

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HSF

Support person present: No

1. My name is HSF My date of birth is 1967. I am 51 years old. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My mum was called and my dad was called They got married very young. I had an older sister called who was a year and four months older than me, and then they had me. We all lived in Edinburgh together.
3. My parents were 22 when they got divorced. I was about four or five years old at the time. Me and my sister lived with my mum. My dad would come round sometimes and take us out. We lived in the Holyrood area of Edinburgh and I went to Milton House School, which is now called Royal Mile.
4. My mum died from bowel cancer just before my seventh birthday. Her last dying words were not to let my dad get us. We stayed with my maternal grandparents for a while, but then my dad came to get us. He was living with somebody else by this time. I really didn't want to live with him but my sister was going so I went too. We moved in February 1974 and it was the worst decision of my life.
5. I had a horrific childhood from the age of seven until I was about thirteen or fourteen years old. My dad was a drinker and a gambler. He and his partner pretended they were married but they weren't because my dad was Catholic and couldn't marry

again. [REDACTED] had a daughter, [REDACTED] from a previous relationship who lived with [REDACTED] parents. That was another hidden shame for her. It was a very dysfunctional family.

6. [REDACTED] and my dad had a son called [REDACTED] who was just a baby. He mostly stayed with [REDACTED] parents, but sometimes with us. My dad and [REDACTED] had another son called [REDACTED] when I was eight years old who lived with us. We all lived in a one bedroom tenement flat on [REDACTED] in Edinburgh.
7. Me and [REDACTED] slept in a box-room with no windows. My dad and [REDACTED] slept in the back bedroom, and [REDACTED] slept with them. My dad and [REDACTED] went on to have another two sons called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], but that wasn't until I was about fifteen or sixteen years old.
8. There was no bath or shower in the flat. We would go to the local baths to wash. It was once a week at first, then it was every fortnight. There was no toilet roll or cleanliness in our flat. We went from being very well dressed and clean kids with our own mum, to being very neglected.
9. We carried on going to Milton House School after my mum died. The teachers at the school used to look at us with pity. We didn't want that. We wanted somebody to explain what had happened.
10. I started to comfort eat when my mum and dad got divorced. My addiction to food got worse as the years went on. I was a morbidly obese child. I was getting comfort from food and using it as a crutch. We didn't get fed much at home, but people in the street used to feed us. It was my job after school to go around places to get food from the shop and the bakers. People gave me it because we were pitied. They knew my dad was an alcoholic and was always in the pub.
11. Not long after we moved in with our dad, one of our cousins called [REDACTED] who was about fifteen or sixteen years old, was babysitting us. We were in a brown box-room with no window, and he was doing sexual things to my sister. I was told to

face the wall and I was crying because I couldn't do anything. My sister was crying because she didn't want to do it. She would have been about eight years old. We didn't tell anyone.

12. I became the carer of my family at the age of about seven or eight, and my sister became the victim. We were living in chaos and crisis, and had no structure to our lives. [REDACTED] had started drinking too because my dad would always compare her to our mother, and was abusive towards her. It was a shame.
13. My dad used to batter me a lot and even broke my nose once. I would never cry because I think that was his main aim. I think he was mentally ill. He once stood up in the middle of the room and stated that he was God. He once threw our cat out the second floor of the flat.
14. I went on to go to Drummond High School in Edinburgh. I didn't go to a dentist the whole time I had been with my dad. I had gum boils and abscesses, which the school knew about. We got our hair checked at school. The teachers could see the neglect and smell us.
15. My records say that the teachers were aware that we were neglected and had seen my bruises. They say that Miss Munro, my guidance teacher at Drummond High School, didn't know that she could phone social services. I don't understand how she couldn't have known this.
16. [REDACTED] worked as a cleaner at the school once, which was a laugh. We didn't qualify free school dinners for a little while when [REDACTED] was working there. The dinner ladies just gave us dinners anyway. They knew the situation. They could tell from the look of us, our hair and the smell of us. I hung around them because they were food givers.
17. We used to get sent to stay with [REDACTED] brother, [REDACTED] in Sighthill, at the weekends. He was a barman on a pub in [REDACTED]. He had four kids to a woman called [REDACTED]. They all stayed on [REDACTED] in the Sighthill [REDACTED].

