with the hens to keep them warm. We all took turns to do it, but it was a scary experience when you're just eight or nine years old. We had to walk across the fields to the hen house in the dark, put the lamp inside and then bolt back to the house. I remember one time one of the cows tried to attack me and I was screaming, but none of them helped me over the wall out of the field.

Clothing/uniform

79. We hardly had any clothes although what we wore wasn't second hand. Every year we got a grant for clothes to last us the whole year and we would go to 'Skinners' shop in [REDACTED] We were always excited, but it was all school uniform stuff we got. We never got any of the other clothes, they were put in a chest. I don't know what happened to them all, EHF [REDACTED] must have sold them.
80. We didn't have socks, or pyjamas and we were only given one pair of pants for a whole week. I used to get called EFI [REDACTED] at school, because I was still wetting the bed and had to go to school with wet pants on.
81. We wore wellington boots all the time and because we never had socks on I had a red ring around my legs with them constantly rubbing.
82. We changed our clothes every Sunday and all of us kids except [REDACTED] had to wash them along with all the sheets. All of us would kind of work as a team, using a washboard in two big sinks and hanging everything out.
83. Recently I looked back at photos of my time at [REDACTED] and in one I was wearing a little dress with a frill. I've no idea where that came from, but perhaps it was one I was given to wear when the social workers came.

Schooling

84. We all cycled two miles to school in the morning and then back for lunch for a plate of watery soup, before cycling back afterwards. EHF [REDACTED] was always in her bed when we left for school in the morning and when we came back in the afternoon.
85. The schools were [REDACTED] Primary and then [REDACTED] Academy, but I didn't get on very well at school. I wasn't clever and I was just left in the corner to please myself. One time I copied somebody else's work and the teacher knew I'd been cheating but he didn't do anything. EHF [REDACTED] never helped either, she never did homework with us.
86. I left school when I was fourteen-and-a-half, but I didn't have any qualifications.

Religious instruction

87. On a Sunday morning, we'd get up and say our prayers and then have to walk two miles to church for Sunday school. Then we'd come home and walk two miles back to the church for the service. It was always [REDACTED] that went with us, EHF [REDACTED] never did.

Leisure time

88. We were never allowed to go to friends' houses or anything like that. We weren't allowed to leave the place. Even going to the end of the street was enough to get a hiding from EHF [REDACTED] We were never allowed to have friends over either.
89. Our playroom was outside, [REDACTED] used to play cricket and had a ball, so we would play cricket with him. There was also an old cooker and an old frying pan in the yard outside and we would pretend to cook with them. There were no toys, just two dolls and they were [REDACTED]'s. I never got to play with them.
90. We got to dance on a Friday night. Country music would be put on and EHF [REDACTED] would play darts in the livingroom.

Birthdays and Christmas

91. We never celebrated a birthday, I never even knew when my birthday was. At Christmas we got a tangerine, an apple and a lump of coal. Christmas was just another day.

Personal possessions and pocket money

92. We all had a bank account that we had to put sixpence in every week. Years later, when EHF [REDACTED] died, we went to get our accounts, but there was nothing in them. EHF [REDACTED] had been keeping the money herself.

Trips and holidays

93. The only trip we had was once a year when we went on the Sunday school picnic on a bus. We were given a bag of goodies, with cake and things, but I don't remember much else about those trips.

Family Contact

94. When I was nine ^{EHF} [REDACTED] told [REDACTED] who then told me, that we had a baby sister. Up to then I never even knew I had another mother. She was never spoken about and I never saw her.

Good memories

95. [REDACTED] had family in Inverurie, whose surname was [REDACTED] and they used to come out in their car in the summertime. They were nice, although [REDACTED] wasn't a very nice woman. I found some photos of when they came and I'm actually smiling, so I must have been having a good day that day.

