

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**Witness Statement of**

LLM [REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is LLM [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1964. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. As a child I had a really good life. I had an older brother [REDACTED], who died when he was nineteen, and two younger brothers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. My mum and dad were together until I was six. He was a stonemason and travelled around a lot. He eventually met someone else and left my mum.
3. Things were ok with my mum for years. She was really protective of us, took us to school and picked us up every day. We weren't allowed outside to play with the local children. I got taken to the Kings Theatre to see ballet and went to the Tattoo every year. We had a really good life. When I was about ten things started becoming really different. My mum had some kind of mental block or something.
4. My first recollection of it was her not looking after the house, washing not getting done and not replacing clothes. Me being an only girl, I was always well dressed and all of a sudden I started going to school with holy tights. Back then people commented on it. I would get upset about it and argue with my mum, which made things worse. Because I was voicing my opinion my mum started having something against me. She started thinking I was bad. I remember her going out and buying us gold crosses to protect us for some reason.

5. I slept in the same room as my mum when my dad left. We had a living room and a lounge and when she changed she moved me into the lounge to sleep so that I wasn't beside her. She walked in one night when I was in bed and she was speaking to herself and punching herself and hitting the door. She was saying things like, 'Leave me alone' and 'Leave my breast alone'. She was really hurting herself. I started laughing and she attacked me. I had to jump out of the first floor window. I ran round to the police box. The police took me home and by this time she was normal and made out that nothing had happened. She said I must have been having a nightmare or something. She took me back in and things just went downhill from there.
6. On a Wednesday night she was a dancer in a ladies league. She danced with ribbons and things and she stopped letting me in the house when she was out because she said I was the devil. So I got locked out. My brothers would let me climb up the drainpipe to get in the house and pull me in the window. I'd hide in the bathroom until she came home at ten o'clock then I'd run out the door and walk in as if I'd just got back in. But she obviously realised and put grease down the drainpipe so that I couldn't get back in.
7. I started mucking around with a rough crowd of kids on that night and it was kids that I was never allowed to play with. They used to sit on the wall outside and laugh at us and tell us to go to bed and call us snobs. All of a sudden I had to play with these kids that used to pick on us. Well, I didn't play with them, they looked after me. They bullied me at first then got me to do things for them, like stealing things and I ended up becoming one of them. I got more and more involved with them. My mum just got worse and worse. Eventually I started skiving school.
8. I went to James Gillespie secondary school, which had been an all-girls school. It changed when I went. I think a couple of years before that you had to pay to go there. It was really noticeable that I was a mess. Things were said to me and I just couldn't go to school. I was embarrassed.

9. I started going to St Thomas's school without permission because the people from Tollcross that I hung about with went there and they weren't as nicely dressed. I went for a while until somebody realised I shouldn't have been there and I got put out. I went back to James Gillespie's but I never settled. I just felt really out of place and different from everybody else. I wasn't as clean.
10. Eventually one morning the police came to my door and said they had to take me away. I hadn't been to a panel, I don't even think I had a social worker. I take it a letter must have been sent to my house. I don't know if I got it and ripped it up or my mum's just not got it. It's that far back, I don't know how it happened. I remember my mum shouting and saying 'You can't just take her'. They said they had to. It was a court order or some other reason. I was taken away to Liberton Assessment Centre and that's how I went into care.
11. I was in two main places in care and also Cornton vale prison for two weeks when I was fourteen years old.
12. I was told it was for care and protection but I suppose it would be for the truancy because I don't think we had the social work in the house for them to know anything. Saying that, I was telling everybody that my mum was off her head, so it could have been because of her mental health. They didn't take my brothers, just me. That morning I just remember arriving at this place.

Liberton Assessment Centre, Howden Hall Road, Edinburgh

Routine

First day

13. I was taken to this place that was all locked up. It was horrendous. You had to wait until they came to let you in, with the keys. Then another woman came and took me upstairs to get ready. I was strip searched at eleven or twelve years old. I'd never

stripped in front of anybody in my life. As I was an only girl I was kept separate from the boys. I'd never even stayed overnight with anybody. I was really frightened and had to have a bath in front of the staff. A woman washed my hair for me and then she had to check over my body. My clothes were taken from me and they took me into a room and gave me their clothes. You couldn't even wear your own underwear. They couldn't find clothes for me, I was so small. I had to wear big trousers until they bought me some that fitted me.

