

1 Tuesday, 12 July 2022

2 (10.00 am)

3 LADY SMITH: Good morning and welcome to the last week in
4 this group of hearings of evidence in relation to our
5 foster care and boarding-out case studies. We have
6 an oral witness, I think, ready to give evidence. Is
7 that right, Ms Innes?

8 MS INNES: We do, my Lady. I do have a slightly longer
9 preamble than usual.

10 The next witness is 'Rachel'. 'Rachel' was admitted
11 to the care of the City of Aberdeen Corporation and
12 placed with a Mrs FAD in [REDACTED], which is
13 an Aberdeenshire, on [REDACTED] 1973. She remained
14 there until [REDACTED] 1973.

15 The City of Aberdeen seem to have been alerted to
16 the need for care by a charity, which was then called
17 the Aberdeen Association of Social Service, and as we
18 will see, a case worker from that organisation was said
19 to be responsible for visiting and any case work
20 decision in the case, although there were visits by
21 a social worker from the Corporation, and therefore it
22 does appear that Aberdeen Corporation took
23 responsibility for the placement.

24 Mrs FAD may also have been a foster carer for
25 Aberdeen County Council and there is a document which we

1 will look at in relation to that, so whilst it does
2 appear that Aberdeen City Council are the relevant
3 successor, Aberdeenshire Council would also have
4 an interest, given that it appears that she was also
5 a foster carer for them.

6 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

7 'Rachel' (sworn)

8 LADY SMITH: 'Rachel', a couple of things before we begin
9 your evidence. It looks as though you're in a good
10 position for that microphone. If you could keep in
11 a good position for the microphone, that would be really
12 helpful because we need to hear you through the sound
13 system.

14 That red folder on the desk has a written version of
15 your statement in it that you signed and you'll be taken
16 to that in a few moments. You'll also see the statement
17 coming up on screen and you might find that helpful.
18 You don't have to use it, but if it does help you, feel
19 free to do so.

20 A. (Witness nods).

21 LADY SMITH: Moving on, though, to something I want to say
22 to you about being here and understanding how difficult
23 it is, I do appreciate that it's not easy coming into
24 a public forum to talk about yourself and your own life,
25 and particularly to talk about difficult things that

1 happened in your childhood, and however organised and
2 ready any of us feel, the emotional impact of doing so
3 can take us by surprise.

4 I fully understand that, and if at any time you want
5 a break or a pause, please don't hesitate to let me
6 know. If it works for you, whatever it is, it will work
7 for me, because we want to help you to give the best
8 evidence you can in this difficult set of circumstances.

9 If you're ready, I'll hand over to Ms Innes and
10 she'll take it from there. Is that all right?

11 A. Yeah.

12 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

13 Questions from Ms Innes

14 MS INNES: 'Rachel', we understand that you were born in
15 1967; is that right?

16 A. That's right, yeah.

17 Q. If we can just look at your statement, please, we give
18 it the reference WIT-1-000000669. If we can go to the
19 final page, please, paragraph 52, we see there it says:

20 "I have no objection to my witness statement being
21 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.

22 I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are
23 true."

24 And I think you signed this statement on 21 April of
25 last year, 2021; is that right?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. If we can go back to the beginning of your statement,
3 you tell us at paragraph 2 that you were born in
4 Aberdeen and you refer to your parents, and then you say
5 that you have twin sisters who are older than you?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. I think you tell us later in your statement that you
8 discovered later that they don't have the same father as
9 you?

10 A. That's right, yeah, mm-hmm.

11 Q. I think are they just about a year older than you?

12 A. Yeah, just over a year.

13 Q. And I think again later in your statement you tell us
14 about a younger brother?

15 A. Uh-huh.

16 Q. So I think you say that you have a younger brother, six
17 years younger than you.

18 A. That's right.

19 Q. Okay. So before you went into care, at paragraph 5 on
20 this page, you say that you have very little memories,
21 but you didn't have a happy childhood is your overall
22 impression of the time?

23 A. Yeah, I can't really remember much, but I know I wasn't
24 happy.

25 Q. Okay. If we go on over the page, please, to page 2 and

1 paragraph 7, you say that you've tried looking through
2 your records to find out how you came to be in foster
3 care.

4 A. (Witness nods).

5 Q. What you tell us in this paragraph is that from -- is
6 that your understanding that came from your records?

7 A. (Witness nods). Yeah, mm-hmm.

8 Q. You tell us there that you understand that your mum had
9 abandoned you and left you with your dad, and you have
10 some memory of being at your dad's for a bit, and then
11 you think you stayed with his parents and then went to
12 your mum's mum.

13 A. Mm-hmm.

14 Q. Your grandmother. You say that you can remember being
15 in care but you can't remember how you got there or
16 anything.

17 A. I can't remember how I got there, no.

18 Q. Okay, that's fine. You tell us at paragraph 8 that you
19 went to stay with a woman called a Mrs FAD .

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. Did you go with your sisters?

22 A. Yeah, my sisters were there as well.

23 Q. Had your brother been born by that time or did he arrive
24 later?

25 A. He arrived later.

1 Q. You tell us that it was a farmhouse?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. And was it near where you had lived before with your

4 grandmother?

5 A. I think it was -- it -- maybe about 10 miles or

6 something. It was within the vicinity.

7 Q. Had you started school, can you remember?

8 A. I had. I was at school, yeah. I was either a P1 or 2,

9 I can't remember, but I was at school.

10 Q. Can you remember anything about the house that the

11 FAD-SPO lived in?

12 A. All I remember is the stairs, the steep stairs. That's

13 all I can really remember.

14 Q. Okay. We'll come back to that in a moment.

15 At paragraph 9, you say that you think you must have

16 been wondering what on earth was going on. Is that your

17 reflection looking back on your time in foster care?

18 A. Yeah, because I honestly can't remember how I got there.

19 I mean, it just seemed to be --I don't know, it just

20 came out of nowhere.

21 Q. Okay. In terms of the FAD-SPO themselves, you say at

22 paragraph 10 Mrs FAD was married and you say you

23 didn't see much of her husband?

24 A. No, he was a farmer so he was out a lot. I can vaguely

25 remember him, but it's her I do remember.

1 Q. Okay. And you say you don't have a memory of what
2 Mrs FAD herself would have looked like or what sort
3 of age she was?
4 A. I can't remember, no.
5 Q. If we go over the page, were there other children as
6 well as you and your sisters in the farmhouse?
7 A. There were two other children and I thought that they
8 were her children until years later when I looked in my
9 records and they were actually foster children as well.
10 Q. And you say you think that they were older than you,
11 but --
12 A. (Witness nods).
13 Q. -- do you have any sense of how much older?
14 A. I honestly can't remember, but I do think that they were
15 older.
16 Q. Were they at primary school with you, can you remember?
17 A. Well, the school that I went to, it was a primary come
18 academy, so we all went to the same school so I don't
19 know if they'd been in the Academy side of it.
20 LADY SMITH: So that would be six children in total in the
21 household then, with your sisters and your brother and
22 you?
23 A. No, my brother wasn't there. It was just myself and my
24 sisters and the two other children.
25 LADY SMITH: Sorry, I thought you said your brother came

1 later.

2 A. Aye, no, sorry, he wasn't in care.

3 LADY SMITH: Oh, he was born later. Of course, yes. But

4 five children living in the house?

5 A. Yeah.

6 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

7 MS INNES: If we go on to paragraph 12, you talk there about

8 food. What sort of memories do you have about mealtimes

9 or food that you were given?

10 A. I cannot honestly remember much about the food but I do

11 remember her giving us cheese and I hated cheese, and

12 being forced to eat it. That's what sticks in my mind,

13 is getting the cheese and having to eat it.

14 Q. Do you have any memories of sitting around a table with

15 your sisters and these other children?

16 A. I can see us sitting round a table with my sisters,

17 Mrs FAD , but not the other children.

18 Q. Okay. At paragraph 13 you talk about school and some

19 memories that you have about what happened there, and

20 you say that you remember going out of the class to

21 drink the wee bottles of milk. Was that with other

22 children in the class, can you remember?

23 A. No, I just used to go out myself.

24 Q. Right.

25 A. And take the milk.

1 Q. Okay. You say that you never got given a play piece and
2 you can remember going through other children's bags and
3 taking theirs?
4 A. Yeah.
5 Q. Was that when you were living with the FAD-SPO ?
6 A. Yes, uh-huh.
7 Q. Why do you think you were doing that?
8 A. Probably because I hadn't been given anything and
9 I don't -- I can't remember anything about food when we
10 were there, so -- I don't know.
11 Q. You think you must have been hungry, you say here.
12 A. Mm.
13 LADY SMITH: From that description, 'Rachel', it sounds as
14 though all the other children at school had a play piece
15 with them; is that right?
16 A. Yeah.
17 LADY SMITH: So that was the norm, but you weren't
18 getting one?
19 A. I wasn't getting, no.
20 LADY SMITH: Thank you.
21 MS INNES: You go on at paragraph 14 to tell us about
22 a memory of Christmas at Mrs FAD 's, and what was your
23 memory of that?
24 A. I remember coming down and her saying that Santa hadn't
25 been. And that -- that's all I can remember. I just --

1 she'd said that he hadn't been.

2 Q. Can you remember how you felt about that?

3 A. Absolutely devastated, as any child would.

4 Q. You say that you can remember standing with your sisters

5 when you were being told this?

6 A. Mm-hmm.

7 Q. Is that right? Okay. You say you think you might have

8 tried to run away once, but you're not sure about that?

9 A. Aye, I have that somewhere at the back of my mind, but

10 I honestly can't remember.

11 Q. Then if we go on to paragraph 15, you tell us about some

12 of the memories of things that happened to you, and you

13 can remember that you wet the bed when you were there.

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. What was Mrs FAD 's reaction to that, can you

16 remember?

17 A. I got thrown down the stairs.

18 Q. You got thrown down the stairs. You mentioned the

19 stairs earlier.

20 A. Mm-hmm.

21 Q. And is that why you can remember the stairs?

22 A. That's why I can -- uh-huh.

23 Q. You say you can also remember something being rammed

24 down your throat?

25 A. Yeah, I can feel it in my throat now, either the sheets

1 or -- the soiled sheets or clothing, socks, I don't know
2 what it was, but there was definitely I remember
3 something being rammed down my throat.

4 Q. If we go over the page, please, at paragraph 16, you
5 tell us that you remember being locked in a cupboard.

6 A. Mm-hmm.

7 Q. What can you tell us about that?

8 A. I just remember being put in this wee cupboard in the
9 dark and I would be absolutely screaming, but it would
10 make no difference. And then -- this happened time and
11 time again. And then I got wise that I could see
12 a crack of light through and I stopped screaming. And
13 I think -- well, she must have stopped putting me in
14 once there was no effect.

15 Q. You say that your memory of that is that it went on and
16 on:

17 "It seemed like I was there for an eternity."

18 A. Mm-hmm.

19 Q. Is that your feeling looking back at it?

20 A. Looking back, it was, aye.

21 Q. You say you think it was maybe because you couldn't do
22 your reading or spelling?

23 A. That's the only thing I could think. I have no
24 recollection, but it was the only sort of thing I could
25 think maybe it would have been because of. Maybe it

1 could have been connected to wetting the bed. I don't
2 know. I really don't know.

3 Q. Okay. And then at paragraph 17 you say that you think
4 another time Mrs FAD was standing watching you when
5 you were over someone's knee being smacked, you say.

6 A. Mm-hmm.

7 Q. What can you remember about that?

8 A. Again, just very, very little, just remember being over
9 the knee and her standing there looking.

10 Q. Do you know if it was a man or --

11 A. I seem to think that it was the -- the boy that was in
12 foster care.

13 Q. Okay. So the older boy that you've mentioned?

14 A. Mm-hmm.

15 Q. Then you say at paragraph 18 that you have a memory of
16 being round the tea table with your sisters when
17 Mrs FAD was checking your nails.

18 A. Mm-hmm.

19 Q. What can you tell us about that?

20 A. She had a thing about you biting your nails and
21 I remember so clearly because my sisters -- not that
22 I wanted them to be in trouble, but I remember they bit
23 their nails and I remember putting out my hands and
24 saying, "Look, look, my nails are fine", knowing that
25 I wouldn't be in trouble.

1 Q. So you had a sense that you would be in trouble if --
2 A. Mm-hmm.
3 Q. -- there was an issue, okay. We know that you left
4 Mrs FAD 's on 1973. Other than what
5 you've told us about in your statement and in your
6 evidence, do you have any other memories yourself of
7 your time at the FAD-SPO ?
8 A. No, honestly, just --
9 Q. Do you have any -- sorry.
10 A. It's all very vague.
11 Q. Do you have any overall sense of how you felt there?
12 You know, whether you were happy, sad, afraid?
13 Anything?
14 A. Definitely sad and afraid. Never happy. I wouldn't use
15 the word happy at all.
16 Q. You tell us at paragraph 19 that you can't remember how
17 it came about that you left the FAD-SPO ; is that right?
18 A. No.
19 Q. But I think that you've seen your records, and we'll
20 look at them in a moment, and you say the records state
21 that you had injuries and you have no memory of how you
22 got those injuries?
23 A. (Witness shakes head).
24 Q. No, okay. Then after you left Mrs FAD s, I think you
25 went back to your grandmother's again; is that right?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Your mum's mum?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. If we can look at your records, at ABN-000000525.

5 If we can start by looking at page 4. This is
6 a letter from the Corporation of the City of Aberdeen
7 dated 31 January 1973 to a Ms Margery Urquhart, who is
8 said to be the Director of Social Work at 4 Albyn Place
9 in Aberdeen. I think we understand from other
10 information that we have that she was with Aberdeen
11 County Council, so although the address is in Aberdeen
12 itself, it's Aberdeen County Council.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. There's reference there to:

15 "Children in care. I have to notify you of the
16 placing in your area of the undernoted children."

17 It's blanked out on the screen, but I can tell you
18 that you are one of the children that's noted, together
19 with your twin sisters and that you were placed with
20 Mrs FAD in in 1973.

21 If we can go back a page, please, to page 3, what we
22 can see here is another document dated 8 February 1973,
23 and this is to a Mr Gibson, who, if we scroll down to
24 the bottom of this page, it appears to be the area
25 officer in Turriff.

1 I think we can see that if we scroll up again,
2 please, that I think this is Ms Urquhart saying to
3 Mr Gibson:

4 "I have been notified by the Corporation of the City
5 of Aberdeen social work of the placing in your area of
6 the undernoted children. Please add these children's
7 names to your list of other authority boarded-out
8 children."

9 Again, that's blanked out but it's you and your
10 sisters.

11 Okay, if we can move on to page 5. I think here we
12 see that there's reference to a social worker,
13 Mrs F Moir. There's a Miss S Maxwell that's scored out
14 and then Mrs F Moir in handwriting. Can you remember
15 any social worker coming to visit when you were at the
16 FAD-SPO ?

17 A. I can't remember anyone at all.

18 Q. I think we see some notes here of visits that I think
19 you'll have seen when you've looked at your records.

20 A. (Witness nods).

21 Q. We see a record on 6 February 1973 where there's
22 a reference to visiting the FAD-SPO :

23 "Mrs FAD finding the three girls no trouble at
24 all. Their father did not visit last week as promised.
25 Mrs FAD said the girls manage very well on their

1 own -- like to change their clothes as often as
2 possible -- they seem to have a large amount of clothes.
3 Their grandmother likely to be in hospital for nearly
4 9 months."

5 What's your understanding of what had happened to
6 your grandmother that meant that she was going to be in
7 hospital for that long?

8 A. I think she had fallen and hurt her hip and had to get
9 a hip replacement, I think, but I can't really remember.

10 Q. There's reference in the next paragraph:

11 "Their stay at [this farm] means there is no need
12 for them to change schools."

13 And there's reference to:

14 "The long-term foster children also attend [REDACTED]
15 school."

16 I think that's the school that you all went to but
17 you said it was a primary and a secondary?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Okay. And it's from this, I think, that you discovered
20 that these children were foster children?

21 A. Yeah, because I originally thought they were her
22 children.

23 Q. Then at the next paragraph, 10 April 1973, there's
24 reference to:

25 "Home visit. Didn't see [you and your sisters], as

1 they were at home with their grandmother for a few
2 days."

3 Do you have any recollection of going back and
4 forth?

5 A. I have no recollection at all.

6 Q. It says:

7 "Mrs FAD is in contact with Mr Wilson AASS, who
8 is dealing with this case."

9 We know from another document that we'll come onto
10 that AASS stands for Aberdeen Association of Social
11 Service. Can you remember seeing a Mr Wilson, a man
12 coming to visit you?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Then there's another visit at 14 August 1973 where
15 there's reference to you spending a holiday from 10 July
16 until 13 August with your grandmother.

17 A. I can't remember that either.

18 Q. Then reference to your grandmother going into hospital.

19 It then says:

20 "Mrs FAD is becoming a little restless as to how
21 long she might have the children. She will not be able
22 to cope when she moves into a caravan while the house is
23 renovated. This will probably be about October."

24 Can you remember moving into a caravan or staying in
25 a caravan?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Then it says:

3 "For the present she is quite willing to look after
4 the children. Mr Wilson AASS keeps in touch with the
5 situation."

6 Then I think we see in this paragraph here that
7 there's reference to your grandmother having a fractured
8 femur.

9 A. Mm-hmm.

10 Q. And then in the final paragraph it says:

11 "The children were placed with Mrs FAD on
12 1973 after consultation with Mr G Wilson,
13 AASS, who is responsible for visiting and any case work
14 decision in this case."

15 So again that seems to be referring to this
16 Mr Wilson from the charity that we've spoken about.

17 A. Mm-hmm.

18 Q. Okay. Now, if we can go on to the next page, please, at
19 the beginning of this page there seems to be a record of
20 supervision and there's reference to a Mrs E Reid,
21 social worker.

22 I think at the beginning of this section we see some
23 reference to your mother requesting information about
24 you?

25 A. Mm-hmm.

1 Q. And a letter received from Swansea Social Services. Is
2 that where your mother was living at the time?
3 A. It must have been, yeah.
4 Q. I think there's reference to your father sometimes
5 visiting.
6 If we can go on, please, to [REDACTED] 1974, we see
7 here:
8 "Phone call from Mr Wilson ..."
9 So I think that's the name from AASS?
10 A. (Witness nods).
11 Q. " ... telling me that the girls had left the foster home
12 and returned to the care of their grandmother on
13 [REDACTED]. Mr Wilson was informed that the youngest
14 girl [that's you] had marks and bruises on her neck and
15 it was possible that Mrs [FAD] had caused these.
16 Mrs [FAD]'s account of the injury conflicts with
17 'Rachel''s and Mr Wilson feels that nothing would be
18 gained by accusing Mrs [FAD] or by making an issue of
19 the injuries. Mr Wilson did ask me to visit the foster
20 home although the girls are away, but I thought it may
21 be more appropriate if the social worker who visits the
22 other two children in Mrs [FAD]'s care should be
23 informed."
24 Now, I know that you saw this when you looked at
25 your records. What did you think when you saw this

1 about injuries?

2 A. I honestly couldn't believe what I was reading. And
3 for -- my account apparently was different from her
4 account or vice versa, but to say that now that I wasn't
5 in her care, it was basically what was the point of
6 following it up.

7 Q. It seemed to be that Mr Wilson had suggested that, but
8 he had asked the social worker to visit the foster home,
9 but the social worker thought it might be more
10 appropriate if the information were passed on to the
11 social worker for the other children that were in the
12 placement, I think is what's being said here.

13 A. Mm-hmm.

14 Q. And then it goes on at 7 January:

15 "Spoke to Mr McKenzie about this case and we agreed
16 that there would be no point in me meeting Mrs FAD
17 and discussing the incident when the girls were away.
18 We did feel, however, that Ms Jamieson, Area 7, who is
19 social worker visiting the other two foster children
20 should be informed."

21 And then 15 January:

22 "Discussed case again with senior and agreed that as
23 the children are no longer in our foster home the case
24 can be ceased."

25 So I think from your reading of the records, you

1 were saying that you were shocked that this was what
2 happened after these injuries had been seen.

3 A. Yeah.

4 LADY SMITH: So on the face of those records, it looks as
5 though Mrs FAD remained on their list of foster
6 carers.

7 A. Looks like it, yeah.

8 LADY SMITH: And no steps were taken to address what your
9 needs might have been following the incident.

10 A. None whatsoever, no.

11 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

12 MS INNES: Then if we can move on to page 7, to a further
13 letter, so this is from the Aberdeen Association of
14 Social Service to Mrs Reid, who is the social worker at
15 Aberdeen Corporation, on 1974, and we see here
16 that it says:

17 "Dear Mrs Reid."

18 It refers to you and your sisters:

19 "I am confirming our telephone conversation in
20 informing you that the above children were returned to
21 their grandmother on Wednesday, . This seems
22 for the moment a permanent arrangement.

23 "The move had been planned to take place before
24 but was delayed by their father's lack of
25 action on the matter. It was precipitated on this

1 occasion by injury to ['Rachel'], allegedly inflicted by
2 Mrs FAD ."

3 So it seems, well, from this letter, that in fact it
4 was the injuries that meant that you moved on that date.

5 A. Mm-hmm.

6 LADY SMITH: And you had been seen by a doctor, who had
7 alerted the social worker. Is that right?

8 MS INNES: Yes.

9 A. Yeah.

10 MS INNES: I think it goes on there:

11 "I was originally informed of this by Dr Taylor,
12 ."

13 So that would be a local GP, do you think?

14 A. That would have been the local doctor.

15 Q. Then it says:

16 "Mrs FAD 's account of the injury conflicts with
17 ['Rachel''s] and I feel that nothing would be gained by
18 accusing Mrs FAD nor by discussing the injuries more
19 widely with her."

20 Is the suggestion from the case worker. Then it
21 says:

22 "It is unfortunate that such a useful and otherwise
23 pleasant placing should end on such a sour note and
24 I remain grateful to your department and Mrs FAD for
25 being able to take the children when we so badly needed

1 a home for them."

