

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FET

Support person present: No

1. My name is FET. My date of birth is 1972. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Glasgow. I don't know much detail surrounding my family or life before I went into care. In later life I found out that I had older brothers. My brother is ten years older. is the next oldest followed by I was separated from my brothers when I was placed into care. I've hardly had any contact with them since.
3. I believe that my mum died. I don't know when she died. She could have died before I went into care. I know that my father was a raging alcoholic. I learnt that when I met him in later life. I suspect, because of that, he probably couldn't look after me.
4. At some point, before I was placed into care, the responsibility for me was passed on from my parents to the social work department in Drumchapel. I was placed under what is called "a section 16." Social work were responsible for me from the age of two until I left care. No one else was my guardian throughout the whole time I was in care

5. Growing up in care was all I knew. The children's homes themselves haven't caused me any great shakes. The reason I am speaking to the Inquiry really concerns one of my placements with foster parents.

Dunclutha House Children's Home, Dunoon, Argyll

6. It was social services from Drumchapel that put me there. I've read that in my records. I was put into Dunclutha at the age of two. I stayed there until I was about five. I would say that I was approximately there between 1974 and 1977.
7. I have some memories of Dunclutha. It was really a home for babies and toddlers. I remember a very loving and warm female staff member. She was called Helen. I have no negative memories of my time in Dunclutha.

Leaving Dunclutha House Children's Home

8. I guess it would have been social services that organised for me to leave Dunclutha. I think the reason I left Dunclutha was because it was a place for babies and toddlers. I had reached the age that I needed to move on.

Blairvadach Children's Home, Helensburgh

9. I was moved over to Blairvadach when I was five. I stayed there until the age of nine. I would say that I was there approximately between 1977 and 1981. There

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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16. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Blairvadach Children's Home and moving to foster care

18. I was introduced to a couple who would be fostering me when I was about eight. I was in the home. I don't remember the name of the family. I went to stay with them for a few weekends but it never worked out. I was scared to leave the security of what I knew which was staying in a children's home. I then was introduced to The **JDK/JDM** when I was about nine. They came to the home to visit me.

Foster care with **JDK/JDM**, **JDK/JDM**, Pollokshields, Glasgow

19. Social services organised for me to be fostered by **JDK/JDM**. I ended up staying with them between the ages of nine and eleven. I would say I stayed with **JDK/JDM** between approximately 1981 and 1983.

The house on **JDK/JDM**

20. My first memory of the house was that it was very unkempt, untidy and smelly. It was not a nice environment to be in. They had a dog. The place was covered in dog hair. Mr **JDM** had wrecked cars in his garden. They were like hoarders. The place was rank. It wasn't a pleasant place to be in.
21. There were fifteen concrete stairs up to the house. **JDK/JDM** had the upper level of the house. The lower level was owned by a family called the **JDK/JDM**. Inside the house there were a further ten or fifteen steps up to a small landing.

22. There was a kitchenette in the flat. There was a living room. I wasn't allowed in the living room because that was "the good room." [JDK/JDM] kept that room reasonable. It was dirty and unpleasant but it was adequate for the purpose of my social worker visiting.

[JDK/JDM]

23. The couple were called [JDK/JDM]. They must have been in their thirties or forties. [JDK] was a vile woman. She could only use one hand because she had a disability with her other hand. She had a permanent limp. Mrs [JDK] was brutal. Mr [JDM] wasn't as bad as Mrs [JDK] but he did give me a good few kickings.
24. [JDK/JDM] had a daughter. She was called [REDACTED]. I reckon, when I went there, she must have been about seven. She was a bit mentally handicapped. I wouldn't be able to describe what her disability was. To me she just "wasn't right." I didn't really talk with [REDACTED] much.
25. [REDACTED] got everything she wanted. To [JDK/JDM] their daughter was the "bees knees." There was definitely a divide between me and [JDK/JDM] family. There was a divide in everything, whether it be clothing or anything else.

Routine

26. I would get up for school, walk to school, go to school, return back, eat, then be told to "get out". "Getting out" would be done in one of two ways. [JDK/JDM] would either just ask me to "get the fuck out" or they'd physically launch me out the door.
27. At weekends we sometimes went to Mr [JDM] parents in Larkhall. It was Mr [JDM] [REDACTED] and me who usually went. Sometimes Mrs [JDK] would come. There were no problems or issues there. We would literally sit there doing nothing. There was no television or anything. If we didn't go to see Mr [JDM] parents I would just

try and get out at the weekends. I would try and be out of that house as much as possible.

Sleeping arrangements

28. There were three bedrooms. One was [REDACTED]'s, one was [REDACTED] room and one was my room. My bedroom was just a bed. I wasn't allowed to put anything up like posters.