14. I was then taken down to meet the other girls. They were mostly older than me. I was just thrown in this room and they told me to take a seat and introduce myself. So I sat down and this girl, [REDACTED], who was about fifteen and had special needs, ran over to me and hit me over the head with an annual and ran away. She continued to do this and I just sat there thinking, 'What's happening?' Everybody was laughing and the staff didn't do anything. I could feel the tears running down my face. She kept doing it, so I jumped up and hit her. That was the only way I was going to stop it. Nobody else was helping me. I was punished but she wasn't.
15. My mum came up and visited me that day and she couldn't understand why I was there and asked why I was wearing these horrible clothes. I told her I couldn't get my own clothes, that they had taken them. She demanded that I put on my clothes and that we were going home. I told her I couldn't, that I had to stay there and go to a panel. She thought I wanted to stay there and tried to take me away. It was like a prison visiting room, we were sitting at a little table and chairs.
16. She dragged me to the door and tried to get out, but it was all locked. She started kicking at the window to get out. She was freaking out. They took me away but I saw my mum attacking a member of staff and they took her up to the cells and I could hear her screaming. They took me away and I never saw her for another week. She was arrested and put in Cornton Vale prison.
17. I then went to a panel. I don't know if my mum was just frightened but every time I went to one she said I wasn't ready to come home. This happened every time I went.

I couldn't speak for myself. This went on for months and months. I ended up in the assessment centre for about two years or three years.

Mornings and bedtime

18. You got up at 7.30 and had to hunt for underwear. There was a big basket with pants, socks and bras in it. No matter what your size was you had to hunt in this basket. If there were thirty girls there were thirty sets of underwear. You had to be quick, if you were last you had to wear what was left, tiny or big. Your clothes were rolled in a ball in a big bread basket.
19. I can't remember how many sinks there were, four or six. There were quite a lot of girls so you had to stand in a queue to get ready. You got dressed together. You then went downstairs into a common room, which was a room with seats in it. You would wait there for the bell to ring then went for breakfast.
20. You got a cup of tea, a roll with jam or butter, or cereal and porridge. The tea had bromide in it they told us. After breakfast you went back into the common room and hung around. The education was of primary standard, not for older kids. The bell went and the ones going to education went there. The rest were all cleaning the floors, the bedrooms and toilets. I went to the education to start with and as I was there longer I had to do the cleaning because they couldn't educate me anymore.
21. You did this until dinner time and again you got no choice, just one course. There was no talking while you were eating. If you spoke there was a man, Mr PAU who was SNR or [REDACTED] who had a big bunch of keys and he threw them at your head for talking. You then went back to the common room and sat and wrote letters to your family or they had a record player and two or three records that were played over and over again. That was it basically.
22. After dinner you went for your shower. You had no choice, you had to have one. There were two showers and two baths, but you weren't allowed to have a bath, only now and again, if someone had a bad period, just extreme reasons. You had to have

a shower every day. The showers had no curtains and you stood in a queue with only a hair towel. There were no bath towels, so you showed your front or your backside. When it was your turn you had to hand your towel out to a member of staff that was there, so everyone saw you naked. You had to wash yourself in front of everybody. You were told to hurry up because others were waiting. The member of staff gave you the towel back when you came out. You came out naked in front of everyone. You had to wash your hair twice a week.

23. After tea you just sat about. You could watch TV for an hour or an hour and a half, or you'd just sit writing. Sometimes one of the staff would bring in a game, like Frustration or something. In between dinner and bed you got toast, and then went to bed about 8.30pm.
24. You got to exercise outside if the weather was okay. There was a small yard and you just walked round in circles for an hour.
25. When I first went there I had a room of my own but that didn't last long. I had another girl put in beside me then I was put in a dormitory. There was no privacy. If you needed the toilet you had to ask to go, you couldn't just go. You wore a flimsy nighty in bed that you could see through. We all had the same. There were no housecoats. There was no furniture in the bedroom, just a bed. The windows had bars on them. You had to put your clothes outside, rolled up in a basket and your underwear in the wash.
26. I never had much to do with the staff. I went in when I was twelve. I was a weakling and people would take a loan of me. I was told not to get too friendly with the staff or I would get called a 'grass'. I didn't interact with them, because they wanted to know what others were up to.
27. There was a nice woman, Mrs Barraclough, she was quite young, but she left after a few months. She was really nice. I don't know why she left.

