

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

ERI [REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name is ERI [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1961. My contact details are known to the Inquiry. When I was living with my foster parents from the age of four until I was ten I used the surname ERI [REDACTED] because ERI [REDACTED] was their surname. Since then and the rest of my time in care I just used the surname ERI [REDACTED].
2. My birth mum and dad were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I was born in Dumbarton and had nine brothers and sisters. [REDACTED] was a year older than me and we grew up together as children and only got separated when I was fourteen. The only others who I knew about were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who were two and three years younger than me. Six other children died either in childbirth or very soon after. I didn't know about all the others until I was nearly sixteen.

Life before going into care

3. I was told that my dad was out at work a lot of the time. He was a labourer. I was also told by mum in adult life she worked as a seamstress. My mum, in my adult life, has told me that she and my dad had a violent relationship and he raped her. I never forgave my dad for that. When I was four, apparently something happened in the house, but I don't know what it was. The police were involved. All of the children that were born by that time were taken into care. That would have been eight of us. All I know is that [REDACTED] came with me and the two children younger than me, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], also ended up in foster care.

4. I am not sure of the exact circumstances of us getting taken away but it had something to do with the Children's Act. I saw my files when I was an adult and I read somewhere along the lines that another charity like Barnardos were possibly involved.
5. I remember being in a black car beside [REDACTED] and we were being driven away from our house in Dumbarton and children were running after the car. That is the last recollection of leaving my family as a child. I was told in later life by my oldest brother that he was chasing the car. My brothers apparently were taken to a home run by monks. I have no recollection of my mum from before I was taken into care. My mum died in [REDACTED] 1994. My dad died around 1987.

Castlemilk children's home, Castlemilk, Glasgow.

6. My sister [REDACTED] and I were put into Castlemilk children's home when I was around four and a half. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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7.

8.

Leaving Castlemilk children's home

9. My sister [REDACTED] and I were taken into an office at Castlemilk and asked if we wanted to go on a holiday, which of course we said that we did. [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later

The next thing I remember was being on a train and going to the foster carers. I believe the four oldest children from my family went back to live with mum and the four youngest were put into foster care. Only [REDACTED] came with me to [REDACTED]. The two youngest children [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] went somewhere else. I don't recall them being at Castlemilk but they might have been.

10. I remember the train journey because I went for a pee on the train and the train 'shoogled' and I thought it was really funny. I think it must have been social workers that were with us but I don't remember having met a social worker before then. When we got off the train we got in a car. I am not sure what train station we arrived in but we were driven in a car to [REDACTED] in [REDACTED]. I don't remember that car journey.

Foster care with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

11. My foster parents were [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. She was known as [REDACTED]. They would have been in their sixties. He was tall, balding and had a ruddy farmers face. He had a kind smiley face and he was a lovely man. He was the head gardener at the main house which was nearby. [REDACTED] was small and a bit heavy and always had a sour look on her face. I never saw her happy. They had three of their own children, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] but they were much older and had married and left home and had their own children. When we were there it was only me and [REDACTED] that lived with [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

12. We initially lived on a farm called [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] Aberdeenshire. My foster dad named the farm. He loved [REDACTED] and his surname [REDACTED] [REDACTED] so it was

██████████ When I was about eight we moved to an address at ██████████. ██████████ This was after my foster dad had a heart attack. I didn't know but he had previously had heart attacks and when he had the second one he was told that the farm was too much work for him and he should retire. I didn't know they were planning on moving until one day me and ██████████ got home from school and they were all packed up and we were told we were moving. We got in his car and we drove to our new home in ██████████.

13. ██████████ was a typical farm with cattle, and vegetables. We never used the front door. We used the side door which led into a wash house, then the kitchen and a back living room. It had a huge fireplace and had a big table and old tatty furniture. Next to that was ERK-SPO bedroom. There was a nice living-room at the front of the house for guests. There were stairs leading to the two attic rooms which was where ██████████ and myself slept. We were together in the same room initially but then we were put in separate rooms because ██████████ wet the bed. The house didn't have an inside toilet. We had a pail in our bedroom and there was an outside porta loo.
14. The house we moved to in ██████████ was a nice big house. It had a porch and just inside on the left was my foster parents bedroom. Also downstairs was a living-room and a door leading to the bathroom and kitchen. There were stairs going up to two big bedrooms and a glory hole room. There was a nice front garden but we didn't play there because my foster dad kept it really nice and entered gardening competitions. The back garden was gravel, no grass and there was a washhouse outside. This house was in a village so there was more for us to do than on the farm.

Routine with foster parents Mr and Mrs ERK-SPO

First day

15. We were met at the door by the foster carers ERK-SPO. The foster dad asked me how the train journey was and I told him how I got a biscuit and the train 'shoogled' when I had a pee. When we were at the Foster home we were told by the

social workers that this was our new mum and dad. I didn't really know any better so that was what I called them. [REDACTED], who was a year older than me, said that they weren't our mum and dad and she refused to call them that. I was crying because I didn't understand why she didn't want to call them mum and dad. [REDACTED] just called them ERK-SPO [REDACTED] to begin with and they didn't try and correct her.

Mornings and bedtime

16. We were woken up then got dressed and went down for breakfast. In the evening about half past six we got a cup of tea and a Rich Tea biscuit before bed. Bedtime and lights out was seven o'clock. By the time I was twelve or thirteen it moved to nine o'clock.

Food

17. Because we were on the farm there was always plenty food to eat when my foster dad was there. We had a roast on a Sunday and sometimes through the week. We had plenty eggs and vegetables. Our evening meal was often soup and sandwiches or cold meat. We had to put our hands up to ask for permission to leave the table. The food was always good when my foster dad was there. Whenever my dad wasn't there she made porridge that was lumpy and disgusting. He was never there at breakfast time because he was working on the farm. He was often not there at supper time either. I got lunch at school and there were no issues with food at school.

Washing and bathing

18. He had a bath on a Saturday night so we were clean for church on the Sunday. It was in one of those tin baths in front of the fireplace. We had soap but not shampoo. The bar of soap was usually made up small bits of leftover soap, usually carbolic. I was just a child so didn't really expect any privacy. I didn't have any problems with bath nights but [REDACTED] did.