18. We slept on the pull-down sofa when we stayed at [REDACTED]. There would be four of us kids together. [REDACTED] would come home late at night after work and I would hear him pick my sister out of the bed and take her into the kitchen, then he would do sexual things to her. My sister told me this when I was ten or eleven years old, so [REDACTED] would have been twelve.
19. One night when [REDACTED] wife was away, he told us all to go to the chip shop, which was far away. He told [REDACTED] to stay and I could see she was terrified. She was looking at me, but I was powerless to do anything. He even came out to make sure I got in the lift.
20. [REDACTED] was investigated by the police in 2007. It was Detective Constable Lake from the Amesyth Team at South Gyle who led the investigation. My sister said other girls had come forward as well. He was working for Edinburgh Council as a caretaker at the time. I hadn't seen any of the abuse happen so it was hard for me to be a witness. I don't know what the outcome was. He's dead now.
21. One of my uncles, [REDACTED] came to stay with us and we slept in the box-room in our flat. One night he was drunk and masturbating in the living room. He was shouting on my sister to come through and she was petrified. He then started to shout on me. I had to be the strong one. I went through and booted him, and said I was going to tell my dad. I then said to my dad "Do you want to tell him?" My dad's arm was hanging out of the bed and he was asleep drunk. I think the fact that I had roused my dad was enough for [REDACTED] to stop.
22. My relationship with [REDACTED] was poor. She would batter me and I would stand up to her. We didn't have any food but her and my dad wore lots of gold sovereign rings. They were always in and out of the pawn shop. [REDACTED] used to batter me with these rings. She would also get my dad to give me a battering when he came in drunk from the pub.

23. [REDACTED] would go to church and confession on a Sunday, but just come back and batter us. It put me off religion. I would think that if there was a God then why had I been subjected to this life.
24. My childhood was surrounded by drink. My mum's side of the family, the [REDACTED], had their troubles with drink too, but weren't as abusive as the [REDACTED]. We weren't allowed to see the [REDACTED]. I used to sneak away to see my gran's house during my lunch hour at school.
25. [REDACTED] treated us differently from her own kids. She bought sweets for her own kids. Her mum lived in the Cowgate but me and [REDACTED] were never allowed to go into her house. Apparently it is because it was so dirty and they didn't want us to judge them. We would be left out to play.
26. One time, my dad had really battered me and broken my nose. I was at high school and going out and seeing people. I just couldn't take the fear and that life anymore. I took my first overdose [REDACTED]. That was when I was twelve or thirteen. My guidance teacher, Miss Munro, called an ambulance and I was taken to the Royal Infirmary.
27. I had to get my stomach pumped. I felt great in a bed with nice, fresh, clean sheets. I disclosed a little bit of what was going on to the psychiatrist. My dad and [REDACTED] came to the hospital and tried to manipulate the psychiatrist, and he told them to leave. He believed me.
28. Around the same time, my dad had thrown me out onto the streets and I was walking the streets. The police picked me up and I lied, saying my dad was at a party. I was trying to cover up for him, but they didn't believe me. I was taken to my gran's that night. The police went and had a word with my dad.
29. My uncle, who was married to my mum's sister, got children's protection onto my dad. This was because I kept running away and was taking overdoses. I had had enough living in that house. That was when social work got involved.

30. I didn't tell the social workers exactly what had gone on at my dad's house out of loyalty. I would tell them that I didn't want to go back there.
31. I moved in with my granny. It was like I had come out of a cave. My gran, aunty and uncle wanted to dress me up and clean me up, but that was just the outside. I couldn't cope with the new environment. I became really withdrawn and I cut all my hair off. I was still taking over doses and self-harming. I was very broken and confused.
32. Social work referred me to Forteviot House, which was part of the Sick Kids Hospital.