28. Some of the staff names I remember were Mrs [REDACTED] who [REDACTED] the place, Mrs Easton, the matron, Mr MTQ [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED] PAS [REDACTED], Mrs PAR [REDACTED] Mr PAQ [REDACTED] and EWA [REDACTED].
29. After I'd been in a while I got to know the other girls there. There was a hierarchy. I eventually got to the top of this when I'd been in a long time. I wasn't a bully but you've got to stick up for yourself. In general I got on with the other girls ok but I kept myself to myself. I realised I had to do this if I wanted to survive.
30. I was never told and didn't know why I was ever there and was too frightened to ask. I didn't understand what was happening. I went to a few panels while I was there. I went with a woman called Helen Morton, a social worker. I only met her when I went to the assessment centre. She told me she was my social worker and I was going to a panel.
31. The first one was about a week after I'd went to the assessment centre. I only saw Helen Morton when I went to panels or when she was taking me to visit List D schools. I remember the first panel, and my mum was there and they were asking how I was getting on. I didn't really speak. I was really frightened. My mum would always say, "I think she needs more time". I honestly don't think she knew what she was talking about. She was maybe just frightened because of what happened to her. So I'd get sent back again. I remember three panels over a few months and that's all my mum said. I'd only see Helen Morton when she came to pick me up to go to them.

School

32. As I said the schooling was like primary education, things like ten plus two. Very low level. I think I missed most of high school. You got art. I liked this, making belts and pictures, things like that, but I wasn't in school for long. I started working, doing the cleaning.

Clothing/Uniform

33. I don't know if you'd call the clothing a uniform. You didn't have any of your own clothing. The clothing you had to wear was like something my granny would wear. Polo neck tops made of crimplene or nylon and crimplene trousers with seams sewn into them, flared things. The shoes were either Jesus sandals or brown jelly beans.
34. If you ran away you were put into different clothes. These were like old men's trousers that they had cut the legs off, so they came down to your knees. This was so that everyone would know you ran away and to stop you doing it again. I ran away a few times, but not at first. I just thought I'd get home but when I was first in it took them a long time to let me out. I don't know why that was.

Holidays & trips

35. I remember I got out for the Christmas holidays. I went home. That was the first time I got out. I went back to the centre after the holidays so I got out a few times. I went back home another time and found out my mum had lost her house. There was no one there.
36. Before I went into care I used to go to a youth club and they were going camping and they called the assessment centre and asked if I could go. I hadn't told the staff I'd lost my house, so I had to borrow clothes from other kids so that I could go camping. They allowed me to go. I was quite shocked. They must have found out my mum wasn't there any longer and my leave was stopped. I didn't get home after that for about a year.
37. We went on outings now and again to the graveyard over the road from the centre to look at the graves. The baby graves.

Visits/Inspections

38. My mum and granny visited me. You got a visit two days a week. It was on a Tuesday I think and a Sunday for about an hour or an hour and a half. They could bring sweets in for you and you were allowed one a day and you could buy cups of tea and a chocolate biscuit or something. It was pretty much the same as prison visits. You sat at a little table with people watching over you.
39. I got out a few times, every fortnight, but it didn't last long as my mum lost her house. After a while I realised I wasn't going to get out and that's when I started running away. I went to friend's houses in the Tollcross area, where I stayed, or slept in stairs. I normally got found by the police and taken back to the centre.
40. I found out that my brothers had slept in Blackford Hills. I don't know how long this was for. They lost all their clothes too. I remember telling the assessment centre people about it, that they were sleeping in the streets. Nobody believed me.

Healthcare

41. If you were ill when you were in Liberton then the matron dealt with it. I used to get tonsillitis regularly and I'd get the back of my throat painted with iodine or something. She'd use the same brush on everybody. But I don't think I had bad illnesses in these places.

Abuse at Liberton Assessment Centre, Howden Hall Road, Edinburgh

42. I'll tell you how bad it was there. I went to prison when I was fourteen and it was brilliant compared to Liberton Assessment Centre.
43. Some of the staff were ok, some quite nasty. There was a woman called **PAS** who was really bad. If you swore or spoke back to staff you'd get dragged to the cells by the hair or the arms up your back. If they attacked you and you hit back you'd get the cane and then taken back up to the cells. You could be in there for days. You had to call them by their title, like Mrs **PAR**.