Visits / inspections

29. My social workers changed when I was with [REDACTED]. My new social worker was called Janet Rooney. She was brilliant. She was very understanding and very kind. I'm friends with her to this day.
30. Social work came to visit me maybe every couple of months. I reckon I was visited maybe six times a year. They didn't come all that often. They wanted to try and limit their contact with me. I recall having a conversation with my social worker about that. I think it was Janet who discussed that with me. They limited the contact because they wanted to leave me to grow with the family.
31. [REDACTED] would know when the social work would be coming to visit. They would be all nice and smiley before the visit. They would try and be nice to me. Their demeanour would change. They would put on a false front.
32. When social work came to visit me [REDACTED] would usher them straight through to the "good room." They would then leave the room. The door was left open. There was no privacy. [REDACTED] were always in earshot. The social worker would talk to me. They would ask "how's it going" and all that sort of thing. I wanted to say "get me the fuck out of here" but I couldn't. I couldn't say that because I was too scared. I was scared because [REDACTED] were about.

33. I can't remember my social workers visiting my room at [REDACTED]. They could have done. I don't know whether they might have done that prior to me going there. I really don't know.

School

34. I was sent to Glendale Primary School. It was about a mile away. I think I was taken in by my social worker and Mrs [REDACTED] on my first day. After that I had to walk to school on my own.
35. The teachers were alright. They clearly knew I was a poor wee boy from a children's home. I didn't like that. I was put in the dunce group at school. I remember Mrs [REDACTED] saying that I was in the "stupid group for stupid people." I was never bullied at school. I could look after myself because I had been in a children's home. If people slagged me off then I would stand up to them.
36. I don't remember ever having homework.

Chores

37. [REDACTED] didn't make me do any chores.

Food

38. The food was rank. It was poor quality. I didn't enjoy it. [REDACTED] and I had different food from [REDACTED]. If I left anything on my plate my face was pushed into it by Mrs [REDACTED].

Healthcare

39. I had to get a medical before I went to [REDACTED]. When I was at [REDACTED], I was once taken to the doctors for a couple of check-ups. After that I was taken to a place called "Notre Dame." I saw a doctor there of some sort. I don't know what it was for.

I don't know whether it might have been something to do with my behaviour. I don't remember being taken to a doctor other than those times. I never went to the dentist whilst I was with [REDACTED].

Clothing

40. [REDACTED] dressed me like a tramp. I looked like an absolute "tink." It was all hand me downs. They put me in clothes that were too small for me. I stood out at school because of the way I looked. There's no doubt about it.

Possessions and pocket money

41. I didn't have comics, toys or books. I wasn't given any pocket money. I didn't get sweets or anything like that. If I wanted something I had to go and shoplift things.

Birthdays and Christmas

42. At Christmas I would get maybe a small gift. [REDACTED] would get bikes and all sorts of things. I would get virtually nothing.

Friends

43. There was a children's home across the road on [REDACTED]. It was called [REDACTED]. I was like a moth to a light. I was straight over there. I remember being desperate to be put in there. I was desperate to be put back into a children's home. I made friends in there and tried to be there as much as I could. The home had a big garden at the back where we all used to play.
44. I played with a couple of kids called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was slightly older than me. [REDACTED] was slightly younger than me. They lived only about 150m from where I was staying with [REDACTED]. They lived in quite a posh house. I got on really well with them.

45. I got speaking to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] one day. They told me that they were adopted. I then told them my situation. I remember asking [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] whether they were beaten. They said "absolutely not." I remember that "blowing my mind" at the time. I thought that that was just the norm back then. I just thought that was what adults did.
46. I went up to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]'s house to play. I met their mum and dad. They were called Professor Reverend [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They ended up feeding me because I was so scrawny. I used to love going up there.

Abuse during time spent with [REDACTED]

47. Quite quickly after I was fostered they started leathering me. The kickings probably started only a week and a half after I was fostered by [REDACTED]. It was as quick as that. I was physically beaten on a daily basis by Mrs [REDACTED]. It was mostly her who did that. Mr [REDACTED] did that as well but not like her. She hit me with a dog lead. It was one of those dog leads that had a metal chain with a bit of leather on the end. Mrs [REDACTED] would grab me and punch me. She would "clump" me with her hand. She would pull me forward towards her with her clenched good hand by the scruff of my shirt then use the momentum of me be pulled forward to punch me in the face. She would give me a hiding. The kickings could be for anything. I remember, at the time, trying to think whether I had triggered something for these people to be giving me kickings.
48. Mrs [REDACTED] would throw me down both sets of stairs that lead out of the house. She launched me down the steps many a time. I'm not talking about just being pushed down. She would run and physically throw me. I would have to try and catch myself. I would hit the door at the bottom of the stairs. She would be straight down after me opening the door. She would then launch me down the concrete stairs outside.
49. One day [REDACTED] were making a coffee. I asked whether I could have one. At that time I didn't even really know what "a coffee" was. They gave me a hot coffee. I

tasted it. I didn't like it and said that I didn't want it. Mrs **JDK** gave me a hiding for that. After she gave me the hiding she dragged me into the kitchen and forced me to drink the cold coffee.

