

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

EEH

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is EEH My name as a child in care was EEH My date of birth is 1951. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Aberdeen. I knew as my father and my mother was called . They both died when they were in their early sixties. I found out seven years ago that was my uncle and his brother was my biological father. There were five children altogether. was the oldest and was born in 1943. Then there was who was born on 1946. My brother was eighteen months older than me and was born in 1949. Then there was me and then my youngest sister, , who was born on 1953.
3. We lived at Aberdeen in a tenement building. There were six tenants in the building and we lived on the middle floor. Mother went out drinking and dad was a trawler fisherman. Dad was away at sea for ten days at a time, depending on what they caught. You knew when dad was due home because my mother started cleaning. When he came home there was always a big argument. My mother stirred things and my father got arrested for wife assault and petty theft. The police were involved practically every time my father came home and dad would get thirty to sixty days imprisonment. Dad treated my brother badly because he wanted to make a man of him. My brother was my mother's favourite because she always wanted a son.

4. We weren't clean and got reports from the school about that. We had lice and I remember my mother looking at lice in our hair and cracking it between her nails. I was at Kittybrewster School to begin with and then I went into Causeway End Primary School at the other end of the town, for what reason I don't know. I think social work got involved because we were going to school dirty. My mother didn't take advice about looking after us children. We were in and out of care for short periods of time in our early life until, finally, we were taken into care through the court.

5. I have been able to find out the dates I was in care from my sister [REDACTED]'s records. I've read in the records that my mother and father were in Kingseat, the mental hospital, for short periods of time. My mother was in three or four times, up to 1957. I know my father was in too. I went to visit him at the hospital when I was about fifteen and he looked old and drawn. The reason for us going in and out of care was that either one of them were in the psychiatric hospital and so we were taken into care for a short time. We were committed into care for good in 1961.

Pitfodel Nursery, Cults, Aberdeenshire

6. I went into Pitfodel on [REDACTED] 1955 when I was four years old and left on [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I don't remember anything about Pitfodel.

7. The records say that we returned to live with our parents from [REDACTED] 1955 until [REDACTED] 1956.

The Children's Shelter, Aberdeen

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

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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10. I went back home to my parents from [REDACTED] 1956 until [REDACTED] 1958. Things at home were just the same. There was neglect, shouting, screaming and the police were involved.

11. [REDACTED] was about fifteen years old and was looking after me and my brother and sisters. She made us tea and dressed us. [REDACTED] was stealing so she could feed us. [REDACTED] told me, when I was a teenager, that she went into borstal for between one and three years. She was sentenced and then she was recalled to borstal. I'm not entirely sure if she went into borstal in the late 1950's or early 1960's but [REDACTED] was never in any of the homes me and my brother and sisters were in.

Linn Moor Children's Home, Culter, Aberdeenshire – first stay

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Linn Moor Children's Home

18. My dad came back from sea and took us out of the home on [REDACTED] 1958.
19. We returned to live with our parents from [REDACTED] 1958 until [REDACTED] 1958. Life at home was just the same as it was before. We went back to Linn Moor for a week, from [REDACTED] 1958 until [REDACTED] 1958. I was seven years old.
20. We went back to my parents on [REDACTED] 1958 when I was seven years old. On 11th January 1961 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and I were taken to court with my mum and dad. I was ten years old. It was a rare occasion, being out together. My youngest sister was at home with measles and couldn't be taken.
21. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and me sat on a bench in the court hallway. Mum and dad went into a room. They were in the room for ten or fifteen minutes. When mum and dad came out, they walked by us. I thought they didn't see us but, obviously, they did. Naturally, my brother, sister and I jumped up to follow them. I shouted. We were guided back to the bench and were screaming and shouting after my mum and dad. Mum and dad just walked on, out the front door.
22. From the court, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and I went in a car and were taken to a clinic round the corner. Our nails and hair were checked out. We got smelly stuff on our heads and I stood on scales. I was screaming and it took a long time to calm me down. I was holding on to my brother and sister. My sister might have known what was going on but I certainly didn't. No-one ever sat down and explained to me what was happening. It was dreadful.

Craigielea Assessment Centre, Aberdeen

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Craigielea Assessment Centre to go to Foster Care

37. The staff were packing a wee case for my sister and me. We asked why and the staff said we were going on a holiday. I'd never been on a holiday, so we got excited. The

staff were very nice when we left. There were hugs all around and tears. The staff said we would be back and not to worry. The holiday was foster care.