44. PAS loved to hurt you. She was a big woman and she'd get you down and put all her weight on you with your face on the ground, arms up your back. There were plenty of other staff to help her so she didn't have to do it.
45. One time we went to a camp place at Loch Doon. Its way out in the hills, I don't exactly know where. We stayed in bothy's. Mrs PAR lost her keys for the centre and we didn't know about it but she thought somebody had taken them. She was frightened that someone would find out. There was no hot water there but she said she was going to do something nice for us and give us all a bath and wash our hair because we'd been there about five days.
46. She took us in one at a time. I was the last one taken in and the bath was full of cold water. She took hold of me and forced my head under the water, again and again. I thought I was going to drown. She kept asking me where her keys were. I didn't know. I asked the other girls and I was the only one she had done it to. She eventually found them in the place where she got the coal. She never apologised to me. To this day I hate my head under water, even at the hairdresser.
47. The last week I was at Liberton I had run away and when I got back I asked to go to the toilet. A woman took me and I must have answered her back in a certain way and she grabbed me and I pushed her. She shouted for help and Mrs PAR came and they dragged me away with my arm up my back. I was taken to the SNR office to be caned. I wouldn't take my trousers down to get caned on the back of my legs so I got it over the face.
48. I was dragged to the cell. I don't know how many days I was there. There was a window in it but it was really high so you couldn't see outside. I heard a fight going on outside involving my friend and another girl that I didn't like so I shouted support to her. I was overheard. Mr PAQ came in and got me to stand up and he slapped me right in the face. I would fall on to the mattress and he kept telling me to get up and slapped me again. He was a big man. I wouldn't cry and it was annoying

him so he kept on slapping me. He was either SNR [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

49. That night or the next I was sleeping in the cell and I was wakened up and I remember getting pulled up by my nightie and he bugged me. It was Mr PAQ [REDACTED]. All I remember was him saying was "Bitch" and that I wasn't to say anything. I put it out of my head for so long. I didn't even know you could do that sort of thing when I was that age.
50. I actually thought I'd done something wrong and I was embarrassed about what had happened. I couldn't tell anyone. I was kept in the cells and a few days later an old teacher from my List D school came and asked to see me. She spoke to me and I told her I had to get out of the assessment centre. She took me away and I never went back. I never got into trouble again. I never done a thing.
51. I always knew things like that happened there because it's what everybody tells you. I never thought it would happen to me. I thought I looked after myself enough. I thought I'd shout out. I only spoke up about it about five years ago.
52. I had heard rumours about another member of staff, Mr EWA [REDACTED], who was another man in authority in the place. It was a well-known fact that he was doing things with the young boys, from about eight to twelve years old. We knew whose turn it was as he would sit them on his knee and bounce them up and down, cuddling them.
53. If you were speaking in the dormitory or doing something wrong and no-one owned up to it you'd all be taken downstairs and have to stand on your tip toes with your arms out and two fingers touching the wall. This could be for hours. Eventually they'd let you go because no-one would ever own up.
54. The cells were a frequent punishment for doing small things wrong. I couldn't count how many times I was in them. Not in the beginning, at the latter end of my time there. You also had to scrub the floors with toothbrushes. They would stop you going

on visits and stop you seeing your family when they came to visit. I didn't see any of this as a punishment. It was all I knew. You weren't allowed to swear, you had to speak to the staff like teachers, calling them Mrs **PAR** or Mrs **██████**.

55. There was this other thing that went on called 'Grabbing', which was like in the programme 'Life with gypsies'. It was the senior boys in there who carried it out. You could be just walking past and they'd grab you and pull you into a cubby hole or something and grope you. There was only a couple of them that could do it. If you went to the gym there was a bit there they'd pull you under so no-one could see you, and under tables and things. That happened quite a lot. More so as I got older and you'd have to fight away from them and they'd just be groping you. I can't remember their names. They would hide and grab you or they'd wait on girls making the toast at supper time. They'd watch them going then grab them.
56. You didn't interact with the boys, you only had dinner with them. They were kept somewhere else, across the hall from you but a couple were allowed to walk about because they were a bit older.
57. I was late to start my periods. I was fourteen. You had to ask for pads if you needed them. They were huge. Mrs **██████** told Mr **PAU** that I was a lady now and he put me on his shoulder and smacked and patted my backside. It was like he was putting me on show. I was really embarrassed.
58. In the assessment centre if you had pierced ears the staff put thread through your ears so that you didn't wear earrings. You didn't have any of your own property there. Not even a hair clasp.