Forteviot House, Edinburgh

33. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

34. I was about fourteen years old when I went in. I took my own clothes in with me. I think I had gotten a grant to get clothes through social work. I stayed there on a residential basis for three or four months. I was put in there because I was endogenously depressed, self-harming and taking overdoses.

35. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Forteviot House

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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56. Nobody spoke to me or asked me if I wanted to go back to my dad's house.

Life back at home

57. I was about fourteen years old when I left Forteviot House and went back to my dad's house. [REDACTED] tried to batter me again and at my lowest point, I battered her back. I felt terrible after I'd done it. I think I just didn't want to go back to that life and I snapped.
58. I lasted about a week at my dad's house. I went to stay with my mum's sister and her husband, [REDACTED]. They had two daughters of their own. My dad agreed to me living with them.
59. Rose Exton from Craigentenny became my first field social worker after I left Forteviot House. I am sure I told her that I was getting battered and was frightened of my dad. I never felt like she was taking me seriously or that she believed me.
60. They would just say that I was a broken girl, but wouldn't look behind the issue at why that was the case. They said that I lived in a fantasy world, but I didn't. It was escapism.
61. I went back to Drummond High School for a little while. The teachers thought it was great that I was all cleaned up, and thought everything was sorted. I then changed school and went to Gracemount High School.
62. My aunty and uncle made me look nice on the outside but I still had problems. I was eating badly and they put me on a diet, so I started stealing food. They thought food was the problem, but it was the symptom.
63. My cousins also resented me living with them and sharing their bedroom. I couldn't settle there so that arrangement lasted for five months. I then moved in with my dad's brother for a couple of weeks.
64. I ended up in hospital after that. I think I had self-harmed again. It was decided that I would go into temporary care into Tenterfield House. That was the only place available because it was an emergency placement.

65. My dad needed to sign papers to allow me to go there. I remember sitting in my social worker's car while my social worker went up to my dad's flat to get him to sign the papers. I remember crying because part of me didn't want him to sign the papers. I was frightened and I just wanted everything to be ok. My dad signed me into care. I was about fourteen years old.

Tenterfield House Children's Home, Haddington

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Leaving Tenterfield House

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86. After I had been at Tenterfield a few months, I had a case conference meeting. It was decided that I would be put in Howden Hall Centre. They then put a call in for me to be taken away because I couldn't be managed. A few hours later I was taken to Howden Hall in a car by two duty social workers from Shrubhill. The child safety locks were on so I couldn't get out.

Howden Hall Centre, Edinburgh

87. Howden Hall was a secure unit. It was like a grey building from the 1970s. Inside, the place was very clinical and had no carpets. When I got there, I was met by Mr and Mrs MTQ-SPO [REDACTED]. They told me I was to call them "ma" and "pa."
88. I think people were given blue trousers and a sweatshirt to wear when you went in, like in prison. It was difficult to get one to fit me because I was so big, so I wore my own clothes.
89. I was shown around by one of the residential staff. I was shown the dormitory where I would sleep, and the cell where you'd be kept if you kicked off. It was a room with a heavy lock. There was no toilet and I think a small window that was covered with mesh.

I was told that was where I would be put if I didn't do what I was supposed to, because I was there to behave. It was shown to me as part of the tour to frighten me. All the doors were locked behind you.

90. There were boys and girls in Howden Hall. They had separate wings. The age group was from twelve or thirteen to sixteen or seventeen. I think there were about forty residents altogether in there.
91. We slept in dormitories and there were two to a room. There were about eight or ten rooms on the landing and you all used the same toilet.
92. There were no carpets in the rooms. We slept on iron beds with washable mattresses, like in hospitals. There was a small wardrobe in there to keep your stuff. I had some of my own stuff, but I had to wear a uniform.
93. At night the landing door would be locked but you could get out of your room to go to the toilet. There would be somebody on the landing at night to monitor us.