38. In the records, it says in May 1961,
"Avert from foster care. No results from the Church of Scotland or Barnardo's. Visited the children several times because of Craigielea alterations and arrangements were made for a holiday for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]"

and on 6th July 1961,

"In foster care. Arrangements were confirmed for the children to visit parents, for [REDACTED] to join the sisters on holiday."

Foster Care – Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] Fraserburgh

39. I was ten years old when we went to Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] in 1961. We were there for a couple of months around [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. The house was a small, fisherman's cottage. The beach was at the back door. [REDACTED] and I had a bedroom and Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] had a bedroom. There was a small kitchen, a sitting-room and a vestibule. They had a small garden with fish nets in it.
40. Mr [REDACTED] went to sea. He hardly spoke a word. Mrs [REDACTED] had long grey hair that she put up in a bun in the morning. She was very strict and I didn't like her at all. I don't remember their first names or what we called them. Mrs [REDACTED] was about sixty or seventy years old and was very old-fashioned in her ways. I didn't see any other family of theirs at the house. We were fed and kept clean but there wasn't a happy atmosphere. Mrs [REDACTED] was very strict about bedtime and church time. We had freedom at Craigielea and this was a totally different environment.

Routine in Foster Care

First day

41. Miss Luke was our social worker whilst we were in foster care. She took us in the car to Fraserburgh. She was nice. We had never met Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] EEO-EEP They were nice while Miss Luke was there. After Miss Luke left and we were shown our room, [REDACTED] and I unpacked our clothes and our banky. Then we were lost and we didn't know what to do next. We had tea and then we had to go to bed.

General Routine

42. [REDACTED] and I went to bed at 7:00 pm or 7:30 pm, except on a Sunday when we had to go to church in the evening. We shared a double bed. The bed was comfy and it was a nice, clean and tidy room. We were able to get washed.
43. There was a Town Crier, which we had never seen. When [REDACTED] and I heard the shouting, we looked out of the window. What a row we got for looking out of the window. We were kept in and not allowed out to play on the beach. You weren't allowed to look out of the window.
44. [REDACTED] and I were well fed. Mrs [REDACTED] EEO was a home baker so the food was good. Mrs [REDACTED] EEO didn't like you being in the way while she cooked and she kept you well away from the kitchen. We didn't have any chores to do and Mrs [REDACTED] EEO did everything herself.
45. We didn't go to school while we were in foster care. The beach was your playground and we were out playing nearly every day. When you went out to play, you had to come back not a minute later than when you were told. There were puzzles in the house but that was all. There were two children called [REDACTED] from St Mather's Home, which was a Nazareth House home in the Spittal of Aberdeen. They were fostered out to a family in the village. We became friends. Sometimes Mrs [REDACTED] EEO took us down to the harbour to see the boat coming in, when Mr [REDACTED] EEP was coming back from sea.

46. The [EEO-EEP] were very churchy people. We said our prayers every night and said Grace at the table. Sunday was for church. I don't know what religion it was but we went to church in the morning, afternoon and evening on a Sunday. Mr [EEP] never went to sea on a Sunday and you couldn't put out washing on a Sunday. It was strange and [] and I couldn't understand it.

Visits / Inspections

47. My sister [] was sent to a convent in Bishopbriggs after the girls' hostel because she kept running away. [] and I kept asking for our sisters and brother. Social work let [] come and stay with the [EEO-EEP] for two weeks. She was about twelve or thirteen years old. [] came with her social worker. [] [] and I slept in one big bed and spent time at the beach.

Abuse in Foster Care

48. In the homes, you had your Sunday clothes and when you got home from church you had to change into play clothes. On the first Sunday we were there, [] and I did that but Mr [EEP] was sitting in our bedroom reading his bible. The bedroom was small. He sat in a corner, on a chair. Mr [EEP] didn't do anything or say a word. [] and I took turn about going into a little cupboard and changing our clothes. One of us stayed outside the cupboard.
49. We were uptight about this and we told Mrs [EEO] She said Mr [EEP] was reading his Bible and doing no harm and so it carried on. We got a raging from Mrs [EEO] because you don't come out of your Sunday clothes on a Sunday. We learned the hard way that Sunday is for church and rest, not play.
50. I couldn't tell the time. Mr [EEP] sat me down and went around the clock the whole evening. Every time I got it wrong, he would get angrier. He shouted at me. It was terrifying. I was up that night until I got it right.