Health care

19. I was allergic to fish so my foster mum never gave it to me. One time when I was about six the school made me eat fish despite me telling them I couldn't eat it. I had a reaction and was violently sick. When I got home I told my foster mum and she marched down to the school and gave them hell. That was the first time she stood up for me and I was actually quite proud of her for that.
20. We had medical examinations every year. I regularly had bruises from the beatings my foster mum gave me. These were easily explained because I lived on a farm and was a bit of a tomboy and loved climbing tree's. I often had other bruises and she told people this.
21. When I was about five apparently I collapsed at school and the janitor found me in the playground. My foster mum must have sent me to school when I was obviously ill. When I woke up I was in hospital and I had pneumonia. Around that time I was told I was borderline diabetic. After I was told that my foster mum stopped giving me cakes and sugary sweets. Ever since then I have tried to only eat food that I am supposed to. I don't remember any other time when I was ill when I was with them.

Clothes

22. I had two sets of clothes that were kept good. One was my school clothes and the other was my Sunday church clothes. The other clothes were often hand-me-downs from my foster mum or from jumble sales. When we needed new clothes we got them in Fraserburgh although some things were sent to us from the social work department in Glasgow. We got shoes at the jumble sales or that had been left by previous foster children.

School

23. I first went to [REDACTED] primary school. It was about a mile away and I used to walk. [REDACTED] school closed down then I went to St Colmes primary which was possibly

about five miles away. I never had any issues at primary school. I started going to secondary school at [REDACTED]. I hated it. I didn't like the other children or the teachers. It was more disciplined there. My sister and I were teased quite a bit. We were foster children so quite often it was said that we didn't have parents and nobody wanted us. I didn't make any proper friends at school.

Religion

24. We went to church on a Sunday. Me and [REDACTED] went to Sunday school and our foster parents went into the church. We didn't have a choice and we never questioned it.

Leisure time

25. After school we had to come straight back home. We weren't allowed to chat or play with our friends. When we got home we did any homework we had then got changed into our old clothes then went out to help with whatever needed done on the farm. When I had any spare time, if I could I would spend it with my foster dad, helping him on the farm. If for whatever reason I couldn't go out to work I just sat in the house reading my books or knitted.
26. When my foster dad was home I would sometimes sit with him and we did his accounts together or he did lessons with us. I enjoyed doing this with him. My foster mother taught me how to knit and that was the only useful thing she ever did for me. I never sat and chatted with her in the house. If ever I dropped a stitch she hit me with the end of the needle across the knuckles. [REDACTED] got hit on the knuckles too if she dropped a stitch.
27. There was a television which we were allowed to watch but my foster mum would often place the washing rack in the way deliberately so that I couldn't see it. She always made sure we were doing things or there was something to stop me watching my programmes. I read some of my foster mum's books or magazines or comics we had got from other people's children

28. At [REDACTED] my foster dad and some of the other farmers made us a swing in the garden and when we didn't have hens any more he made it into a play house for us. Me and [REDACTED] used to play in there and we had fun. We didn't get much time to play. A lot of our time in the evening was doing lessons with the foster parents. She did writing lessons where she made us write passages out and he did sums with us. This helped us at school.

Chores

29. We had lots of chores to do on the farm. I didn't call what I did for my dad on the farm chores as I loved helping him. We collected the hens' eggs and cleaned out the hen house. We also had to clean out the cows' barn. We also had to do stuff with the vegetables growing in the fields. I sometimes sat on Betsy a Clydesdale horse and with my dad we ploughed the fields. When my dad got a tractor I sat beside him. When he was seeding the fields I helped him. For the house we had to get water from the outside water pump and wash the dishes. Because of the time I spent helping my foster dad on the farm my ambition in life was always to be a farmer's wife.

Holidays/day trips

30. We were never taken out as a family for a day trip anywhere. During the summer holidays we went to stay sometimes with two of [ERK-SPO] sons, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They were both married and had their own children. We didn't have a great time with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] as we didn't really get on with their children. We had a nice time at Laurencekirk with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] as we got on well with them. We sometimes stayed overnight with them. I was happy when I was in [REDACTED]'s company as he reminded me of his dad, my foster dad. Occasionally we stayed there for a week's holiday. It was either in Buckie or in Laurencekirk. We never had a, what you would call normal, family holiday.

Birthdays and Christmas

31. Birthdays weren't celebrated with the foster parents. There were no parties, cakes or birthday cards. At Christmas the social work department sent us a present. It was usually a toy or a book. One year I got a plastic handbag and my sister got a doll. Our foster parents gave us a colouring book, crayons, an orange and a thruppenny piece.

Pocket money

32. I know that the foster parents got money for having us and they were supposed to give us pocket money. I got thruppence from my foster dad. We never actually got to keep it because my foster mum took the money back for our board and lodging. My foster dad didn't know that she took it back from us.
33. At [REDACTED] we were given ten pence a week pocket money. We could buy sweets but because I never ate them I gave my money to [REDACTED] I realised after a while that I could save the money to buy my foster mum a mother's day present. I did and bought her a calendar. I am not sure why I did this for her when I hated her but that is the kind of person I am. I did this more things like this after my foster dad died in [REDACTED] 1973.

Visits/Inspections

34. We were visited a few times by a man and a woman who must have been social workers. They came from Glasgow or Aberdeen. We had maybe been at [REDACTED] about six months by that point. They visited us twice at [REDACTED] and only once at [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] their previous foster children also came to the house to visit [REDACTED] ERK-SPO

Bed wetting

35. [REDACTED] wet the bed. We were locked in the bedroom at night and were given a pail to use if we needed the toilet. Initially we were put in the same bedroom and slept in the same bed but when [REDACTED] wet the bed our foster mum didn't know which one of us it was. I used to cover for [REDACTED], change into her wet nightclothes and take the blame for her because I felt I was stronger than she was. She was smaller than me and was very thin. When the bed was wet I was belted.

Other Children in House

36. ERK-SPO [REDACTED] had other foster children, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] about ten years before us. I think they were brother and sister. His full name was [REDACTED] and he joined the RAF. He actually called himself [REDACTED] I heard from them that ERK-SPO [REDACTED] had another family of four children too but they gave them back because one of them wet the bed. [REDACTED] often came back and visited the ERK-SPO [REDACTED]

Discipline

37. It was the man's job to work on the farm. It was the responsibility of my foster mother to deal with the house and bring up the children. My foster father wouldn't interfere with what my foster mum was doing in the house and would leave all the discipline to her. My foster mum never hit me when my foster father was there. When [REDACTED] continued to wet her bed she wasn't beaten and instead her punishment was to wash her own sheets.
38. No one ever sat down with me and told me what the ground rules were and what was acceptable behaviour and what wasn't.

