

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

PPQ

Support person present: No

1. My name is PPQ. My surname as a child was PPQ. My date of birth is 1965. My contact details are known to the inquiry.

Background

2. I was brought up at in the Possilpark area of Glasgow. My parents' names were and . I was the youngest of nine siblings. is the eldest, then there's , , , , , , and me. is about ten years older. I know there was about a year between us all, but a gap of about three years between and . When I was about ten, my mother also adopted my sister's son, . We had a busy household.
3. My father was a worker. He was a welder at Remploy. He was disabled and had but he was a really good, hard worker. He passed a lot on to us about work ethics, always earning your own money and having a savings account. He didn't like liars and put a lot of good things into us. We had a good life. We weren't rich and we didn't have a lot of money. We got hand-me-down clothes, but we didn't go without anything. If we needed something, the money would be left on the fireplace in the morning.
4. My mum ran a good household. She was quite organised. My dad was more strict than my mum. We had to get up in the morning, make our beds and get dressed. My father would never allow us to be walking around in our night dresses. I don't know how my mum did it, having nine kids. I remember her cooking my favourite meals. She always

had a bit massive pot to go round everybody. She would make stovies or eggs, chips and beans when she was skint.

5. I don't know why the decision was taken to send me to respite care. I imagine it was because there were so many kids. We didn't have any social work involvement at home. My dad would never have allowed it and we didn't need it because our parents were taking care of us. Because my dad was working full-time, I think it was my mum's decision to send us away for respite care.

6. I didn't realise at the time, but it wasn't just me that went. When I started exploring what happened recently, I discovered that [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] also went to Fornethy. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] don't remember much. [REDACTED] has a bad memory, but I think she was there at the same time as [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] remembers [REDACTED] being with her but she doesn't remember me. I don't know whether they went at a different time. I don't have any memories of my siblings being at Fornethy with me so I don't know whether we were there at the same time. I don't know whether my brothers went into respite care.

7. I don't have clear memories of being told I was going to Fornethy. I'm very clear that I was told that I was going on a holiday. It was a six week holiday. I don't know the lead up to it or who told me that I was going to this place. I don't even remember travelling to get there.

Fornethy House, Residential School, Kilry, Angus

8. I think I was five or six when I went to Fornethy for the first time. I went back again when I was about ten or eleven. I think I was there for six weeks on each occasion. I don't know what time of year I went to Fornethy, but I know it was snowing the second time. I would have thought I'd have more memories of being there the second time around because I was a bit older, but I only have a few. I didn't see myself as being in care because I was there on a holiday. I know there must have been other girls placed there by social work.

9. Fornethy was a girls' school for primary school aged children. It was surrounded by big trees. You don't see it if you drive past because of all the trees. I couldn't remember what the house looked like. I always remember there being what looked like faces on the building. I've since visited Fornethy as an adult and I was looking for these faces. I noticed that above the doors and in different areas right round the building "1915" was written. It made sense to me that as a young girl, 1915 looked like a face.
10. There was a ground floor, which had the tuck shop on it. There was also a room that you could sit in. I remember going up the big, brown staircase. When you went upstairs, my bedroom was to the left. There was also a library on that floor and I can remember a teachers' room, which was next to my bedroom. I remember there being other doors there but I don't know what they were. There were gold plaques above the doors with names on them, but I can't remember the names. I've since realised that there was another level but I don't remember knowing that as a child.
11. I don't know how many girls there were at Fornethy. There are very few faces that I can remember from my time there. I can't really remember talking to other children, although I did get into trouble for trying to talk. I can remember being in the shower with a girl called [REDACTED] when I went back for the second time. I can remember the head teacher, who was called Fletcher. She would wear a kilt, socks, a woolly jumper and a brooch. She was an older woman, but I don't know how old she was.
12. I remember the teacher who was bad to me, Robinson. I don't know whether she was Miss or Mrs. I can see her face as clear as day. She was quite butch and had a puffy face. She had a wide nose and quite a hard looking face. She had brown hair down to chin level. She would wear fleeces, walking shoes and trousers you'd wear for walking. I can remember a male visitor, but I can't see his face. I have memories of sitting at the dining table with kids all round me but I can't see their faces. It's as if the other children were invisible. There were other kids there, but I can't see them and I don't know who they are. I don't know whether I knew them.

Routine at Fornethy

First memories

13. Last year, I was part of a group of people who had been to Fornethy. One of the ladies shared a photo of the roundabout at Fornethy and asked if anybody remembered it. When I looked at the photo, all I could hear was stones like the bus turning. I could hear the gravel under the bus. I think that is a memory of arriving there. I have no memory of walking in the door of Fornethy. My first memory of Fornethy is probably of carrying the sheets. We must have been handed them. They were ironed. I'm sure there was a pair of sand shoes on top of them. I remember walking in a line, carrying the sheets.