Staff

94. Mr and Mrs MTQ-SPO office was right at the front of the building. If you got sent to them for doing anything wrong, you got put on report. We very seldom saw them.
95. Every unit in there had a unit leader, who would be in charge of that wing. They would each have about four workers in their wing, who they would be in charge of.
96. We had members of staff who were in charge of us. A woman called Vicky was a care assistant. She used to speak to me about my weight because she used to be big as well.

97. I got to know the staff there quite well. There were no barriers with the staff. They were quite open with the residents about their personal lives. One of the women who worked there was an ex-police woman called Aggie. There was also a woman called Laura Thomson, and a ^{HSG} [REDACTED] who both lived in Penicuik

Daily routine

98. When we woke up, we had our chores to do. That would be to either clean our dormitories, the landing, or the toilets. The chores rotated weekly. I think you got marked down if you didn't do your chores, and got money taken off your pocket money.
99. We got a tuck shop a few times a week where we could spend our pocket money. I think you could smoke in there, because people used to buy fags with their money.
100. After our chores, we would go downstairs to get our breakfast in the main dining room, which was like a big prison hall. Breakfast would be cereal and toast. There would be about forty of us all having breakfast together. It was set up like school dinners.
101. Breakfast would finish at about 9 am, and then we had the choice of whether to go to school or not. They didn't let you out of the centre to go to school. School was basically a class in the building.
102. There was just one class and you didn't have to go to it. You would be taught some English or history, or whatever class was on in the centre that day. Not much importance was put on schooling. I was about fifteen and a half years old and was coming to the end of my educational years.
103. There were two rooms where you could hang out if you didn't want to go to class. One was the dining room, which had a table tennis table in it, and the other room had a television in it.
104. We would have lunch, which would be hot meals. It was nutritional food, like mince and potatoes. They weren't too fussed if you didn't eat your food.

105. In the afternoon, there would be an option of going to class again. Some people would do their chores if they hadn't done them in the morning, or just watch television.
106. In the evening, there were some crafts things you could do, or you would just watch television again. I don't remember any books in there. It was a bit like prison for young people.
107. Bedtime would be around 8 pm. We would get our pyjamas on about 7.30 pm and then come back downstairs to watch television in our pyjamas and wind down. Then we would go up to bed and go to sleep.
108. We could have baths in the morning or at night if we wanted to. It was a clinical bathroom and we could go in on our own and lock the door. It wasn't mandatory that we had a bath. The bath facilities would be cut off from about 9.30 am until about 8 pm.

Trips and visits

109. There were visiting times when people could come and see you, like in prison. We would all sit in the dining room area during visiting times. It wasn't heavily monitored. I don't know if my sister came to visit me. I don't remember getting any visitors.
110. I don't know if there was a phone that you could use to phone anybody. I didn't stay in touch with my family. I think I wrote to my sister once and she wrote back. She had moved out of my dad's house by then.
111. I shared a room with a girl called [REDACTED], who was from Prestonpans. She told me her uncle smuggled some drugs into the centre for her during visiting time. [REDACTED] was in the centre for drug misuse. She took an adverse effect to whatever it was her uncle had brought her. I think it was heroin. An ambulance took her away to get treated for whatever it was.

112. [REDACTED] got into trouble when she came back to the centre.
113. My social worker, Gordon Clapton used to visit about once a fortnight. We would talk about that. I had only just met him, and he was a man, so I didn't talk openly to him. I was quite guarded and we had superficial conversations. He was looking into placing me back into the community because you could only stay at Howden Hall until you were sixteen years old.
114. We never got trips or went out. It was a locked down place and we stayed there. If we needed to go to the doctor or dentist then we got escorted there and back.