Running away

39. I think I was about six years old when my sister devised a plan for us to run away. She wanted to go home because ERK-SPO weren't her real mum and dad. It was snowing really badly and we never really thought it through because my foster dad just followed the footsteps in the snow and found us. We tried running away another time but were caught by another farmer not very far away. Nobody ever asked us why we ran away.

Good memories

40. All the good memories I have from being with the foster parents is the time that I spent with my foster dad, the man I was happy to call my dad. He was a lovely man. When my foster mum was taken into hospital my dad made us food and we watched Top of the Pops on the television. We had a great time and this was probably the best day I had ever had in my life. When we moved to [REDACTED] my foster father was there most of the time and I spent a lot of time outside with him. We went for walks and we watched the bowling. I tried to spend as much time with him as I could. He often held my hand when we were going for a walk to or from church and we would sing or he would tell me stories.

Abuse by foster carers

41. When I took the blame for [REDACTED] wetting the bed our Foster mum belted me. I took the blame because I felt I was stronger than [REDACTED]. It was a big wide belt with a buckle at one end. She made me lie on the bed and pulled my pyjama trousers down and lifted my top up and hit the bare skin on my stomach then on my back, backside and the back of my legs. [REDACTED] was told to watch when I was getting hit. She knew it had been [REDACTED] who wet the bed but she belted me for lying a lot of the time. To start off with [REDACTED] would cry but as time went on she laughed when I was being beaten.

42. I learned not to struggle or move when she was hitting me or it would just make it worse. It was usually about five strokes and it left me with weals. I remember screaming the first time she belted me and she told me the more I screamed the worse it was going to get. After that I bit the bed clothes to stop me from screaming. Afterwards she put Germoline on my weals.
43. She would belt me many other times for many reasons. If I told lies or stole food those were the usual reasons. To start off with she never hit me with the buckle but I think when I just lay there and didn't cry she started hitting me with the buckle end. I would guess that I was hit with the belt probably once a fortnight. Sometimes more, sometimes less. She never hit me when my foster dad was in the house. It was always when he was working on the farm.
44. When [REDACTED] wet the bed she didn't get a proper wash so she smelled of urine. On the Saturday I always had my bath first then the bath was emptied and filled with cold water. [REDACTED] was then given a cold bath, and I mean a cold bath with no hot water. I don't remember if it was ever said but I assumed it was because she wet the bed. I don't remember getting any love and attention from my foster mum. [REDACTED] now and again got some from her but not a great deal.
45. One time when we were outside on the farm at [REDACTED] my foster mum came out at lunchtime with sandwiches for us. She gave [REDACTED] her sandwich then threw my sandwich onto the ground, stamped on it with her filthy welly then told me to pick it up and eat it. I had to eat it and I didn't have a choice in the matter. She told me to eat it so I had to eat it, covered in cow shit or not. [REDACTED] never had to do anything like that and she was never belted.
46. One Christmas my sister was given a doll by the social work department. She teased me and made me jealous because I never had a doll. I broke it's head off. My foster mum battered me for that. She didn't just belt me. Sometimes she would punch me and if I fell to the ground she would kick me. This would usually happen outside the house. If it was in the house she would belt me.

47. My sister was always hungry and I felt sorry for her so I would sneak into the kitchen and steal bread or something like that for her and give it to her in the bedroom. I never ate any of it and gave it all to her. She would then 'grass' on me and our foster mum would belt me for stealing. She enjoyed me getting hit.
48. If you were given food and you didn't eat it she would serve it to you at the next meal. If you didn't eat it you got it at your next meal. This would go on for days, possibly a week, maybe even two weeks, until you ate it, even if the food had gone mouldy. By that time you would be absolutely starving. In this time I would still get cups of tea and water but that was all. Me and my sister used to dislike different things so when our foster mum wasn't looking we would swap things on our plates.
49. I learned never to be sick, or if I was sick in my mouth I quickly swallowed it. If she saw me being sick in my mouth she would tell me not to spit it out and to swallow it. I knew that if I was sick my foster mum would have beaten me.
50. Whenever my foster dad was in the house I would try and be near him. If he was out I would hide in the house and read books or knit. If she found me doing nothing she would find something for me to do and if I didn't do it right she battered me. When we moved to [REDACTED] because my foster dad was there most of the time the belting by my foster mum more or less stopped.
51. My foster dad never hit me and I think he would have gone mental if he had known that my foster mum was hitting us as much as she was. One time she sent him to leather me because I had stolen food from the kitchen. He came up to the bedroom and I was petrified. He came in and told me to scream. He whacked the bed and I tried my best to scream properly. As far as she was concerned he had belted me. My foster father grew in my estimations after that.
52. When we were at the farm my foster mum used to play the song 'Nobody's child' and she used to sing it to me. She made me sing it too. She did this because she was pure evil. She often told me that our real mum and dad didn't love me and that's why they were lumbered with us. She told us that nobody ever wanted me. She made me

feel like I was unlovable but I knew that my foster dad loved me. He spent time with me and showed me love and affection. I do not have a bad word to say about my foster dad.

53. There was another time when my foster dad was playing with [REDACTED] and myself. My foster mum was in our neighbour's house, [REDACTED]. My dad was playing with us and he was birling us round holding one foot and one ankle and we were off the ground. We called it getting a 'fishy'. My foster mum came back into the house and she went ballistic at him, but I am not sure why. She told him he shouldn't be playing with us like that. My dad turned to her and said that she was just jealous and he should have married the 'other one'. By that he meant her twin sister [REDACTED] who was a lovely woman. That was the first time I realised that he wasn't happy in the relationship.
54. I remember the day that I got home from school for lunch and being told that my foster dad had died. I knew he hadn't been well that day so when I came into the house I asked my foster mum how he was. She just turned to me and without any emotion said "He's deid". I was devastated and dropped the bowl of soup I was carrying and ran into the bathroom crying. I heard our neighbour [REDACTED] speaking to my foster mum and she was telling her that she should have told me in a better way. [REDACTED] came into the bathroom and comforted me. My foster mum then made me go back to school for the rest of the day. Everyone in my class knew what had happened and I broke down in class. I can't believe that my foster mum could be so heartless in the way she told me and that she sent me back to school.
55. My foster mum didn't let me go to my foster dad's funeral. She said it was because we were too young. I was twelve and I know there were other children there much younger than us. I think it was because we weren't his actual family. Before the funeral my foster dad was laid out in my mum's bedroom in a coffin. I touched him and he felt cold. I climbed in to the coffin and lay beside him to try and warm him up and I fell asleep. I was found the next morning by [REDACTED] my foster dad's son, because they were looking for me. He just told everyone that he found me hiding under the bed.