2 What did you think when you saw that?

3 A. No words, really. It's just not ...

4 Q. Okay. Now, again, if we go on to the next page, I think
5 this seems to be a case discussion on 9 October 1974, so
6 this is later, and from what we can tell, I think this
7 comes from the charity. If we go down a little, there's
8 reference:

9 "As maternal grandmother required operation to leg,
10 girls moved to foster home in [REDACTED], where they had
11 already begun school. School first class in interest
12 and concern and felt that they should not leave the
13 area. This initially short period until father found
14 something lasted over a year."

15 Then the next paragraph it says:

16 "The girls returned to [and that's your grandmother]
17 after [REDACTED] 1973 after most unhappy incident with
18 foster mother who can no longer be used (Aberdeen
19 City)."

20 LADY SMITH: So that sounds as though something may have
21 happened on the part of the Local Authority to react to
22 the indication that Mrs FAD [REDACTED] had hurt you. Is that
23 the only reference we have on record to anything of that
24 nature?

25 MS INNES: Yes. I'll come to a final document just in

1 a moment, but I think that's the only reference that we
2 can find in your records --

3 A. (Witness nods).

4 Q. -- to Aberdeen City not using this carer again.

5 A. Mm-hmm.

6 Q. If we move, please, to page 10, this is a record of
7 supervision, but we think that this is from Aberdeen
8 County Council, and I think we'll see the letters or the
9 initials MU after each entry, which would suggest
10 Margery Urquhart, who we saw the letter to her earlier,
11 she's the Director of Social Work at Aberdeen County
12 Council.

13 If we look down, there's a reference February 8:
14 "Notification sent to us by Aberdeen City letting us
15 know that the children had been placed with a foster
16 mother, Mrs FAD . I have a feeling that Mrs FAD is
17 one of our own foster mothers who used to be in the
18 Kincardine area. She was actually quite good."

19 Is the reference that we see there.

20 Now, did you have any reflections on that sort of
21 reference to Mrs FAD when you looked at your records?

22 A. So you just have to be "actually quite good"? No.

23 Q. Okay. Then in the next section, January 1975, just at
24 the beginning, for completeness, it says there:
25 "This case has really been dealt with all along by

1 Aberdeen Association of Social Service. Mr Wilson being
2 the social worker involved. There is a fairly long
3 history ..."

4 Reference to your parents, living with your
5 grandmother. Your grandmother was:

6 " ... at one stage unable to continue to care for
7 them and the Association appeared to have boarded them
8 in the [REDACTED] area and charged the city social work
9 department for this. There appears to have been some
10 crisis in the foster home and the children were returned
11 to their grandmother in [REDACTED] 1973 and they have
12 remained with her ever since."

13 So that's all that I wanted to look at with you from
14 your records, but I think you say in your statement,
15 'Rachel', that you had a recollection that they said
16 something like the foster home was okay.

17 A. Mm-hmm.

18 Q. Does that reflect back on the entries that we've looked
19 at? So, for example, that she was "actually quite
20 good"?

21 A. Well, if you look at -- I mean, for someone just to be
22 "quite good" to look after children, in my eyes, that
23 just -- you know, it -- it hasn't been looked into
24 properly. "Quite good" is just not good enough.

25 Q. Okay. If we can move on to, please, to look at

1 paragraph 45, where you deal with this in your
2 statement, so this is at the bottom of page 8 of your
3 statement, and you say there that you'd received your
4 social work records and you'd thought for years that
5 you'd imagined some of what had happened.

6 A. Mm-hmm.

7 Q. So when you got your records, did that help you
8 understand what had happened?

9 A. Oh, it definitely put the pieces together, because I did
10 honestly think I was imagining things, but to see it in
11 black and white, that was quite horrific, really, to be
12 honest.

13 Q. Okay. So at paragraph 46, over the page, you say there:
14 "I wanted to find out what had been recorded and if
15 Mrs FAD was still able to go on fostering."
16 You think that's what you were thinking.
17 "The records were very vague."
18 They stated, I think you're say, in effect:
19 "It was a pity it had to end way as she was an okay
20 carer".
21 Was that your impression from the various things
22 that we've looked at in terms of --

23 A. Definitely, uh-huh.

24 Q. -- reference to Mrs FAD? Okay.
25 In terms of the impact on you of this placement with

1 the **FAD-SPO**, what impact would you say that it had on
2 you?

3 A. Throughout my childhood?

4 Q. Childhood and the rest of your life.

5 A. Oh, it's -- it had major, major impact on me.

6 I mean ... (Pause).

7 Q. In what sort of way did it impact on you?

8 A. Well, certainly in my adult life, I've used alcohol to
9 blot things out for years and years. No confidence.
10 Panic attacks. Just ... mm.

11 Q. Okay. You tell us on page 9 some of the lessons that we
12 can learn from your experience, and you say at
13 paragraph 47 that your understanding is that social work
14 weren't as involved as they would be today, and you say
15 you would like to think that there's no way that they
16 would get away with what they did back then, and you
17 feel that carers weren't vetted to the extent that they
18 are today?

19 A. I think that's right, because -- I would like to think
20 that in this day and age, that if someone was removed
21 from care with marks or whatever, that they would be
22 listened to do, but it was just a case of I think that
23 what I said just didn't matter, and then to say that
24 just because we weren't in her care any more there was
25 no point in pursuing it.

1 Q. Okay. At paragraph 48, you say:
2 "The bottom line is, regardless of age, you really
3 have got to listen to the children."
4 Can you tell us about your reflections on that?
5 A. I think had I been listened to way back then, my life
6 could have been so much different. Things could have
7 been so much different for me, and I just -- I now work
8 with children, and you've got to listen to them.
9 They've got to be heard, and it's just -- to be just
10 sort of shoved to the side and forgotten about,
11 basically that's what was done, it's just -- it's not --
12 it can't be.
13 Q. Okay. You say that if there had been somebody checking
14 in on you on a regular basis, you would obviously have
15 got to know them and you would have been able to talk to
16 them. So I think you're talking there, 'Rachel', about
17 being able to build up a relationship with somebody.
18 A. Mm-hmm. I -- I think if -- as I say, I can't remember
19 anyone ever coming to actually check in and I think if
20 there had been, I would have been able to -- well, tell
21 them what was going on. But in my eyes, I -- that's my
22 only conclusion, that there was nobody coming on
23 a regular basis to actually see what was going on or to
24 find out.
25 Q. And to talk to you specifically --

1 A. Aye, to talk to us.

2 Q. Okay. You say also this is regardless of age. So are
3 you saying no matter how young a child is, you should
4 try to understand what they're --

5 A. Oh definitely, uh-huh.

6 Q. -- saying, okay.

7 At paragraph 49, you say:

8 "I think being caring, supportive and trusting is
9 a big thing. You've got to be aware of signs that
10 a child is unhappy or being abused ..."

11 Is that something that you think people should be
12 looking out for, not just what a child says, but what
13 a child does?

14 A. How a child reacts. Because, I mean, I was permanently
15 crying at school, but nothing was ever -- it was just,
16 oh, she's crying again, but as I say, working with
17 children, I -- you look out for how they act and what
18 they're doing as well, you know, not just what they're
19 saying.

20 Q. Okay. Then you talk about decisions that were made
21 about going back to your mother and you say at
22 paragraph 51:

23 "After all these years, for me to be actually
24 listened to and believed are the biggest things."

25 A. Mm-hmm.

1 Q. Is that how you felt about giving your statement to the
2 Inquiry?

3 A. Definitely, mm-hmm.

4 MS INNES: Right, 'Rachel', I don't have any more questions
5 for you and there are no applications, my Lady.

6 LADY SMITH: Thank you. Are there any outstanding
7 applications for questions?

8 'Rachel', that completes all the questions we have
9 for you today. Thank you so much for engaging with the
10 Inquiry. As you know, this case study looks into the
11 experiences of people who were in foster care and
12 boarded out. Yours may only have been a year, but it
13 was clearly a very significant year in your life and
14 what you've been able to tell us about your experience
15 found out from your records is extremely valuable to the
16 work we're doing here.

17 Quite apart from anything else, I'm struck at the
18 value to you of actually seeing your own records. They
19 may still be light on detail, but as you say in your
20 statement, first up is they convinced you you were not
21 imagining having been in care.

22 A. (Witness nods).

23 LADY SMITH: You were not imagining that things happened to
24 you as you've described to us, and I'll certainly take
25 that with me. We've heard quite a lot about the

1 importance of records, but that really encapsulates it.

2 So thank you so much. I hope you realise you've
3 contributed something of value to our work here, and
4 I can let you go now with my thanks.

5 A. Thank you.

6 (The witness withdrew)

7 LADY SMITH: Ms Innes.

8 MS INNES: My Lady, Ms Rattray has some read-ins to proceed
9 with, if I might be excused briefly.

10 LADY SMITH: Certainly. Thank you.

11 Just while we change over, I should mention that
12 Mrs FAD's name was used during that evidence. It
13 can't be used outside this room because her identity is
14 protected by my general restriction order.

15 Ms Rattray.

16 MS RATTRAY: My Lady, we'll start this morning with
17 a read-in from an applicant who wishes to remain
18 anonymous and has chosen the pseudonym 'Frank'.

19 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

20 'Frank' (read)

21 MS RATTRAY: 'Frank''s statement is at WIT.001.002.1957.

22 'Frank' was placed by the City and Royal Borough of
23 Perth, later Tayside Regional Council, in a foster
24 placement with FJZ-GDT in Perth from
25 1970 until 1978.

1 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

2 MS RATTRAY: The current responsible authority is Perth and
3 Kinross Council.

4 "My name is 'Frank'. I was born in either 1966 or
5 1967. I don't know which one is right as each has been
6 used on different documentation. My contact details are
7 known to the Inquiry.

8 My mother was only 16 when she had me. From what
9 I have been told by my mother and father, Social
10 Services were involved from the minute me and my sister
11 were born. My sister is my twin, but I have never met
12 her. I have two younger brothers, one who committed
13 suicide about 14 or 15 years ago.

14 My mother ran away from the home she was in at
15 Dundee. She ended up in Manchester and that's where she
16 met my dad, who had moved there from Jamaica. When she
17 found out she was pregnant, she came back to Scotland.
18 I was born mixed-race. I think that's why I was taken
19 from my mother when I was 12 weeks old.

20 My twin sister was adopted and I ended up in
21 Craigiebank in Perth. My mother has told me that she
22 had to sign papers. She thought this was to have
23 treatment for tuberculosis. It turned out this was to
24 have my sister adopted. My mother was only 17 at the
25 time and didn't understand the law.

1 I don't remember anything about Craigiebank. When
2 I was about three, I was put into care at Nimmo Place
3 Children's Home in Perth. I can remember bits of my
4 time at Nimmo."

5 From paragraph 6 to 15, 'Frank' speaks of his
6 memories in Nimmo Place Children's Home, Perth. Moving
7 now to paragraph 16 on page 3:

8 "I stayed at Nimmo until I was five, and then I went
9 into foster care. My foster parents, FJZ-GDT
10 FJZ-GDT, turned up at the home with their adopted son.
11 They had a green ball and a tractor for me. I played
12 with their adopted son whilst they were away with the
13 staff. He was two years older than me and mixed-race as
14 well.

15 There was no preparation for going into foster care.
16 One day I was in care, the next day I was at the foster
17 home in Perth. I was driven in my foster parents'
18 Wolseley car to their house.

19 There was a big [REDACTED] on the front lawn of the
20 house. I remember the kitchen and living room being
21 downstairs. The two bedrooms and bathroom were
22 upstairs. Their son and I were in one room and my
23 foster parents slept in the other room.

24 When I arrived I was taken around the neighbours and
25 introduced to everyone. It felt a bit weird. It was

1 like a freak show with everyone pointing their finger at
2 me.

3 My surname was changed to their surname.

4 FJZ ,my foster parent, was in her 50s and too old
5 to be looking after young children. She also had
6 a heart condition that she had to take a lot of
7 medication for. GDT , her husband, was ten years
8 younger than FJZ . FJZ and GDT couldn't have kids.
9 That's why they fostered.

10 I had the feeling that FJZ just saw me as a source
11 of revenue. A cheque in my name would be sent to me.

12 FJZ would put it in the bank and then spend it.

13 GDT was very placid. He only hit me once with
14 a belt on the backside. I think I deserved it, although
15 I can't remember what I had done.

16 They tried to get me to call them mum and dad but
17 I never did. They weren't my parents. I never called
18 them anything.

19 I got myself up in the morning. Their son would
20 help me dress and tie my shoelaces. I would then go for
21 breakfast. There wasn't any choice. I was given salty
22 porridge. If I didn't eat it, then I would go to school
23 on an empty stomach.

24 I would go to bed at 5.30 pm. It was ridiculous
25 going at this time. Bedtime was a bit later as I got

1 older.

2 I was well fed and always given something to eat.

3 I had my lunch at school and my tea when I got home.

4 My foster parents bought me the cheapest school
5 uniform. They also provided me with other clothing for
6 outside school.

7 My birthday was never celebrated by my foster
8 parents. There was a tree and decorations at Christmas,
9 but it was just another day to me. I used to go out and
10 see my mates. Christmas still doesn't mean anything to
11 me.

12 When I was about seven or eight years old, I ran
13 away. I had been at school and one of the boys said
14 something about my foster parents not being my real mum
15 and dad. When I told FJZ, she hit me, so I ran away.
16 I only got as far as the arcade in the town. The woman
17 at the arcade recognised me and told FJZ.

18 I didn't realise at the time that my real mum stayed
19 just around the corner. When I was older, I found out
20 I should never have been in care. There was no need for
21 me to have been in care.

22 I had a bath every night. FJZ would bathe me
23 until I was about 10. Nothing bad happened, I just
24 don't think it was right.

25 I didn't go to school for the first couple of weeks.

1 I think they were waiting on a place becoming available.
2 I eventually went to primary school.

3 People would call me names because of my hair and my
4 looks. I would hit them then get punished by the
5 teachers. The girls at school would stick up for me
6 when this happened.

7 If I was given the belt at school, I would retaliate
8 against the teacher. I would take the belt from them
9 and hit them with it. I never liked being hit or anyone
10 touching me.

11 When I was at school, one of the kids called me
12 Sambo. I didn't know what this meant so I told my
13 foster mother when I got home. She leathered me for
14 saying this. I knew then that it must be bad.

15 When I was back at school, I battered the boy who
16 had called me the name. I split his head on a bollard.
17 After this, I was expelled from school. I would have
18 been around six years old.

19 I was taken to the Child Guidance centre. It was
20 like a day assessment centre for children with problems.
21 After this I went to see a psychiatrist, Dr [REDACTED].
22 I told him how I felt and that I was being targeted.
23 I also told him that FJZ [REDACTED] was hitting me with her
24 stick.

25 Dr [REDACTED] took me on holiday for ten weeks to

1 France with his family. They were like foster auntie
2 and uncle to me. Eventually it was [REDACTED] that got me
3 away from my foster parents. I was at the assessment
4 centre for about a year.

5 I was asked where I would like to go to school.
6 I said a place where there were people like me. After
7 this, I was given a place at Croftinloan boarding school
8 near Pitlochry.

9 Q. FJZ [REDACTED] had a big mahogany stick. She would hit me with
10 this. I still have scars on my face and back. One time
11 she hit me and split my head. I ran to a neighbour who
12 lived upstairs. I ended up needing stitches.

13 When I was about nine, I started to hit back every
14 time FJZ [REDACTED] beat me. There could be any reason for
15 hitting me. It happened almost daily.

16 Once I was on a rope swing and FJZ [REDACTED] pulled the
17 rope. This made me fall off and hurt my back. I had to
18 go to hospital and FJZ [REDACTED] said it was an accident.

19 Their son would steal FJZ [REDACTED]'s pills and he would be
20 leathered worse than I was.

21 I had told my social workers about being hit right
22 from the first time it happened. Nothing was ever done
23 about it. I would say it in front of my foster parents
24 when the social worker was there. FJZ [REDACTED] would say I had
25 hit her first and they would believe her. I never spoke

1 with the social worker on my own. I didn't trust them
2 anyway.

3 The neighbour upstairs would be forever taking me
4 and their son when FJZ had lost it. There will be
5 statements from her in my records.

6 GDT knew it was going on as well but he didn't say
7 anything. It was anything for a quiet life with GDT."

8 From paragraphs 49 onwards, 'Frank' speaks about
9 Croftinloan boarding school, Pitlochry. That's from
10 paragraph 49 to 62. Now to paragraph 64 on page 10.

11 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

12 MS RATTRAY: Which is redacted, but it covers a handover
13 period:

14 "Ms Albert from the Child Guidance centre also used
15 to come and visit me. She was my sort of guardian as my
16 foster parents had washed their hands of me. Every
17 30 days there was a case conference. I said I didn't
18 want to go back to my foster parents. I told them what
19 had happened to me. They would say the foster parents
20 had changed and I should give it another try.

21 I was at Croftinloan from age 7 to 11. I loved it
22 there.

23 At first I had to go home on a Sunday for six hours.
24 After FJZ had a heart operation, I had to start going
25 home for the weekends. I then started going back to the

1 way I'd been before. I started to understand that they
2 were just using me to get money. When I found this out,
3 I smashed their house up."

4 And now to paragraph 69:

5 "I went to stay with my foster mother's relatives
6 for a few weeks. I called them auntie and uncle.
7 I never went back to the foster home after this. I was
8 put straight into Rannoch Mhoire Assessment Centre."

9 From paragraph 70, 'Frank' describes his experiences
10 in Rannoch Mhoire, Dundee; Burnside Assessment Centre,
11 Dundee; Carolina House, Dundee; and Colonsay House
12 Perth

13 Secondary Institutions - to be published later
14 Secondary Institutions - to be published later 'Frank' also says that he used to go to
15 his foster parents' whilst at Colonsay House, which was
16 okay as their son was still there.

17 'Frank''s account of life after care and impact may
18 be more closely related to his experiences in a range of
19 other care settings as well as foster care, and in the
20 circumstances I will move now to paragraph 231 on
21 page 36.

22 "I have no objection to my witness statement being
23 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.
24 I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are
25 true."

Now, my Lady, 'Frank' says that while he did access

1 his children's records, he did so with his wife, who had
2 also been a child in care, and they each read the
3 other's records, they didn't read their own records, so
4 there's a limit to how much he has seen his records.

5 However, I won't quote from the records but I do
6 wish to highlight certain issues which I think are of
7 importance.

8 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

9 MS RATTRAY: And in particular a record at PKC-000000141.
10 There isn't any need to bring it up on the screen.

11 What I would say about this is that in February
12 1975, whilst 'Frank' was in foster care, Mr GDT's
13 employer contacted the social work department saying
14 that his employee, Mr GDT, was in a depressed
15 condition and may be neglecting or ill-treating the
16 children boarded out with him. He said a neighbour
17 reported hearing children being beaten.

18 This man, who I understand to be the social worker,
19 was asked to report on the validity of the allegations,
20 suitability of Mr and Mrs FJZ-GDT to have children in
21 their care and whether it was necessary, in the
22 interests and safety of the children, for them to be
23 removed from their care.

24 A report of 20 February 1975 was prepared. There
25 had been a visit to the FJZ-GDT on 10 February, where

1 Mr GDT admitted he suffered from depression and had
2 hit the adopted child for selling chocolate given to
3 him. There was another visit to the foster carers,
4 which confirmed the social worker's opinion that the
5 family enjoyed warm relationships.

6 A GP also reported that he didn't consider the
7 children to be in danger from Mr GDT, who had
8 medication for his condition, and he was no risk at all
9 to the children, and he was not a violent person.

10 There's no evidence of the children being spoken to.

11 That was the events in 1975 when 'Frank' would have
12 been approximately eight years old.

13 Then in 1978, there are further reports. There's
14 a series of complaints by neighbours in August
15 and September 1978 about concerns of Mrs FJZ's
16 treatment of 'Frank'. A neighbour said many neighbours
17 were concerned and that she in particular had seen
18 'Frank' thrashed with a belt when walking past the front
19 door and the front door was open, and that 'Frank' had
20 been running away.

21 Other neighbours had heard screams at night on
22 a regular occurrence.

23 The RSPCC became involved and the RSPCC felt that
24 'Frank' should be removed for his own safety.

25 In the course of various notes that are there,

1 'Frank' alleged that he had been prodded with a walking
2 stick by Mrs FJZ .

3 Mrs FJZ admitted using the belt but said it
4 didn't really have much effect on 'Frank' and it was
5 over his trousers.

6 The general conclusion appears to have been from the
7 records on the part of the social work department that
8 Mr and Mrs FJZ-GDT were not at all able to handle 'Frank'
9 due to 'Frank''s bad behaviour and it was at that point
10 that the placement broke down and 'Frank' moved on to
11 other placement settings.

12 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

13 MS RATTRAY: My Lady, we can move on to another read-in.

14 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

15 I just note there FJZ-GDT 's names as
16 being protected by my general restriction order. Thank
17 you.

18 'Harry' (read)

19 MS RATTRAY: The next read-in is from an applicant who has
20 the pseudonym 'Harry', and his statement is at
21 WIT-1-000000569.

22 'Harry' was placed by Glasgow Corporation, later
23 Strathclyde Regional Council, in a foster placement with
24 in Glasgow from 1972 until
25 1977. The current responsible authority is Glasgow

1 City Council.

2 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

3 MS RATTRAY: "My name is 'Harry'. I was born in 1965. My
4 contact details are known to the Inquiry.

5 I was born in Glasgow and I would describe my life
6 at home as one of turmoil. There were ten of us in the
7 family. My mum died in 2009 and my dad in 2014. The
8 two siblings who were closest to me were my sister who
9 was slightly younger than me and my brother who was
10 older by about 10 years.

11 My father was drinking all the time. Mum was
12 a drinker but not like him, he was always in the pub.
13 Although I have no real memories of life with my family,
14 I am aware from my records that the reason my younger
15 sister and older brother and I were put into care was
16 due to neglect, domestic abuse and how the house was
17 run. I cannot remember where my older siblings would be
18 living. They tended to stick together and not bother
19 about us younger ones except for an older sister, she
20 was caring and understanding. She was a loving sister
21 compared to the rest of them."