Cornton Vale Prison, Stirling

59. When I was fourteen I ran away with older girls and was arrested by the police. We were caught for shoplifting or graffiti or something. I didn't want to go back to the assessment centre so I gave the police a wrong name and age, or just age. I think I

told them I was sixteen. Mr Megson was my lawyer. We went to the Sheriff court in the High Street. The other girls got bailed because of their age, but I was remanded because they didn't know I was fourteen. I didn't know what was happening as my friends got pieces of paper and left and I didn't. I freaked and kept shouting "I'm only fourteen". They must have remanded me because they didn't know exactly who I was.

60. I stayed in the cells until a prison van came and took me away to Cornton Vale prison with another woman. She sat at the back. She'd obviously been a few times. She told me what to expect.
61. When I got there I was put into a box and told to strip off and jump up and down. They put up a sheet, told me to jump up and down and to spread my legs. They must have known I was fourteen because they got a teacher in every day to teach me. I was in the untried. I had to sit outside my room on a chair and they'd work with me. The teachers came every day.
62. They kept me away from the adults. I could hear them but I was in a single cell. I think it was an observation cell. I could smoke there. Everybody was ok with me. I got to exercise there.
63. I was there a couple of weeks. I can't remember if I went back to court or straight back to the assessment centre. It was better at Cornton Vale as I wasn't watched all the time. I could smoke, I could have a shower with nobody watching me. They let me have a shower when the other girls were in their room. It was more relaxed. You were taken to buy cigarettes, tuck and toiletries. You had no toiletries in the assessment centre.

Leaving Liberton Assessment Centre

64. When I was still fourteen I went to stay at my granny's. My granddad was there too. But my mum was there by then. My brothers had been taken from her and she had

totally lost the plot and she still had this thing against me. I slept on the couch. I went to a new school too. Everything was too much for me. I'd get put out the house quite a lot. I'd end up back at Tollcross asking friend's parents to let me stay the night or slept in stairwells. Eventually my granddad called the police and said he didn't want me to stay there. My granny gave me money to go away and I did. This was over a period of a couple of months and I ended up back at the assessment centre through that.

65. I visited a few List D schools but they wouldn't take me because they said I was too much trouble. I was in trouble for running away and started speaking back and keeping myself to myself. I was treated as a troublemaker. So these reports must have gone with me.
66. They tried to find somewhere for me to go and eventually Tynepark List D school in Haddington took me on. I went there but it was completely different to what I was used to. I had been used to being locked up.

Tynepark List D School, Haddington

67. When I first went to Tynepark it was really nice. Open doors, you could do anything you wanted. You were allowed to go outside. They told me you could go up town to Haddington. My first night there was a Friday and the girls were my age or older and they said they were going to a disco. They borrowed my clothes and they were getting ready but they were actually playing a trick on me, kidding on they were allowed out at night. As we were going downstairs one of the night nurses came upstairs and caught us and went mental. I just freaked, jumped out a window and ran away.
68. It must have been a different day from a Friday actually because it was the day of the Worlds End murders and SNR [REDACTED] Mr LLN [REDACTED] had to go and view the bodies as one of them fitted my description. The police took me back in the morning.

Mr LLN [REDACTED] slapped me hard across the face and was going to put me back to the assessment centre.

69. You still had the 'top dogs' there and there was a lot of bullying but I got on fine in Tynepark.
70. You had to get up the same time every morning. Meals were at set times but all you did all day was sit around. There wasn't really anything to do, but you could sit and watch TV.
71. You could go up town but you had to ask permission. The people up town had this thought that the girls were tarts. The school was well known, so they expected things from you and if you didn't go along with it they'd call you for everything. So you tended not to go to town very often.
72. The staff were ok. There was nobody really cruel. There was one called Sophie who didn't like me. She didn't hurt me in any way, she was just nasty. I wasn't put forward for anything. I still kept myself to myself. There was no interaction. We were in dormitories there, maybe four in each one.
73. I was at Tynepark for about a year. The girls were from all around Scotland. Nothing really bad happened there. We just sat about all day. I think we cleaned our rooms. We got pocket money there but I can't remember how much it was, maybe a couple of pounds.
74. You could have a bath when you wanted. You could sit with the staff and talk to them. I didn't. You had your own person, like a key worker. There was a TV room and everybody congregated there because you could smoke. I sometimes went to stay with my fifteen year old friend in Livingston.
75. I got a visit once from my little brothers. It was really nice. I hadn't seen them for years. I don't know if they'd just moved homes, but for some reason they brought them to see me.