Birthdays and Christmas

115. I had my sixteenth birthday in there but I don't remember it. I don't remember birthdays being celebrated in there. I think the resident girls might have made me birthday cards.
116. At Christmas, we made decorations. I remember making paper chains. We had a Christmas tree in the big hall. I think we also did a play or pantomime. We didn't go out anywhere to a party or pantomime or anything.
117. We must have had a Christmas dinner but I don't remember it. I don't remember any presents.

Abuse at Howden Hall

118. The staff hit the children if they were out of order. That was quite normal. That could be for answering back or not doing what you were told. They would always threaten to put you in the cells for a day or a couple of days. They were the bosses and we knew that.

119. HSG [REDACTED] had a disabled son in Gogarburn. She was in her forties and very glamorous. I took a shine to her. I must have done something one day and she slapped me. It was a really forceful slap and I didn't know what I had done. I remember it because it was hurtful that she had physically assaulted me when I liked her. I got hit and I saw other people getting hit.
120. They used quite heavy restraint when people kicked off in there. It was much more brutal force [REDACTED]. The women would call the men over to help them restrain people. If you still didn't calm down, then you'd be put in the cells. You would be isolated from everyone in there.
121. The team leader of the unit could make the decision to put you into cells. It didn't have to be Mr and Mrs MTQ-SPO [REDACTED]. I never got put in the cells but I saw other people being taken there.
122. There was a boy in there who had the nickname [REDACTED]. He really kicked off one day in the dining room and it took six members of staff to restrain him. There was an alarm that the staff could press if they really needed assistance, and then people would come to help.
123. The staff had no barriers when they spoke to us. HSG [REDACTED] spoke about a disabled son that she had given up, who lived in Gogarburn. I don't think that is something the staff should have been telling us about. The staff used to speak to us a lot about their own lives. They would tell us what they were doing at Christmas with their families. It was quite hurtful for us to hear about it.
124. Maybe sharing stories about their family life was their way of showing affection. There were never any hugs or anything. I think I must have had affection for HSG [REDACTED], which is why I was so hurt when she hit me. I felt that I had built a bond with her. Maybe it was just because her name was HSG [REDACTED] like my mum's.

Leaving Howden Hall

125. I must have been in Howden Hall for about seven or eight months. It was the longest care placement I had been in. It wasn't great but it became a way of life quite quickly. I had become institutionalised. It felt safe in there, being away from the outside world. It was a locked unit and I got used to that way. I didn't want to leave.
126. I was sixteen years old. I hadn't sat any exams and had no qualifications. My social worker felt that I still needed support, but there were limited places that I could go to because of my age.
127. I had a choice to go to Chester Street Hostel, which I visited a couple of times. Two staff members from there also came to visit me at Howden Hall a couple of times. A resident from Chester Street came too.
128. I got kicked out of Howden Hall around [REDACTED] time. I was frightened to go back into the world because I had been cut off from it for eight months. I was crying when I left.
129. I went to Chester Street because it was the only option and my social worker said I still needed the support.

Chester Street Hostel, Edinburgh

130. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Chester Street

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169. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

170. I went to stay with a family in Piershill for a couple of months. The woman was called Mrs [REDACTED] It was a bit like respite care or fostering. She had a big house and I had my own room in the house. It was ok there and there was one other adolescent. It was difficult to adapt to a house with rules again because I had to be back home for meal times.

Reporting of abuse

171. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

172. I told my first social worker, Rose Exton from Craigentenny, that I was getting battered by my dad. I never felt like she was taking me seriously or that she believed me. Nothing was done. They removed me because I was seen as the problem, but my dad and [REDACTED] still got to keep my younger brothers.

173. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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176. [REDACTED] A police team called the Amethyst Team spoke to me. I went to the Gyle in Edinburgh to give a statement about my cousin, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] brother, [REDACTED].
177. [REDACTED] and her brother [REDACTED] were interviewed. I don't know what the outcome was. I think maybe other girls came forward and gave evidence against him too. I heard he was put on the sex offenders register. He's dead now.