Supervision oversight/inspection by fostering authority

96. Our social workers came every year and we knew when they were coming. We always had to put on a nice dress and we would sit under the big tree in the garden and have a glass of lemonade. Whenever that happened, sure as anything, we would see the black car coming over the hill. As far as I remember it was always the two of them, Mr Macdonald and Miss Heron.
97. The visit was always staged and we were always made to play happy families. We would be kicked under the table and warned by ^{EHF} [REDACTED] to say nothing and she was always there. We never got to speak to them on our own. I can't remember what sort of questions the social workers asked.

98. The social workers were nice people but I could never have spoken to them about how EHF [REDACTED] was treating us, even if we had been given time on our own. I would have been too afraid of getting a hiding afterwards. I don't think I could have been confident that if I had spoken with them it wouldn't have got back to EHF [REDACTED]

99. A lady who lived half-a-mile down the road, Mrs [REDACTED] who had two sons of her own, wanted to take me and [REDACTED] but the social workers wanted us all kept together. I know that if we had gone we would have had a lot of happy memories because she was a nice person.

Relationship with foster parents / other children

100. EHF [REDACTED] was an evil woman. She beat us the whole time I was there and never showed us any affection. She never gave me a kiss or a cuddle. I don't remember this, but my sister [REDACTED] told me we always had to give EHF [REDACTED] a kiss before we left the house.

101. We wanted a dog, but she wouldn't let us have one, however the next thing [REDACTED] came in with a dog on a lead. That dog was tied to a chair its whole life and all it got to eat was saps, the same as what we got. The poor dog died eventually with rabies.

Running away

102. I ran away quite a few times when EHF [REDACTED] was being bad to me. I never went far, just to the top of the hill and I knew she would come and get me, but I just had to get away sometimes. She seemed to pick on me all the time and I was unhappy a lot.

103. I played truant from secondary school once when I was about fourteen. It was the best day of my life. I sat in another girl's house and we had a laugh. I knew I would get a hiding when I got home, but I wasn't bothered.

Bed Wetting

104. I wet the bed a lot until I was fourteen, although I'm not sure how often. When I did I used to have to lie in it, because if I told EHF I would have got a hiding. I had to try and find myself a bit of the bed that wasn't wet and cold.

Abuse at [REDACTED]

105. EHF [REDACTED] would give us hidings for nothing at all and every time after she did she would give us a 'Rich Tea' biscuit. I think she picked on me because I was the youngest. She was an evil woman. She never hit [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] because she was quite quiet, but she did hit the others too and she was always hitting me. She was really coarse to [REDACTED] as well.
106. She would hit us anywhere she could, on the head, the backside or the body and she would use whatever she could get her hands on. It might be a belt, a shoe, or a slipper, anything at all and if she couldn't put her hands on anything she would slap us with her open hand on the head. If you said something she didn't like, she would pick something up and throw it at you.
107. [REDACTED] used to go with a boy known as [REDACTED] and one day when I was still small she took me to a farm nearby to meet him. We sat on the grass at the roadside with him when EHF [REDACTED] came along the road, raving and shouting. She took me home and when we got there hit me so hard across the head with her hand that I fell over and hit my head on the cast iron bath. I actually saw stars. I never lost consciousness, but I had a really sore head afterwards.
108. One day during the school holidays when I was in Primary Seven, EHF [REDACTED] hit me on the head with a high-heeled shoe. She hit me so hard that she made a hole in my head, which I've still got to this day. I remember having a scab afterwards that covered almost all of my head. I think I'd maybe been picking the scab and it grew and I remember the doctor coming in. I don't know why he didn't report it, but he didn't.