76. There were no social work visits. I think I had the same social worker while I was there but no social worker came to see anyone back then. You only ever saw them at a panel.
77. Lady Jane Douglas Hamilton came in to the school and took us for art. She did this for nothing, she was really nice. But there was no education there.
78. I got a £100 clothing grant when I went to Tynepark but they bought the clothes. They were kept in the place so you just went downstairs and picked from what was there. They weren't exactly nice clothes.
79. Because I'd stayed with her for two months, my granny had bought me nice clothes to wear at school. I'd had nothing previous to that because all my clothes were left in the house when my mum had it taken from her. I found out that it had been a bought house and she hadn't paid the mortgage and it was taken back. No social work were involved when it happened.

Leaving Tynepark

80. I got out of Tynepark on my sixteenth birthday. I moved into my grannies. It didn't work. I went to the social work to see about a flat but all they offered me was the Victoria Street hostel. Back then it was just down and outs that stayed there. I couldn't do that. I'd rather sleep on the street. I moved about from friend to friend. I worked but I'd lose my job because I had nowhere to stay, so I'd end up getting into trouble.

Reporting of abuse

I never reported the abuse I suffered to anyone. I was too embarrassed and frightened to tell the social work or the police. Since I contacted the inquiry the police have called me but I haven't given them a statement yet.

Life after being in care

81. I never felt like I had anybody, because I was taken out of my family. I never saw my brothers and my mum had totally lost it. She didn't stay at my grannies very long because she'd caused so much trouble. My granny was too old to deal with it so my mum became a bag lady in the street. I didn't feel like I belonged to anyone. I got attention from friend's dads. That happened since I was twelve but because I was on the street it got worse.
82. I remember staying in Gilmore Place in the snow. In these bedsits they'd put you in a room with strangers. There could be four women in a room. There were no rooms when I went so they built a tent in the back garden and I stayed there for a month, in the snow. That's how desperate I was. From then I was on my own, living on the streets and I ended up being on drugs. But I've always felt responsible for all that happened to my family.
83. I asked the social work to help me with somewhere to stay. They couldn't. My friend got a flat and it was £2.50 rent. I was getting £12 a week DHSS money but the place had no furniture. I asked for help but all they gave me was a cooker, one chair and a fire with one bar, so it turned into a gang hut. I started sniffing glue, doing all sorts. I just didn't want to live basically. So eventually the landlord put me out.
84. From then on I moved from bedsit to bedsit or out on the streets. I stayed in a graveyard for months. There was no-one I could ask for help.
85. My older brother died. I saw my dad at the funeral. I thought he would help but he had been told so many bad things about me when I was in care that his new wife wouldn't take me on. I found out then that my dad had been paying for me in care.
86. After that things just got worse. I was on drugs, moving back and forward to London. A lot of the girls I was in care with are dead now, through drugs. I got off drugs when I was in jail. When I had my son I ended up having a habit again. When I fell pregnant I was going up to the City Hospital for methadone to get me off drugs. But I

saw a doctor who said there had been a mistake made. I was told I had full blown AIDS, and I was pregnant. So I was booked into hospital for an abortion.

87. My brother was a porter at the hospital and they called him over to wheel me away and I said goodbye to him and I just tried to kill myself because then I would be with my baby. They asked why I'd do that and I said I didn't have long to live, I had AIDS, and they said "You've not got AIDS, you've not got the virus". So they took me into hospital to get me off drugs. I don't know if that was to shut me up.
88. I went into Simpsons for three weeks and came off drugs. I think I was mixed up with someone else's blood. That was a Dr Jones, who was meant to be the head person in the AIDS place. So I came off drugs and eventually the council gave me a flat. I got no other help from them but just got through it. I was scared so I didn't take help in case the social work got involved. I just had it in my head that they would want to take my kids from me.
89. Most of my problems started when I had my kids. I didn't want my kids going through the lifestyle I'd had. It was the first time I ever got a house, so at least I had that. But I just lived my life around my kids. I locked them up. I didn't have anyone in the house that could hurt them.
90. By that time I'd met my little brother at my grannies and he told me to watch [REDACTED], my son, because he had been abused and that put me over the edge. I thought it had only been me. I didn't know my younger brothers had been abused. That had a big impact on me and caused me to have a breakdown.
91. I got it in my head that the social work would take my kids from me. So when I first heard them and the health visitor were coming, I'd get up and scrub the floors. I had no furniture in the house. All I had was a couch that someone had given me. No carpets. You didn't get grants then. I just thought I was a bad person because that's all I had. I would scrub my floors every day. I just locked myself away from people. I just thought they'd think I was a bad person. I wouldn't take any help because I didn't want the social work near me.