Life after being in care

178. I had a psychiatric admission when I was about eighteen years old. I was in the Royal Edinburgh for about eight months. Dr Cox treated me and I got psychotherapy. It was decent. The staff from Chester Street came to visit me and so did my dad.
179. I told my dad about the abuse, including my sister's abuse. He went away and told everyone in the pub so that they could all buy him sympathy drinks.
180. I was put into supported accommodation through Link Housing after leaving Chester House and the hospital. It was a shared flat in Abbeyhill with five other people, and you had your own bedroom with a lock. It was independent living. There were a few flats and I knew a couple of people there.
181. I had a support worker who would come to see me and help me with budgeting because you had to pay your own rent. If you didn't budget, then you wouldn't eat so we learned. David McKenzie and Beth Cummings were my key workers. They would intervene if there were any problems. Gordon Clapton still came to see me.
182. I stayed in Link Housing until I was 21 years old. It was ok. It could be chaotic because everyone was from similar backgrounds. It was the best they could have done and you knew you had support. You also had support from other people staying there, even if it was chaotic.

183. My dad started turning up drunk when he found out I lived there. Social workers had helped my dad and [REDACTED] by putting my younger brothers in longer day nurseries so that they could carry on drinking. The drinking problems had never been picked up on. They also had a dog that was allowed to urinate all over the house. I don't know how they were allowed to keep the kids.
184. I got into trouble with the police for fraud when I was about twenty years old. My dad and brothers were breaking into peoples' houses and stealing cheque books. I got involved because I couldn't break away from my dad. I was caught and prosecuted. I was dealt with through the criminal justice system.
185. My dad and [REDACTED] later moved out to my granddad [REDACTED] house in Ferniehill with my younger brothers, after my granddad died. It was a four bedroom house. I wasn't in touch with them at that point.
186. I got involved with a guy who was just out of prison when I was about 22. I fell pregnant and had an abortion, and then I had a mental breakdown. My weight got out of control and I was attending various different clinics. I was about 23 stone when I was about 24 years old.
187. I was put on lots of different trials for my weight. I was put on Prozac, which initially came out as a weight-loss drug.
188. I had a couple of abusive relationships with alcoholics. When I came out of them, I found Over Eaters Anonymous. I was about 24, and I lost seven stone on my own over the next few years. I got down to about fifteen stone.
189. I stayed in private lets around the [REDACTED] area until I was about 25 years old. I found it hard to break away. I went to college and trained to be a nursery nurse. I moved flats about three times in five or six years.

190. I was working as a nanny and doing domestic jobs. I also done some child minding for the children of [REDACTED]. When I was about 26 years old and working, I bought my own place.
191. I met my ex-husband and we got married. I got pregnant when I was 29 years old and put lots of weight back on. I had my son via C-section, but got MRSA. I then had another breakdown and was admitted to Royal Edinburgh Hospital for psychotic post-natal depression. The hospital had a mother and child ward, where they helped me bond with my son.
192. My weight soared up after having my son. I was at my heaviest, which was 27 and a half stone. I had MRSA and arthritis had also kicked in. I started to get post-traumatic stress from all my childhood. I think having my son triggered that.
193. When my son was three years old, I got divorced and decided to get my stomach stapled. I did it so I could be a better mother to him. It was severe surgery. I managed to get back down to a reasonable weight.
194. I then met another man and had my daughter. I didn't stay with him though. I couldn't have men around. He was quite abusive and I had to go to court to get an interdict against him.
195. He took me to court to get access to my daughter. I decided that I couldn't hand my daughter over to someone like him. I went to Napier University and studied for a diploma in law to help me understand the court proceedings.
196. I was ordered by the family court to make my daughter available for contact once a fortnight. I refused. I was held in contempt of court in 2009. I was sent to prison for two weeks. My son was allowed to come and see me in prison. They had me chained up and I think that was traumatising for him to see.
197. I ended up in hospital again. I have had 27 hospital admissions in seventeen years. I have had a lot of illnesses with calcium and iron deficiencies.