56. After my foster dad died the food got worse. For breakfast we got bread and butter and a cup of water, no porridge. At lunchtime we got nothing. Tea time was whatever she could be bothered cooking. Sometimes it might be a bowl of tinned soup and a couple of slices of bread. One morning my foster mum got me out my bed at four o'clock in the morning and told me I had to do the fire. I had to get the kindling and the coal ready. I also had to make the porridge because she discovered that I could cook. At six o'clock every morning I had to wake her up with a cup of tea so she could take her tablets. It had to be bang on six o'clock, not a minute earlier or a minute later. I then had to get my sister up for school.
57. After my foster dad died my foster mum did nothing in the house. She just sat about and expected me to do everything. The only thing she did was the washing and that was so [REDACTED], our next door neighbour, saw this and thought life was normal.
58. One time we went to [REDACTED] to visit my foster mum's twin sister who we called [REDACTED]. We were living in [REDACTED] and dad had died by that time. For breakfast my foster mum gave me a boiled egg with soldiers. My egg was rotten. She told me I wasn't to waste it and I had to eat it. [REDACTED] told her that she shouldn't force me as it would be horrible. My foster mum told her that I wasn't getting to waste food. [REDACTED] walked out in disgust.
59. After my foster dad died, for the next two years, my foster mum called me 'Bastard' all the time. She would say 'Bastard do this', or 'Bastard do that'. She only did this when there was no one else in the house. This was a very lonely time for me because I had nobody to love or to love me. Even my sister [REDACTED] turned against me. At one point I told my foster mother that it should have been her that died and not my foster dad. I got a beating for that. I can't remember how she beat me but I think she punched me. I felt it was worth it.
60. Across the road from our house was a house that was getting demolished and our foster mum sent us over to get wood for burning on our fire. [REDACTED] and I went over and we started collecting it. At one point I picked up the end of a bit wood and she picked up the other. We both refused to let go. We pulled at it then I decided just to

let her have it and let go. She fell backwards and cut her backside on some glass. When we got home her backside was pouring with blood. My foster mum beat me with a stick and that was the first time she had hit me with a stick. My mum then made [REDACTED] walk up to the doctors holding a wad of material against her backside and [REDACTED] was virtually naked.

61. When I was about thirteen or fourteen I knew my sister wanted a watch. Being the person that I am, I stole money out my foster mum's purse and bought her one. I hid money that was left over. [REDACTED] 'grassed' on me and told our foster mum. When she heard about it my foster mum hit me on the body over my clothes with a stick. [REDACTED] started hitting me with a stick too. I ended up with bruising and redness to my back. My foster mum encouraged her to hit me. [REDACTED] did it and she enjoyed it.
62. Another time [REDACTED] and I pinched some strawberries from a garden when we were on our way home. Afterwards I got ringworms and my body was covered in red circle marks. I admitted it could have been because I had stolen and eaten the strawberries. She then whacked me with the belt but it was on my body over my clothing. She didn't care what she was doing and she was hitting me with the buckle end of the belt. By this time I stopped reacting when she was beating me. It was extremely painful but I didn't scream or cry. I was numb by this point.
63. [REDACTED] started her periods when she was about fourteen. She hadn't learned about periods at school but I had. She was screaming when it happened and she was bleeding heavily. Our foster mum made her walk all the way to the chemist to get her own sanitary towels. I offered to run to the chemist and get them for her but she made [REDACTED] go. It was really degrading because she was in a mess. I hadn't realised up until then that our foster mum had been horrible to [REDACTED]. She didn't get beaten but she was degraded and humiliated.
64. The whole time I was with my foster parents, my foster mum looked for any excuse to belt me. If I back-chatted her, told lies, didn't eat my supper or any other minor thing she liked it because it gave her an excuse to belt me. When she was beating

me her language was foul and she would be cursing and swearing. One time I used the word bloody as a swearword and she didn't like it. My dad stuck up for me saying that 'bloody' was in the bible so wasn't a swear word. My foster mum beat me the next day when he wasn't there because he had stuck up for me.

65. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]'s brother sometimes came to visit [ERK-SPO]. They had previously been fostered by [ERK-SPO]. [REDACTED] took me and [REDACTED] for a walk when she came. At one point on our walk [REDACTED] held [REDACTED] over the edge of a bridge over a railway line threatening to drop her. It was sort of done as a joke. I think [REDACTED] was doing it to stick up for me and frighten [REDACTED] and to let her know that she knew she was 'grassing' on me to our foster mum. I was really scared for [REDACTED] so I ran back and told our foster mum. [REDACTED] wasn't allowed to visit after that. I have since heard that [REDACTED] committed suicide.

Abuse at [REDACTED] Academy

66. The PE teacher was a pervert. After PE the girls would be having their showers and he would come into the shower room. Sometimes he would come close to you and the girls would be trying to cover themselves with their hands in the shower. He would tell the girls to carry on washing but it was obvious he just wanted to watch. I was eleven or twelve and all the girls were starting to develop. He had absolutely no reason for being in there. We complained and he was there for a while after but then he was replaced. I don't know what happened to the pervert. I don't remember his name.

Leaving foster care

67. I was still fourteen when I left foster care. She was still calling me bastard and I flipped. I think this was a very short time after she had beaten me with the stick. I grabbed her at the chest by her cooking pinny and pushed her back against the door and told her never to call me that again. I shouted at her that my name was [ERI] and not Bastard. I ran out and up to my bedroom and everything just calmed down. That

night she locked me in my bedroom from the outside. [REDACTED]'s room was opposite mine so I managed to get her to unlock my door. I told her I was going to run away but she wouldn't let me downstairs. I went into the glory hole room and climbed out the window onto a flat roof then down and I ran away. I got to Fraserburgh and I was wandering about the streets a few hours later in the early hours of the morning and the police picked me up. I was put in a detention room at the police station.

68. My foster mum came to the police station and I heard her voice. I banged and banged on the door and I went ballistic saying I wasn't going back to live with her. I then heard her say that she didn't want me back so I was quite happy. I was fourteen and deemed to be unruly by the police.
69. A female social worker came took me to The Cabin, in Turriff. I knew it was a temporary placement until something more permanent could be found.