50. Mr **JDM** was out at work most the time. Mrs **JDK** would threaten to call Mr **JDM** and get him to come and get me. He did get me a few times. I remember one time that Mr **JDM** lifted me above his head. He threw me into my room. He was trying to get me onto my bed but he threw me too hard. I remember bouncing off the wall before landing on my bed.
51. **JDK/JDM** would "do things wrong" and blame me. She would lie. I would get a kicking from **JDK/JDM** for things that she had done. I would have to take the wrap for things that she had done. There was never any question of her not being believed by her parents.
52. After I got a kicking off of **JDK/JDM**, I used to write notes. I would write things like "I want to leave and go back to a home." I'd hide the notes in my room. **JDK/JDM** would find the notes and it would be like "round two." I'd get a kicking again. They did that to make sure I didn't say another word.
53. I would have a lot of bruising. I would have bruised ribs and things like that. I would be kept off school until the bruising was gone.
54. I wouldn't cower from them. I would get up. I wouldn't let them see me cry. When they left I would cry. It was constant with them. It was probably every day I got a clout or a kicking. My time with **JDK/JDM** was absolutely brutal. It was horrific. These people knocked the shit out of me for two years.

Reporting of abuse

[REDACTED]

55. I might have told [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] what was happening but I don't think I told Mr and Mrs [REDACTED]. It could be that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] may have said to their mum and dad that [REDACTED] were being bad to me but I don't really know.

Social workers

56. I initially did think "if I told my social worker now will she take me with her?" when she visited. I thought that wouldn't happen. I thought it would take time to get me out of there if I told her anything. I was scared that if I did tell her anything I would be left on my own for a few days until they got me out of there. I would have been murdered by [REDACTED] if they knew I had said something.

Teachers

57. I didn't get on well enough with my teachers at school to tell them what was going on.

Leaving foster care with [REDACTED]

58. One day, when I was eleven, I wrote a letter to my dad saying "I want to leave because they are not nice to me here. I need to get out of here and I need to get out of here now." It said things like "these people are cruel to me." I even said "I love you dad." At that time I hadn't even met my dad but I just had to write something. I have a copy of that letter. It is in amongst the social work records.
59. I've no idea whether the letter got to my dad. Janet must have got hold of it somehow because she got it all "squared away." She got me out. She got me out

quite sharpish. I can't recall exactly when but it might even have been that very same day. It was quick. I was gone. The relief I had at that point was phenomenal.

Alva Children's Home, Pollock, Crookston Rd

60. **Secondary Institutions -** I was there for no more than a year. I would have been there in about 1983. **Secondary Institutions - to be published later**

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Leaving Alva Children's Home

61. Leaving came about through my friends [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I'd continued playing with them. I would walk miles to see them. I told them where I was staying. I think they asked their mum and dad, Mr and Mrs [REDACTED], whether they would adopt me. I think their parents then looked into it. Social work must have had some input at this point. I don't know what they did. In the end Janet Rooney spoke to me and told me that it had been approved. She told me that I was going to be fostered by the [REDACTED].

Foster care with Mr and Mrs [REDACTED], [REDACTED] Pollokshields, Glasgow

62. I was fostered by the [REDACTED] when I was about eleven. I stayed with them until I was about fifteen. That would mean I was with them between approximately between 1983 and 1987. I think by the time I went to stay with the [REDACTED] I was a little bit damaged.
63. Professor Reverend [REDACTED] was a minister and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was a housewife and a teacher. They were an

older couple. They were kind to me. They gave me everything that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] got. They gave me everything I wanted.

64. I remember that Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] wanted me to call them mum and dad so that I could be part of the family. I found that very difficult. I found that embarrassing in front of people.
65. Being fostered by the [REDACTED] did make me happy. It was a positive outcome for me. I knew that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were never beaten. However, by that point my guard was up.

Visits

66. Janet was still my social worker when I was with the [REDACTED]. She came to visit me. She would try and reign me in. The reality was that it was always just a quick "hello" and then she would be away. I would just say "aye ok Janet, cheerio" and that was it.

School

67. I went to Shawlands Academy. I really struggled at secondary school. I struggled academically. I would "dog" school. I got suspended for my behaviour. The [REDACTED] still tried to help me though. They pushed me.
68. I ended up getting expelled. There was a six week break before I could go back to school. I then went to Bellahouston Academy. The first day I was there I was approached by another pupil who thought it would be ok to try and bully me. I just didn't allow it. My actions got me expelled that same day. I wasn't even there for an hour. After I left Bellhouston [REDACTED] tried to home school me. It didn't work out though. I think that was because I had missed so much. I couldn't catch up.