Reporting of abuse in Foster Care

51. When [REDACTED] came to stay at the [EEO-EEP] we told her what was going on. We told her about Mr [EEP] sitting in the room when we got changed and the things we didn't understand, like going to the church three times a day and not being allowed to go out and play on a Sunday. Mr [EEP] never sat in the room when [REDACTED] was there. [REDACTED] promised to tell someone. Not long after that, we were removed from the [EEO-EEP] I think [REDACTED] said something to her social worker. We didn't all have the same social worker.

Leaving Foster Care

52. Miss Luke came to the [EEO-EEP] Miss Luke asked Mrs [EEO] if [REDACTED] and I wanted to stay. I shook my head and Miss Luke saw me do that. I didn't want to stay there and Miss Luke took us away. It felt great that we were leaving the [EEO-EEP]

Returning to Craigielea Children's Home

53. We returned to Craigielea for a short time before going to Primrosehill. I was excited to see everybody again. We left Craigielea to go to Primrosehill.

The Aberdeen Home for Widowers Children, Primrosehill, Aberdeen

54. [REDACTED]

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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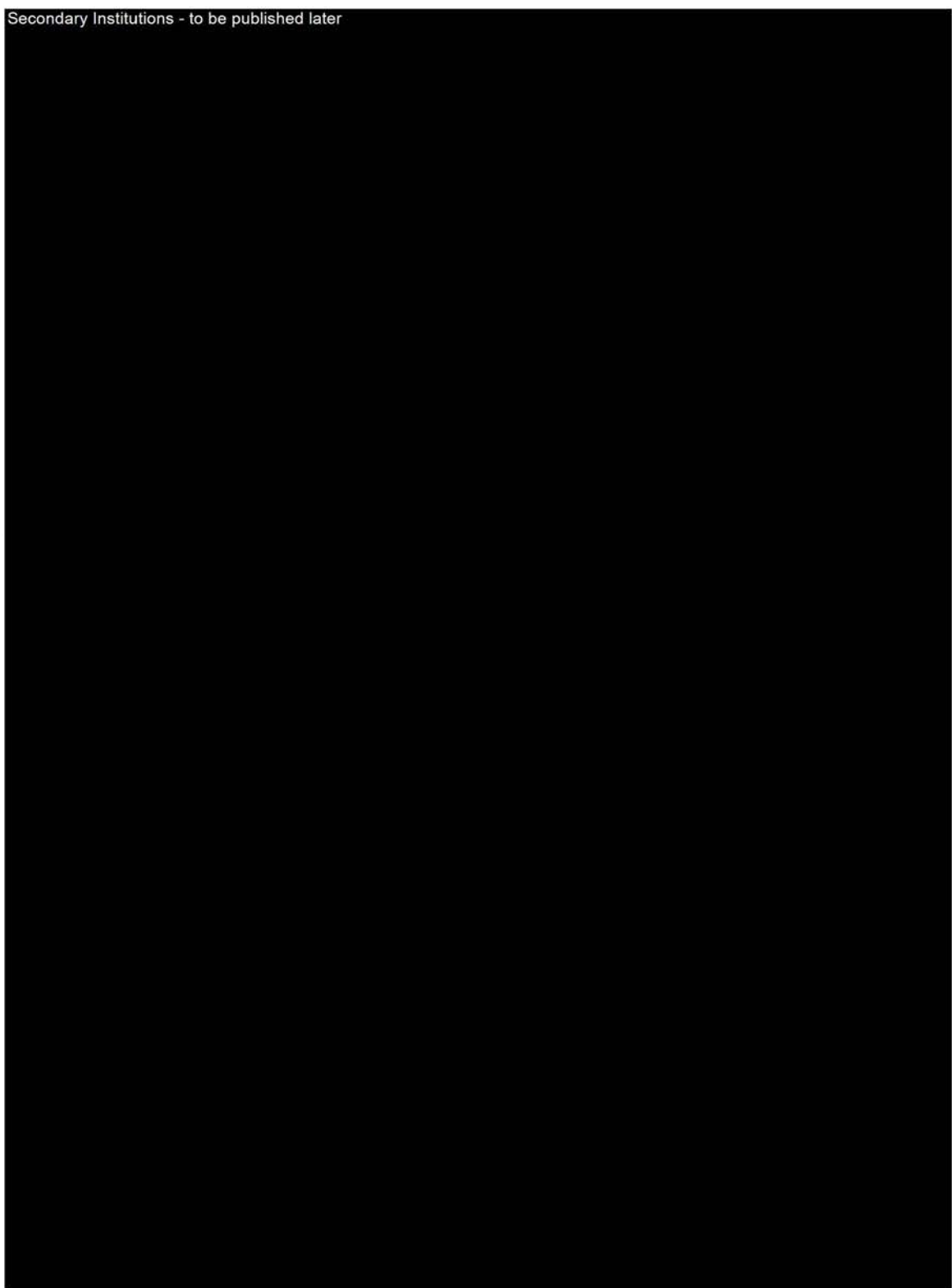
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Discipline