22 From paragraphs 4 to 10, 'Harry' speaks of his
23 experiences in an unnamed children's home in Glasgow

24 Secondary Institutions - to be published later
25

1 Moving now to paragraph 11 on page 3:

2 "I was adopted by a family who lived in Glasgow when
3 I was five years old. It was a big house and it was
4 near the last children's home I was in in Pollokshields.
5 They were educated people, well-to-do, and had money.
6 They were FQE-SPO and they were in their
7 early 50s. She had a top job in a company and he worked
8 in a motor factory in Glasgow. They had a son, who was
9 18 to 19 years old. I stayed with them until I was
10 either 10 or 11 years old. They also had a daughter who
11 lived in Holland.

12 The house was a big Edwardian-type place which was
13 up a close. It had shiny green tiles with a nice
14 pattern on them and they lived upstairs at the top
15 floor. There was a neighbour on the same landing.

16 I wasn't happy there at all and I didn't feel
17 I could tell anyone. They had a different mindset
18 towards children then.

19 It was the social work who took me there from the
20 home. Everything was okay for a while but my first
21 impression was I didn't like the son as he was a bully
22 and behaved like a spoiled brat.

23 I don't remember much about getting up or going to
24 bed. I had my own bedroom but it wasn't much of a room.

25 It was FQE who cooked, and I think she cooked the

1 things I liked or what she thought I would like.

2 I couldn't help myself to food as it was quite strict.

3 She bathed me when I was younger but not as I got
4 older. I don't really remember. I just remember all
5 the horrible stuff.

6 She chose my clothes and sometimes I liked them and
7 sometimes I didn't.

8 I did have toys and games to play with.

9 I went with the FQE-SPO to visit their daughter.
10 She was okay, she was fine, but we didn't see much of
11 her.

12 My first memory of school is when I was in foster
13 care. I was sent to a private school, which I went to
14 as a day pupil. I don't remember the name of it. I had
15 to wear a uniform, hat and shorts, and I hated it.
16 I wasn't cut out for that way of living.

17 I was in hospital once, but although I remember
18 going in, I can't remember anything else about it.
19 I think it might have been to get my tonsils out.
20 I don't think I was ever in hospital again as a child.

21 I had to go to the local church every Sunday with
22 the FQE-SPO. I hated it. It was a lot of nonsense.
23 I wasn't from a religious family, but we probably had
24 a Protestant background. They were Protestant. I knew
25 they were because of a flag of the Red Hand of Ulster

1 and other military paraphernalia.

2 I don't think I had to do housework.

3 Christmas was celebrated just like everyone did and
4 I got presents.

5 I did have some toys and games but nothing else as
6 I hadn't brought anything with me.

7 Social work would visit them and would speak to
8 Mrs FQE on her own. I think they would speak to me
9 but I don't think I was alone. I don't know if social
10 work told them to hit me. The social worker might have
11 been called Alistair and his visits were fairly regular.
12 I didn't trust or like social work.

13 I don't recall ever taking anyone to the house even
14 though I did have a couple of friends when I was living
15 there.

16 I got visits from my social worker but that's all.

17 I had no contact with my family other than my
18 younger sister came down one day, but they didn't want
19 her coming into the house. I had to see her outside.
20 The FQE-SPO were trying to put a stop to the family
21 contact. I think my sister came down a couple of times
22 and I did take her into the house when they were out.
23 I remember trying to teach her to read because she
24 wasn't able to. I just thought it was abominable that
25 a girl in a children's home couldn't read.

1 They called all the slapping discipline, but that's
2 not discipline to me, that's abuse.

3 It was okay for a few years, but as I got older
4 I started being naughty and she started being physical.
5 She lifted her hand and she was slapping me. I would
6 get beaten by her for not getting my maths right. How
7 do you learn through fear? It was always Mrs FQE
8 who hit me. Mr [REDACTED] never hit me. She would slap me
9 across the face or the ear and whip the back of my legs
10 or backside with the shower hose. This sort of thing
11 happened between one and three times a week and
12 Mr [REDACTED] was never there when it happened but I never
13 liked him.

14 Their son was not really physical, he was verbally
15 abusive, criticising and belittling me.

16 Mrs FQE's mum was Irish and we visited her in
17 Northern Ireland on holiday when I was young.
18 I remember she stayed in a bungalow. Mrs FQE beat
19 me with a stick of a privet hedge after pulling the
20 leaves off it. She whipped me with it over the back of
21 the legs.

22 I couldn't eat mince burger as it made me sick.
23 I would get beaten if I didn't eat. I feel I lived in
24 fear throughout the years I was there.

25 When I lived there, there had been an ongoing thing

1 about children's behaviour. They blamed me for my bad
2 behaviour, but if they hadn't hit me and made me scared,
3 I wouldn't have been like that. I felt it was their
4 fault but I didn't have any say. It was just do as they
5 said.

6 There was a shop across the road run by a Muslim
7 family and a guy in there was abusing weans. He often
8 did it to me when I was eight or nine. He was quite
9 old, maybe in his 50s or 60s. He was quite big
10 weight-wise and I never knew his name. I never told the
11 FQE-SPO . I never really understood about sexual abuse.
12 I heard other weans talking about what he was doing in
13 that shop. It was just horrific to go through that and
14 then go home to people you didn't like and they would
15 wonder why my behaviour was so abhorrent that they
16 wanted to get rid of me. They did do that in the end.

17 I think of my time with FQE and as horrific as
18 they abused me and I was going home to people I didn't
19 like. They just wanted to get rid of me. They were
20 going to Canada to live so I had to go back to the
21 children's home.

22 I know I went to a children's home in Glasgow but
23 I don't remember anything about it or how long I was
24 there before I was sent to Blairvardach. I think the
25 social work probably explained to me why I was levering

1 the FQE-SPO . I don't think I got to take my stuff when
2 I left them. In a way I felt relieved. I don't
3 remember ever saying goodbye to the FQE-SPO ."

4 LADY SMITH: Ms Rattray, before you move on, just to pick up
5 on one thing, it seems pretty clear from the content of
6 this statement that this was man was not adopted but he
7 was in foster care, although in paragraph 11 he stated
8 he was adopted.

9 MS RATTRAY: He does state he was adopted. There's no
10 evidence he was adopted. It's quite clear that he was
11 in foster care throughout that time.

12 LADY SMITH: Given the ongoing social work involvement and
13 that when the FQE-SPO were moving to Canada he didn't
14 go with them, it seems pretty clear.

15 MS RATTRAY: Yes.

16 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

17 MS RATTRAY: From paragraph 40 to 101, 'Harry' describes his
18 experiences in Blairvardach Children's Home in
19 Helensburgh Secondary Institutions - to be published later
20 Secondary Institutions - to be published later and in St Andrew's List D
21 School Secondary Institutions - to be published later
22 Secondary Institutions - to be published later He also speaks of his life after
23 care.

24 Moving now to paragraph 102 on page 18 where I will
25 read out some of what 'Harry' tells us about impact,

1 while recognising that impact has to be understood in
2 the context of 'Harry''s overall care experiences,
3 including many years in several care settings:

4 "Every aspect of my life has been affected by being
5 a child in care. At 16 I was free from them but not
6 mentally. I try not to think about my childhood.
7 I have thoughts that life is futile and a waste of time.
8 I feel I had a waste of a life. I was ripped away from
9 my family for people to abuse me.

10 Being in care had an incredible impact on my
11 education and I suffered severely. FQE [REDACTED] made me
12 fear getting anything wrong and I carried those feelings
13 and fears throughout every educational experience I had.
14 I feel I was left to fester in all aspects of my time in
15 care, including the educational system.

16 My health has been impacted both physically and
17 mentally. Nothing ever felt right."

18 And to paragraph 106 on page 19:

19 "I would never hand my child to any social worker
20 but I had no choice, my childhood was enforced on me.
21 If it wasn't for my time in care, I would have had such
22 a different life."

23 And now to paragraph 111 at the foot of that page:

24 "I have a file which I got through freedom of
25 information from Glasgow City Council three years ago.

1 It contains my entire records from social work, foster
2 care and GPs as part of my care. I can't remember some
3 of the places listed on my records. Some of the
4 information has been blacked out. It's not easy for me
5 to read these records, and because of that I haven't
6 read them to help give my statement. It takes a toll on
7 you."

8 And now to paragraph 113:

9 "They split my family up and I never got to see
10 them. Some of them I have never seen again since going
11 into care. I was always getting moved about. I think
12 they went out of their way to split up my family and
13 this is wrong. They need to keep the family bonds."

14 And to paragraph 115:

15 "After all of this, I would like if someone could
16 say to me that they were in the wrong and I was in the
17 right. Like an apology. I have never had that and
18 I doubt I ever will.

19 I have no objection to my witness statement being
20 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.
21 I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are
22 true."

23 And 'Harry' signed his statement on 7 December 2020.

24 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much.

25 MS RATTRAY: My Lady, perhaps at this stage we could take

1 the morning break because the next read-in will take
2 much longer.

3 LADY SMITH: Very well.

4 MS RATTRAY: We did have an oral witness scheduled for
5 today, but she's been unable to come today due to poor
6 health, and we hope that we will hear from her
7 in August.

8 LADY SMITH: Very well.

9 I'll take the morning break now, and just note in
10 passing that FQE-SPO who were the foster
11 carers in relation to that witness, had their names
12 referred to but of course they're protected by my
13 general restriction order. So we'll stop now for the
14 morning break. Thank you.

15 (11.17 am)

16 (A short break)

17 (11.44 am)

18 LADY SMITH: Ms Rattray.

19 MS RATTRAY: Thank you, my Lady.

20 The next read-in is a statement of a witness who has
21 the pseudonym 'Henry'. His statement is at
22 WIT-1-000001016.

23 'Henry' was a foster carer for Strathclyde Regional
24 Council. An applicant whose pseudonym is 'Patricia' and
25 whose statement was read in on Day 103 on 5 July 2022

1 was placed with 'Henry' and his wife in Glasgow from
2 [REDACTED] 1980 until 1983, when 'Patricia' was
3 discharged from care at the age of 18.

4 The current responsible authority is Glasgow City
5 Council.

6 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

7 'Henry' (read)

8 MS RATTRAY: "My name is 'Henry'. I was born in 1948. My
9 contact details are known to the Inquiry.

10 I have no formal academic qualifications but I was
11 employed for nearly 40 years for [REDACTED] I worked my
12 way up in the company after I did my apprenticeship
13 elsewhere as a panel beater.

14 I can't remember the exact time when I became
15 a foster carer. My memory isn't great. My wife was the
16 one who would have known all of this. The only way
17 I can think it is my son was born in 1984 and 'Patricia'
18 came to us a few years before so it must have been
19 approximately 1981. The foster carer payment ends at 18
20 but 'Patricia' stayed with us longer so it didn't really
21 end. She wasn't abandoned or kicked out at 18 because
22 she was part of the family and she was my daughter.

23 We never really planned on becoming foster parents.
24 We hadn't even thought about it before 'Patricia'. My
25 wife worked in a children's home as a domestic and she

1 would always talk about all the kids when she got home,
2 just like people normally speak about their work. One
3 day, though, she came home and she was talking about
4 this girl she felt sorry for. This girl was getting
5 into bother in the home, but my wife didn't know her
6 full background. My wife asked me if we could help her
7 out and take her out for the day one Saturday. I was
8 always happy to do anything my wife wanted, so we got
9 the right permission from the home and took her down to
10 the coast. This happened for a couple of months, so she
11 would spend the day with us on a Saturday and then go
12 back to the home at night.

13 When she was with us, she was no problem at all.
14 Supposedly, once she went back to the children's home
15 she was chaos, so she got transferred to Dr Guthrie's in
16 Edinburgh, which is a List D School. When she was in
17 Edinburgh, we'd drive through from Dumbarton for the day
18 to see her. I can't remember how long this went on for.

19 Sometimes she would even come and stay for the
20 weekend. We got 'Patricia' her own room and everything.
21 Then one day out of the blue I got a phone call from
22 Dr Guthrie's School and he was asking what our
23 intentions were with 'Patricia' and if we had ever
24 considered fostering. In truth, we were probably too
25 young as we were only in our early 30s, but we decided

1 to do it. From there, we were assessed by the social
2 work department by an informal home visit and 'Patricia'
3 was placed with us.

4 The assessment process was very informal. I don't
5 even think you can call it much of an assessment. There
6 were never any background checks and we never had any
7 qualifications or anything. All they did was come to
8 our house for a chat. The social workers were
9 Catriona Neil and Kate Cook. I can't remember any
10 references being taken either. From what I remember,
11 I don't think it was a very long process between
12 Dr Guthrie's School phoning us and 'Patricia' coming to
13 live with us. I suppose because we'd known her for
14 a while from our weekend visits, we might have skipped
15 some steps but it was still all very informal.

16 Once 'Patricia' came to us, there were no more
17 checks or assessments. We had monthly meetings with
18 a support group where we would discuss different topics
19 about fostering. It was always conversation-based and
20 it was more like if X happened, what would you do? It
21 was really for support and advice with other foster
22 parents.

23 This only started after we had 'Patricia' and it was
24 run by a social worker called Mike King. This is where
25 we were told we could get an increased payment for

1 having 'Patricia' because of her complex background.
2 This was less of an assessment or check and more in the
3 realms of support.

4 When we took on another foster child, it was quite
5 different. Again, we were asked to take him on but we
6 didn't know him at all when he was given to us. He came
7 from the List D School in Cardross where he went every
8 day when he stayed with us. Because of this, he was
9 constantly surrounded by social workers in that
10 environment. We were never assessed when taking him on
11 either, as they assumed we were up to the job from
12 having 'Patricia'.

13 The end of the foster placement wasn't great with
14 the foster boy. It had become too much for us so we had
15 to have a case conference meeting where it was decided
16 he would be going to live with his uncle instead. In
17 total, I think he was only with us for a few months, and
18 definitely less than a year.

19 I think before someone is given a teenage foster
20 placement, they should be given training. They should
21 be told the pitfalls and problems that can occur.

22 I was never given any formal training on being
23 a foster parent. I was never told anything about how to
24 handle a child with different experiences. I can't even
25 remember if we were told the full extent of 'Patricia''s

1 problems, never mind how to handle them. I was never
2 told anything about child protection, discipline or
3 foster arrangements.

4 The only training I received was during these
5 monthly meetings in Wellington Street with the other
6 foster parents. Even then, these meetings were more
7 about support. Sometimes Mike King would bring up
8 a specific topic at the meetings and give us pointers on
9 how to handle a situation, but really it was more of
10 a chat night. I remember the structure of the meetings
11 was taken from some American scheme, so half of it
12 wasn't relevant. I don't remember being given any
13 written guidance or instructions at all.

14 I can't speak about fostering young children, but
15 for fostering difficult teenage children there should
16 definitely be some sort of structured training, like
17 working through a booklet or something.

18 I didn't think of myself as being employed as
19 a foster carer. I didn't feel like I worked for
20 someone. Yes, we got paid from the social work
21 department, at that point for the Strathclyde region,
22 but this was secondary. We didn't really think about
23 the payment as a motivator. It was just out of our love
24 and affection for 'Patricia'.

25 I don't know what type of foster care arrangement it

1 was, we just fostered 'Patricia' and that was it. We
2 weren't looking to foster, it just happened through our
3 relationship with 'Patricia'. We never had any
4 paperwork or anything that I remember. Even when we had
5 the boy later on, I don't remember anything formal. We
6 were just asked to take him on.

7 We didn't have our own social worker. Kate Cook was
8 'Patricia''s social worker and the boy had some man
9 whose name I can't remember. If things got bad, we
10 could contact her.

11 In terms of support we sometimes had to contact the
12 social work to say we couldn't cope with 'Patricia'
13 because of her behaviour. To give us a break, she would
14 be sent to go and stay at the List D School assessment
15 centre place in Cardross. Even when she was there,
16 she'd sometimes show up at the door at 11 at night,
17 having escaped.

18 However, in terms of ongoing support there was only
19 really our monthly meeting group. There was one
20 occasion where a meeting with a child psychologist was
21 made for my wife. This was so she could speak to him
22 about 'Patricia''s behavioural problems that were
23 getting out of hand. After my wife explained at length
24 the problems we were experiencing, he said these
25 difficulties were too deep for us to resolve and to run

1 a hundred miles in the opposite direction. With the
2 benefit of hindsight, there really should have been more
3 support.

4 We were just looking after someone. It was never
5 a profession or occupation. I think there should be
6 more of a chance to get some qualifications when
7 fostering. However, there is a danger of
8 professionalising something that should be emotional.
9 The way we became foster parents was fairly unique, so
10 considering it as a work arrangement wasn't right.

11 We were given a monthly payment to foster. I can't
12 remember how much, but it was about £100 or £200
13 a month. This was the highest payment you could get as
14 we'd taken on a List D School child. I think this came
15 from the social work department and it was either paid
16 into my bank account or by cheque. I used it for things
17 like clothes, food and experiences like going away for
18 the weekend. You're never going to be rich being
19 a foster carer. We never got anything beyond money, no
20 clothes or toys.

21 Overall, I think the financial support was
22 definitely sufficient.

23 I fostered with my wife. When we fostered
24 'Patricia', it was just me and my wife. When the boy
25 came along, 'Patricia' was also there. He was only

1 there for a few months. He was gone before my son was
2 born, but 'Patricia' was still living with us then. She
3 was beyond the age of 18 and was no longer being
4 fostered by us. When we were asked to take on the boy,
5 we spoke to 'Patricia' about this first.

6 'Patricia' initially lived with us in Dumbarton.
7 She was there with us for about two or three years. We
8 then moved to the West End. In both of the houses,
9 'Patricia' had her own bedroom. The foster boy also had
10 his own room. We already had enough bedrooms so we
11 didn't need to make any changes to the home. My wife
12 always kept the whole place spotless, the two sitting
13 rooms, three bedrooms and bathroom. Even the gardens
14 were kept tidy.

15 We fostered two different children. We took on our
16 foster daughter 'Patricia' when she was about 15 and the
17 boy was a few years later when he was about 14 or 15.
18 I think this must have been within a four or five-year
19 period as she had a couple of years on her own before we
20 took on the boy for those few months.

21 Neither of them were related to us and we were asked
22 by the local social work department to take them on.
23 This would have been Strathclyde social work at that
24 point.

25 'Patricia' never officially changed her name, but

1 when she was living with us she went by our surname
2 instead of her real surname. The boy always kept his
3 own name.

4 In terms of notice, we chose to take 'Patricia'
5 because of our relationship with her. It wasn't really
6 a matter of notice. For the boy, we couldn't really say
7 no. We got a call and he was with us not long after.
8 I don't think we were well-matched with the foster
9 children at all. From what I remember, we weren't told
10 much about either of their backgrounds. Maybe they did,
11 but I never got any records or care plans.

12 For moving them in, all social work did was to visit
13 our home. I suppose we'd have had our weekends with
14 'Patricia' before so it was different. This must have
15 been at least a dozen or more times. We hadn't met the
16 boy before he came. We were just asked to take him on
17 by the List D School and then he was with us.

18 I think the foster children settled in fine. The
19 boy and 'Patricia' got on well enough once he came to
20 stay too.

21 For the preparation for placing or moving a child,
22 I think the best way to do it is by meeting a child you
23 get on with and fostering them. When the boy was rushed
24 into our home, it made the process more difficult
25 because there was suddenly this stranger in the house.

1 Our daily routine was fairly normal. We got up in
2 the morning, had breakfast together, got ready for
3 school, did the school run, and we always had our dinner
4 together. In the house we tended to share out the
5 chores. The foster children didn't have to do anything
6 major. They would tidy their rooms and tidy throughout
7 the house but my wife was so methodical that the place
8 was never untidy. Myself and my wife did all the washing
9 and ironing.

10 Myself and my wife shared a room and the boy and
11 'Patricia' had their own rooms. They never wet the bed.

12 There was only one bathroom in the house with a bath
13 and shower and all that. The foster children had full
14 access to it and soap was always provided. There were
15 locks on the doors too.

16 The boy had some hygiene issues. He would do
17 anything but wash his hands and face. Sometimes he'd
18 even go and wet the soap but not use it, to make it seem
19 like he had. This caused some issues.

20 The allowance we got from the social work department
21 was used for clothes and things for the foster children.
22 My wife would go shopping with 'Patricia' and she got
23 whatever she wanted. Myself and my wife washed and
24 pressed the clothes. The foster children never shared
25 clothes.

1 We always had breakfast and dinner together every
2 day. My wife always liked to cook relatively plain
3 things like stews, vegetables, sometimes even a Chinese
4 curry. It was just normal family food. We often had
5 pudding too. We probably split the cooking between
6 myself and my wife equally.

7 There were never really any problems about the
8 foster children eating their dinners. If they weren't
9 hungry, they didn't have to eat it, but no one ever went
10 without. No one was forced to sit and eat something
11 they didn't want to.

12 Whatever the kids wanted, they would get. This was
13 especially true for 'Patricia' because of how long she
14 was with us. She loved to go to the swimming baths and
15 would always ask me to go with her. I can't really swim
16 but I'd go anyway. When 'Patricia' decided she wanted
17 to play football, I got her into a team. I even
18 organised a minibus from the local school and got it all
19 fixed up for the girls' team to have. We lived by the
20 school and we would often go into the school playground
21 and play a game called Wally where we'd hit a ball off
22 the gable end of the building. The kids loved it.

23 The foster children had access to anything they
24 wanted. If they asked for a book or a magazine, they'd
25 get it. Even for things like making calls to friends,

1 they had full access to the telephone. We also had
2 a front and back garden.

3 I can't remember if the boy was part of any clubs,
4 but, like 'Patricia', he got anything he want. They
5 both got pocket money too, so if they wanted to buy
6 themselves something they could.

7 As a family, we often went on day trips. We were
8 always going and doing something like going down to the
9 coast or up to my family home. That was more with
10 'Patricia' because of how long she stayed with us, but
11 we did take the boy on a family trip to Scarborough.

12 With 'Patricia' we also went down to the
13 Lake District. Myself and my wife have never been
14 abroad so we never took the foster children on foreign
15 holidays.

16 'Patricia' went to the local school. This was the
17 local Catholic school in Dumbarton that I can't remember
18 the name of. Before this she was in a Catholic school
19 in the city, then she was sent to the List D School.
20 Once she was with us, she went back to normal school.
21 Because of all that happened to her before we met her,
22 her education suffered a lot. She had a serious lack of
23 education and suffered academically because of it.

24 The boy attended the school in the assessment centre
25 in Cardross. He travelled there on the train every day

1 from Glasgow. He was at that school before we had him,
2 during, and I assume he still went once he had left us.