Reporting of abuse at foster care

70. After we had been with the foster carers about six months we were visited by a male and a female who were social workers from Glasgow or Aberdeen. His name was Mr Butler. We were put in the nice living room at the front of the house and were wearing our good clothes because we knew they were coming. Our foster mum was usually there when they were speaking to us so there was no way we could say anything but she left the room to make tea. They asked if we were happy there and we told them we weren't and wanted to go home. [REDACTED] told them that we were getting hit and I backed her up but he just said that we were liars. I was probably five. I remember telling them that mum was hitting us and not feeding us. They didn't believe us and this was the start of me not being believed.
71. They visited another time and we told them the same thing and that we were going to run away. They didn't believe us and I think I gave up trying to tell anyone else after that. The rest of the time our foster mum was there and we knew we couldn't

say anything in front of her. When they visited us at [REDACTED] there was no point in telling them again.

72. I could never tell my foster dad about the abuse I was suffering from my foster mum. She made it clear that if I ever said anything to him about it she would make it a lot worse for me. I was too frightened to say anything to my foster dad.
73. When I was in my twenties I spoke to [REDACTED] the foster carers' son and told him some of things about my foster mum abusing me. He said he knew that it was going on at the time.
74. [REDACTED] used to come and visit [REDACTED] farm when me and [REDACTED] were there. He considered [REDACTED] ERK-SPO to be his mum and dad even though they had left about ten years earlier. One time he was there and he told us to hide in his car so we hid on the backseat. I was about six. I looked up and he was saying goodbye to our foster parents. One of us must have put our heads up too high and [REDACTED] ERK-SPO spotted us and told us to get out the car. [REDACTED] was told never to come back to the farm. [REDACTED] was obviously going to take us away from the farm for whatever reason. I think [REDACTED] must have told him what was going on. I remember him saying that he knew what we were going through but he never told me if anything happened to him. Nothing changed after that.
75. When I ran away from my foster mum and before I went to the Cabin in Turriff the police asked me why I had run away and why I didn't want to go back to live with my foster mum. I just told them that she kept calling me 'Bastard' and had locked me in my bedroom. I didn't tell them everything else because they would have called me a liar and because by then I knew that no one cared.
76. I never told anyone about the abuse we suffered from our foster mum because I knew I would get beaten if she found out. She made it clear that if we told anyone she would make it much worse for us.

The Cabin, Turriff

77.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving The Cabin, Turriff

79. After the [REDACTED] holidays I was taken to St Clair's home for girls in Great Western Road, Aberdeen. I would still have been fourteen.

St Clair's home for girls, Great Western Road, Aberdeen

80. I was in St Clair's twice with a brief spell in Brimmond in between my stays. When I left the second time I went back to Brimmond. I am not sure how long I was at St Clair's each time but in total I was there for around a year.

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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95. My foster mum came to visit me the first time I was at St Clair's. She wanted to take me on holiday with her but I said I didn't want to go with her and I walked away. A while later I went back to the office and told them I had changed my mind. It was then arranged for me to meet my sister [REDACTED] and we would travel together to [REDACTED] I had a good time with my foster mum. We had good chats and a laugh and a bit of a carry on. After that I started visiting her during holidays from St Clair's. I got on better with her.

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Leaving St Clair's home for girls

105. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
- Secondary Institutions - to be published later I think my first visit at St Clair's was only for a few months. I
- Secondary Institutions - to be published later got
- put into Brimmond for a short period. I don't know why Brimmond was chosen for me. I then got put back to St Clair's. I wasn't at St Clair's for long then I ended up in Brimmond again. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
- Secondary Institutions - to be published later I was sent back to Brimmond. I never went to any children's panel. This must have been decided in my absence.

St Clair's home for girls second visit

106. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
- 107.
- 108.

109. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Brimmond Remand Home, Brimmond

112. Brimmond was a remand home so we were locked up in there. It was like a prison and we couldn't get out. It was a nasty place. I was in Brimmond twice but I can't differentiate between what happened the first time I was there and the second time. The first time I was there might have been about three months and in total I wouldn't have been in there for more than a year.

113. The home was [REDACTED] Mrs ^{ERL} [REDACTED] and her husband Mr ^{ERM} [REDACTED] I can't remember his first name. She was between forty and fifty and was a little grey haired

lady. Mr ERM was about the same age but was a tall man. They lived in one of the houses [REDACTED]. GJO-GJP lived in the [REDACTED] house. They were house parents. Mrs GJP also sometimes slept in a bedroom beside the girls and Mr GJO sometimes slept in a room downstairs with the boys. These rooms were nightshift staff bedrooms. Other members of staff were Mr and Mrs zIFH-zGJX but I am not sure where they lived. There was a member of staff, EPX and an arts and crafts teacher, Mrs Tough. EPX and Mrs Tough were really nice.

114. I think there were about ten girls and probably the same number of boys all between ten and fifteen years old. The girls I remember were [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. The boys were in a completely separate wing. We slept in dormitories. The girls quarters were upstairs and the boys were downstairs. Also downstairs was the kitchen and dining hall and there were some rooms used as school classes.

Routine

First Day

115. I don't remember the journey to Brimmond or how I got there. My first memories I have is just being in there.

Mornings and bedtime

116. We got up in the morning got washed, dressed and brushed our teeth. We then had to stand in file then were marched down for breakfast.

Mealtimes/Food

117. The boys and the girls sat together at meal time and we were allowed to mix. Talking wasn't allowed so there was lots of whispering going on. Staff would stand there and watch us. If the male staff caught you talking they would rap you on the top of your head with their knuckles. Female members of staff may have just shouted at us to

stop talking. The food was okay. If you didn't like something you left it. There wasn't a choice of food and If you didn't eat your food you went hungry. There was nothing to eat between meals.

118. After our meals some of the girls would clear the tables and clean the floors and other girls would go into the kitchen to wash the dishes. The boys didn't do any of this because it was deemed to be women's work. I don't know what the boys did.

Leisure time

119. Through the day we just sat and watched the television. We were allowed four cigarettes a day. If you didn't smoke you were allowed sweets instead.

Trips and holidays

120. Occasionally we had day trips. We went in the minibus to different towns. My favourite was Balmedie where there was a beach.

Schooling

121. There were school classes there but I never went to any of them. I think I was too old and didn't have to go. I can't remember if any of the other girls went to the classes. Mrs Toughe did arts and crafts with us upstairs and she made us do self-portraits, painting and things like that.

Religious instruction

122. We had to go to church. We didn't have a choice. Those were the rules. The church was just a few minutes walk away. Both the boys and girls had bible class on a Sunday. It was really boring. The only reason we enjoyed it was because afterwards we got juice, biscuits and the boys and girls were allowed to mingle. The man who ran the bible class was a bit of a sleaze towards the girls but I never saw him doing

anything that could be called abuse. All the girls felt uncomfortable by him and we all hated him.