109. The doctor told me he was going to cut the scab off and got a pair of scissors and told me to tell him when the scissors were touching my scalp. The doctor told me I had wet eczema, but it wasn't. I know it was started by getting hit with that shoe. The doctor cut off all my hair and I had to wear a 'pixie' hat afterwards. I can't remember the doctor's name, but he gave me a sixpence for being a brave girl. As soon as he left, EHF [REDACTED] took the sixpence off me and I never got it.
110. When I went back to school the teacher, who wasn't a nice person either, took off my hat and showed the rest of the class my head. I don't remember the teacher's name, just that it was one of two women. I had a note from the doctor that I was to hand to the teacher that said my hat wasn't to be removed at any time, but she did anyway, just to humiliate me. I ran away from the school and went home, but as soon as I got home EHF [REDACTED] put me back to the school.
111. As a punishment EHF [REDACTED] would put us out in the snow without shoes on. It wasn't just for a minute, we were outside for a long time. I had chilblains until I was a teenager.
112. One day I was in the garage getting my bike after I'd been cheeky to EHF [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was shouting to me, telling me that she wouldn't touch me so I went out, but she gave me another hiding.
113. [REDACTED] lost his temper quite a lot. I would sit next to him to do my homework, but I couldn't concentrate because I knew he would give me a slap. He also used to play cards and when I was about ten I had to sit with the cards on a tray across my knees. He started putting his hand up my skirt and the second time he did it I told [REDACTED] who then told EHF [REDACTED] but she did nothing about it. He just said that I was enjoying it, but I was only a child. I don't know if he did that to any of the others.

Leaving foster care

114. Towards the end of my time at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] got married and had left home, [REDACTED] was leaving because she had got engaged to a guy in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] was also engaged and was working so I was the only child ^{EHF} [REDACTED] was getting paid for. She said that if the others were leaving we could all go. We were just money-making machines for her, that was it. When the money stopped she wasn't interested in us.
115. [REDACTED] said that she was going back to stay with our mother so ^{EHF} [REDACTED] told us we could all go and the three of us went to live with our mother in Falkirk.
116. I hadn't had any contact with our mother before that, but we all went there anyway. The social workers weren't involved at all and I don't know if they even knew.
117. When we arrived at our mother's, there were two women on the stairs, one of them was at the bottom and the other was at the top. I remember thinking that I hoped the one at the bottom of the stair wasn't my mother. She was an old, poor and ill-looking woman, even though she must only have been in around forty. It turned out she was our mother and she never even gave us a kiss when she saw us.
118. Life there was just awful, we never got fed and our mother was really bad to us. She was on her own, our father had left by then and we weren't getting fed or treated properly at all. After a time, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] decided they wanted to go back to Aberdeen so I was left on my own and I was treated like dirt.
119. I went to Redding School in Falkirk for six months and left school with no qualifications at fifteen.
120. About that time I got myself a little whippet dog that I named Sheila and she became pregnant to an Alsatian. I came home one day and my mother was flushing the pups down the toilet. She drowned them all. She wasn't an evil person, but she probably wondered how she could feed the pups when she couldn't feed her children.

121. Our mother had three other children after me, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was her favourite. He didn't like me because he thought I was taking over his role.

Life after being in care

122. I got a job as an auxiliary nurse in a hospital for the handicapped in Larbert and when I was about sixteen my mother threw me out. I went to live with a friend, [REDACTED] and her mother, who lived along the road and for the first time I was fed properly.
123. After a while I went back up to Aberdeen and lived with my sister [REDACTED]. I stayed there for about a year before I got my own flat at [REDACTED] in Aberdeen and shared it with a friend.
124. I met my husband [REDACTED] and we got married when I was nineteen. We had a daughter [REDACTED] and then I had a miscarriage and then we had another daughter, but she died. I couldn't have any more children so I decided I was going to become a foster carer and I was going to make a better job of it than [EHF] [REDACTED] did.
125. I've now been married for fifty-three years and [REDACTED] and I have fostered about a hundred children. We only recently retired from fostering.
126. [REDACTED] died a long time ago and I kept on seeing [EHF] [REDACTED] until the day she died about twenty years ago. That was the hold she had on me, even though she had treated me the way she had. I went back and forward to see her and I took [REDACTED] to see her as well. I think I felt obligated to go and see her and, although I would have liked to have spoken to her about how she treated me as a kid, I just couldn't.
127. My sisters and I kept in touch with our mother and after a while she gave up her house in Falkirk and stayed with all of us in Aberdeen for a while. When she stayed with me, that was the first time I started to get to know her. Eventually I actually got on quite well with her.