3 I don't remember there being anything like parents'
4 evenings or concerts or anything like that, but if there
5 was I would have been there. I don't really remember
6 them doing homework much either.

7 On our part, we tried our best to teach 'Patricia'
8 self-respect and self-worth since she had such a low
9 opinion of herself. We never formally taught them how
10 to cope with adult life but we always got them involved
11 in chores, garden work and their hobbies so they would
12 be well developed.

13 If the foster children had any medical problems, it
14 would probably be the GP that dealt with them.

15 I remember one time 'Patricia' got terrible sunburn and
16 I had to run to the pharmacy to get suncream and all
17 that. I remember my wife putting the cream on for her.

18 I don't remember any routine health checks but they
19 were registered with the same GP and dentist as myself
20 and my wife. We never kept any records of their medical
21 issues.

22 My family's Christmas dos are mad. We always had
23 a huge Christmas tree, all the presents and that.
24 Birthdays were the same. We would get them a big cake
25 and all that. They were always spoiled rotten with

1 gifts. I remember 'Patricia' once being upset and
2 kicking off because we got her a snooker table rather
3 than a motor scooter.

4 I don't really remember the boy having a birthday
5 when he was with us.

6 It wasn't always bad with 'Patricia'. Sometimes it
7 was a bit of a battle to get her in line but I always
8 made allowances for the foster children because of what
9 they'd been through. When 'Patricia' first moved in,
10 she vandalised our neighbours properties so I sent her
11 out with cleaning fluids and a pail of water and told
12 her to apologise and clean it up. It was always a case
13 of fixing the wrong rather than punishment.

14 We really erred on the side of smothering them with
15 love and giving them as much as possible. We knew we
16 weren't dealing with normal children so allowances and
17 understandings had to be made. Sometimes giving
18 sanctions and what not would just add to the problem of
19 'Patricia''s behaviour. It was like adding coals to
20 a fire.

21 We were never actually given any guidance on
22 disciplining the foster children. But whenever we did,
23 myself and my wife would do it together. We'd talk
24 about it and decide what to do.

25 We never physically punished the foster children.

1 'Patricia' would have what we called her full moon thing
2 where she would lose it. She once held a knife to my
3 wife's throat. At times she was restrained because of
4 her extreme violence. After this, we locked up all the
5 knives in the house apart from the usual cutlery. That
6 was just the way life was with 'Patricia'.

7 We didn't keep a record of any punishments or
8 sanctions. We wouldn't do that for our own children so
9 we didn't do it for the foster children.

10 I think I got on pretty well with the foster
11 children in my care. I treated them like I treated my
12 own biological children. 'Patricia' was always
13 smothered with love. Myself and my wife are very huggy
14 people so we would often hug the foster children if they
15 wanted it.

16 'Patricia' was well past 18 by the time our son was
17 born but they lived together for a short while. It was
18 just a normal family dynamic. I think the foster
19 children might have been more indulged or spoiled than
20 our own children. 'Patricia' was just treated as one of
21 the family.

22 The boy's situation was slightly different, but it
23 was always a healthy relationship until we couldn't cope
24 any more. Even then, it didn't end with any animosity.

25 'Patricia' never had contact with her parents or

1 other family. I never spoke to or met 'Patricia''s
2 parents. I had no information to give Patricia about
3 her parents as I didn't know anything. We never blocked
4 any contact but there just wasn't any. I think it was
5 maybe prohibited but I don't know for certain.

6 I can't really comment on if arrangement for contact
7 with family other than siblings should be changed
8 because I never experienced it.

9 I'm not sure if any of 'Patricia''s siblings were
10 placed in care at the same time as her. However, we
11 never fostered them. 'Patricia' had a younger sister,
12 an older sister and a brother. I think she would
13 sometimes phone her brother but her older sister wanted
14 nothing to do with her.

15 However, she would see her younger sister. In fact,
16 we encouraged it. Her sister loved coming down to the
17 house for her dinner and they phoned sometimes. It was
18 never a formal arrangement but we never put any
19 restrictions on them seeing each other.

20 I never had any issues regarding sibling contact.
21 I think it should always have been encouraged.

22 'Patricia''s social worker didn't visit all that
23 often. Kate Cook would come down to the house from time
24 to time, maybe for dinner with the family, but
25 'Patricia' always had full access to the phone to call

1 her if she had any issues. If 'Patricia' ever wanted
2 any time with Kate Cook alone, then that was fine.
3 There was nothing routine about the visits.

4 Mike King was the only person you could describe as
5 my social worker and I only saw him at the monthly
6 meetings. At the meetings, Mike would introduce the
7 topics of the meeting and we would all discuss them.
8 These were always general topics about foster care
9 problems, behaviour and all that. There was also the
10 opportunity of one-on-one with him if we wanted.

11 Sometimes, if we were struggling, we would call
12 Kate Cook or Mike King to let them know. However, the
13 social workers were never there to inspect us or monitor
14 us.

15 I can't remember who the boy's social worker was,
16 but because he was at the List D School, he was
17 surrounded by social workers every day. Again, any
18 issues with him and we could phone Mike King.

19 There were never any childcare review meetings. For
20 the boy, when the placement was coming to its end
21 because of his behaviour, we had a case conference where
22 we discussed him and how it wasn't working. This was
23 where it was decided that he would go and live with
24 family instead.

25 We never had a care plan for either of them.

1 I don't think we went to any Children's Hearings either.

2 I used to sit on the board so I might be confused.

3 Essentially, we were left to get on with it. We
4 didn't really talk about the fact of them being in care
5 a lot. If they wanted to speak about it all, they
6 could. These conversations would probably be had with
7 my wife rather than me. I don't think they had
8 an independent advocate either.

9 We never had any records or kept any records for
10 either of the foster children.

11 I can't comment on any changes about record-keeping.

12 'Patricia' stayed with us as part of the family
13 after she was 18 so she never had to move placement.
14 She was treated as part of the family for years.
15 I drove her to her wedding. My daughter was even
16 a flower girl at her wedding. It was only when she
17 tried to sue our son that we cut ties.

18 The boy had to move on. We had a case conference
19 with the social worker, the List D School manager and
20 some others who I can't remember. We didn't meet who he
21 was going to but I know it was a family member. We did
22 all this without him knowing. After the meeting, we
23 came home and told him he was moving on. He saw it as
24 a positive thing as he said he was glad to be going back
25 to his family. I can't really remember if he was sad

1 because of it. We weren't giving him up. Ultimately,
2 we didn't want him any more because we couldn't cope,
3 but fundamentally it was better for us that he went. We
4 stayed in contact after as he once visited with his
5 girlfriend and a baby.

6 When 'Patricia' left the care system at 18, she
7 stayed on with us. The foster payments stopped when she
8 turned 18, but the social work got us some advice and
9 told us to get her to apply for government assistance.
10 That was really the only transitional advice we were
11 given.

12 When 'Patricia' moved out of the family home, we
13 helped her get a nice flat in the West End and got it
14 all furnished. We even paid for her bills. We were
15 involved in her wedding too and always gave her
16 financial and emotional support. We did try to help her
17 with employment, but she couldn't really cope with the
18 job we found.

19 I think much more should be done to help foster
20 parents for when their foster children leave the system.
21 More support and information needs to be given.

22 To my knowledge, there was no specific procedure for
23 foster parents or foster children in making any
24 complaints. Of course we could have phoned, but there
25 was no process I knew of.

1 I think there should have been a formal procedure.

2 I have no convictions relating to the abuse of
3 children. I had no convictions before becoming a foster
4 carer. I can't remember if I was asked about
5 convictions.

6 We stopped being foster carers when 'Patricia' was
7 well past 18 and married in her own home. We also had
8 children of our own by then.

9 I had no awareness of any abusive behaviour
10 happening to 'Patricia' or the foster boy. The children
11 never needed any medical attention because they had been
12 abused. With hindsight, I do not think any discipline,
13 punishment or other practice was abusive.

14 I have been asked to clarify the last sentence. The
15 wording of the sentence and the manner in which it was
16 framed was in direct response to the question in the
17 original document: with the benefit of hindsight, do you
18 consider any discipline, punishment or other practice to
19 have been abuse? By using the phrase 'with hindsight'
20 I was answering the question only. It was not my
21 intention to leave any implication of any practice which
22 might be construed as abusive in my perception. I do
23 not accept any inappropriate behaviour at all, including
24 any discipline, punishment or other practice.

25 The foster children could speak to their social

1 worker, myself or my wife about any concerns or worries.
2 They were given full and free access to the telephone
3 and they knew they could phone anyone. They also knew
4 they could talk to us about anything just because of our
5 family dynamic.

6 I could speak within my monthly meeting about any
7 concerns or worries I had. I also knew I could phone
8 the social work too.

9 I wasn't aware of any specific reporting mechanisms
10 in place. No guidance, written or verbal, was given to
11 me on the reporting of abuse. The topic of sexual abuse
12 was never a topic of conversation.

13 I never knew of anything in my household that I feel
14 now that I should have reported.

15 I have not been the subject of any other complaint
16 in relation to the alleged abuse of foster children.

17 There was no abuse of foster children in my care
18 reported to the police.

19 The supposed abuse of a foster child in my care was
20 first reported to the police in 2012 or 2013. The
21 police visited my house twice and on the second occasion
22 they advised me to get a lawyer. I attended a police
23 station interview where I gave no comment and was not
24 charged. Nothing further came from this allegation.
25 The police behaved in a moderate and reasonable manner.

1 I have never given any other statements about my
2 time as a foster carer.

3 'Patricia' has given a statement to the Inquiry.
4 Within that statement, she says:

5 ''Henry' used to ask me to come and sit on his lap.
6 I was 14 and you just don't do that. Things like that
7 made me shy away from 'Henry'. I told his wife and she
8 said it was just because he hadn't had a child and
9 wanted to be a daddy to me.'

10 I deny that any such event happened.

11 She says that:

12 ''Henry' would also want to go into the bathroom and
13 wash my hair when I was having a bath ... then he
14 started touching me in places he shouldn't have been
15 touching me. I kept telling him to stop and that it
16 wasn't right, but he kept doing it. He then started to
17 kiss me. It was a proper grown man slobbery kiss all
18 over me. It wasn't nice at all. Then he started
19 putting my hand down his trousers to play with his
20 thing'.

21 And that:

22 'This would happen when his wife was at work. She
23 was still working at [REDACTED].'

24 I deny that such an event happened.

25 'Patricia' alleges that:

1 'When 'Henry''s wife would go to the bingo, I would
2 be in bed because I had school the next morning.
3 'Henry' would come into the bed beside me and start
4 cuddling into me. He would start kissing me and kissing
5 my body. He would put his fingers inside me.'.

6 I deny that any such event happened. I was never in
7 'Patricia''s bed on any occasion.

8 She also says in her statement:

9 'It just kept going on so I started to reject
10 'Henry' and started being destructive. They still
11 wouldn't put me in care. I kept telling 'Henry' to stop
12 touch meeting and I didn't want to touch him. He would
13 say that he was going to tell my real dad and the people
14 who sexually abused me where I lived. I think that's
15 why he got away with doing it to me. He wouldn't stop
16 abusing me so I kept running away.'

17 I deny any abuse that is alleged. I didn't know
18 anything about 'Patricia''s real dad or any of the
19 people who sexually abused her. I had no details or any
20 knowledge of who these people were. 'Patricia' never
21 ran away or attempted to run away. 'Patricia' never
22 asked to go back into care.

23 Later in her statement, 'Patricia' says:

24 'I went to Glasgow university and studied law.
25 I got my own flat in Broomhill. I still couldn't get

1 away from 'Henry'. I had given his wife a set of keys
2 to my flat at Broomhill but 'Henry' would use them and
3 come in after his night shift at work. He would let
4 himself in and get into bed beside me. I was 18 years
5 old and still couldn't get away from him.'.

6 I deny that any such event happened. I never went
7 into 'Patricia''s flat in Broomhill. Neither myself nor
8 my wife had the keys to enter.

9 The person making the allegations was my foster
10 daughter who continued to be treated as my daughter
11 after the placement ended. I thought we had
12 successfully turned around her life. 'Patricia' was
13 a complex young woman who had more good points than bad.
14 She was never sanctioned or punished.

15 In my view, as foster carers we ought to have been
16 given training and rigorous insight into the foster
17 child and the process.

18 The allegations against me are untrue. I do not
19 believe the passage of time has affected my recollection
20 of what is alleged.

21 Despite many difficulties, myself and my wife helped
22 'Patricia' into adulthood. 'Patricia' had a history of
23 being spiteful and vindictive. I would be in a position
24 to give more detail about the type of things she did.
25 I believe it was a spitefulness about our breaking off

1 contact that motivated these allegations.

2 The final straw for breaking our ties with her was
3 when she tried to sue my young teenage son when he was
4 only doing a kindness to her by giving her one of his
5 old phones. She even got a lawyer involved. We said it
6 was too much and cut her off. I know she didn't take
7 this lightly as myself and my wife were always her rock,
8 always touched base with her and bailed her out.

9 Years after being told she couldn't contact us any
10 more, she got back in contact and tried to make amends
11 and re-establish her relationship with my family. We
12 missed our grandson, 'Patricia''s son, very much. She
13 also told us she had been confined to a wheelchair,
14 which caused us significant angst. My wife decided
15 enough was enough and couldn't take the drama any more.
16 There was multiple calls a day with a new drama each
17 time. We felt we were too old for it and would rather
18 things just stayed the way they had been. We needed
19 some peace. Prior to the allegations, 'Patricia' made
20 threats via a lawyer's letter which we responded to via
21 a lawyer's letter. This stipulated there was to be no
22 further contact. Some two or three years later, I heard
23 about the allegations.

24 If someone did what she alleges happened, I would
25 of course accept that is abuse. However, she was never

1 abused in my home.

2 This whole ordeal has had a damaging and lasting
3 impact on me. Every single day I am reduced to tears at
4 the thought of a girl who I once considered my daughter
5 to have accused me of these terrible things that I did
6 not do. My mental health is ruined and I am plagued
7 with suicidal thoughts. I am not sure if I will ever
8 fully recover from the emotional toll this has had upon
9 me.

10 Since it has been almost four decades since I last
11 fostered, I don't know what the modern system is like,
12 so I cannot comment on lessons to be learned.

13 I have no objection to my witness statement being
14 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.

15 I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are
16 true."

17 And 'Henry' signed his statement on 14 June, 2022.

18 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much.

19 MS RATTRAY: My Lady, we now have a further read-in and

20 Ms Innes will attend to that.

21 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

22 MS INNES: My Lady, I'm going to turn to the statement of
23 an applicant who wishes to remain anonymous and has the
24 pseudonym 'Kevin'.

25 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

1 'Kevin' (read)

2 MS INNES: The statement is at WIT-1-000000970.

3 'Kevin' sadly died in [REDACTED] 2022, having met with
4 members of the Inquiry team in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] of
5 2022 to provide his statement. A provenance statement
6 has been provided which is at WIT-1-000000972. I don't
7 intend to go to that.

8 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

9 MS INNES: As a result of what has happened, records have
10 not been recovered for 'Kevin', but it appears from his
11 statement that he was in the care of Strathclyde
12 Regional Council. His foster placements, which
13 commenced, on the basis of his statement, on [REDACTED] 1986,
14 were in Bo'Ness and Kirkcaldy. The first placement
15 lasted about 18 months and the second for about a year,
16 so until late 1988.

17 In terms of relevant successors, it's not possible
18 to be definitive. It appears that Glasgow City Council
19 would appear to be the relevant successor authority for
20 'Kevin''s care based on where he lived before he went
21 into care. Obviously Bo'Ness is in Falkirk Council area
22 and Kirkcaldy is in Fife, so they may have an interest.

23 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

24 MS INNES: "My name is 'Kevin'. I was born in 1972. My
25 contact details are known to the Inquiry.

1 I was born in Rottenrow Hospital, Glasgow.
2 I thought I was a happy lad as I grew up and would get
3 into the usual trouble that any other young child would.

4 I was initially raised in the Easterhouse area of
5 Glasgow. I have four siblings: two sisters and two
6 brothers.

7 After my dad died, there was a time when mum had us
8 staying at my gran's. Mum would then go out and she met
9 a man who was just out after having served a term in
10 prison. He went on to become my stepfather. I would
11 have been about six years old then.

12 I was abused by my stepfather with physical violence
13 but never any sexual abuse. I received a broken leg and
14 had black eyes. When I was about four, he tried to
15 drown me in the bath. I began wetting the bed because
16 of the fear I felt living with him. He was threatening
17 me that he would get me up during the night, saying:
18 make sure you don't pee the bed.

19 During this time, if there was any time my mum was
20 going out, I would make as much of a nuisance as
21 I could to try and make her stay in the house but it
22 never worked.

23 Anne Marie was the woman who was the social worker
24 for our family. She dealt with me from when I was about
25 4 years old right up until I was about 21. She would

1 check out on me when I was at the different homes to see
2 how I was getting on. Even when I was supposed to be
3 finished with the social work, she helped me get a house
4 and organise my benefits when I was about 21.
5 Anne Marie was always there to help me. I just had to
6 phone and she would be at the home the next day.

7 The first time I was placed into care it was for
8 some respite for my mother just after my dad died. That
9 was when I was sent to Dunclutha in Dunoon, which was
10 supposed to be just for a few weeks. It was me and my
11 sisters who went to Dunclutha. My youngest brother was
12 just a wee baby and stayed with mum. I was about four
13 or five when we went there for the first time. Some of
14 the memories for this time and at Inver House might be
15 mixed up a little, just with the passage of time."

16 'Kevin' then goes on to tell us about his time in
17 Dunclutha. Thereafter, he returned home for a period
18 before moving to Inver House Children's Home, which he
19 deals with at paragraphs 27 to 34 of his statement.

20 Thereafter, he returned home again but was taken
21 into care.

22 At paragraphs 40 to 148 of his statement, 'Kevin'
23 deals with his time the Gryffe Children's Home, Bridge
24 of Weir, Larchgrove Assessment Centre, and then
25 Southannan Children's Home.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

2 Moving on to page 28 and to paragraph 149:

3 "When I was coming to the end of my time in
4 Southannan, the social work decided that it might be
5 better for me to be placed into a foster family
6 environment. That was when I was moved to the [REDACTED]
7 family in Bo'Ness.

8 I came back to Southannan one day and my case was
9 all packed with clothes all neatly folded inside. I was
10 told by the staff that it was time for me to go to the
11 [REDACTED].

12 I can remember that the [REDACTED] came to see me in
13 Southannan. Mr [REDACTED] drove a Skoda They are two
14 children: a daughter and a son. The father was
15 an electrician by trade.

16 The first time the whole family came to see me they
17 took me out for the day and we went to Largs for
18 something to eat. On the first visit, Anne Marie was
19 with us for my support. The next time I saw them I was
20 taken to their home for the day. I can remember when
21 I was there that I played pool with the son in his room.
22 I remember staying for a meal and then went back to the
23 home. There were another couple of similar day visits
24 until we were all happy with the arrangements being
25 made.

1 The [REDACTED] house was a very large bought house.
2 There were four bedrooms in the house and I was given my
3 own room. There were two toilets in the house, the
4 second one having been built by Mr [REDACTED].

5 I stayed with them for about 18 months until I was
6 about 15 years old. Mrs [REDACTED] wanted to have more
7 children but Mr [REDACTED] suffered from diabetes and did
8 not want to pass this on to any children. This was one
9 of the main reasons I was fostered by them.

10 The [REDACTED] had a daughter and she would have been
11 about 22 years old when I was there. They also had
12 a son. He always got more leeway than me. There were
13 lots of times at the house that he would bully me.

14 The [REDACTED] would buy me new brogue shoes each
15 year and they were to be worn when I was going to
16 school. I would hide my trainers in the bushes and
17 would swap them over before I went to school.

18 When I stayed with the [REDACTED] I went to the local
19 school. I was enrolled in the local secondary,
20 Bo'Ness Academy. I found this really difficult as I had
21 never been in school for any length of time. Suddenly
22 I am wearing a uniform and told I am going to the
23 school.

24 I was still having problems with my arithmetic.
25 They helped me by buying me a calculator. But if I used

1 it without telling them it was obvious from the long
2 division sums that I had used it. If the father caught
3 me, he would give me another sum to do by hand.

4 I was having difficulty adapting to the school
5 authority and telling me what I should be doing.

6 Anne Marie visited when I stayed there. She was
7 just checking in to see that I was still happy and that
8 the family were still happy with me being there.

9 I did have phone contact with my mum while I stayed
10 at the [REDACTED]. Mum would keep telling me that I was
11 going to be able to visit her but it never happened.

12 There were times when I would get a slap in the face
13 from the son. He would also punch me in the face and
14 pull at my hair. He would sit on top of me and slap me.
15 I told him I did not want to fight but he said he was
16 doing this to toughen me up. I knew in myself that
17 there are other ways to protect myself and I always
18 preferred to talk my way out of trouble.

19 I was a handful for the [REDACTED] as I had no
20 experience of dealing with a family environment.

21 Mr [REDACTED] was quite ill and when I started getting
22 into trouble at school he was getting more stressed and
23 his health worsened.

24 One night I was in the hallway and I was aware that
25 the family were having a conversation in the living

1 room. I could hear some of that conversation and they
2 were having a vote about whether they should continue to
3 foster me or to let me go back to the social work.
4 I was really upset by this. I felt I was once more let
5 down by adults. I told them I had overheard what they
6 were talking about. I told them they were cowards and
7 not telling me about any issues to my face. I then got
8 them to telephone Anne Marie, my social worker, and the
9 next morning she came and got me out of the house.

10 I was moved from the [REDACTED] family to the
11 PBR-SPO family in Kirkcaldy. I stayed with them for
12 nearly a year. When I stayed with them there was
13 another kid being fostered by them. Later in life and
14 with what happened there, I came to the conclusion that
15 they were only doing the fostering for the money and not
16 to care for anyone.

17 After what happened with the [REDACTED], I did not
18 let the PBR-SPO get too close to me. The father was
19 a long distance lorry driver and looked in his 60s. His
20 wife was of a similar age.

21 Mr PBR was an aggressive man. When he came in
22 from his work and after he'd finished his dinner he
23 would not allow us to be in the living room.