Discipline

69. The [REDACTED] engrained discipline into me. They did that within reason. They were so nice about it. They would just say they were “disappointed in me.” At no point did the [REDACTED] ever hit me. If I had done some of the things I did at the [REDACTED] at the [REDACTED] ^{JDK/JDM} I would have been kicked about like an empty tracksuit.

Leaving foster care with the [REDACTED]

70. My behaviour as I got older ruined it. It went all wrong at my own doing. I was hanging around with the wrong people. I became a casual and a soccer hooligan. I would stay out late. The [REDACTED] found that difficult because I was chapping the door late at night and things like that. I would steal money from them. As an adult now I look back and think that they didn’t deserve that.
71. I’ve looked at my file and I’ve read that the [REDACTED] felt that they couldn’t do anything more with me. I understand that. I believe the [REDACTED] said my behaviour was not appropriate. They couldn’t handle me. I agree with that. I wasn’t an easy person to handle. I was out of control at that point.
72. When the foster care arrangement with the [REDACTED] collapsed I ended up getting sent to a children’s home. It was all quite quick. Janet came to see me one day for a visit. She just told me that I was leaving that very same day. At that point the [REDACTED] were just at the end of their tether. I was disappointed with that. However, I also felt that I was going back to an environment that I knew. I think I just closed it all down and treated it all “matter of factly.”
73. I remained in contact with the [REDACTED]. I apologised to them for the things that I did. Sadly Professor Reverend [REDACTED] died a few years ago. At the time I initially provided my statement to the inquiry [REDACTED] was still alive. Unfortunately she has now passed away.. I’m glad that I apologised to them when I did. They only wanted to do good by me.

Ailsa Children's Home, Hyndland, Glasgow

74. I think I was between fifteen and sixteen when I went there. I was in there for about four or five months. I would say I was approximately there in 1987. Secondary Institutions - t

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

75.

76.

Contact with family

77. I got a phone call in the home. It was out of the blue. The phone was passed to me. I didn't know who was on the phone. The person on the other end of the phone said "listen it is your brother. Just pretend it is one of your pals. It is your brother ██████████" I was shocked. I didn't know what to say. I pretended just to speak normally as if I wasn't shocked. It was hard because that was probably the first time I had properly felt emotion. It was the first time I was meeting someone that belonged to me. It gave me some sort of identity. ██████████ then said "listen, can you get out?" I said I could. He then said "I am across the road with your brother ██████████" At this point I was nervous, scared but excited.
78. I went out to see them. We all hugged. The next thing was that ██████████ is saying "your dad wants to see you." I told ██████████ that I thought my father was dead. ██████████ said "no he isn't but he is an alcoholic." I then realised I could smell alcohol off of ██████████. I thought to myself "Jesus Christ." I didn't know these people. They could be anyone. I just went with them. We all jumped on a bus to Drumchapel.
79. When I went into the house I saw my dad. He was a gibbering drunk. He was an absolute wreck of a man. He was the sort of guy you would see walking around in

the city centre saying "give us ten pence for a cup of tea." He was that kind of guy but doubly as bad. He called me "Guy." I remember thinking "who the fuck is Guy? I'm FET." I decided there and then that I would never touch a drop of alcohol. I haven't since. For all my time in care, I never smoked, drank or took drugs. I never touched alcohol because I never wanted to be like that man.

80. I didn't want the identity that had been given to me. I pulled back. I could do that because I didn't have a bond with them. I wanted to be proud of them but I couldn't.
81. I've no idea how my brothers tracked me down. All I know is that somebody told them I was in that home and that was it. In my file I've found invitations to [REDACTED]'s wedding. I'm assuming that they were sent to social services. It could be that the invitation was sent to them and they told [REDACTED] that I was in a home in the West End. That's the only way I can think about it.
82. I wouldn't say meeting up with my family was a positive experience. I didn't have any further contact with them until about a year after that. They felt like strangers to me. I've probably seen my brothers, to this day, less than five times.

Leaving Ailsa Children's home

83. The social work organised for me to leave. Janet came to speak to me. I do remember that she suggested a unit that I might like to go to. I refused to go to. I was digging my feet in because I didn't want to leave the home I was in at that time. I was then told that I was too old and I had to leave. I ended up having to go to Redheugh. I was told that there were no "ifs or buts." I was told by Janet that I would be taught life skills in Redheugh for when I left care. That's the way it was sold to me. I was sold Redheugh as a place that would guide me and give me the skills for leaving care and looking after myself. It was social work took me to Redheugh. It was Janet who took me. I was taken there straight from the home.