Visitors

123. Sometimes there were psychologists who came in to see some of the girls and boys. but they never came to see me.
124. I had some contact with social workers but I didn't really have any time for them. When they came I just sat there and listened to them. They never listened to anything I said so I didn't bother. They decided everything for me whether I liked it or not. My attitude was to keep silent and basically be an obnoxious little brat. I think I learned when I was there that Brimmond was only going to be for a short term until somewhere else was found.

Running away

125. I ran away the first time I was at Brimmond. I ran away with some other girls. One was [REDACTED] There was one of the boys who we knew was trusted with the keys for the building. We managed to get the keys from him and we unlocked the side door and ran away over the tattie fields. I got as far as the bus stop. If ever the girls ran away the staff would tell the boys and make them chase after us and catch us. [REDACTED] one of the boys, caught me and he told me that if I kissed him he would run away with me. I refused so he took me back to the building.

Abuse at Brimmond remand centre

126. If you did something at Brimmond that merited getting punished Mrs ERL [REDACTED] would make you scrub the back stairs, shower room and outside and inside the toilet with your own toothbrush and a bucket of water. There were various reasons she would make you do it, something like giving back chat. She would wake you up in the middle of the night and you did it in your nightclothes. There were often two or three

girls doing it each time. When you scrubbed the toilet this included scrubbing under the rim of the toilet. At the end she made you brush your teeth with the dirty toothbrush before you got back into bed still wearing your soaking wet nightclothes.

127. We usually started scrubbing around eleven pm and would get back to beds about two in the morning. If one of the girls was sick when they brushed their teeth Mrs ERL would make them clean it up then we all had to start cleaning all the floors and toilet from the beginning again. If someone was sick we would be up twice as long. If I was sick in my mouth I always swallowed it. I remember that some girls were still cleaning the toilets when I got up in the morning and they were crying. They had been cleaning all night so never got to their bed at all because someone kept being sick. I think everyone would have done this cleaning at some point when they were at Brimmond and I saw it happening at least once a fortnight.
128. When I ran away, and [REDACTED] caught me, I was taken back and I kicked off. Mrs ERL hauled me upstairs by the hair, banging my head off the stairs. I started kicking out at her because my feet were free. She shouted on Mr ERM who came running up the stairs. He lifted me off the ground like a rag doll and threw me into the cell. The cell was like a single bedroom with a metal bed and a potty. There was a spy hole on the wall and a buzzer for when you needed something. I continually pressed the buzzer because I wanted out of there. I did it so much that they switched the buzzer off. I had bruising to my body and I remember being upset and crying for a while.
129. I was left in there for nearly three days. I wasn't given any food, water and there was only the potty for the toilet. I refused to do a poo in the potty. They forgot about me. Mrs GJP opened the door on the third day and immediately started apologising saying I shouldn't have been in there for as long. My stomach was sore with holding onto my poo so I went to the toilet. Mrs GJP stood and watched me continually apologising for leaving me in the cell. I had to tell her to look away and she did. She made me toast and a cup of milky coffee. After that everything sort of went back to normal.

130. The next day I was given a surprise. I was taken in the minibus with Mr and Mrs GJO-GJP to [REDACTED] to see my foster mum. Mrs GJP told me I had half an hour with my mum. She was obviously feeling very guilty for forgetting about me in the cell and was trying to soften me up.
131. [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had a hard time at Brimmond. I saw [REDACTED] one time after Mrs ERL had beaten her. [REDACTED] was crying and she was bruised. I never saw it but she told me Mrs ERL had beaten her. I heard that quite a few girls and some of the boys were beaten by Mrs ERL. I saw some of the boys crying. Mrs ERL was cruel. If you did something wrong she punished you. I was punished and sometimes I didn't know what I was being punished for. If Mrs ERL hadn't been there Brimmond would have been okay. The place was actually well run and it was fine.
132. One time we were down in the boys' wing, possibly watching a film or something on the TV. One of the boys must have done something and Mr ZIFH started shouting at him. Another housemaster was there called Simon and he said he would deal with it. Mr ZIFH went over and grabbed the boy by the ear and hauled him out of the room. I don't know what happened outside. I don't know who the boy was but he was younger than me.
133. I think by the age I was I had learned to close my eyes to the abuse. If I didn't see it, it isn't going to affect me. Because it was a secure unit there was nowhere to go or hide, you had to just try and not see things so you weren't affected.
134. There was another house mother there but I can't remember her name. If you were being punished and were scrubbing the floors with your toothbrush and were on your hands and knees she would kick you over with her foot. Sometimes she would splash water on the floor or kick your bucket so it soaked the floor.

Leaving Brimmond remand centre

135. The first time I left Brimmond I went back to St Clair's. I think they said I had learned my lesson and that I could go back.
136. The second time I was at Brimmond they took us to Balmedie beach. Mrs ERL and a new house father KEF took us. I can't remember his last name. When we got there they sent us off to play on the sand dunes. When we were playing we caught Mrs ERL and KEF having sex. When we got back Mrs ERL knew that I knew because I was shouting it out of the window to the boys below. Mrs ERL bent over backwards to keep me quiet after that. She gave me cigarettes left right and centre.
137. Not long after I saw Mrs ERL having sex with KEF at Balmedie I got a live in job at [REDACTED] Hotel in Banchory, Aberdeen. Mrs ERL arranged this. I would have been about fifteen and a half. Mrs ERL took me in to her office and told me it was time for me to start work. I presume the social work had some involvement but I think she just wanted rid of me because of what I had seen. I was happy to work in the hotel and I had a bedroom there. I did various tasks in the hotel. Unfortunately my sister [REDACTED] came to work there too and she shared my bedroom. She took men back to my room and I got the blame for it. Because of this I ran away. I was living in a squat in Aberdeen and I was caught by the police and the social work were involved and that time I got sent to Broomhill. I worked at the hotel for about three months.

Reporting of abuse at Brimmond

138. I never told anybody about any of the abuse I suffered. By that time I didn't trust anyone and just kept my head down and got on with it.

Broomhill children's home, Aberdeen

139. I would have been about fifteen and a half when I went to Broomhill. I can't remember how I got there

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Broomhill children's home

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

I got into a bit of bother with the police because I was there when a house was broken into and I was keeping watch. I went to court and took the blame for it and was put into Craiginches prison on remand. I was sixteen by this time and was only in Broomhill for a few months.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

147. At some point I went to the social work office at Kincorth and I told them what was happening and that I couldn't cope any more. I spoke to a social worker who I think was called Marie. Nothing changed or happened as a result of me going there.