24 He was not a very patient man. When I would sit and
25 talk about what I had done that day he would tell me

1 that I had already spoken about it.

2 Apart from the clothes I had when I arrived, the
3 PBR-SPO never provided me with any by themselves.
4 They would tell Anne Marie or the other social workers
5 that I was needing new clothes or shoes. Only when
6 money arrived in for it would whatever I needed. The
7 problem was not all the money was spent on me, some of
8 the money was used to buy their son new clothes.
9 I think he was about 21 or 22 at the time.

10 In the evening after our evening meal we were not
11 allowed to sit with the parents in the living room to
12 watch TV with them. That was their time. We had
13 a small black and white portable television in our room
14 which we watched. Even their own kids were not allowed
15 in the living room.

16 During any period when we had some leisure time, the
17 PBR-SPO did not like us watching the television in
18 our room and would have involved us in various
19 activities. This would sometimes involve gymnastics and
20 swimming or out on the bikes. They always wanted us to
21 be active. I would also go to the ice skating to watch
22 the Fife Flyers ice hockey team.

23 Sometimes I would take the dog for a walk and
24 I would meet Mr PBR when he was driving his lorry.
25 I wasn't allowed to go to his actual depot but he would

1 take me in his lorry for a short journey. I can
2 remember going over the Erskine Bridge and being bought
3 ice cream.

4 When I had pocket money, I would go to the local
5 shops and buy myself some ice cream.

6 When I was with this family, I got a job in
7 a mushroom factory at the weekend to give me some extra
8 money. It was when I was riding my bike home to my
9 foster family and when I got back I saw the former
10 minibus driver from Southannan working in his garden.
11 He started to talk to me and he seemed to have forgotten
12 all the bad things he did. I was good at football and
13 he said he wanted me to play for the football team.
14 I told him he had to check with my foster parents. They
15 met him and agreed for me to play in the football team.

16 When I stayed at the PBR-SPO [REDACTED], I did get enrolled
17 at Viewforth High School and did try to go a lot more
18 regularly.

19 One day I had an argument with the football coach,
20 the former minibus driver, and slammed the door. He
21 went to my foster house and told Mr PBR [REDACTED] that I was
22 the reason he got sacked from the school. He made it
23 out to them that he had done nothing wrong and that it
24 was all my fault he was sacked. I could hear what he
25 was saying that I had alleged the incident about the

1 dragging by the hair. I went into the living room and
2 told them that it was the staff that saw what he did to
3 me and it was them that sacked him. They were taking
4 his side and there was an argument and Mr PBR
5 started slapping me. His son joined in and he also
6 started hitting me.

7 Mr PBR was a very angry man. I am not sure if
8 it was because he was older or whether he was like that
9 before I arrived.

10 After what happened with Mr PBR and his son,
11 I phoned Anne Marie and she came to the house about
12 an hour later."

13 'Kevin' then returned to Dunclutha Children's Home
14 in Dunoon, and after that he had periods in prison.

15 Moving to page 35 and paragraph 193:

16 "When I left the prison system, I initially moved in
17 with my aunt in Easterhouse. Anne Marie then helped me
18 get my own flat. She also arranged for me to apply for
19 some grants for furniture and some clothes. When I was
20 settled, Anne Marie became less and less involved as my
21 social worker. For a short period there were some
22 renovations needing to be done to the flat. My
23 landlord put me up in a hotel in Millport while the work
24 was carried out. She said just to use the money I was
25 supposed to pay her. She even gave me £10 and checked

1 if that was enough for food. No one had ever done
2 something nice for me like that before."

3 Moving to paragraph 197:

4 "I did have thoughts about wanting to visit the
5 [REDACTED] in Bo'Ness as an adult. I went to Bo'Ness but
6 did not go to their door. I could remember them very
7 clearly but I was too afraid they would not remember me.

8 As an adult I learned that the son of the family
9 I stayed with in Kirkcaldy was convicted along with his
10 friend of sexually abusing two boys within the family
11 home."

12 Just pausing there, my Lady, we've not been able to
13 find any details of that conviction.

14 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

15 MS INNES: As yet.

16 "When I was referred for a drug treatment order,
17 I found that to be a safe place. I have now spoken with
18 Sarah and Anne from there and we built a good
19 relationship where I was relaxed enough to tell them
20 some of my experiences as a child. They made me feel
21 safe to tell them and I know that has helped me get over
22 my issues with drugs.

23 I am currently taking anti-depressants to control my
24 depression. I am also on a drug rehabilitation
25 programme. I think I used drugs as a result of my time

1 in care and they helped me forget some of the bad
2 memories of that time.

3 In 1991 I was in a relationship and my first
4 daughter was born in 1995. I later had another daughter
5 in a separate relationship. I now have two lovely
6 grandchildren that I see quite often.

7 When I was released from my first prison sentence
8 I felt strange being in the outside world as I had never
9 been shown what I should be doing there. Having gone
10 there very soon after leaving care, I was always being
11 looked after by someone, whether it was the staff in the
12 care homes or the staff in the prison system. Having
13 been released from prison, I had no one to show me what
14 to do.

15 I was last sentenced to prison in 2003 and released
16 in 2006. I am trying with help to keep myself away from
17 the wrong environment to make sure I don't end up back
18 there. I am not sure in myself that my time in prison
19 is linked to my time in care and would not like to blame
20 my time in care for being in jail.

21 I think I was institutionalised from a very young
22 age, not just from the prison system. During all my
23 time in care I had someone to look after me and help me
24 with cleaning and cooking, et cetera. This was the same
25 when I got into trouble and ended up in jail. I was

1 never taught how to look after myself, especially as
2 an adult.

3 I think that the lack of education being provided at
4 most of the homes I stayed in resulted in me having
5 issues with reading and writing throughout my adult
6 life. I am able to read and write, but it was never
7 part of any formal curriculum during my time in care and
8 I was never asked to sit any exams."

9 Moving to the next page at paragraph 208:

10 "I am also looking for help to see if I can get my
11 social work records. I need them to help confirm the
12 dates I was in the various homes throughout my
13 childhood.

14 I think there should always be someone independent
15 for children in care to be able to speak to about
16 anything. They need to be trained to relate to the
17 kids, so that the kids can feel free to tell what bad
18 things are happening to them.

19 I know from my time in the different homes that
20 there are people, like Anne Marie, who are not in that
21 job just to get a wage, they are in it because they
22 care."

23 Moving to paragraph 212:

24 "I was never taught anything to help me show what
25 life would be like away from the care system. One of

1 the few times I was ever shown anything was if I visited
2 the house of the football coach and his wife might have
3 taught me how to make spaghetti.

4 I am hoping when I get started with Future Pathways
5 that I might be able to get additional counselling on
6 top of what Sarah from the drug treatment team are
7 doing.

8 I am hoping that by coming to the Inquiry that
9 people can learn from my experiences and the abuse that
10 happened. Hopefully it will stop someone from being
11 abused at the hands of a carer.

12 I have no objection to my witness statement being
13 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.
14 I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are
15 true."

16 And as I've indicated, 'Kevin' sadly died before he
17 signed his statement.

18 LADY SMITH: Yes, I see that. He would have been about 50
19 years old when he died?

20 MS INNES: Yes, that's correct.

21 LADY SMITH: Very sad.

22 MS INNES: My Lady, these are all the read-ins that we've --

23 LADY SMITH: Very well.

24 MS INNES: -- managed to deal with today. There will be no
25 other read-ins today.

1 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

2 So if I rise now, there'll be another witness ready

3 at 2 o'clock; is that right?

4 MS INNES: Yes, that's correct, my Lady.

5 LADY SMITH: Very well. We'll stop now for the break,

6 noting before I leave that the [REDACTED], the PBR-SPO [REDACTED]

7 and their son, as their names were all mentioned and

8 they're covered by my general restriction order so they

9 can't be identified outside this room.

10 Thank you very much.

11 (12.35 pm)

12 (The luncheon adjournment)

13 (2.15 pm)

14 LADY SMITH: Good afternoon. Ms Innes.

15 MS INNES: My Lady, we have another oral witness this

16 afternoon. 'Yvonne' was in the care of Edinburgh

17 Corporation, then it became Lothian Regional Council.

18 She lived with her aunt and uncle in Edinburgh from

19 [REDACTED] 1972 until [REDACTED] 1983, when she moved to

20 Canaan Lodge. Initially her residence with her aunt and

21 uncle was on the basis of a condition of the supervision

22 requirement, which was made on [REDACTED] 1972. Her

23 aunt and uncle were foster carers, and Edinburgh

24 Corporation assumed parental rights in respect of

25 'Yvonne' on [REDACTED] 1974. The City of Edinburgh

1 Council are the relevant statutory successor.

2 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

3 'Yvonne' (sworn)

4 LADY SMITH: Now, 'Yvonne', we do need you to use the
5 microphone, I'm afraid.

6 A. Okay.

7 LADY SMITH: It's important that we hear you through the
8 sound system. If you can keep in that good position
9 you're in now, that will be really helpful.

10 A. Okay.

11 LADY SMITH: You're ready with your red folder.

12 A. Yeah.

13 LADY SMITH: That has the hard copy of your statement in it,
14 the statement you signed. Your statement will also be
15 brought up on the screen and we'll take you to the
16 different parts that will be discussed with you during
17 your evidence.

18 A. (Witness nods).

19 LADY SMITH: 'Yvonne', can I also make this clear to you:
20 I do understand it's not easy being asked to come into
21 a public place and talk about yourself and your own
22 life, and particularly to talk about things that were
23 difficult in your childhood. I do understand that, and
24 I do understand what a big step it is to decide that
25 you're going to do it.

1 I know that it can be an emotional time, of course
2 it can, and if you want a break, whether leaving the
3 room or just sitting and pausing for a while, that's
4 absolutely fine by me, or if there's anything else we
5 can do to help you to give the best evidence you can, do
6 let us know. Will you bear that in mind?

7 A. Yeah.

8 LADY SMITH: It doesn't bother me at all if people show that
9 they're upset and show that it's a bit of a struggle to
10 do this. We'll make what progress we can and do what we
11 can to help you. Okay?

12 A. Okay.

13 LADY SMITH: If you're ready, I'll hand over to Ms Innes and
14 she'll take it from there.

15 A. Yeah.

16 LADY SMITH: Ms Innes.

17 MS INNES: Thank you, my Lady.

18 Questions from Ms Innes

19 MS INNES: Now, 'Yvonne', we understand that you were born
20 in 1968.

21 A. That's true.

22 Q. If I can ask you, please, to look at your statement, we
23 give it the reference WIT-1-000000774.

24 If we can go to the last page of the statement, and
25 the final paragraph, 307, it says there:

1 "I have no objection to my witness statement being
2 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.
3 I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are
4 true."

5 And I think we see that you signed the statement on
6 10 August 2021.

7 A. I did.

8 Q. If we can go back to the beginning of your statement
9 again, please, you tell us at paragraph 2 that you lived
10 with your parents and your sister in San Diego in
11 California?

12 A. We did, yes.

13 Q. Your sister, how much -- is she older than you?

14 A. Three and a half years.

15 Q. You remember, I think, that you were taken into care
16 when you were in America; is that right?

17 A. We were, yes.

18 Q. And on page 2 at paragraph 4, you tell us that you were
19 put into foster care in America, you and your sister?

20 A. (Witness nods). We first went into the juvenile system.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. And then we were given back to my mum, and then my mum
23 abandoned us again, which we were put back then into
24 foster care.

25 Q. Okay. You tell us at paragraph 4 that when you were in

1 foster care, I think, your mum turned up for a visit,
2 took you out for the day, but instead she took you on
3 a plane back to Scotland; is that right?
4 A. Yeah, she brought us home.
5 Q. Was she Scottish?
6 A. Yes.
7 Q. And was your dad American?
8 A. Yes. And he had custody of us at that time, but he was
9 in the Vietnam War, he was on the ship. He was doing
10 his service.
11 Q. Right, he was away at that time?
12 A. Yeah.
13 Q. You then say at paragraph 5 that you think it was in
14 1972 that you came here from America for the first time,
15 for you?
16 A. Yeah. So I was three and a half, four. That was my
17 knowledge.
18 Q. Okay. You say that you remember your aunt and your
19 mother living in the same stair?
20 A. Yeah. [REDACTED].
21 Q. Okay, in Edinburgh --
22 A. So my mum was -- it was a very -- it's old enough now,
23 but back in the day it was a very old tenement block and
24 my mum -- the toilets were on the outside, they were in
25 the middle of the staircase, so you -- when you needed

1 the bathroom, you had to leave the house to go to the
2 bathroom in the stair. It was like the old tin baths,
3 that if you had a bath, the water then got put down the
4 stair. It was very old, very old, but yeah.

5 Q. And you and your mum and your sister were in -- you say
6 you were on the first floor?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And your aunt was at the top of the stair?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. You say that you remember going essentially between the
11 two houses and then you gradually spent more and more
12 time at your aunt's house; is that right?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Do you know why it was that you started spending more
15 time at your aunt's?

16 A. My mum wasn't there.

17 Q. Your mum wasn't there, okay. At the bottom of this
18 page at paragraph 7, you tell us a little bit about the
19 accommodation and you refer to five of you sleeping in
20 one bed in the bedroom?

21 A. Yeah, we were all just very young kids, but yeah. We
22 shared the big bed and they slept in the lounge.

23 Q. So that was you and your sister and your three cousins;
24 is that right?

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. You tell us a little bit about your cousins. So there
2 was one born in 1967; is that right?

3 A. Yeah, that was the oldest. And then there was the boy
4 who was the same age as me, and then there was my
5 younger cousin that was two years younger.

6 Q. You tell us that your aunt and uncle were the
7 **ERR-ERS**?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. If we move over the page to page 3, paragraph 9, you say
10 that when you were about four and when you were living
11 in , the social work decided that
12 you were going to be living with your aunt and uncle?

13 A. Yes. I'm aware at that time I was just told that, as
14 you say, I wasn't allowed to live with my mum for the
15 reason that -- the same as America. So we were just
16 then told that my aunt had stepped up and said, "Well,
17 we'll take you".

18 Q. Okay. So are you saying you were told that at the time?

19 A. We were always told, when I was younger, we weren't
20 allowed to visit my mother.

21 Q. Right.

22 A. It was a thing that, "No, you can't go stay with her,
23 you can't live with her". It was just deemed -- we were
24 never told the reason. We never found answers out until
25 we got a little bit older, but we weren't allowed to

1 live with her.

2 Q. I wonder if you would mind moving the microphone

3 slightly towards you.

4 LADY SMITH: Yes.

5 MS INNES: Thank you.

6 A. Is that better?

7 LADY SMITH: I think that is sounding better. It's

8 important that I hear everything that you have to say,

9 and I'm afraid we have to contend a little bit with the

10 air conditioning at the moment.

11 A. Okay.

12 LADY SMITH: But it's working well so I don't want to

13 complain about it.

14 A. Okay.

15 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

16 MS INNES: So you know that there came this time where you

17 were to be living with your aunt and uncle and this was

18 authorised or organised by the social work department.

19 A. (Witness nods).

20 Q. You then say at paragraph 10 that you remember life was

21 very poor and you remember being given a new house in

22 Wester Hailes?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. What can you tell us about that?

25 A. That was just so exciting because you had to see what

1 [REDACTED] was back then. And again, we were
2 little American children that was totally different
3 across there coming back to that. [REDACTED]
4 was just so run down, the buildings were being knocked
5 down and we were one of the last families to leave.

6 Q. Right.

7 A. So there was rats, there was everything. We were going
8 into all the old houses because everyone had abandoned
9 them and we thought we were finding treasure because
10 they'd left pictures and -- so to us it was a wee
11 treasure hove but it was a dangerous place to be living.

12 Wester Hailes was just brand shining new. The
13 houses were all pure white, they were lovely. As you
14 say, they were just lovely brand new houses to us. That
15 area wasn't as bad as what it's called now. But it was
16 just a brand new house, it was shiny, it was new, it was
17 lovely. We had our own rooms.

18 Q. Was it a house that you moved into in Wester Hailes or
19 was it a flat?

20 A. It was a stair. We were the top of the stair again.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. But it was a four-bedroom house on the top floor. It
23 had a balcony. Yeah, and I shared with my two cousins.
24 My sister had the downstairs bedroom and my male cousin
25 had the other single room, and then my aunt and uncle

1 lived in the other room.

2 Q. So although it was at the top of a stair, it was on two

3 floors from what you're saying?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. You tell us a little about that in your statement at

6 paragraph 12 on page 4 and you say, as you've said:

7 "The house was light, sparkly and all new. It had

8 an indoor toilet and a bath inside."

9 A. Yeah, that was big to us, an indoor toilet.

10 Q. Okay. You then talk a little bit about where you were

11 living. I'm going to move on to page 5 and ask you some

12 questions more about the detail of living with your aunt

13 and uncle.

14 On page 5, you're talking there about food. You say

15 at paragraph 16 you had to eat whatever was put down in

16 front of you.

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Can you tell us a bit about that?

19 A. I'd just assume every family was the same as ours, that

20 we didn't have a lot of money and it was whatever you

21 were given as an evening meal, you ate it. You weren't

22 allowed to leave anything. There was no waste in the

23 house. You had to eat it or there was nothing else to

24 eat if you refused to eat it, but we weren't allowed to

25 refuse.

1 Q. You talk about sitting at the table while pasta went
2 cold and gluey.

3 A. Yeah. And they would take the dog out the room so we
4 couldn't feed it to the dog. But again, it was their
5 way of saying you have to eat that meal for something to
6 eat, but again if you didn't like it, you wouldn't force
7 children now to do that, but we were forced to eat what
8 was given.

9 Q. You say that they had to do that -- so your cousins had
10 to do that as well?

11 A. Yeah, we were all treated the same back then.

12 Q. If we go on to paragraph 18, you say:

13 "At primary school my cousins were given free
14 dinners for a period of time but [REDACTED] and I weren't
15 entitled to them because we were foster children."

16 A. Yes. My sister and I always had a label. We were never
17 known as "Oh, you're that family". We were, "Oh, you're
18 from -- you live with the guardian, you're the foster
19 children", we were always labelled.

20 But they did, for a period of time, my uncle,
21 I don't know if he wasn't working at the time, but they
22 were all given free school dinners but I used to have to
23 go home for lunch and given packet soup or whatever and
24 then go back, but they were all at school.

25 Q. So your understanding from that was that they were

1 allowed to get --

2 A. They were struggling. If they had something -- my uncle
3 was not working at that time period and was struggling,
4 they were on benefits and their children were taken care
5 of, we were -- as you say, we thought we were part of
6 the family but we were never treated like that. We were
7 always separated. You're not entitled, you're foster
8 children, you need to go home.

9 Q. Were you told you're not entitled to the school lunches
10 because you're foster children?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. Who told you that?

13 A. The school used to tell us because we were like: oh
14 we're the -- I'm their family -- no, you're not entitled
15 to the school dinners, you need to go home.

16 Q. You then say at paragraph 19 you all knew when the
17 cheque came in for you and your sister. Can you tell us
18 about that?

19 A. We always got excited because to us when the cheque came
20 in, that was what we assumed my aunt and uncle were
21 being given some money to watch my sister and I, and
22 when that cheque came in, you knew it was in. My aunt
23 would go to the shop and to us our treat was corned beef
24 and coleslaw sandwiches, we were getting a dinner,
25 corned beef and coleslaw sandwiches or hot dogs or

1 whatever. It was a treat on that Friday. And my
2 Aunt **ERR** used to also get her treat, which was
3 Carlsberg lagers, but we always knew when that cheque
4 came because we were getting different items.
5 Q. How often did it come, do you know?
6 A. Back in the day you would think it was every month,
7 every month that came in, but you knew when it came in
8 because to us we got a little treat that night.
9 Q. You say that your aunt would go and buy a treat for you,
10 but she would also get a Carlsberg lager for herself?
11 A. Yeah, my aunt was a bad drinker.
12 Q. Okay, we'll come back to that.
13 If we move on from that, please, and if we can move
14 on to where you tell us about chores and pocket money.
15 Page 7, paragraph 25. So you say that you all had to do
16 chores, so did that include your cousins as well?
17 A. Yes.
18 Q. What sort of chores did you have to do?
19 A. I used to do the bin. It was a big -- well, as you say,
20 the household bin, but we didn't have bags in the day so
21 you'd empty it down the chute and then have to scrub the
22 bin.
23 My other chore was to go and get the petrol,
24 paraffin, petrol. From where we lived we had to walk to
25 Sighthill, which was at least a mile down the road, to

1 fill the paraffin and to then carry it back. Going down
2 was all downhill, fantastic, empty canisters. Coming
3 back they were full and I was just this -- as you say,
4 when I first met my husband, even then I was a very
5 frail, tall, thin lanky has, 7 stone, like, so to carry
6 the 2 gallons of paraffin all the way back up the hill,
7 your hands would all be cut with the weight of the
8 paraffin. Stinking as well. But that was our chores.
9 We had to go and do what we were asked to do.

10 LADY SMITH: How old were you when you started going to
11 collect the paraffin?

12 A. Oh, I was primary. Primary 5 onwards.

13 MS INNES: Did you do that on your own?

14 A. I took that chore over from my sister. She had it
15 before me and then it turned into my chore.

16 Q. How did your sister manage to pass that on to you?

17 A. She hated it as well. It was -- you had to do it. You
18 were -- "Go get paraffin". We never answered back in
19 those days. If you were asked to do something, you done
20 it. It was afeardy(?), I would never speak back to
21 an adult.

22 Q. Was the paraffin for heaters or lights in the house?

23 A. It was for the heater in the lounge. It was a big
24 square box thing, yeah.

25 Q. How often would you have to do that?

1 A. Whenever -- I would say every maybe couple of weeks,
2 every month. It wasn't every week.

3 Q. You mentioned your uncle and you said there might be
4 times when he was out of work. What was he doing when
5 you lived there?

6 A. He was a labourer.

7 Q. Right.

8 A. So he used to travel sometimes. I just remember him
9 getting on this little wee old bus, Heart Buses, and
10 they would pick the people up on the way to work. He
11 would always -- because we used to wait for him at the
12 balcony to jump off and we'd know he was coming up. So
13 we just assumed he got picked up and taken to work. At
14 one point he did travel away for work and the longest
15 time was when he went to Shetlands.