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Uplands College, Bridge of Allan, Stirlingshire

119. The social worker took me, Secondary Institutions - to be published later to the college where I stayed for a year. I was fifteen years old. I enjoyed college and liked the other girls who were there. During the time I was at college, Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

120. At college I learned how to clean and cook. It was a domestic course with twelve girls on it at a time. I didn't want to cook stew and tatties. I wanted to do things with cakes and confectionary. After a year at college, you had to do a year residential work. The other girls got jobs in hotels and I got stuck in a house with kids. I had no choice in my job. Before I went to work in the house, I was taken back to Aberdeen and put in a girls' hostel.

The Girl's Hostel, Broomhill Road, Aberdeen

121. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later . I went from the hostel to the [redacted] The social worker said it was a beautiful house.

Mr and Mrs [redacted] Aberdeen – Residential work

122. I was taken to a house in a posh area, in the west end of Aberdeen, by the authorities. Mr [redacted] was a surgeon. Mr and Mrs [redacted] had twins who were nine months old, a boy of seven years and a boy of nine years. I was sixteen years old. I was paid seven pounds, seven shillings and sixpence, minus board. I was given a room above a garage in an annexe where there was a bed, a clothes shelf and a side table. I hated the job. I had no friends and I didn't know my way about. I didn't know anything about looking after children.

123. I worked from 6:30am until late. My job was to look after the children, clean the house and cook all the meals. Mr [redacted] came in at odd times. I had to get the boys ready for

school and get the twins up, washed and dressed. A breakfast tray had to be taken up every morning for Mr and Mrs [REDACTED]

124. Mrs [REDACTED] put the twins in a big Silver Cross pram and I was to take them out a walk every afternoon. One afternoon, it was pouring rain and I had the pram hood up. I'm only four feet ten inches tall and I couldn't see over the pram hood. I got lost and went into a shop to ask the way back home. The shopkeeper knew Mrs [REDACTED] and phoned her. Mrs [REDACTED] came, picked up the babies and told me to walk home with the pram. I had to put the hood down to see over the pram and, when I got home, the pram was soaking. I suffered for that because when I got back Mrs [REDACTED] was telling me to do this and that. I was tired and soaking wet.

125. I had two half days off a week on Tuesday and Thursday. On Tuesday and Thursday night I had to go to night classes in Aberdeen. There were eight people in the class. There was no-one of my age. They were mostly married and learning to cook. One night I was going to the class and I saw a street which I recognised the name of. I got off the bus and knocked at a door. I asked for my mother who I hadn't seen for years. A woman answered and sent me to another street. I found my mother that day. I thought my mother was ill and I decided to leave the [REDACTED] and look after her. Unbeknown to me, it was drink. I was still sixteen years old.

Siblings

126.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Leaving care

127. I didn't stay at my mums for very long. My mum was drunk all the time. There was no food and everything was dirty in the house. I got reported to the authorities for staying with my mum. So I went to stay at dads.
128. My dad kept a three roomed council house in case any of us kids came back to stay with him. I stayed with dad until my mum reported me to the authorities for being there. I had to go to see a social worker.
129. By then I had met [REDACTED] who became my husband, and we went to meet a social worker. I was still sixteen years old. The social worker said I was under a court order until I was eighteen years old and I had to go back into the Girl's Hostel. I got upset. [REDACTED] said, "What if we got married?" The social worker gave us three weeks to get married or I was to go back to the hostel. We got married to save me going back to the hostel. The arrangement was that we would get divorced in three months. We've been married for 53 years.