Craiginchies Prison, Aberdeen

148. I was remanded to Craiginchies prison. I was never committed. It was a man's prison but a small section was for women on remand. The women's section was a small part of the main prison and was upstairs. I was sent there for two weeks for social work reports. When they heard that I could knit I was told that I could knit things and they would be sold for charity. I had to ask for permission to get the knitting needles and that was granted. The only prison officer I remember was Mrs Laurie. When she was on we had a good laugh. I didn't have any issues with any of the other women who were on remand beside me. There was no abuse at Craiginchies prison, in fact this was probably a positive experience for me. I was happier there than some of the places I had been in care. I felt at ease and relaxed.
149. The only thing I didn't like about Craiginchies was that when I arrived I had to have a bath and then was strip searched. The bath was smelly and it was to stop you getting scabies and things like that. This happened to everyone.
150. This was possibly the first time I had Jessy Vinicombe as my social worker. When I reappeared in court after the first two weeks she wanted me to go to borstal so the judge remanded me back to Craiginchies for another two weeks for more reports. By the time I reappeared two weeks later the deputy governor of the prison gave me a good report saying I had got into trouble because I had fallen in with a bad crowd and that I wasn't suitable for borstal. When they were having their discussions in the court I heard them talking about Broomhill, Secondary Institutions - to be published later
Secondary Institutions - to be published later They then talked about Seafield and I had heard a lot of good things about there so I made it known that I would be happy to go there. They listened to me and that was where I was sent.

Seafield children's home, Viewfield Road, Aberdeen

151.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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154. As part of my sentence from the court I had to spend an hour every week with my social worker but that was just a waste of her time and mine. I had no time for Jessy Vinicombe by then and considered her to be useless at her job because she just wanted me to go into borstal. I hated her and didn't want to talk to her so she did all the talking. As soon as the hour was up I left. She didn't do anything to help me. At one point Jessy Vinicombe asked my boyfriend [REDACTED] to come to a meeting with her and I. At the meeting she asked [REDACTED] to tell me to speak to her. I was sixteen and a half by that time so she had no right to get him involved. He tried to encourage me but I refused.

155.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

I had to leave Seafield because I was too old to stay there any longer. I had been there less than a year and I would have been seventeen.

Life after care

156. When I left Seafield I got a bed and breakfast. The couple who ran it were really nice and they helped me. They let my boyfriend [REDACTED] move in with me until we got our own flat. I got engaged to [REDACTED] in 1978 and we married in 1979 and had three children with him. My first daughter died in hospital on [REDACTED] 2020. She died as a result of her diabetes. My foster mum died in [REDACTED] 1984.

157. I used to bake a lot and I would often go back to Seafield children's home and take some of my baking there for the kids. For a while I stayed at [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later Seafield because [REDACTED] was working away at sea [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

158. I went to see my real mum for the first time in my life in 1981. She was a mess. She was an alcoholic and she was a horrible woman. I hated her at this point. I met her again in 1994 and after spending a lot of time and chatting with her I forgave her for putting me into care. She had a very hard time living with my father and had to go through a lot with him. I think this was a turning point in my life. This was when my 'mum' became my real mum. We did lots of things we should have done when I was a child. I slept in my mum's bed and she slept on the sofa. She cooked for me and we had a good time together. This was the point that I put everything from my past behind me.

159. I have been married four times. My first marriage was ten years of physical abuse. When I fell pregnant he became jealous and the violence started. Usually it was

when he was drunk because when he was sober he was a different man and was brilliant. I reported it to the police but they just said I was a woman and deserved it. I left him. In my second marriage I suffered abuse. He was charged by the police and I left him. My third marriage was different. He was obese and there was no sexual relationship. This marriage only lasted a week because I found out he had lied to me. I had another partner but he too was abusive. He died suddenly. The last time I got married was to [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] 2010.

160. My first job was in a café but my first husband made me give it up because he wanted to keep me. It was a bit old fashioned but I was happy to give it up and be at home for him. Since I left care I have had various jobs, waitressing and cleaning.
161. In 2001 I had an operation to remove a tumour from my spinal cord. I now cannot walk very far and suffer a lot of discomfort.

Impact

162. It was only when I was at [REDACTED] when I was about eleven or twelve that a social worker came to our house and told us that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]'s foster parents were wondering if we wanted to go and meet them. I didn't even know I had a brother and sister. Arrangements were made but then we were told it was cancelled. We were led to believe that they had cancelled but when I spoke to [REDACTED] years later she said it was cancelled on our side. I never got to meet them when I was in care.
163. I have met my brothers and sisters intermittently over the years. I got close to [REDACTED] for a while but then we fell out. When we were speaking he was telling me everything about all my other siblings. I have met them all but now am only close to my sister [REDACTED]. I am not close to any of the others. I have even fallen out with [REDACTED] who I knew the best having been in foster care with her for ten years. Some of them I don't really know very well at all. Had we all been brought up together as a family I am sure that things would probably be different and I would have a closer relationship to most of them. Being taken in to care stripped me of my family.

164. Because my foster mum warned us not to be sick I have always just swallowed it when it was in my mouth. It is almost a natural reaction for me now. I would only ever spit it out if there was no one else there.
165. When I was at Seafield, [Secondary Institutions - to be published later] that was when I learned I had all my other brothers and sisters. I knew by that time that I had a brother and sister [] and [] so I made some enquiries to try and find them. I wrote to the social work department but they got back to me and said [] didn't want to know me. [] was broken because he had been in the Falklands. He was a stranger to me and I couldn't get emotional about him. A lot of the time I wish I didn't know about my brothers and sisters.
166. Because of all the time I spent in care I think I was always quite old fashioned in everything I did. I think the way that I was treated made me an angry child. It wasn't in my nature to be like that but the system made me that way because no one ever believed me. [Secondary Institutions - to be published later]
[Secondary Institutions - to be published later]
167. Because of the time I was locked in the cell at Brimmond for three days I can't sit in a room with the door closed, even in my own house. I always have the door left open otherwise I have to consider and plan my escape route. My bedroom door is always open and I always have the window open. [Secondary Institutions - to be published later]
[Secondary Institutions - to be published later]
[Secondary Institutions - to be published later] In my living-room I have to sit on the seat nearest to the door. I will not sit anywhere else. I need to sit nearest the door in case I need out.
168. I have an aversion to showers. I think that stems back to the perverted PE Teacher at [] academy who used to come into the girls changing room and watch us in the showers.