92. My lack of education stopped me from getting jobs. My education is up to primary seven and that's it. I got a job in a sweetie factory for a few months when I turned sixteen, the week after leaving Tynepark. Then I got a job in the zoo but I was homeless so found it difficult to get there every day. I moved on to other jobs but I never got anything decent.
93. As I got older and had my kids the only job I could possibly get was cleaning. Nobody else would take me. I filled in forms and had no education. I would never tell anyone that I'd been in a List D school. I always felt it was something to be embarrassed about.
94. When I first had my kids I saw my brother [REDACTED]. The [REDACTED] went away somewhere and he stayed with me for two weeks. Then he moved into a hostel and I didn't see him for two years. Then he got married and started coming up then. I wasn't very good at showing him my feelings. I was like a stranger to him I think. There is about eight years between us. I think I was closer to my older brother, who died.

Impact

95. I've never had relationships because of what happened to me. I don't trust men. I have two kids. I had them when I was 24, when I got out of prison after two years. I got out on parole. They were to a friend. I had my kids to him but I could never let him stay. He's the only relationship I've ever had, but it didn't work because of my problems. I was unlovable.
96. I have always felt beneath everybody. I don't see my mum. I see my brother [REDACTED]. It's quite a recent thing, maybe over the last few years. He and my brother [REDACTED] were brought up by a family called the [REDACTED] and I was excluded from them. I wasn't allowed to see them. Obviously they had their lives and they got married and I was just used to being on my own. I didn't think they would want me so I stayed away.

97. I have had no help in life. I've had no chance to do anything with myself. My life is ruined. My kids' lives are ruined because of it. I kept them locked up in case they were abused. I am scared when they are out. If they aren't home in time, I am worried they have been in an accident. My kids are 28 and 26 and I'm still over protective.
98. My daughter [REDACTED] has a little girl who was two pounds when she was born. My son [REDACTED] works in Sainsbury's.

Treatment / support

99. I actually started going for help because of my daughter. I used to babysit for her when her baby was a few months old. One time, when I was going to give her a bath I noticed she had little marks on her sides. I called my daughter, going mental because she had started going out with a boy and I said to her, 'One of you are abusing her', and I really believed it. My daughter started screaming, saying she wanted her taken to the hospital now. She told me to take her as it must have happened in my house. I told her she'd given her to me like that. So my daughter came up, looked at the baby and there was nothing wrong with her. The marks must have been my fingers when I was putting her in the bath. Her skin was transparent because she was so little. My daughter said if I didn't get myself sorted out I'll not get to see her again.
100. I went to a place called Willow and they explained to me how my mind has been trained. I have a different way of thinking things through. They've helped me see other ways of doing things. I still find it hard. Everything is a threat to me in my head. It's taking a long time but I'm getting better. I just wished I had that help when I was in my twenties. My kids are from a relationship I had with a friend. He wanted more but I see all men as potential rapists.

101. Years ago I was asked to write a book about my life but when it came to doing it I couldn't put down what happened to me. I had to tell my kids that I had been in prison and that I'd been a drug addict. I haven't told them everything.
102. They took my younger brothers and me away, they left my older brother. He had special needs and died when he was nineteen. He would be alive if this had never happened. When he died we weren't allowed to see him. My granny told me he'd died. I went to the funeral. That's where I met my dad. My dad's dead now but I never had a relationship with him.

Lessons to be learned

103. I hope that nothing like this happens again to other kids. That they get help when they come out of care. I think I would have had a better life if I'd just had somewhere to go. They should get help with bedsits or flats and help on how to pay rent and things like that. I had nothing like that.

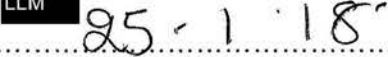
Records

I have never applied for my records from when I was in care.

Other information

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...  LLM

Dated...  LLM 25.1.18