Redheugh Adolescent Unit, Kilbirnie, Ayrshire

84. Redheugh was for older kids. It was run by the Salvation Army. I was sixteen when I went there. I think I was there for about a year. That means I would have been there between about 1987 and 1988.
85. Redheugh was for adolescents between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. I'd say there were about twenty to thirty boys and girls there. You weren't allowed out except for Saturdays. It wasn't cells or anything. You just weren't allowed off the grounds.
86. As a sixteen or seventeen year old from Glasgow, being sent out in the countryside in the middle of nowhere drove me wild. My girlfriend was in Glasgow. It wasn't a pleasant experience. It was an abusive place. We were young adults who were trying to fight against the system.

The facilities

87. Redheugh consisted of one big massive building where nearly everybody stayed. There was a hut where you went to do your activities. There was another building that was like a stepping stone halfway place. You went there if you were about to get out. They called that the independent living unit. You had responsibility for your own money and food and things like that in there. I never got to go to the independent living unit. I wanted to go there. I would have liked that.

Staff

88. The staff were made up of males and females. There was day staff and night staff. There were far less staff on at night time. The staff were all members of the Salvation Army. They were holy people. They were bible bashers. Some of the male staff were rough. The staff were hard but I didn't really have a problem with them.

89. Mae Mae Darroch was my key worker. She was a Redheugh staff member. I didn't get on with her at all. She was a "hard hard" woman. There was a staff member called Steven Burgess. Another staff member was called George. I don't remember his surname. He was a very kind hearted soul. He was a gentleman. I don't remember the names of any of the other staff members.

General behaviour of kids at Redheugh

90. The kids liked night time. I would sneak up and go and speak to the girls. I was chancing my arm. We did use to cause drama. We went up on the roof and things like that. The police would be called. We were absolute idiots. I think that we behaved like that because we were denied our freedom.

Routine at Redheugh Adolescent Unit

First day

91. The first day I arrived at Redheugh they took my bags and put me into my room. I was sharing with two other guys. That was around tea time. After that I went down for dinner. During dinner there was a guy staring at me. I knew who he was. He was a kid I had known in Ailsa Children's Home. He was a pal of a wee boy I had battered there. After dinner I went up to the dorms. The guy who had been staring at me over dinner was there. He walked up to me. We were face to face. Within a couple of minutes we were rolling about on the floor. I battered him. My first day was a scrap. Funnily enough I became good mates with that boy later on.

Daily routine

92. We got up early. Breakfast was about 7am. Everybody was out of school so we had to go, from 9am to 4pm, to a hut to do activities. We did things like art. It was mundane rubbish. That's all you did. Lunch was 12:30pm. At 4pm you scooted up the stairs and went back to your dorm to watch telly. There was nothing else to do.

93. I was only allowed out on a Saturday. You were only allowed out from when the first train left, which was about 10am, to when the last train came back, which was about 10pm. I would go out in Glasgow. That was the only time I could get to see my friends.

Sleeping arrangements

94. There were dorms. There were eight or ten people in each dorm. Mine was called Jura. There was another called Tiree. The girls were at the top of the building in another dormitory.

Food

95. The food was alright. It was adequate.

Washing / bathing

96. The washing facilities were communal. We would get up in the morning and go into one big room full of showers.

Religious instruction

97. They didn't throw religion down our throats but they had bibles in the rooms. The bibles just got used as doorstops. The staff would ask us to attend church on a Sunday. Nobody would go to that. The staff would go but the kids wouldn't.

Christmas and birthdays

98. I can't remember if I was there for Christmas or for a birthday.

Visits / inspections

99. Visits were only made by social work if they had been requested by Mae Mae Darroch. If the social worker visited it would be an official meeting with the social worker, Mae Mae Darroch and the head of Redheugh. We would discuss my behaviour. We would talk about things like if I had been fighting. I don't remember any inspections or inspectors.

Healthcare

100. I don't remember any doctors or dentists. If you were injured you went to the hospital by yourself. I remember that during the period I was being cared for by Redheugh I got slashed on a visit into Glasgow. A guy attacked me with an open razor near Central Station. I put my hand up. He got me on both my hands. He also stabbed me in my leg. I phoned Redheugh to tell them what had happened. They basically said "we will see you when we see you" and that I had to "make my own way back." I took myself to hospital. I had to get an operation. I then had to make my own way back to Redheugh. I was in agony.

Abuse at Redheugh Adolescent Unit*General discipline*

101. Punishment was being put into a room and being made to stay there. There'd be a male staff member standing guard outside the door. If you were really kicking off you would be restrained. That could happen for only answering back. It could be done for saying things like "fuck off" or "you're not my mum or dad."
102. Sometimes the staff would pile in mob handed and get you to the floor. Sometimes they yanked the chair from under you to get you to the floor. That happened on many occasions to me. I had grown men holding me down. I would nearly pass out from the pressure that was being applied to my back. The restraint wasn't just

“holding your arms.” It was more than that. It was agony. Your neck was getting squeezed. I saw other kids being restrained and passing out. I remember thinking to myself “oh fuck.”