198. I got a lawyer and Queen's Counsel and fought my case. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I think I was fighting for my own childhood.
199. I then started to represent myself. I was put on petition for contempt of court. The court found against me and I was sent back to prison. I served another two weeks.
200. [REDACTED] Most of the proceeds went to a mental health charity because it was about my life, my abuse, and my addiction to food.

Impact

201. I carried a lot of shame from the time I lived with my dad and [REDACTED]. I have carried that my whole life and I can still switch into shame mode in three seconds now. There is a shame about alcoholism and we are taught to hide it.
202. I was a compulsive eater as a child and I know now that I had a dependency on food and was mimicking my dad and [REDACTED] dependency on alcohol. I have had a lot of problems with body image throughout my life.
203. I had a weight problem and was obese. I think I had tried to make myself big when I was a child to protect myself against my dad beating me. I made myself very big and achieved that goal. It nearly killed me as an adult.
204. I think my time in Howden Hall gave me a fake outlook on life. It was a locked down place and I didn't go out in seven or eight months. I felt safe in there not integrating into society. I probably felt safe seeing the abuse because it was normalised.

205. After getting counselling during my time at Chester Street, I have always relied on counselling through my life to deal with problems. [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later

[REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later

[REDACTED] Secondary I have spent a lot of money on counselling in my life. I have been with Wellspring as well as other agencies over the years.

206. I didn't know how to bond with my son when I had him. I used to think that children needed to be battered when they cried. Looking back, I can see that I didn't have many boundaries with my son because I was never taught any. [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later

[REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later My son has now gone off the rails a bit.

207. The fathers of both my children have not been around to bring up my kids. This is because I couldn't have men around. I had only seen abusive men in my childhood.

208. The abuse my sister got from [REDACTED] brother, [REDACTED], split me and my sister apart. I think she always felt that I got away with it because it didn't physically happen to me. I was just as much affected because it was my sister and I was powerless to help her.

209. When I was in the court process, I think I was fighting for my own childhood. Whenever I was in court, and saw people attacking each other with words, it reminded me of my childhood and how I was attacked with words.

210. I hate labels like "survivor" and "victim" because I am not; I am a person. People say I don't have respect for authority. I do have respect for authority, but I don't trust authority. I see it as me and them. People from my background will always see the people making the decisions as professionals. There is always a divide between people. It makes people cautious to open up.

Records

211. I have managed to get my social work records. They cover the period from when social work got involved with me in about 1980. It says in them that the teachers were noticing that we were neglected. They could see that from how we looked and also the bruises. Nothing was done about it.

Other information

212. When my mum died, I think someone should have explained what had happened to us. The school should have spoken to me about it instead of pretending nothing happened. They should have spoken up when they realised things were not right.
213. I viewed the social workers as care bears. They didn't have a clue what was going on. I had three different social workers in just two and a half years. I didn't trust them and it was going to take time for that to happen.
214. The professionals need to learn the different levels of abuse and recognise the different signs. They could see the obvious things like my weight, but they didn't pick up on my dad's alcoholism. They never addressed it. They just looked at the problematic child. They should have looked at the reasons behind the problematic child.
215. I also stayed in three completely different care environments. I went from a place where there was force and kids were being restrained, **Secondary Institutions - to be published**
Secondary Ins A child needs consistency.

216. **Secondary Institutions - to be published later**

217. Staff should be vetted for the job and then repeatedly vetted thereafter. They need to be taught about boundaries and what is inappropriate to share with children.
218. People who have lived dysfunctional lives should be involved on panels when decisions are made about policy change. People with knowledge and lived experience of abuse should be consulted. This might help the people have more trust.
219. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed..........

Dated.....7/12/18.....