128. I wanted to meet our dad and when I was twenty-one I tried to trace him through various places. Eventually I found him in Peterborough and by that time he had remarried and had two children. He came up to Aberdeen to see us but he died a long time ago. I couldn't think of him as my father though, my dad was [REDACTED] because he had brought me up.

Impact

129. I think about my time in care all the time. It's worse at night when I'm lying in bed trying to get to sleep. It's the same things that come into my head all the time and they won't go away. I wish I could put my head down at night and not think about it and not remember all the bad things.
130. I can get a bit anxious and I'm a nervous person, which may have come from living in fear as a child. I try to crack jokes, but it's just me putting a face on things.
131. I'm certain that my education was affected. I could never relax and I was never able to enjoy school or my homework. If [REDACTED] was there I was always waiting on a slap and I could never concentrate.
132. I don't believe in God. I always think if there was a God, why would he let these children suffer? Why would there be people like EHF [REDACTED] treating children so badly?
133. I am quite a chatty person, but I don't have many friends. Those friends I do have I have known for years.
134. I know what it's like to be the outcast and I've a lot of empathy for people. That's why I went into fostering because of the way I was treated by EHF [REDACTED] There is a need for foster carers and I wanted to be better than her.

Life as a foster carer

135. It wasn't straightforward becoming a foster carer, I think it took about six months for the whole thing to go through. They were thorough and we had to provide references. At the time we started [REDACTED] and I lived in a top floor flat and we didn't have a telephone, a TV or a car. All we had were the basics.
136. The first child we had was after I saw an advert in a local paper looking for a foster home for a twelve year old girl called [REDACTED]. I went to the phone box at the bottom of the street and a few days later a social worker, Nan Cleveland, came up to the flat to visit us. [REDACTED] had been in jail when he was young and Nan asked if either of us had a criminal record. I told her about [REDACTED] but she said she already knew and she told us we were right to be honest.
137. Six couples had put in to foster [REDACTED] but we got her and she was a lovely girl. She stayed a while, but in those days the parents were always given lots of chances and eventually [REDACTED] went back to live with her mother.
138. After [REDACTED] we went on to foster [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who we ended up adopting. We only had two bedrooms in the flat and [REDACTED] was ten so we had to get a bigger house and the council gave us one. We continued fostering for just under forty years and did emergency care too. At one time we were looking after six children at the same time, although that wouldn't happen now.
139. At first we were called foster parents, then they changed it to foster carers and now they've changed it back to foster parent. To me, that's right, because you are a parent to those children. When we first started fostering we got £25 for a month for looking after a child. I never had a bank account so I had to go to the butcher who would only cash it for me if I bought meat from him.
140. It's changed now so that you get a pay for yourself of £400 a fortnight and you also get £400, which is the child's money. I think it goes up when a child gets into their

teens. Once the child gets to sixteen you don't get any money, however some of my children stayed on anyway. One was with us until he was twenty-one, although we did get an allowance for him under the 'Longer looked after children' scheme.

141. The social workers were never away from the door. They would do spot checks and announced visits and I remember one day the head of the department came. We'd known she was coming in advance and she asked me if our house was always this tidy, but I told her it wasn't, I tidied for her coming. You can't have a tidy house if you've got lots of children.
142. More recently we had to do thirty hours of training every year about all sorts of things, including sex abuse and drug abuse.
143. We had our own social worker, Audrey Shearer, who was a really nice lady and every child that came to us had their own social worker too. The two sets of social workers would be together at the 'Looked after children' (LAC) reviews, which [REDACTED] and I would go to as well. There were lots of other meetings I had to go to, including the Children's Panels, or if there were any problems to be discussed. In fact there were far too many meetings for the silliest things that could often have been sorted out with a phone call. A lot of time is wasted in meetings.
144. When a child was on a placement with us, their social worker would phone and say that they were coming and they would either take the child out for something to eat, or sit in the garden. I would ask the child's permission if they wanted me to be there and some said they did want me there, some said they didn't.
145. I can't say that I always felt supported. One child told her social worker that she was scared of my husband [REDACTED] because he had fallen out with her after she misbehaved. The girl told her social worker that [REDACTED] had shouted at her so she and a boy we were also looking after were removed from our care that day. There was an investigation, although the police weren't involved, and we were without children for a whole year. Eventually we were allowed to look after children again and

we put that behind us, although when we were asked if we would consider taking the girl back, we refused.