Steven Burgess

103. Steven Burgess was very touchy feely. He didn't do it to me but he did do that with weaker younger boys. They were maybe boys who were what you'd call more “emotionally immature.” He'd give them a wee pat on their arses. He'd grab their nuts. He'd walk in on kids when they were showering. He walked in on me once. I just said “what the fuck are you doing?”

104. None of the other boys told me that Burgess was doing anything to them. However, there was chat around it. No one said something about a particular incident. I think people were too embarrassed. We were hardy wee boys. Talking about something like that would have been a big sign of weakness. Back then my thought process wasn't there. I took it all as a bit of banter. I have heard that Steven Burgess has now been convicted for child abuse and sexual assault. I think he got ten years.

From local kids in the area

105. The local kids used to hate us because we weren't from that area. There would be maybe four or five of us who would be getting the last train back to Kilbirnie on a Saturday. When the train came in there would be maybe twenty or thirty local kids waiting for us. They would be waiting for us because we didn't come from that area. That happened every Saturday in Kilbirnie. It was like the opening scene in *Gladiator* with all the arrows. We would get bottles thrown at us. We had running battles with these kids. They had cars so we had to dive into fields. It was constant. There was too many of them for us to defend ourselves. We were assaulted loads of times.

106. We told the staff at Redheugh what was happening. The staff refused to get us. We would have to run from Lochwinnoch to the home. The home was about five miles from the station.
107. I ended up going up to the instigator of all these kids. The guy's name was [REDACTED]. I walked up to him and said "let's have a square go and we'll call it a day." I ended up taking the guy on. As I was battering him his girlfriend came up and hit me round the back of my head with a brick. I turned round, thinking it was a bloke, and punched her. I was mortified. [REDACTED] and the girl made a complaint to the police. I got lifted. I got done for two assaults and a breach of the peace. I got a criminal record and a £250 fine. At that point, for all my days in care, I had never been in trouble with the police. The staff didn't care. They should have stood up for me and told the police that we were all having to go through these running battles.
108. The kids coming to the station and battling us happened throughout the time I was in Redheugh. It continued to happen after I was convicted. They used to come up to the home to do it. They came into the fields to get us. These kids were coming into the grounds to battle us. The staff saw what was happening and they didn't do anything.
109. Ultimately, it ended up with five or six of us having to go into Glasgow to buy baseball bats to defend ourselves. We wanted to finish it. That's how scared we were. We ended up using our pocket money to buy the bats. The only ones we could find were bright luminous pink and green. We had those when we came in. We were lucky no one was killed because people were getting seriously injured. It had gotten to the point that boys were getting thrown onto the railway tracks.

Reporting of abuse at Redheugh Adolescent Unit*Staff*

110. The staff didn't care about the local kids assaulting us. We used to tell them what was happening. We asked them to come and get us in the minibus. They would just say "no, we haven't got a driver." We told them that we were being assaulted. We told them that it was happening every weekend.

Social services

111. I would report the assaults by the local kids and the running battles in meetings where Janet Rooney and staff from Redheugh were present. It would have been Mae Mae Darroch who was present at these meetings. George might have been there as well. The meetings were really one sided. I raised my concerns but I wasn't listened to. It was all "this is what is happening" and "this is what you will do." I would say something but they weren't listening. In the end, they didn't do anything about the assaults.

The police

112. The police would turn up at the home all of the time. However, it was never the locals they were investigating. It was always us. We were the ones who were always getting into trouble. We were the "bad ones" because we were in the home. We weren't the baddies. The local kids were the ones who were causing all of the problems. It was the twenty or thirty kids who were going out to get us who were in the wrong.

Leaving Redheugh Adolescent Unit

113. When I was seventeen and a half I was called into a room. Janet Rooney was there with Mae Mae Darroch and George. I hadn't expected my social worker to be

visiting. I was told by Mae Mae Darroch "a decision has been made that this place isn't suitable for you now. You need to leave." The decision was made for me. I didn't get any input into that. I asked when I would be leaving. They then told me that I had to pack my stuff there and then. I didn't have much stuff anyway so it didn't take long. I was then taken to what was called "supported lodgings."

114. I don't think there was any preparation for me going into the world at Redheugh. I thought, when I was told that I would be going to Redheugh, that I would be taught the skills for not being in care. I thought that because I knew it was an adolescent unit. That's the way it was sold to me. My social worker had sold it to me as a place that would guide me and give me the skills for leaving care and looking after myself. I got none of that.

**Supported lodging with the [REDACTED], [REDACTED], The Gallowgate,
Glasgow**

115. I went to supported lodgings when I was seventeen and a half. Supported lodgings is a basically a room in a stranger's house. I left just before I was eighteen. I wasn't there that long.

[REDACTED]

116. The woman who ran the house was called [REDACTED]. She was an older lady with mobility issues. She had a job she went to during the day. She had a daughter also called [REDACTED]. She had a son called [REDACTED]. They were pleasant enough people. I had a good relationship with the [REDACTED]. I helped out [REDACTED]. To this day I look upon [REDACTED] as my sister. I see her most days.