16 Q. So what was he doing in Shetland?

17 A. Again, just labouring.

18 Q. Okay. At the bottom of page 7, you talk about clothing
19 and school uniform. Here you say your cousins were
20 entitled to grants for school uniform, but you and your
21 sister weren't?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Can you tell us about that?

24 A. That was when my cousins were on the school dinners,
25 they got shoes and whatever from a grant and we weren't,

1 so it was -- they were entitled to things at the time
2 again just because what my uncle and aunt were claiming
3 for.

4 Q. You say that you don't remember having a school uniform?

5 A. No, we never had a school uniform.

6 Q. Was there a uniform when you were either at primary or
7 secondary school?

8 A. No. No. We just wore -- primary, you used to have the
9 odd occasional grey skirt or whatever, but no, we never
10 had a uniform back then. And high school, it was
11 a brand new school and they chose not to do a uniform,
12 which again you just wore your own clothes.

13 Q. Okay. You talk about that at the top of page 8 at
14 paragraph 28. You say that when you went to high
15 school, there wasn't a school uniform or dress code so
16 they bought whatever they could afford?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. What sort of things could they afford?

19 A. Well, me and -- I was just so -- I was so tall that even
20 when we were taken to the local shopping centre to get
21 the clothes, my legs were always that much too long, so
22 even when I was put in trousers, they already looked
23 like the cat's did, so I remember going to high school,
24 I got a very pale blue pair of trousers that were on
25 offer at Mackays and then again it was the 1980s and so

1 she put me in a pair of pop socks with it and I always
2 remember going to high school your very first day, my
3 trousers are this much too short, pale blue of all
4 colours and with bright yellow pop socks, but that was
5 me and that was my ...

6 Q. Okay. You talk about your grandfather, your mum's dad,
7 bringing you things to wear, I think that had been maybe
8 thrown out by other people; is that right?

9 A. Yeah. At that time he worked as a caretaker down Leith
10 in the flats, and people who used to put clothes down
11 the chutes, he would bag them and bring them back to me.

12 Q. Okay. All right, just take your time.

13 A. So, yeah, I did wear -- probably when my sister was
14 wearing mini skirts and being a mod, I was in gypsy
15 skirts because that was what they had, so yeah, we were
16 in total different fashions.

17 Q. Then you tell us in the next section about going to
18 school and some of the things that I think you know that
19 happened at the time and also that you've seen in your
20 records. You tell us at paragraph 32 --

21 A. Oh.

22 Q. -- that there was a time you couldn't go to primary
23 school one day because the dog had eaten your pants.

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Can you tell us about that?

1 A. Honestly, it's like something out of Billy Connolly.
2 I laugh about it now, and me and my sister have a little
3 joke, but it wasn't funny back in the day. We -- there
4 was four girls and a lady in the house. Laundry was
5 only done once a week on a Sunday and our dirty clothes
6 and the dog tended to chew the pants. But what made it
7 worse was my aunt put it in a note for all of us, not
8 just me, to take to school, and the note, when the
9 teacher read it in my class, could not believe it, so
10 decided to share it with the class, which was then just
11 more torture.
12 And you hear now, like, the dog ate my homework. My
13 dog ate my pants. It was just ... so we couldn't go to
14 school for a couple of days until my uncle got money for
15 us to all go buy new pants.
16 Q. Okay. Then you tell us that you had issues, I think,
17 with bed-wetting?
18 A. Yeah.
19 Q. And also wetting yourself in class.
20 A. Yeah.
21 Q. If we go over to page 9 and paragraph 33. Are you able
22 to tell us about that and what happened at school?
23 A. When I was a child, I was -- I was very, like, nervous,
24 wouldn't speak up, wouldn't talk to people. It's -- so
25 when you tell me, "Sit in this seat", I'd sit in this

1 seat until you told me to leave it. I never had the
2 confidence to put my hand up to say, "I need the
3 bathroom". Maybe I did when I was younger and was told,
4 "Wait for break", so I never asked again.

5 So when I was needing I'd wiggle and wiggle and then
6 get to the extent I couldn't hold it in any more, I'd
7 have accidents, or maybe it was just an accident on the
8 way to the bathroom, but all I remember as being a child
9 was I always in wet pants. Always.

10 Q. You also tell us in your statement that there were
11 issues at home with bed-wetting.

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. And were you given clean clothes to wear or clean
14 bedsheets?

15 A. No. We all wet the bed at one point, apart from my
16 younger cousin, so it was me and my older cousin and my
17 the same age cousin, we all wet the bed and we were
18 basically -- our beds were never stripped, they were
19 never aired. Embarrassment. We'd get up, knowing we'd
20 wet it, cover it and in those days you never had duvet
21 cost, you had old-fashioned army woollen blankets. The
22 mattresses were also woollen sprunged mattresses, which
23 took forever to dry anyway, but our beds were never dry.

24 Occasionally my uncle used to try to bring home
25 a tarpaulin, but again the tarpaulin, it was not like

1 a proper -- what you get now, a sheet to protect the
2 mattress. The tarpaulin used to just hold the water and
3 make it run elsewhere. So again, it protected the
4 mattress for a wee bit. But yeah, we were all bed
5 wetters.

6 Q. And that affected you, I think, at school?

7 A. Yeah. Because again it sounds bad now not having the
8 knowledge, but we would get up from that wet bed, take
9 off the wet nightdress and just get told, "Get dressed,
10 you're going to school", so we'd get dressed and not
11 have been washed beforehand. So again, me, [REDACTED]
12 and -- oh, sorry, my other cousin, we were always, as
13 you say, getting bullied because we were -- we smelt.

14 Q. You talked about your uncle. What was your aunt doing?
15 Did she work or did she just stay at home?

16 A. No, she stayed at home.

17 Q. Do you know why it was that she wasn't changing the beds
18 and --

19 A. I would love to ask her. But no. I don't know why.
20 Because, again, she never worked. The first time she
21 ever got a job, we were in our late teens, about 12, she
22 got a wee job in a hotel up the road from us, but until
23 then she never worked, we did the chores. We used to
24 come home, have to polish, have to Hoover, peel the
25 potatoes, go for paraffin. She never worked.

1 Q. You talk in the next paragraph, paragraph 34, about
2 harvest day at school. Are you able to tell us about
3 that?

4 A. Harvest day was a nightmare to me because -- well, it
5 was one of the nightmares because where we lived, the
6 school -- that's more primary, you would have to take in
7 something for harvest day. And it could be a tin out
8 the cupboard or whatever you wanted to take, but you had
9 to take something. And just approaching my aunt to say,
10 "It's harvest day, can we take something out the
11 cupboard to take into harvest day?", we never had that
12 to give away. And there was four of us of the same age
13 asking at the same time can we get something.

14 So when the school -- I thought I'm not asking, the
15 school would then pull my name up, "Have you brought in
16 today?" No. "Well, can you bring in tomorrow?"

17 All I can remember is the harvest, what we collected
18 at the school went to the church to help the elderly,
19 but sometimes you were, like, it's not just the elderly
20 that need that food. But I used to find that torture
21 having to go home and ask because I knew I was going to
22 get shouted, clouted, whatever, because I was asking.

23 Q. You say at paragraph 35 that there was a similar issue
24 with asking your aunt if you were in cooking class and
25 you needed ingredients for cooking?

1 A. Yeah, that was when I started high school. High school
2 then told us if you went to home ec -- well, we had to
3 go to home economics, it was, say, 25p back in the day,
4 you had to contribute to do a bit of baking or -- that
5 day, you had to pay the money. And again four of us
6 asking. It sounds petty, like a pound was a lot to her
7 back in that day, for four of us to be asking for it for
8 cooking, and then whatever we made, we never dared touch
9 what we made because she had paid for it and she made us
10 aware: I've gave you that money; so all my friends, if
11 it was chocolate profiteroles, would be eating them on
12 the way home. Why are you not touching yours? No,
13 because I couldn't remember how many my sister had taken
14 home before me, so if she took four and I took three,
15 I'd be known to have eaten one and you wouldn't do that,
16 so we took every dish back and then she would just slate
17 it and half the time it went to the dog. It was like:
18 I would have ate that!

19 Q. You say at the end of this paragraph that at the time
20 you wondered why they never gave you the money for
21 cooking "because I knew they were given a cheque for us
22 and I felt they weren't looking after us."

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Was that how you felt at the time?

25 A. It was. It was embarrassment. You had to tip your hat

1 to my aunt, you had to beg to my aunt, and all I could
2 think about at the time: you get money for watching us.
3 Why are you making us beg, why you are making us dip our
4 hat? Why are you making us thank you thank you? That
5 was how we felt at the time. You get that to help take
6 care of us and we didn't see that, apart from on the
7 Friday we were given a wee treat and a corned beef
8 sandwich or whatever.

9 Q. And you say:

10 "Now that I am older I understand it more. I can
11 see they struggled for money."

12 A. Yes, and that's the sad bit, that I'll always still
13 protect her ... (Witness nods).

14 Q. Okay. We'll come back. I think you say similar things
15 elsewhere in your statement.

16 A. Yeah. She wasn't good at budgeting and there was other
17 ways to go about that. But yeah.

18 Q. Well, you've told us that she was spending money on
19 Carlsberg lager, for example, rather than putting food
20 on the table.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Then you tell us that when you were older you started
23 going to some church, I think --

24 A. I did.

25 Q. If we move on to page 11 and paragraph 42, if you can

1 just tell us about that. You say that you went to the
2 church in Oxfords without their knowledge?

3 A. I started off with a little Bible group with a lovely
4 old little gran who used to make cakes and bring us in
5 to Bible group and one of my friends went and I thought
6 I'd tag along and I thought it was the best thing ever
7 because this lady made homemade jam, she made cakes. We
8 would just turn up for the treats and we would the
9 little Bible sessions.

10 Then she took me to other churches because she seen
11 I was excited with turning up at her house, she thought
12 oh, you must be really into this church thing, so she
13 took me down to Dulrightair(?), a sort of black church,
14 and I thought that was fantastic because everywhere was
15 so happy.

16 She then took me to a church in Oxfords. They also
17 ran school and holiday time, they ran a day class that
18 you could have fun and do outdoor activities. When
19 I first started to go there, I never told the family
20 that I was going back on other days. Because --

21 Q. Why did you not tell them?

22 A. Because my uncle ERS didn't like me going to church.

23 Q. Was it because of the type of church?

24 A. It wasn't his religion, yeah. I don't -- I don't care
25 what church I'm in if the environment's doing fun

1 things. If it's a holiday club, if it's a singing and
2 dancing one. It was just fun. I was 12 or whatever.
3 It was just fun. And it was different. Everyone was
4 happy. But I was probably entering a Catholic church
5 back then and churches that he didn't want us to be in.

6 Q. And you say that this was when the friction started.

7 A. Yeah, because instead -- all up to that point the only
8 place that we would go out to play was -- we called it
9 the concrete jungle. It was where we lived was just
10 concrete, there wasn't any greenery, but we all played
11 in the square and it would be football, rounders,
12 tennis, whatever, but we all sat in that square and
13 that's where we remained, and then all of a sudden,
14 except for when I went big up walks in Bonaly with the
15 dog, all of a sudden I was going to different places
16 without my cousins. My cousins were my aunt's eyes and
17 ear so everywhere I went they were there to then feed
18 back to my aunt and all of a sudden I was going
19 somewhere that no one knew where I was.

20 Q. Right. If we can move on to the next page, please, and
21 to paragraph 49 where you talk about one holiday that
22 you went to Dunbar and you talk about having fun times
23 with your cousins at that point.

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. But then you say:

1 "It was only in our teenage years when we struggled
2 because my cousins released that they could have
3 a better life without us in it and I felt the same."
4 A. Yeah.
5 Q. Can you explain that, please?
6 A. When we were children, we were all treated the exact
7 same. Our Christmas presents, the exact same, just
8 different colours. Everything. Our clothes to go to
9 school, everything was the exact same. The holiday in
10 Dunbar was fantastic because we had never been away from
11 where we lived, so again that was at the beach. We had
12 so much fun catching crabs and my Aunt **ERR** would be
13 boiling them up. It was just fun.
14 But when around just before going to high school, it
15 was when everything started to change because my cousins
16 then got resentful because I think they realised, as you
17 say, we were seeing my Aunt **ERR** drink more, I wasn't
18 happy being there, I was scared to be there, and it was
19 just like -- again they -- **ERR** -- oh, sorry, my
20 sister moved out. My youngest got her room. I was
21 still sharing with my other cousin, and again jealousy:
22 I want my own room. We were just all drifting apart,
23 having different interests.
24 Q. Can you remember how old your sister was when she moved
25 out?

1 A. Well, she got married 18, but she was more out the house
2 come 17.

3 Q. And you think you said she was about three and a half
4 years older than you?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. At the bottom of this page you talk about family
7 contact. At paragraph 50 you say that apart from a very
8 few occasions when you moved to Wester Hailes, you can't
9 remember your mum visiting?

10 A. No.

11 Q. You've already said that you were constantly told that
12 you couldn't see your mum, it wasn't allowed?

13 A. I don't know what happened back then, but my mum wasn't
14 around. I remember her in Primary 4 bringing me
15 a womble present for my birthday and I think that was
16 the only present I really got. And from that point, we
17 never really had contact with my mum until she
18 remarried.

19 Q. If we go on to page 13 and paragraph 51, you say there
20 that your mum remarried.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Can you remember roughly how old you were when she
23 remarried?

24 A. I must have been 11, 12.

25 Q. So you were still at primary school?

1 A. Yes -- yeah. Or going into high school, just. I'm not
2 sure when they married.

3 Q. Okay. You say that you remember that when she
4 remarried, the social work came to the house and asked
5 you if you wanted to live with your mum or stay where
6 you were.

7 A. Yeah. And silly enough, I put my -- I want to go live
8 with my mum. Because I hadn't ever known my mum. So
9 the very -- the little occasions that we got the bus up
10 to visit or whatever, I had her on this pedestal. She's
11 my mum. Look, she's beautiful, look, she's fantastic,
12 because again we got spoiled when we went to see her so
13 again you had her on a pedestal. So I said yes. For
14 some reason my sister said no. And the social worker
15 asked us in front of my aunt and uncle.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. So is your memory that your aunt and uncle were there
19 when the social worker was asking you about this?

20 A. Yeah, my aunt was. She was fuming that I'd said yes.
21 My aunt -- I don't know what it was, they're sisters.
22 She had a right problem with my mum. Just because she
23 had brought us up, she thought we should love her more,
24 not our mum. There was a lot of hate in the
25 relationship between the two of them.

1 Q. You say at paragraph 52 that the social worker took the
2 choice away from you and you didn't understand why they
3 had asked you and then not listened to you.

4 A. Yeah. And I still have a problem thinking that today.
5 I said yes. So I don't understand that if my sister
6 said no, because she's -- if I was 13, she'd have been
7 16, she's met her boyfriend, she's about to be married,
8 whatever. I still wanted to go. Yet it wasn't like,
9 oh, well, I want to and they don't, so ...

10 Q. And you say that you wondered why the social worker had
11 put you into that position?

12 A. Yes. Why ask if you're not going to follow that up and
13 do anything?

14 Q. You mentioned a moment ago that after your mum
15 remarried, did you have more contact with her after
16 that?

17 A. (Witness nods). And that's what I don't understand
18 either is we were allowed to then visit. So we were
19 given bus fare from my aunt to then go up and visit and
20 I'd go with my two cousins and we would go and see her.
21 So I don't understand for all the years we were told
22 don't go near, don't talk, don't do this, and then all
23 of a sudden we're being asked the opposite but don't
24 know why. Why were we not allowed to live with her
25 before that and then all of a sudden we are? Don't know

1 why.

2 Q. Were you able to stay overnight with her and her new
3 husband or was it just visits during the day?

4 A. I did, I remember that. I stayed over a few times,
5 yeah, on my own, with her.

6 Q. At paragraph 53, you talk about your father. What sort
7 of contact did you have with him during your childhood?

8 A. Not a lot. He came over a couple of times in my
9 childhood, spoiled us, visited the school -- well, more
10 primary school, visited the primary school to see how
11 I was doing. Invited us over for holidays, but again we
12 were never allowed to go because the social work thought
13 he wouldn't return me. So they had told me, after
14 giving us, "Oh, you're allowed to go on holiday", then
15 they took it away and said, "No, you're not allowed to
16 go".

17 Q. You say:

18 "We started to be hold horror stories that my dad
19 might not let us go back to Scotland ..."

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. And then your sister said she wasn't going to go?

22 A. My sister chose. When the holiday was offered, again
23 she's older, she -- it was my aunt just feeding my
24 sister and my sister has more memories than me as
25 a child because she was older and she thinks there was

1 more horror stories to do with our foster family across
2 there before coming back, and she just deemed that, as
3 you say, my aunt fed her and then she said no. But
4 I was just so excited I'm getting away from here, so
5 I would always say yes, and then I'd get the punishment
6 later because I've voiced yes in front of them.

7 Q. If we can move over to the next page, please, page 14,
8 and to supervision oversight and inspection by the
9 fostering authority, at paragraph 56 you say:

10 "We always knew what day and time the social worker
11 was going to visit so the whole family was there."

12 A. Yeah, we knew exactly -- come at 4 o'clock, we were all
13 going to be there, we're were all sitting in the lounge,
14 we were all there as a whole family. We never left the
15 lounge. We sat with them. But they weren't there to
16 see us, they were just there to talk to the adults, but
17 we were present in the room.

18 Q. Okay. When you say the whole family was there, were
19 your cousins sitting there as well?

20 A. Yeah. Because they would ask us, "Are you all doing
21 okay?" and we would just nod. And to see us all
22 together, they would assume we were all okay.

23 Q. Would your aunt and uncle both be there or sometimes was
24 it just your aunt?

25 A. No, both. We were all there.

1 Q. You say that you remember that your social worker
2 changed occasionally?

3 A. Yeah. That -- I think I had the same one the majority,
4 but I don't remember them, just this man, but then come
5 when I was getting later primary, they started to change
6 and then after that they changed quite frequent.

7 Q. Okay. At paragraph 57 you say that you never had
8 a relationship with any of the social workers and you
9 saw them as being there to see the adults.

10 A. When they were -- when I was living in the house, yeah,
11 I never had a relationship with any of the social
12 workers apart from the very last one. I think her name
13 was Anne. She was the one who, when we had the
14 argument, when my aunt said, "Do you want to go into
15 care?" and I went, "Yes", that's the only one that
16 I remember.

17 Q. You say:

18 "When I was growing up I was aware of little
19 comments suggesting that the social work were my
20 parents."

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Can you explain that?

23 A. If I had a school trip, I would be asked by the teacher,
24 "Can you go get your guardian to sign the paperwork to
25 go on the school trip?" so I'd take it home and my aunt

1 used to go and get it signed by the social work.

2 Q. Was it your aunt then that was saying it needs to be the

3 social work that sign it because they're your parents?

4 A. It was always scored out on my paperwork it wasn't the

5 parents, it was always circled guardian, and it was

6 always the social work that always signed the guardian

7 part.

8 Q. How did that make you feel at the time, can you

9 remember?

10 A. It was another label. And that's the bit I find hard

11 because it was -- the labels that we had, you're in

12 care, you're a foster kid, you're -- we were just

13 labelled. And that's when I got older, as you say,

14 you're going down another line of job hunting and

15 whatever, as soon as someone knew you were in care, they

16 didn't want to know you. They thought you were bad.

17 Q. You say in the same paragraph:

18 "We never had a phone number for the social work

19 department. I knew where the social work department was

20 when I was a teenager but I never accessed that on my

21 own. I was never told that I could."

22 A. No. It was a brand new social department right at my

23 primary school. We never went there on our own. If we

24 did go there, it was with the family, if it wasn't in

25 the house. It wasn't until I was a teenager there was

1 one social worker who asked me to come in and that was
2 my first time on my own in. Yeah, as you say, I always
3 thought with it being on the door, they could have told
4 me and my sister to go there and have a private word
5 before the family meetings, but that never happened.

6 LADY SMITH: And you're still talking about Wester Hailes
7 and the social work offices there?

8 A. Yeah. It was right at my primary school.

9 MS INNES: You talk about your primary school headteacher,
10 Mr Duff, at paragraph 58. You say:

11 "He wrote truthfully in the reports and I feel like
12 he was the only one who tried."

13 Is that from reading your records later in life that
14 you formed that view or did you know that at the time?

15 A. I knew at primary. Mr Duff would pull me out of the
16 classroom on certain times to sit me in his office and
17 to talk to me. I was like -- I wasn't made to feel
18 special, but it was like no other kids of the class got
19 that done. But I think that was just before I was going
20 to a panel meeting, that he needed to ask me things to
21 then put in the report, so he used to -- I used to love
22 Mr Duff. I thought he was a lovely headmaster.

23 Q. You mention some of the things that he has said in his
24 reports. He refers to hygiene issues you've mentioned
25 already in your evidence.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. You say:

3 "It was also put in the reports that nobody attended
4 parents' night."

5 A. No. It's sad to actually -- later on -- I have all my
6 primary reports, and to actually read that in black and
7 white, it's so upsetting because each year would be the
8 same comment. Yet when we went to the panel and the
9 comment was made by Mr Duff, because he was at the panel
10 every time, the social work would just say, "Oh, when we
11 met them at the house, we didn't see that issue", they
12 would just shut him down. But he was there writing it
13 in every single year, 1 to Primary 7. It's the same
14 writing.

15 Q. If we go over the page to page 15 and paragraph 59, you
16 say:

17 "He put in the report I lived with my aunt and uncle
18 and I was very loyal, I was almost defensive."

19 A. Yeah. When he used to ask me questions about the home
20 life -- because he was trying to understand. You're
21 nodding that you're aware you've got dirty clothes on;
22 why don't you get them cleaned? He was thinking -- why,
23 you're a teenager, you should be getting them -- putting
24 the wash in. He was asking me questions about the home
25 but I would never say a bad word against my aunt and

1 uncle because I always thought if they heard about it,
2 there was worse to come.

3 Q. You talked about the panel. If we go to the bottom of
4 this page to paragraph 62, you talk about going to the
5 panel there and you say:

6 " ... they had the information there but no one ever
7 did anything ..."

8 And that was the bit that you found difficult as
9 an adult. Is that referring to what you've just said
10 about Mr Duff's reports?