146. We had our last boy for fourteen years. One year he had four different social workers. He never had the support from one steady social worker and I think that upsets children a bit.
147. One thing [REDACTED] and I used to complain about was when a child would arrive at the door with no information about them. One boy used to set fires, but we weren't told anything about that. I like to meet the parents if I can and we have actually had parents staying overnight. I think that if you have a relationship with the parents, it helps in looking after the child.
148. My saying is that if you've room in your home and room in your heart you can take a child. It's strange now that I've retired from fostering and I'm actually regretting retiring and I'm missing it. I'm finding it hard to cook a meal and shop for two.

Treatment/support

149. I have never had any treatment or counselling about my experiences as a child. I tend to just get on with things myself. I do get down sometimes, but I go to my bed, shut my curtains and stay there until I feel better. It doesn't happen often.

Reporting of Abuse

150. I have never spoken to anyone about what happened to me in care at [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions or at [REDACTED] I've tried to put it behind me and I never wanted to report it.

Records

151. My daughter [REDACTED] contacted Stirling Council about a year or two ago to get my records. She went to the social work offices in Falkirk first and was told to go to Stirling because they held the records. There was nothing in them though, just a bit of paper that was a court order showing the reasons we were put into Whinwell Brae, the date and our ages. My sisters names were blacked out and that was all there was. 'Neglect' was the word they used, but that was it, there were no log books or anything like that. I think it's an absolute disgrace that's all there was.
152. My sister [REDACTED] has a book that EHF [REDACTED] kept to show the social workers, although I've not seen it. [REDACTED] found it in her belongings when she died. Seemingly it says that we each had a room to ourselves and things like that. It was all lies.

Lessons to be Learned/Hopes for the Inquiry

153. Just because we were in the country and the social workers were a distance away shouldn't matter. The social work should have been coming to visit us more often and we should have been allowed to see our social workers to tell them what was going on. Having said that, the fear of EHF [REDACTED] finding out and giving us a hiding might have put us off telling them anything.
154. Children need to have somebody they know is safe for them to speak to. If we had known it was safe to speak to our social workers and that they wouldn't speak to EHF [REDACTED] there and then, we might have had the confidence to speak out.
155. If someone goes into foster care they should do so for the right reasons, which are to look after children and give them the best care that they can. Care that they didn't have with their own parents. Children should be shown that they can have a good life.
156. There needs to be much better information provided to foster carers, so that they know of any issues there might be with any of the children they are asked to look after. One

child we looked after lived just across the road from us, although we didn't know it at the time. It was only when the child's father came to our door, shouting and swearing at us, that we found out. There needs to be proper checks done and the right amount of information needs to be shared.

Other information

157. I was awful fond of [REDACTED] the little handicapped girl who was also fostered at [REDACTED] and we stayed in touch. She just died in 2020, the day after my birthday.
158. I found out that the sister of one of the kids I was fostering was in a home in Stirling and I got so excited because I thought it might have been Whinwell Brae, but it wasn't. I was disappointed because, although it would have been emotional, I would have liked to have seen it again.
159. I don't have a lot of good memories of my childhood, but [REDACTED] was where I grew up and I have been back there. I wanted to take my grandchildren and show them where I used to play. The couple that stay there now let me in the house and I was amazed at what a small building it was. When I was little I'd thought it was huge.
160. 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.....

EFI
[REDACTED]

14 June 2021