Routine at [REDACTED] The Gallowgate, Glasgow*First day*

117. When I arrived I said hello to everybody and was shown up to my room. All the other bedrooms were padlocked. They had obviously done this before. People had stolen off them and done something. My room was just a small bed, a chest of drawers and a lamp. I asked the person showing me to my room "what do I do now?" They said "what do you mean "what do I do now?" This is where you're staying." I asked how long I would be staying. I was told that I would be there until they could get a flat for me. I remember thinking "right ok." I thought that it was shit but I was back in Glasgow. I realised that I could go and see my girlfriend and things like that.

Daily routine

118. I wasn't allowed to stay in the house when the [REDACTED] were out. Come 7am in the morning, when the [REDACTED] went to work, I would be put out. I wouldn't be allowed back in until 5pm. If I had money I would go on a bus. It was the only warm place I could find. I sometimes did that for hours on end.

Income

119. I didn't have any income other than my "brew money." I had to give the [REDACTED] money out of that for my digs. That left me with maybe five or six pounds to last me two weeks. It all meant that I didn't really have any money. In all, the situation meant I couldn't really do anything.

Food

120. I did steal things from shops if I got hungry. However, I had learnt my lesson from the [REDACTED]. I didn't steal anything from the [REDACTED]. At the end of the day it wasn't right doing that sort of thing.

Leaving [REDACTED] The Gallowgate, Glasgow

121. I met my girlfriend, [REDACTED], when I was thirteen. She had also been placed in care. She ended up only being in care for a couple of years. She was adopted by a well to do family over in Clarkston on the Southside of Glasgow.
122. When [REDACTED] left care she got given a flat on [REDACTED]. My girlfriend was just about coming out of care and she was given a flat. I had been in care since the age of two and they had given me a cupboard in someone's house.
123. I started to stay at my girlfriend's place overnight. It felt more like home. I ended up asking for permission from social work whether I could stay with my girlfriend. My social worker agreed with that because I was coming up to the age of eighteen and would be leaving care. I was still under the social work's section 16 when I moved in with my girlfriend. That was because I wasn't yet eighteen. The day I turned eighteen social work cut me lose.
124. I was probably not ready when I moved in with my girlfriend. My girlfriend probably wasn't ready as well because she was only seventeen. We were just kids. We had no support. We coped with second hand furniture.

Life after being in care

125. I asked for a grant when I left care and went to [REDACTED]. You could ask for that to buy furniture and things for your new flat. To begin with I was refused. Eventually they did give me one. I think it was £1,500. I bought the ugliest sofa, a telly and a video. My girlfriend then got pregnant. I had a YTS job and failed it. I then got a wee job in a warehouse. That was ok but it wasn't secure.
126. I needed to grow up and support my girlfriend and son. I ended up joining the army. As a young boy with no educational prospects or qualifications I had no choice. After I joined the army my life was amazing. I had a great career. I loved every day of it.

127. I think there is absolutely a connection between me going into the army and being in care. It allowed me to go from one institution to another. It allowed me to remain around a big body of people.
128. I was in the army for just shy of fourteen years. The reason I left the army was because I got injured in conflict. After I got injured, and left the army, I got a very secure good job in the security training industry. I was earning just short of £50,000 a year. I'm currently not working.

Reporting of abuse after leaving care

129. After leaving care I kept it all to myself. I haven't really spoken about it all in depth with anyone. I spoke about it with my ex-wife but all I said was that "I was beaten." The first time I have spoken about things properly is when I spoke to the Inquiry.
130. I've never gone into a police station and talked to the police about what happened. The only reason that I've not done that is that I have been left with a very significant lack of trust when it comes to the police.

Impact

131. I had a breakdown in 2014. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I was going to kill myself. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I don't remember much of the incident but that is what happened.
132. I ended up in Leverndale mental hospital for a few days. I was diagnosed with complex PTSD. An organisation called Combat Stress diagnosed me with that. Combat Stress is a veterans' mental health charity. They said that my PTSD could

be potentially from childhood trauma as well as the things I had experienced in the military.

133. I have recently been diagnosed with an emotionally intensive disorder (EID). That came as a shock for me. I've been told that that is potentially from my childhood trauma and the lack of development I had. Basically it could potentially be from having no love or interaction as a child.
134. The monster sometimes comes out because of my PTSD. I say violent things but I am not physically violent. It's only after those episodes that I realise what I have actually said. My PTSD has caused me to lose the one consistent person in my life, my ex-wife. My last relationship with my partner of four years came to an end because of my PTSD. She couldn't live with the monster that sometimes comes out.
135. I'm not the best when it comes to relationships. As a child I couldn't form relationships with people because I knew I would be moved on within two years. That has resulted in a very "matter of fact" approach to relationships now. I can drop people quickly. If someone says they're going to go away it's "nae bother, job done" with me.
136. Christmas isn't a good experience for me as an adult. I don't even put up a Christmas tree in the house. It's a commercial thing but it also isn't a big thing for me. If I had been brought up in a normal family environment then maybe I would get excited about it. I grew up in homes. All I really got was the "inside of a doughnut." I got nothing.
137. I am totally uncomfortable being on my own in a house. I think that is related to my time in care.