169. After my foster mum gave me a rotten egg to eat I couldn't eat eggs for a long time. I only managed to eat them again when I was trying to encourage my own children to eat them by making them copy me.

170. Secondary Institutions - to be published later



171. Because I spent a lot of my unhappy childhood in Brimmond and Aberdeen I now hate everything about Aberdeen.

172. Over the years I have tried to put everything that has happened to me behind me. I don't dwell on my past. I now try only to look to the future. I do sometimes think about things that happened to me when I was in care and it niggles me but I doesn't stop me from sleeping. I have never turned to drink or drugs to blank out what happened to me in care. I drank for a while but that was in relation to the breakdown of one of my marriages. I dabbled in drugs, cannabis, when I was young but it was just as a child experimenting. I only did it for three months then I decided it wasn't for me. I fell pregnant at that time and never touched the stuff again.

173. I have made up with my birth mum and I don't blame her after I learned what she had been through. I still think of her as my mum. In 1994 my mum was making arrangements to come and stay with me. Unfortunately she died on the day of my birthday. I consider my foster dad to be my dad and I am still happy to call him my dad. I have a photograph of them both at my bedside and every night before I go to sleep I look at the photographs and say goodnight to my mum and dad.

174. Because I never had any love and affection as a child my own children suffered because I couldn't cuddle them. It felt alien to me because I had never experienced it. It felt wrong to even have my own children sitting on my knee. I know that I wasn't a good mother. I never hit my children but I shouted at them a lot because that was

better than hitting. I decided never to hit my children because it had happened to me and it affected me. There is never a need to hit a child.

175.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

176. There are things that trigger thoughts in my head about my time in care. Quite often it can be someone talking in a particular tone of voice or it can even be the mention of certain words. I will never watch any television programme if there is anything to do with child abuse. I find it too upsetting. If my husband says the wrong word to me and I react I will not let go until I hear him say the word "sorry" to me.

177. My time in care taught me to stand up for myself. If anyone tries to be condescending or speak down to me as if they are better than me I react. I am still like that today and in certain situations I will react and retaliate. Certain words or situations trigger an aggressive response and brings out the angry side of me.

178.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

179. If I had been left to stay with **ERK-SPO** my foster parents, I think I would have become a farmer's wife which is what I always wanted to be. I felt safe when I was with my foster dad but everywhere else I felt alone and vulnerable. There was no one when I was growing up that I could turn to for help. When my foster dad died I lost any chance of becoming a farmer's wife and because I was then sent to different places and my life turned out completely different to what it could have been. I am sure my life could have been better because my foster dad would have protected

me. There was nobody left to look after me

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

180. When I am in company I never mention that I was in care. If the subject came up I would just avoid it. I am not proud of having such a shit life. I get angry when I see children kicking off at their parents because they don't know how lucky they are to have a mum and dad. It makes me really jealous when I see children with parents.
181. I had a drink problem for a while but this was nothing to do with my time as a child. This related to a particular relationship I was in at the time as an adult.

Treatment / Support

182. I have never felt the need to try and get any counselling or support in relation to the abuse I suffered. I do not feel that it would help me and if I don't tell people they can't. I try not to dwell in the past and now only look towards the future. I have previously written my life story in a notepad and then I burned it. I felt that what was written there wasn't me anymore and it all meant nothing to me. When I think about it now everything that happened to me happened to another little girl and not me. I feel sorry and hurt for that little girl but it wasn't me. I know it is wrong but I think that is just how I deal with it.

Reporting

183. Secondary Institutions - to be published later I have never reported any of the abuse I suffered to anyone in authority. I didn't trust anybody and knew that I would be made out to be a liar. [REDACTED] my husband is the only person I have told about the abuse that I suffered in care. I have given him a summary of things that happened to me. [REDACTED] is a rock for me and we get on well.

Records

184. I read in my social work children's file that when I was eight or so the social workers wrote that I came alive when there were men in the room. I don't like the way that was written but expect it meant that I was more comfortable when my dad entered because of the relationship I had with my foster father. He was my hero whereas I hated my foster mum and she meant nothing to me. I generally didn't like women.
185. I asked to see my records when I was in my thirties. I went to the social work office in Aberdeen. I was allowed to read my file with a social worker present but wasn't allowed to remove or photocopy anything. There was a lot of stuff that was blacked out and I felt there were things missing from my file that should have been there. I possibly wasn't in the right frame of mind at that time to read my files. There was a letter from my birth mum. She had written this letter to the social work department asking them to help her finding us because she wanted to find out how we were. I spoke to my mum in 1994 and she told me that she had been told that they couldn't find us and were lost in the system. I managed to get a photocopy of this letter.

Lessons to be learned

186. In my opinion the social services are a complete waste of time and money. They did absolutely nothing to help me. The only thing they are interested in is finding a place for the child to be put and getting rid of them.
187. Children shouldn't automatically be removed from their parents. They are entitled to be with their parents and should only be taken away as a last resort or if the child needs protection.

Hopes for the Inquiry

188. Children in care should be allocated one social worker and where possible that social worker should remain with that child through their care. Children have to build a trust with someone and that won't happen if they are constantly changing. I had lots of different social workers and the last two, whose names I can remember, were Jessy Vinicombe and Marie. Jessy Vinicombe did nothing for me and just wanted to send me to borstal.
189. I hope that in the future children who are in trouble or whose parents are needing help are assigned one social work who works with them throughout and they are not passed from one social worker to another. If abuse is reported or suspected then social workers shouldn't just turn up and say that the house is clean and tidy and that the child appears well. They should turn up unannounced and see what really happens behind closed doors.
190. Children suspected of being abused should be taken away from the parents on day trips and the trained individual would build up a trust with the child and be someone they can speak to in confidence. They should be trained to identify signs of abuse. Swimming would be a perfect place to take children where any bruising might be seen.
191. I was never believed as a child. I was always made out to be a liar. I know that some children will make up little stories and not always be truthful but everything that a child says should be believed and acted upon until proven otherwise. Don't treat a child as a liar. They have a voice and should be listened to. There should be someone who spends time with children who can build a relationship with them and this person should be available 24/7. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
- Secondary Institutions - to be published later Each choice should be explained to the child and the consequences of each one. The child should then decide what route they want to take. If it is explained properly to the child they will normally take the best option for everyone.

192.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

193.

194. Speaking to the Inquiry has been good for me as it is the first time I have spoken fully about the abuse I suffered and I have been listened to and believed.

Other information

195.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

196.

197. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

198.

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

ERI

Signed..

Dated... 10.3.22