11 A. (Witness nods). He was trying to let them know not
12 everything's perfect. I'm seeing this girl every day,
13 coming in like this and no one's doing anything. So to
14 him he was trying -- trying his best.

15 Q. Sorry?

16 A. He was trying his best.

17 Q. Trying his best, okay.

18 A. To help her. There's only so much what one person can
19 put in a report. If others keep shutting him down,
20 then -- the panel was a panel of more than six people,
21 so for only one to be trying ... it was sad to watch the
22 rest just ignoring it.

23 Q. You talk about the panel on page 16 at paragraph 63.

24 A. Oh.

25 Q. And you tell us that that was at Newington.

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. You used to have to go on the bus to get there and you
3 remember it being an oval table?

4 A. Yes, it was a very long journey for to us go on the bus
5 up there, but it was always just my aunt, uncle, and, as
6 you say, me and my sister, it'd take us so long to get
7 there and sometimes you were only in because they needed
8 to just tick boxes, is everything okay? Okay then, and
9 10, 15 minutes later you're gone for the big long
10 journey back.

11 But it was a giant oval table that we used to sit on
12 one side and they'd sit on the other and just ask basic
13 questions.

14 Q. You say that as well as the panel -- the panel, how many
15 people would that be, do you know?

16 A. I would deem about six on each side.

17 Q. So a lot of people at this meeting?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. You say that Mr Duff, your social worker and obviously
20 your aunt and uncle would be there?

21 A. (Witness nods). And occasionally a primary teacher
22 would also come.

23 Q. Then just finally in this section at paragraph 66 you
24 say that when you were in Primary 6 or 7 there was
25 a teacher who put in a report card that you used to

1 write about wanting a family of your own and you wrote
2 that you would never treat your family the way you were
3 treated.

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. And you've seen that's in one of your school reports as
6 well?

7 A. That's in one of my reports and I just wondered if
8 that's what I wrote, why did no one question the remark?
9 Along with Mr Duff's comments. Why did -- these
10 comments are there to be seen by the panel, but nobody
11 picked them up.

12 MS INNES: I wonder if now might be a good time to have the
13 mid-afternoon break, my Lady.

14 LADY SMITH: We usually take a break about this point in the
15 afternoon. Would that work for you if we did that now?

16 A. Yes, that's fine.

17 LADY SMITH: Let's do that.

18 (3.07 pm)

19 (A short break)

20 (3.17 pm)

21 LADY SMITH: Ms Innes, when you're ready.

22 MS INNES: Thank you, my Lady.

23 Now, if we can move please to page 17 of your
24 statement and paragraph 70, you talk in this
25 section about discipline. You say that your aunt was

1 the boss of the house.

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Because your uncle was mostly at work?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And you did what your aunt said?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Was the regime.

8 A. Oh yes.

9 Q. You say that your uncle's punishment was that he would

10 look at you and you would run.

11 A. He didn't have to punish us. It was if you heard him

12 coming in the door would make us sit quiet or run up the

13 stairs.

14 Q. Would you be told, "Wait until your uncle comes home"?

15 Or not?

16 A. I'd say like every formula mother in the household, if

17 you've done something wrong, wait until your dad gets

18 in, it's like you're in trouble, so it was the fear, but

19 he was actually not the punisher, but it was the fear of

20 what was coming.

21 LADY SMITH: And it was hanging over you all the time --

22 A. Yes.

23 LADY SMITH: -- that passed between that being said and him

24 getting back, I suppose.

25 A. Yeah. He just had to look at you and you were just --

1 you melted.

2 MS INNES: You also say that when he came home, you were to

3 be seen and not heard.

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. You just disappeared when adults came is the way that

6 you put it?

7 A. Yeah, and that became a big -- when I met my real father

8 later on, that was an issue because I wasn't taught how

9 to speak to a grown-up, apart from my Grandpa, who, as

10 you say, passed. He was the only adult person, but we

11 weren't -- we weren't in our room that kids are now when

12 they're talking to adults, we weren't that type of

13 child. We were never -- we never spoke out as children.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. So we didn't kind of like communicate with adults. So

16 if any adult tried to ask me questions, I would just be

17 that be seen and not heard child.

18 Q. At the end of paragraph 71 you talk about your aunt

19 there and the chores that you did, which you've

20 mentioned. You say:

21 "A few of my reports say that she wasn't motherly,

22 she wasn't caring and she didn't show affection. She

23 was just so cold."

24 A. I found that on one of the reports by one social worker

25 and I just thought, well, if that's what you have wrote

1 on that report, why are we there? Again, we were going
2 through issues, but to say someone wasn't motherly and
3 wasn't caring, I just thought, well, when you put foster
4 children into that environment, aren't they meant to be
5 motherly and caring?

6 Q. Okay. Then you talk about running away and I think if
7 we go on over the page to page 18, you talk about this
8 happening, I think, after your sister had left the
9 house.

10 A. Yeah, to my knowledge. Either she was just -- when it
11 was near the time that she was getting married, she
12 didn't stay at home very often because she was more
13 staying at the boyfriend's house and whatever. So yeah,
14 it was -- it was hard then because there was a lot of
15 changes happening at the one time so I was finding that
16 difficult that she was going to leave me again.

17 Q. You say that you disappeared for the whole of the summer
18 holiday and you were staying with a family friend.

19 A. Yeah. My uncle and aunt knew where I was. My cousins
20 were with me to begin with. We had went camping. They
21 lived up on -- I don't know how to explain it.
22 A reservoir. They had a house on a reservoir and he was
23 in charge of the reservoir so we used to go camping in
24 their garden.

25 LADY SMITH: Was that up in the Pentlands? Because in

1 Wester Hailes you weren't far from the --

2 A. Yeah, up in the -- that was up an alley, which was in
3 walking distance, shortcuts, for us. So we used to go
4 up to Bonaly and basically camp in their garden and we
5 were family friends. Then, as you say, it got more
6 serious, my cousins went back, I stayed there longer.

7 Q. You say at paragraph 74 that when you went back, your
8 aunt started calling you names and trying to make you
9 feel ashamed.

10 A. Yeah, because me and my older cousin both liked a boy
11 and she went home and he liked me more, so again the
12 name-calling started. There was another girl from our
13 estate who was with us camping. We all liked him. It
14 was just we were that age group that we were being
15 interested in lads.

16 But I was a tomboy and I don't think they
17 realised -- I sort of was more playing football, playing
18 the sort of sports games with them where the other ones
19 were girl girls.

20 Q. Then you say at paragraph 75 that you started rebelling
21 a bit "because I didn't like it there", I think at your
22 aunt's house, and you were trying to do things for
23 people to ask you why you were doing it, and so, for
24 example, you say that you started to steal pennies --

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. -- to get yourself notice and it did get you noticed.
2 Can you explain that?

3 A. Me and my older cousin. When my aunt got drunk, she
4 started off a happy drunk. She would put on her
5 Cliff Richard records and we'd sing along and whatever.
6 And then we used to sort of say, "Oh, if you give us 10p
7 we'll do this chore and we'll do this chore" and she
8 couldn't remember the following day what she'd said so
9 that's how it started.

10 Then it escalated. I had a paper round. My cousin,
11 the lad, had it first and then passed to me, and I got
12 extra money but people weren't paying me so then
13 I started to ask for a little bit extra and then when
14 she was remembering things there was once she passed out
15 I took money from her purse because I wanted to pay the
16 paper lady because my total wasn't correct. So I was
17 taking it from my aunt's purse to pay the paper lady and
18 then I was going to put it back once I got the money
19 from the customer, but I got busted before that
20 happened.

21 Q. So what was your aunt's reaction when she found out
22 about this?

23 A. She was angry. Yeah. She wasn't happy. But it was
24 only me that got busted. My older cousin didn't get
25 caught. All the money that she thought was being stolen

1 was all from me and not by both of us and I protected my
2 cousin and she never said anything either, so I got
3 deemed with having taken a lot more money than what
4 I had.

5 Q. Okay. You go on at paragraph 76 and over the page to
6 tell us about spending more time with your mum?

7 A. The times that I was going up with my cousins, my mum --
8 it seems like -- I don't know why, but say it was coming
9 up to Mother's Day and we had went straight up from
10 school to visit my mum before we were going home and
11 then there was one that was coming up for Mother's Day
12 and she says, "Oh, you've not made me a Mother's Day
13 card", and I had one in my bag for my aunt and
14 I actually scored that out and wrote her name above it
15 because she's telling me I've not done something for
16 her. Looking back, I'm thinking did you deserve
17 a Mother's Day card? But, as you say, I scored her name
18 out. She actually kept that, I still have it, which it
19 looks sad to see that I've scored to my aunt and put her
20 name above, but I was getting closer to her thinking oh,
21 so she wants to be my mum, she's asking me for Mother's
22 Day cards, she's now asking me to live with her. It
23 was -- we were getting closer.

24 Q. Did that mean that you started confiding in her about
25 things?

1 A. Yeah. She was acting like a friend, now I look back,
2 not a mum.

3 Q. You tell us about that in paragraph 78.

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. You told her that you'd met a boy and what had happened.

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. What did your mum do with that information?

8 A. My mum was acting like a big sister that my sister had
9 never been to me. She was being nice, friendly, giving
10 me attention, so when I was up doing the camping with my
11 friends for the holidays, I got close to the boy.
12 I thought we had done a sexual relationship. Looking
13 back now, it was more a groping or feeling or whatever.
14 But I told my mum. That was the biggest mistake I'd
15 done because as soon as I left to go home, she got
16 drunk, phoned my aunt -- well, later on but, as you say,
17 she told my aunt and my aunt exploded.

18 Q. You tell us about that at paragraph 79.

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. You say that you were asleep at the time and you woke up
21 to a gorilla pounding on your back, that's what it felt
22 like.

23 A. I got beat black and blue that night.

24 Q. Was that by your aunt?

25 A. Yeah. She was more angry that I'd told my mum. Not

1 that I'd had a sexual relationship, in her knowledge.
2 I was never asked what we did. If someone had sat me
3 down and said, "Right, talk me through what you did with
4 him", they would have realised. I was never taken to
5 a doctor. I was never taken to anybody else to say,
6 "She's done this, you'd better check her out, she's
7 had ..." it was just the anger that I'd told my mum and
8 not her and I should be able to tell her things like
9 that and not my mum. It was just that clashy jealousy
10 again.
11 Q. And you say that you had bruises after that and you ran
12 away to your mum's?
13 A. Yeah, my back was black as blue, my head, whatever.
14 I got up in the morning and left. I went to school and
15 right after -- I actually went to school, and after
16 school I walked all the way up to Princes Street, but
17 people who knew my aunt, because I'm not a -- I never
18 take a shortcut, even now, if I'm going anywhere I take
19 a bus route and I walked the bus route and people seen
20 me and when they realised I'd went missing, people had
21 went, "Oh, I was on the bus, I seen so-and-so here", so
22 they knew where I was.
23 Q. At paragraph 80 you said that you stayed with your mum
24 for a good few weeks and the social work came in and you
25 spoke to a Bob Cowie?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. And what did you tell him?

3 A. He's one of the social workers that I do remember

4 because, as you say, he was one of the ones that came to

5 the house after the lady -- well, the one after him

6 I liked better, but Bob was the one that started just at

7 the age that I remember a name.

8 So he came to meet my mum and my stepfather and

9 where they lived, they were caretakers. They weren't

10 allowed children. So again that was the reason they

11 were saying, "You can't stay with your mum", and

12 I couldn't get that when I'm saying, "Well, you just

13 asked me a little while ago if I wanted to live with my

14 mum, so how can you ask me to live with her when now I'm

15 being told I can't live in this building with her?" so

16 he was like, "You can't stay here, you need to go home",

17 and they got my grandad involved in it to get me back.

18 Q. Then you went back to your aunt's again for a time,

19 I think?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. Until you then say that your relationship with your aunt

22 broke down.

23 A. No, so Bob knew at that time, he's seen the bruises,

24 he's seen I was getting beaten and it was always under

25 clothing areas, so he's seen it and he heard it and, as

1 you say, told him the story, but he sent me back.

2 Q. So you're back staying at your aunt's again and how did

3 you feel being back at your aunt's?

4 A. It was finished. At that time, my three cousins were

5 then -- well, I shared a room with the oldest at that

6 time. They knew -- well, they assumed what had happened

7 cos of what I said. They went out into our

8 neighbourhood and told our whole neighbourhood. The

9 whole school. So again that's where I used to do my

10 escape up to Oxfords.

11 Q. To try to get away from what was going on at home?

12 A. Yeah. And that was when the relationship with my

13 cousins started to really fail as well because we were

14 just different by that time.

15 Q. Okay. If we can move on to the next page, page 20, you

16 talk in the section beginning at paragraph 84, you talk

17 about some of the abuse that you experienced when you

18 were living with your aunt and uncle, and you mentioned

19 some of these things in your evidence already.

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. But if we can just cover this.

22 At paragraph 84 you talk about your aunt being

23 a secret drinker and you've told us about some of that.

24 I think you said earlier in your evidence that it

25 got worse over the time that you lived with her?

1 A. At the later years, we knew what was going to come. It
2 wasn't happy just singing along. She was getting more
3 bitter and bitter about the things that were happening,
4 like mum or whatever. And the glass was never -- well,
5 she never drank from a glass, she drank from a can. It
6 was never on the table, it was hidden at the back of her
7 seat. It was constantly pick up a drink, sneak it, put
8 it back.

9 We all knew. We carried the shopping home. We used
10 to have to go shopping and carry the bags home. So it
11 was a panic. When they were in the bag we knew what was
12 coming and that's where -- you had to see her when she
13 was at her worst. It was just -- she was just nasty.
14 She was bitter and nasty.

15 Q. And you talk about some of that at page 21 at
16 paragraph 86 where you say:

17 "Something would flick in her mind and she would
18 start asking how much we loved her."

19 A. Yeah. My granddaughter's done that to me the other day
20 and I thought oh, don't do that. She's like, "Oh, how
21 much do you love me?" and we'd put our arms out and then
22 if she says, "Oh, how much do you love your mum?" and
23 you went a little bit further, you would get clouted,
24 "You should love me, I'm the one that's brought you up,
25 not your mum, you shouldn't love your mum". It was

1 just, as you say -- I don't know why, but that was my
2 aunt.

3 Q. At paragraph 87 you say that she would slap you.

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. "The majority of the time we were slapped very hard."

6 A. Yeah. It was -- we call it a clout. It was just your
7 ears would be ringing because she was a big woman, so if
8 you got the clout -- if I'd peeled some potatoes --
9 I would be told to peel potatoes if she was making
10 stovies or a meal and I was so careful, it used to take
11 me forever to peel a bag of potatoes because she warned
12 me not to take too much skin off, but then if she deemed
13 I had, I'd be clouted because we'd be having less
14 dinner. So it was like you're telling me to do a chore
15 but then if I do it wrong it's like clout. But I never
16 ever done it quick. You had to see how long it took to
17 try not to take any skin off. You were just terrified
18 all the time of what was coming.

19 Q. You say in this paragraph that she hit your male cousin
20 quite a lot as well?

21 A. Yeah. [REDACTED] to my uncle was a bit of a failure
22 because he wet the bed. My uncle didn't like the fact
23 that my -- the boy wet the bed. And [REDACTED] used to be
24 put and sat in front of us when the songs went on, you
25 sing along and it was their choice, Thin Lizzy, Elvis,

1 whatever, but [REDACTED] wasn't one for good at remembering
2 the words. So he never ever done anything right to them
3 either, but because he was the boy he was deemed not to
4 be good enough.

5 But he got it quite a lot. He wasn't good at
6 football. My aunt uncle wanted him to be good at
7 football. So when she got violent he used to hit with
8 pots and stuff. We used to run faster but [REDACTED]
9 always used to be caught up.

10 Q. You talked already about her embarrassing you in front
11 of other people, telling other people about you and
12 things that had happened.

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. So presumably other people on the stair or in the
15 neighbourhood; is that right?

16 A. Yeah. It was just the name calling. I was just a slag
17 and, as you say, everybody just believed everything that
18 she told them. So being a child who doesn't speak back,
19 I just closed off more and more and thought, well, I'm
20 not talking to you then.

21 Q. Then if we go over the page to page 22 at paragraph 91,
22 you talk there about remembering being shut in
23 a cloakroom cupboard?

24 A. That's when we first came across back from America and
25 I was this little American child who was very American

1 used to running about in bare feet and whatever and all
2 of a sudden I'm a four year old being told to put shoes
3 on, I hadn't really worn shoes, I don't think, before
4 then and I wouldn't wear them, I kept taking them off.

5 In Wester Hailes there was a cupboard about the size
6 of Lady Smith's desk there and I used to be locked in it
7 with the door shut and it could have been for five
8 minutes but sitting in a dark cupboard crying and being
9 terrified could I push it open? I wouldn't dare to push
10 it open. I'd just be locked in the cupboard until she
11 came back. But I soon lost my American accent and
12 I soon done what she told me to do.

13 Q. Then on page 23 you talk about your uncle and you've
14 already said that you were scared of him, that he was
15 strict?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. But you do remember there's one time that you can
18 remember him being violent?

19 A. Yeah. This is when my sister took money off of the
20 mantel and we didn't know at the time, my uncle came in
21 and went, "Where's the 50 pence?" and we were all like
22 don't have a clue, so he got the Bible out and we all
23 had to stand in a line and swear on the Bible and then
24 he got his belt and it was like running through
25 a gauntlet of two chairs, we had to run through it and

1 he just whacked us with his belt each time because none
2 of us were saying. My sister was the last one standing,
3 and as before she was to run the gauntlet, she says, "It
4 was me", but we had all been hit and she wasn't.

5 Q. Was he using a belt from his trousers?

6 A. Yeah, yeah.

7 Q. Was that the only time that you can remember him hitting
8 you?

9 A. Yeah. His shout would just be enough for us.

10 Q. In the next section at the bottom of page 23 on to
11 page 24, you tell us about the death of your mother.

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. We know from your statement that your mother became ill
14 and was in hospital; is that right?

15 A. (Witness nods).

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. My whole life, growing up, even when we weren't allowed
18 to see her, my aunt used to tell us stories about her
19 and it was like, "Oh, she's a hypochondriac", there's
20 always something wrong with her, there's this, there's
21 this. So it was always negative stories you hear
22 growing up and how she was jealous that her dad liked my
23 mum; even though my mum was the bad one, my mum had been
24 put in prison, my mum had abandon us, my mum had done
25 that, she was the perfect daughter.

1 But yeah, my aunt was just -- so when I first got
2 told my mum was ill, I just thought, oh, she's
3 a hypochondriac, so she won't be ill. Because when we
4 went to visit her in the past, she used to occasionally
5 breathe into this brown paper bag when we were there and
6 we would be shocked, like what's she doing? We would go
7 back to tell my aunt. Not realising at the time my mum
8 had anxiety, my aunt would be, "She's take faking it,
9 he's a hypochondriac", so I never believed it when i was
10 first told my mum was ill because again we had been told
11 that our whole life.

12 Q. Did you have the opportunity to go and visit your mother
13 at the hospital?

14 A. No. There was one day my aunt -- me and my oldest
15 cousin were playing outside of the stair and my aunt
16 came down and my aunt never went anywhere because if she
17 went shopping she made us go because we were her bag
18 carriers. So we were like, "Where are you going?" and
19 she says, "oh, I'm going to the hospital to visit your
20 mum" I said, "Can I come?" She said, "No, you're
21 dirty". I said, "I'll go get changed", even into
22 something else that was dirty but I was in pastel
23 colours, I though I'll go get changed. She says, "No,
24 I've not got time, I'm going to catch the bus" so my
25 oldest cousin said, "Can I come?" and she took my oldest

1 cousin with her.

2 At that time when she done that I wasn't told then

3 my mum was ill. It wasn't until my cousin came back and

4 my cousin told me.

5 Q. And then your cousin came back and what did she tell

6 you?

7 A. She just said, "Your mum's really not well. She looks

8 like a skeleton. I think you should go see her."

9 So again my aunt never ever sat me down to tell me.

10 She never had a conversation to say, "Your mum's ill".

11 The social work never sat me down. Then I found out my

12 sister had been with her husband and she hadn't told me

13 or hadn't asked to take me. So ...

14 LADY SMITH: And by this time you're about 14 years old?

15 A. Yeah.

16 MS INNES: Okay. And then I don't think you were taken to

17 see your mum before she died?

18 A. No. My mum, as you say, it happened so quick because my

19 Grandpa had -- he was ill and we were taken up to -- he

20 always visited us, but we were taken to see him at

21 [REDACTED] just before he passed and we only knew

22 because of the colour of him he was on his last days and

23 he was lying on the couch and we were told to be quiet,

24 but we got to go see him. We were all taken.

25 So to find out what happened to my mum, it was just

1 like -- for some reason why did you not tell the people
2 that she was as ill as what she was? My stepdad hated
3 my aunt as well, so for my stepdad to phone her to say,
4 "It's serious", and not to come to me ... she went to my
5 sister, but not to me.

6 Q. After your mother died, were you be given any support,
7 counselling or anything?

8 A. No. I found out my mum had died because I was up at
9 Oxgangs playing. I come in for my tea and I was -- we
10 had a double door, so I walked in the front door, walked
11 into the lounge. My aunt met me quite close to my face,
12 "Where the effing hell have you been? Your mum's dead".
13 I was just in shock. I didn't realise she actually was
14 that ill.

15 So I bolted up the stair and then I got shouted down
16 five minutes later, "Get down here and eat your tea",
17 and it was a Friday, corned beef sandwiches, and my
18 youngest cousin had a friend round, I was told to sit at
19 the table and eat my dinner.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. And then about a week later the social work came and
22 said -- everyone was going on about me not showing
23 emotion but I thought I'm not allowed to talk about it.
24 Every time I bring up my mum, she shuts me down. She's
25 hated her her whole life. So why am I allowed to talk

1 about her now when I was never allowed to talk about her
2 in the fast.

3 No, even my sister didn't even ask me if I was okay.

4 Q. You say at paragraph 100 that this was the first time
5 that you were asked to go on your own to the social work
6 department.