Treatment

138. I have had no counselling in connection with my time in care. I have seen psychiatrists with Combat Stress about my PTSD. That came about because of my experiences in the army. Even though I've spoken with them I've skimmed over my childhood experiences. They're not really set up to deal with that sort of thing. They're there to talk about the stress associated with being in the army.

Records

139. I recovered my social work records years ago. I contacted Drumchapel social work and they provided them. I made a freedom of information request. I did that because I wanted to know where I came from, why I ended up in care and who put me in care. I wanted to find out why social work thought [JDK/JDM] were a good fit for me. I wanted to find out first-hand what was going on rather than learning about things through other people.
140. In my social work file I read that the staff at Redheugh thought I was taking drugs. I've never taken drugs in my life. When I read through that file it infuriates me. There is nothing in that file that says that I was getting beaten or anything.
141. I found within my social work records a copy of the letter I sent to my dad when I was with [JDK/JDM]. I don't know when that letter was given to social services but it is dated. The one on the file is a copy. I'm not sure how they ended up getting a copy of that letter.

Lessons to be Learned

Thoughts on [JDK/JDM] and seeing Mr [JDM] in later life

142. [JDK/JDM] treated me like an absolute shit. If you were to see the family you would say "how the hell did these people, who were mentally handicapped, get to foster someone? How did they pass the vetting?" Looking back now, I don't understand how anybody would place a child in that environment. I think there should have maybe been a higher level of vetting with potential foster parents. The vetting should have been done to see whether they were suitable. I suppose that, if someone puts up a front, it is difficult to see past that. Vetting might not pick that up.
143. I saw Mr [JDM] later on in life. I saw him in an Asda supermarket. I reckon that would have been in about 2003. I was in the army at the time and was a fit man. I said to my wife "there's that prick there." I was going to go over and destroy him. Then I thought to myself "I would be no better than him if I went over and hit an old man." I could have wiped the floor with him. I did go up to him. I asked him whether he remembered me. He said "no." I said to him "I'm [FET]." He asked me how I was as if nothing had happened. I said to him "you and your wife kicked the fuck out of me for nearly two years. I'm a grown man now. I'm a soldier. I could do the same to you now if I wanted." The colour drained out of his face. I then said "but I'm not going to. I'm not going to do that because I am not you." I then walked away.
144. I wish I could say I felt better doing that. I did get the moral high ground but, at that point in my life, it didn't make me feel better. I just knew that there would be repercussions for me and my family if I had done something.

Decision making by authorities in charge of my care

145. In all the time I was in care I never went to a children's hearing. That was because I was under the care of social work. You only got a hearing if you were under the care of a parent or something. Social work made all the decisions for me from the age of two until I left care.

146. I would have liked to have had a bit more of an input into my life as a kid. Every decision was made for me without me knowing why the decisions were being made. I was told that I was going to a place "because I was bad." I was never given the chance to rectify my behaviour. It shouldn't have been all just "right you're going."

Final thoughts

147. I think, within reason, there maybe should have been some support available after I left care. However, with the amount of kids that are in care, how are they going to do that? I don't know whether they could give every person a key worker from the age of eighteen until they are twenty five. Someone to guide them. I don't know how they could do that. At the end of the day they wouldn't be with them all day every day.
148. The support should have been there whilst I was in care. I should have been helped to understand the "big bad world." I was moved around between here, there and everywhere but never given support or preparation.
149. I had a choice, I could have let my time in care impact on me in the way so many of my friends have let it impact them. They went down the route of drink and drugs dependence. I chose to do neither of those things.
150. The social work were my guardians under section 16 between the ages of two and eighteen. They have to be held accountable for what happened. At the end of the day they ruled my life. They were my parent. They made decisions without seeing me. They didn't give me reasons for their decisions. I blame the social work for the abuse I suffered. I blame them because they didn't listen to me.
151. I hope that kids in care are now treated as humans and children. Children aren't in care out of choice. Adults put them in these places. The reality is that most kids, irrespective of how badly they are treated, would still want to be with their parents.

Children need to be treated with dignity and respect. They need to be involved in the process. They shouldn't just be standing on the side-lines being told what is happening. It doesn't matter how old they are, children deserve an explanation for the decisions that are being taken. Being moved about is traumatic. Children deserve to know what is happening and why it is happening.

152. 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.

FET


Signed.....

Dated..... 13 APRIL 2018