Life after being in care

130. I was lucky I met [REDACTED] he saved me. [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later [REDACTED] and I started married life with one pot and two cups. [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later [REDACTED] We have two kids and three grandchildren. I got a job as an auxiliary and went on to do my nursing qualification when the kids were small. When I thought I couldn't go on studying, [REDACTED] encouraged me. I learned to drive at the same time. I did general nursing and then theatre work. I retired when I was 58 years old. Then I worked as a council warden in sheltered housing. I had a heart attack when I was 61 years old and I retired after that.
131. [REDACTED] was in London for about a year. I asked social work if she could come and stay with [REDACTED] and I and she did. I hadn't seen her for a couple of years by then. [REDACTED] did okay.

Impact

132. It's disgusting that no-one took the time to explain to me that I was being taken into care when I was ten years old. No-one said where we were going or that it was for our own good.
133. Certain things trigger memories of care for me. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
Secondary Institutions - to be published later
134. When I left Primrosehill, I didn't know where anything was. I knew the way to church, school and the beach and that was it. My father stayed less than a mile away from Primrosehill and I didn't know. I knew the address but I didn't know where it was. I found out where the house was after I left Primrosehill and met my husband. took me to the house and I remembered it.
135. I was at my lowest when I was in the house. I had no friends, I had no clubs to join and I didn't know where I was. We were not prepared for the outside world. There was no help. Nobody told me where the church or the library was. I had come from a home with eighteen children and college with fifteen girls. Loneliness can kill you. I used to cry because I was so lonely.
136. It takes me a long time to trust. I was overprotective with my children. You don't learn to mix well with people when you're in care. In different circumstances, I wouldn't have got married young and in a hurry. and I wouldn't have been as hard up as we were. We had nothing and had to climb from the bottom rung. I wanted to learn confectionary and cakes but I didn't have a say in it. For a time, I wanted to be a missionary. When I met I stopped believing because doesn't believe in God.

137. After [REDACTED]'s wedding, I never saw her until years after I left care. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are both dead. I have no contact with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. We didn't have a bond when we were young. If we'd been kept together, we would have had a tighter bond. I didn't see them for years. When we met later, we didn't gel. It wasn't like having a sister or a brother. They were just somebody you knew.

138. My siblings stopped speaking to me because they thought I was posh by doing my nursing qualification. [REDACTED] thinks they were jealous of me because I was getting on. My mother was wicked. She never bought or paid for anything. Mother went to stay with [REDACTED] and she died before my father.

139. Miss Luke, the social worker, told me to put everything in a book. Years later, I did that. I thought about it for a long time and did some research. It took me a long time to put it together, from 1966 until 2006. I wanted to know why we ended up in care, what the different rules were for Craigielea, foster care and Primrosehill and why they were so different when they were all places of care for children. [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later [REDACTED] I have called the book "Children of the System". The book is A4 size and is contained in a folder. There are 63 pages plus photographs. The photographs are of [REDACTED] me and the children in the home meeting a TV presenter and Ruby Murray, and me as a nurse. The book is all about my life. I got [REDACTED]'s records to back up the truth. I have no intentions of publishing it, it is for my children.

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

141. [REDACTED]

142. I have given a statement to the National Confidential Forum and I was given a transcript of what I said.

Revisits

143.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Records

146. I tried to get my records from the social work department in the early 1990's. I wrote three letters to the social work department in Aberdeen and telephoned them and didn't get an answer. Then I got a letter saying the records were destroyed after thirty years. The records I have are my sister [REDACTED]'s records. I'm included in the records because I was with [REDACTED] in care and you can see my name in them. I got the records from [REDACTED] when she died.

Support/Counselling

147. I maybe would have had counselling in earlier years but I didn't. As you grow older, you are able to bring it to the forefront. I have [REDACTED] and he's a good listener.

Lessons to be Learned

148. Social workers should listen to the kids. They should have regular one to one meetings where they ask how the kids are getting on and what the kids want to do. The children's futures shouldn't be dictated to them by the authorities. That is wrong. The meetings should take place without a mum, dad or carer there.

149. Children's carers should spend time listening to the children's reading and helping with their homework. Children should be encouraged in the things they enjoy, like playing sport for a team. Contact should be kept up with siblings, cousins and aunties. Every child should have the choice to keep contact up.

150. Children should be told where they are going, why and what is going to happen next. People who have been in care should be able to see their records to see all that. As you get older, the question of how did you get into a home is always in the back of your mind.

151. 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.....EEH [REDACTED].....

Dated.....17 December 2020.....