7 A. My aunt had phoned the social worker and told her that
8 I wasn't showing emotion and I wasn't speaking to her,
9 so the social work said, "Can you come after school?"
10 I didn't realise what it was for so I'm with a friend on
11 the way home, I popped up and she pulled me right in
12 front of that friend to ask me -- never took me into
13 a separate room, to say, "Oh, sorry, I need a word", she
14 just pulled me right up in the corridor, "I hear you're
15 not showing emotion", and I just like acted the tough
16 wee, "Well, why would I?" kind of asking me why I didn't
17 go see her. I thought well, I didn't know, and why
18 would I want to go see someone that looked like
19 a skeleton?

20 I just played it down, but at the time I didn't want
21 to talk to the social worker. I thought why are you
22 talk -- I just was angry.

23 Q. Did you not want to talk to the social worker because
24 your friend was there or because you didn't want to
25 speak to the social worker for other reasons?

1 A. I didn't want to speak to the social worker because at
2 that time I was angry, that that was the age I was like
3 getting a wee bit of a backbone thinking where was my
4 sister -- and I had a lot of anger over my sister for
5 years. Where was my sister to sit with me? Where was
6 my aunt? Where was my social worker, supposedly? None
7 of them were there. Not for me.

8 Q. Okay. Over the page on page 25 I think you tell us that
9 things changed or your aunt's attitude changed after
10 your mother passed away. If we look at paragraph 105.

11 A. Yeah. So you think my Grandpa's just died, my sister's
12 just moved out of the house, my mum's just died, and in
13 that time period -- and it's such a short time period,
14 eight months, I've had three social workers. So that's
15 where I was like -- I wouldn't talk because I thought
16 they're just reading reports and they were strangers, so
17 that's where I was getting, as you say, I was just
18 getting a bit confused with everything going on and just
19 wanted to run away from everybody at the time.

20 But, yeah, there was always ...

21 Q. I think you tell us at paragraph 105 that:

22 "As soon as my mum died, there was no insurance
23 policy ..."

24 I think you mean like a life insurance policy.

25 A. (Witness nods).

1 Q. " ... my dad wasn't giving her any money and her dad had
2 died a year before. My aunt had nothing to prove any
3 more."
4 A. Yeah, that bit that she shouted at me about my mum dying
5 and then being quiet, that was [REDACTED]. And then it was my
6 birthday the following month and then by [REDACTED] I was
7 out but just before [REDACTED] she said something about the
8 insurance policy, "Your mum promised me an insurance
9 policy for watching you", and now it didn't exist.
10 Everything my mum had went to my stepfather, so she was
11 really angry about that.
12 And her dad had just died in [REDACTED], so
13 from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED], it was like her dad had died,
14 she'd done it to be the favourite, and then my mum died
15 in [REDACTED] and I was in care by [REDACTED].
16 Q. So when you say that she had done it to be the
17 favourite, because your grandfather was there, do you
18 mean she had taken you and your sister in --
19 A. (Witness nods).
20 Q. -- because it was the right thing to do for the family?
21 A. Yeah, she was the good daughter as she's seen it in her
22 eyes. She was there to -- as you say, going back years
23 ago, she told us the reason she took us in was because
24 she was due a fourth child and she had cancer of the
25 womb and had to have it removed so she couldn't have

1 more children and she always made out to us that that's
2 why she took us in, was we were the extra children that
3 she couldn't have herself, but I don't think she would
4 ever have been able to afford extra children, so ...

5 Q. Okay. Then, as you've just said, by the [REDACTED] you had
6 left.

7 A. I'd left. It was a threat. The social worker came to
8 the house and I was just -- I wouldn't say I was being
9 cheeky. I wasn't talking back. I just wasn't replying
10 to them. I sort of just closed down. So when they
11 asked me things, I wasn't answering, I just -- and again
12 when I was going out, I'm up an alley with the dog, I'm
13 up Oxfords with my friends, I was just disappearing.
14 But it was not like I was being bad, I just wanted to --
15 I was a wee dreamer who, to get to Bonaly you'd walk
16 through Spylaw and I used to always just walk past all
17 these lovely houses, lovely gardens, thinking someone
18 notice me, what I'm wearing, what I look like, save me.
19 I always thought my dad would come and save me, but he
20 never. And that's the hard bit. You were chucked away
21 by your mum. Your dad had custody of you but he never
22 came back to get you. Now I understand he was in the
23 Vietnam War and he might have issues of his own, but he
24 used to send us all these lovely photographs of all
25 these places he'd been but without us.

1 It was like everyone just chucked me away and at
2 that time that was another reason I just thought I'm
3 being chucked away again.

4 Q. Then after you left your aunt's, you went into
5 residential care, so Canaan Lodge, I think.

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. And then there came a point when it was going to be
8 closed down, I think?

9 A. That was the best place I ever went. It was the -- my
10 aunt threatened me, "Do you want to go in care?" and
11 I stupidly went, "Yeah", so she phoned the social worker
12 and that was the lady who took over from Bob. Never met
13 her before but I don't know if she had just looked at me
14 and then she took me to -- she says, "I'll take you to
15 see somewhere", and she took me to Canaan and it was
16 a beautiful -- Canaan Lodge along Canaan Lane, it was
17 a beautiful giant big old house and massive grounds.
18 It's now turned into something else. But I went and it
19 was a bit upside down. It was getting decorated, and
20 there was mattresses in the living room and you're
21 thinking what are they doing? But she said, "Do you
22 want to come and live here?" and I just stupidly went,
23 "Yeah", so a week later I was put in the home.

24 Q. But I think you -- we're not going to go into the detail
25 of your residential placements at the moment, but

1 I think from what you're saying, you had a positive
2 experience in Canaan Lodge?

3 A. In that one, yes.

4 Q. And then it closed.

5 A. I just wish it hadn't closed. It was so
6 family-orientated. It was a beautiful old house with
7 beautiful, as you say, staff, and I just felt so safe
8 there. It was -- I was glad that I went, and then I was
9 only to stay there for 12 weeks and then the gentleman
10 at the end after the 12 weeks came up to me, pulled me
11 in his office and said, "Right, it's time to go home",
12 but no family had ever visited me in the 12 weeks so
13 I said, "I don't want to go home", so I remained in
14 care.

15 Q. And then after it closed you went to some other
16 residential homes and centres which I'm not going to --

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. -- look at just now, but you've covered them in your
19 statement.

20 If we can move on, please, to page 59 and
21 paragraph 269, you start talking about some of the
22 impacts that your time in foster care had on you. At
23 paragraph 269 you talk there about your aunt -- you
24 shouldn't have been put in that situation. You say:
25 "There are things that happened to me during my life

1 that I am not happy about but I understand that it's the
2 system that I'm not happy with."

3 A. Yeah. I think if the social workers -- it's -- it's
4 okay coming up to somebody and asking, "Oh, are you
5 happy living here? Is everything okay? You're doing
6 well at school?", tick, tick, tick. But what they
7 weren't understanding, was you had to see us back then.
8 We were so skinny and so frail kids that you had to ask
9 what are they being fed or whatever. We lived on -- you
10 still see it in the supermarkets now. It's dried milk
11 that's in a tub this size but it makes 5 pints of milk
12 but it's just water, it's white water. That's the type
13 of thing we had for meals and our cornflakes and
14 porridge. We were always living on like porridge,
15 lentil soup, stovies, or whatever my uncle caught being
16 a fisherman.

17 It was all just like simple dishes but, as you say,
18 it wasn't anything nutritional or whatever back in the
19 day. But everybody seen us but just -- they couldn't
20 afford to feed their own three. If you were having to
21 buy dried milk and all the rest of it, what they were
22 purchasing, they couldn't afford to feed us all.

23 Q. You say at paragraph 270:

24 "For years I blamed my aunt and uncle for the way
25 I was brought up but when I look back now I think they

1 were doing their best and they took us in because they
2 were made promises. It wasn't their fault, it was the
3 system."

4 A. Do you know, that's what's been put in my head. They're
5 doing their best, whatever, they've taken us in when but
6 my mum abandoned us. I still protect her to this day.

7 Q. I think that's what you mentioned earlier in your
8 evidence --

9 A. Yeah, I still protect her to this day. And we should
10 never have been left there. The day -- I wish back now,
11 there was a day that my aunt and mum went out and left
12 my uncle with the kids. Three days they never came back
13 to the house. And my Grandpa got involved and my uncle
14 phoned the social work and said, "I've been left with my
15 own children, my wife's went missing with her sister and
16 her sister's left the two kids".

17 Then my aunt and uncle, just as the social worker
18 had turned up at the house, my mum and my aunt came
19 back. That was the day that she says, "We'll keep them,
20 we'll take them".

21 I just wish they had been an hour later of them
22 returning, because we would have been removed. And
23 that's how I feel to this day. We should never have
24 been left. If you've seen [REDACTED] and then
25 you've seen how we were brought up, we should never have

1 been left because they were struggling themselves and
2 I still protect them by saying that.

3 LADY SMITH: 'Yvonne', when you said a few moments ago the
4 words in your statement about thinking your aunt and
5 uncle were doing their best and they took you in because
6 they were made promises, it wasn't their fault, it was
7 the system, that that's what's been put in your head,
8 who put it in your head?

9 A. Well, my aunt was always like, "We've brought you up",
10 it's, "We're looking after you". We were always -- like
11 she'd say, we always had to thank her for how she was
12 bringing us up and how we should love her more. She
13 never told us to love her but that was the sort of
14 environment that we were up, that, "Your uncle works
15 hard", it's that type of thing.

16 But I just think looking back the social work, they
17 weren't doing their best because they never noticed what
18 was in reports. They never noticed what people were
19 trying to say to them. Even my little story for the
20 school, there was highlights that -- I was always told
21 as a kid I was a class section 16, the social work were
22 my parents, I was a class section 16. I'm sorry, the
23 social work wasn't there to be a parent so why would
24 they deem them to be my parent?

25 They failed in their duty to take care of me,

1 I think, and there was so many eyes on me and so many
2 highlights throughout my report and they failed as what
3 they class as a section 16, they're my parents.

4 LADY SMITH: Do you think your aunt and uncle, maybe your
5 aunt particularly, should have faced up to how difficult
6 it was she was finding it to cope?

7 A. Yeah. And that's the sad thing, like to see that
8 there's three bed wetters in the household without
9 a washing machine? For us to then come back into the
10 house after school, "Oh, you go to your bed tonight", we
11 were going back into wet beds. They were never aired,
12 they were never dry. So you're putting on the wet
13 nightie to go back into the wet bed. You had the
14 blisters, whatever, and you're lying -- you're trying to
15 find a dry spot but there was no dry spot because you
16 wet it every night.

17 I just think the social worker, as you say, to have
18 three bed wetters with not a washing machine -- it was
19 all silly things. You're thinking they should be
20 helping us.

21 We never had a launderette at Wester Hailes so there
22 wasn't anywhere to even go to wash your clothes if you
23 didn't have a twin tub in the house or whatever.

24 LADY SMITH: And your aunt not telling the social workers
25 how she was struggling?

1 A. Yeah. I don't know if she did or if she didn't, but to
2 my knowledge, we -- adults didn't talk to us. We were
3 children and adults -- you didn't know what was going
4 on, like what kids do now. Kids listen. We were never
5 in the room to listen, we were always in separate rooms.

6 LADY SMITH: I take it you've never seen anything in your
7 records suggesting that your aunt and/or your uncle were
8 frank about how difficult it was?

9 A. No. There's only one report in my record that my aunt
10 went for a top up earlier than what it should be.

11 LADY SMITH: Money?

12 A. Yeah. And that was only once.

13 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

14 MS INNES: If we can go on over the page, please, to page 60
15 and paragraph 272, you talk there about social workers
16 and you say that:

17 "Social workers should have a skill to alleviate
18 pain and suffering. That is something they should be
19 able to do. They should be a shoulder to cry on. They
20 should have listened to me and talked to me. They
21 should value people and be non-judgemental. Everyone
22 deserves to be listened to. I was not shown that
23 respect by the adults that were ultimately responsible
24 for protecting me."

25 A. No, because again, me being me, I shut down, I was

1 quiet. I wouldn't speak out. But I thought as an adult
2 I don't know -- as you say, back then, mental health
3 issues weren't as strong as they are today. I just
4 thought someone should have been noticing signs that I'm
5 timid, I'm quiet, I'm scared of adults, so prompt me in
6 different directions to get that information. But I was
7 never -- they never got it out of me.

8 MS INNES: If we can move to, please, to page 66, you talk
9 there about getting your records. How did you feel when
10 you got your records? I think you got some perhaps in
11 2014 and then you requested them again I think in 2018,
12 2019?

13 A. I did. In 2014 I was going through a struggle and
14 I spoke with my husband and we thought -- I was being
15 diagnosed with depression and I thought I don't know why
16 I've got depression and I thought, well, maybe if I find
17 what's gone on in my past, that may help me. Again
18 I went to see a counsellor and he actually said the same
19 so I requested them.

20 I went to Castle Street and I had to go to Castle
21 Street to have an appointment with someone, a lady
22 called Jennifer, and she sat me at this table and she
23 started to hand over a bunch of reports and when I got
24 them, I was quite upset, more upset, actually, because
25 they were all redacted and I couldn't see anything in

1 them. There's only -- I've seen an A4 page, I'd be
2 lucky to see two little sentences. The rest was
3 redacted because it mentioned my sister, my cousins, my
4 aunt, my uncle. But I thought, well, this is my family
5 home. I'm looking for answers. But because it had
6 their names in it, a lot of it was -- I couldn't see.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. So I was still looking for answers. I felt angry
9 because I couldn't see the answers that I required to
10 move on.

11 Q. You say that you requested them again in 2018 or 2019.

12 A. I did because back in the day I thought I had them all,
13 and it wasn't until I got a genealogy to look at some
14 family history that they said they only do certain
15 parts. They give you a batch to then read. I didn't
16 realise meeting the lady she was there to support me.
17 I just took them away and thought is that it? But
18 I should have went, "Is there any more?" But again
19 I just assumed what she was giving me was my full batch.

20 So I asked for them again and I got more
21 information, again redacted, so again a lot of answers
22 not answered.

23 Q. Okay. And then you talk about some lessons to be
24 learned at the end of your statement and at
25 paragraph 301 you talk about the children's panel and

1 your reflections in relation to that.

2 A. It was a -- it was a scary thing going to the children's
3 panel because you were put on show. So we had to
4 wear -- as you say, we all got dressed up to go to the
5 children's panel and to be sitting across a table with
6 strangers and them asking questions with your aunt and
7 uncle on the side there of you, your teachers, whatever,
8 I just always feel like some of the questions should
9 have been asked to me and my sister separately, because
10 if you're asked in front of the people that are what you
11 deem as abusing you, "Are you okay? Are you happy
12 living there?" We were nodding dogs, "Mm-hmm", and
13 because we were deemed as being good at school, me and
14 my sister were doing well at school, which they found
15 a shock, again it was another tick. Oh, you're doing
16 well at school, you must be happy, it was just a tick
17 box.

18 No one really questioned us, where I would have
19 expected more, especially with the reports that were
20 going to them. They must have been reading them
21 beforehand, but not bringing -- but all this deemed on
22 us, "Oh, you're doing well at school".

23 Q. Then at paragraph 302 over the page, you mention that
24 you don't think social workers should have been speaking
25 to you in front of the whom family and you've mentioned

1 that before, how you were all sitting together when the
2 social worker came?

3 A. Yeah. One of the reports which I find tormenting is
4 they came in front of the whole family. We all sat
5 there and the time that we were going through the
6 troubles and my sexual encounter, the social work's
7 written on the report, my aunt and their name-calling
8 and they're calling her and she's actually wrote the
9 word "slag", that's how it's written in my report. The
10 wording of the social workers back in their days were
11 just mind-blowing how they just wrote everything down,
12 how they heard it in a family home.

13 And you always thought if you're hearing from
14 through a third party, I'm sitting quiet, pull me into
15 the kitchen, have a word, ask me what happened, what did
16 we do or whatever. But whatever was said by my aunt was
17 believable and that's how they wrote it.

18 So I was even judged -- the social worker never got
19 to know me or my sister. They just went on by what the
20 adult told them. So that's where I have a problem.
21 They shouldn't have been speaking to us in front of our
22 family. They should have been asking -- pull us aside,
23 right, "The relationship with your aunt's broken down.
24 What's going on? Why has it started breaking down?
25 What's happening?"

1 We were never asked the questions. The only one who
2 asked the questions was the lady Anne, and I only knew
3 her for such a couple of months but it was when my aunt
4 said, "Do you want to go in care?" "Yeah", she came up,
5 "Are you sure you want to go in care"? She was the only
6 one who asked me the question, "Are you really sure you
7 want to the go into a home?" "Yeah". And she listened
8 and got me out. I'll be grateful to that lady.

9 Q. Do you think the fact that you were living with your
10 aunt and your uncle rather than other unrelated foster
11 carers had any impact on the way that the social workers
12 dealt with your placement?

13 A. It was just family. Family should be there to take care
14 of you and family are there to support you, but my
15 family wasn't like that.

16 LADY SMITH: Do you think the social workers were assuming
17 that everything would be okay because the fosterers
18 supposed to be looking after you were family?

19 A. Yeah. And that's the worst part of it. You put up with
20 a lot from other people, you do expect your family to be
21 on a higher pedestal. But, as you say, I just find the
22 social workers really failed my sister and I growing up
23 and I think because we had so many, I don't know why
24 there was such a change in the social work department on
25 our doorstep at that time. We were just being swapped.

1 Oh, you're not my case any more, you're so-and-so's
2 case. I don't understand what was happening within the
3 social work department for that to happen, but that's
4 when the failings came, is when we were being swapped
5 about.

6 MS INNES: You say at paragraph 303 that you wish somebody
7 had explained that there were other options.

8 A. I wish when I had been taken into -- as you say, when my
9 aunt said, "Do you want to go into care?" and I said
10 "Yes" and they took me to see Canaan, there was a quick
11 mention "You can go back into a foster family", but my
12 experience of a foster family was horrendous.

13 So I had went, "Oh, I don't want to go back in
14 a foster family", but nobody took me to see another
15 foster family. I think maybe if they'd said, "No,
16 you're a naive, vulnerable little girl, let's show you
17 the difference", it would have opened my eyes. And
18 that's the sad thing, that I just shut them down without
19 them stepping in and saying, "They're not all like
20 that". I just thought no, I don't want to go back into
21 that.

22 So I went the opposite way and that was the biggest
23 thing -- a good mistake getting out but it turned into
24 the worst mistake of my life.

25 Q. Okay. I think from what you're saying there, the social

1 workers were just taking what you were saying at face
2 value and not probing?

3 A. Yeah, and, as you say, it was just -- I was so
4 vulnerable that they just -- it was quick one answers.
5 "Do you want to go in the children's home?" "Yeah." No
6 explanation. "Why? What's happening?"

7 So I just wish someone would have sat me down and
8 said, "Not all foster families are the same, let's show
9 you one, let's see the difference, let's have
10 an option", because going to the next part of the story
11 that we're not going to would have -- that would have
12 never happened. I'd have been more protected.

13 Q. Okay. You tell us at paragraph 304 about warnings that
14 were apparent and that no one --

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. -- took any notice and that you were given no mental
17 health support and you were certainly not given any
18 support at the time that you suffered bereavement.

19 A. Yeah. To be told your mum's died and you had five
20 minutes to get down and have your tea and never speak
21 about her again ...

22 Q. Okay. And you described your meeting at the social work
23 department as well, which followed on that.

24 A. Yeah. In a corridor. Not in a room and not on my own.
25 She was a brand new social worker, again. And if she'd

1 put me in a room and spoke to me like one-to-one I might
2 have opened up more, but to pull me in a corridor and
3 ask the question, I was going to give her a blunt answer
4 to get out of that room as quick as and get away.

5 Q. Have you ever sought any kind of acknowledgement or
6 apology from the council for --

7 A. No.

8 Q. -- the failings in the system that you've identified?

9 A. No. I wish I had. I wish I had got, but no. Nothing.
10 Never complained. Never said anything. Protected them
11 all.

12 Q. Would it make a difference to you now if the council
13 were to look at your case and acknowledge some failures
14 and apologise to you?

15 A. I think it would be a case that they should look at
16 because, as you say, the clashes, these sections,
17 numbers, section 16, we're your parents, and for their
18 parents not to look at your records and not take care,
19 they have to see their failings to then not do that to
20 somebody else.

21 So if it helps, that's what you expect would happen.

22 Q. You tell us that's the reason, I think, that you've come
23 to give your evidence to the Inquiry and give your
24 evidence publicly as well, is so that other children
25 don't experience what you experienced.

1 A. Yeah. I'd never want anyone to experience what I went
2 through. And that's the sad thing, that that's only
3 a part of my life and a small part of the story. I keep
4 saying "Oh, I've not said that, I've not said that".
5 I could go on with another chapter, honestly. There's
6 so much that happened that -- it's all just gone.
7 That's my life. I just keep it all bottled in.

8 MS INNES: Okay. 'Yvonne', I don't have any more questions
9 for you just now and there are no applications, my Lady.

10 LADY SMITH: Are there any outstanding applications for
11 questions of 'Yvonne'?

12 'Yvonne', before you leave, I just want to thank you
13 so much for engaging with us. I can see and hear that
14 it's been no mean feat on your part to manage to do
15 that, but please be assured, doing what you have in both
16 giving us a written statement that's so detailed and
17 coming here today to talk about it with such
18 intelligence and insight has been enormously valuable.
19 Thank you so much.

20 I can let you go and I hope the rest of the day is
21 more restful --

22 A. Yeah.

23 LADY SMITH: -- than the way it's been so far. Thank you.

24 A. Thank you.

25 (The witness withdrew)

1 LADY SMITH: In the course of 'Yvonne''s evidence, ERR-ERS
2 ERR-ERS ' names were used and at one point she
3 used her sister's name. They're all protected by my
4 general restriction order so can't be identified outside
5 this room.
6 I take it, Ms Innes, that completes the evidence for
7 today?
8 MS INNES: It does, my Lady. Tomorrow we have two oral
9 witnesses. There may or may not be time for read-in
10 evidence.
11 LADY SMITH: Very well. I'll rise now until 10 o'clock
12 tomorrow morning. Thank you all very much.
13 (4.14 pm)
14 (The Inquiry adjourned until 10.00 am
15 on Wednesday, 13 July 2022)
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