Mornings and Bedtime

14. I was in a big dormitory with big, tall ceilings and big, massive windows. My bed was on the far side next to a window. I don't know exactly how many beds were in the dormitory, but there were beds next to mine and beds across the wall, leading right up to the door. I now know there were beds at the other side of the dormitory, but I don't remember them. There were quite a few girls in that room. I remember there was a slim wardrobe next to my bed. It was made of light-coloured wood, maybe pine. I can't remember my clothes hanging in the wardrobe, but there was a shelf inside it with my toiletry bag on it. The toiletry bag is the only personal possession I can remember having there. I don't even remember a suitcase or a bag or anything like that.
15. I don't really remember much about the morning or night time routine. I can't remember people coming round to get you up or tell you to go to bed. I wet the bed all the time. I don't think I had wet the bed before I went to Fornethy. You weren't allowed out of bed when you'd gone to bed. You had to stay there all night. All I can remember from the morning routine is going down with my wet sheets in a line. I remember going along the corridor. I don't know whether we were going to drop the sheets off somewhere to get washed. There were definitely other children there because we were lining up, but I can't remember their faces or how many of them there were. I

also have a memory of standing at my bed with big, cotton pants on and not liking the pants. I don't know whether it was morning time.

16. I think it was the first time I was at Fornethy that I peeked out from under the covers and saw a girl being removed from her bed. I could see the door from where my head was. It was always opened a little and there was a wee bit of light coming in. A person came in and lifted a child out of her bed. I just saw a shadowy figure. I couldn't say who the person was or whether the person was male or female.
17. I can't remember anything about the sleeping arrangements when I was at Fornethy for the second time.

Chores

18. I think we made our own beds, but I don't remember any other chores. I always knew how to make a bed nicely and I think I learned that at Fornethy. I knew how to put the sheet up and have it folded over.

Mealtimes/food

19. I don't have many memories of mealtimes, other than a girl being force-fed at the table next to mine. I don't know which meal that happened at, but it was the first time I was at Fornethy. Any memories I have of being in the dining room, the same teacher was there. It was Robinson. I do remember there being a serving hatch and the teacher sitting next to the hatch. I think the food was brought to us, but I can't remember what we had.

Washing and bathing

20. I remember the toothpaste at Fornethy. It was pink and in a round tub. I remember that I liked it. We probably didn't do regular brushing at home. I remember putting my toothbrush into it, dabbing it and brushing my teeth.

21. I don't have memories of showers or baths the first time that I was at Fornethy. The second time I was at Fornethy, one of the only things I do remember is being in the shower. I have a clear memory of standing in the shower room with another girl that I knew, [REDACTED]. She was a neighbour from Possilpark. She's one of the few faces I can remember from my time at Fornethy. I must have been going through puberty. I was roundabout that age. That's the only shower or bath that I can remember, but I don't actually remember having the shower just seeing [REDACTED] there. I felt really insecure and uncomfortable, standing in the shower. I don't think anybody else was there.

22. I've since spoken to [REDACTED]. She remembers so much more about Fornethy than me. She says that because we were hitting puberty, we had different shower times from the rest of the kids. I've learned that [REDACTED]'s family had a lot of social work involvement when we were growing up, but I wasn't aware of that at the time.

School

23. All I can remember about schooling from my first time at Fornethy is writing a letter home and copying it from a board. It was in a different room than the school room. It was a big room and I could see the swings outside. I must have been looking out of the window quite a lot. I wasn't very literate, so I was quite happy to copy a letter and send it home.

24. I have one memory of schooling from my second time at Fornethy. I can't remember who else was in the class with me. I remember Robinson teaching us long division. She was writing a sum down and rubbing it out again. She was asking me the answer. I'm not clever when it comes to maths and things like that. She was screaming and screaming and screaming at me. She was getting angry, hitting the board, rubbing it out and writing it again. She was very near to me. The board was the type that moves round on wheels. The answer was probably there, but I couldn't understand the whole concept of the sum. It made me feel very stupid.

Leisure time

25. I think we had movies on a white board that was on a metal thing with wheels. There was something like that in one of the rooms on the ground floor, but I can't remember watching the movies. I remember playing on the swings at Fornethy, but it's a single memory. I do remember going on walks. We walked to some stones, but I don't know how far away they were or how long it took us. I remember singing, "I wish I wish upon a stone," but I can't remember the rest of the song. I was sure they were tall stones. I've been in touch with other girls who were at Fornethy and they showed me a picture of a pile of stones built up, but I don't remember that.

26. I remember there was a tuck shop, down the stairs and to the side. I remember queuing for it. We would step into it and there would be a teacher sitting at the table. There was a shelf on the left hand side with things on it. The teacher had a book in front of her where she would tick things off. I have a memory of Fletcher, the head teacher, and Robinson being behind the desk. I think I always got something handed to me, one sweetie or a gum. I always presumed that I didn't have any money and that was why I didn't get anything else. Other kids would come out with lots of sweeties. My mother always maintained that she did send me pocket money. [REDACTED], who was there at the same time as me, remembers more about Fornethy. She says that my money would have been withdrawn as a punishment for wetting the bed.

27. [REDACTED] also asked me whether I remembered buying a present for my mum and dad. It was a really nice feeling because I remembered that I bought Maltesers to bring home. I remember being excited that I had a gift to take home to my family, but I don't know whether that was during my first or second stay at Fornethy. It made me realise that I must have had money if I was able to buy the Maltesers. I had never even thought that might not have got the money because I wet the bed. All through my childhood, I just thought it was because my mum never sent me any money.

28. I remember I had to walk in the snow the second time that I was at Fornethy. I was at the front of the queue. The snow was so deep that I had to make a path for the younger children. I can't remember where we went in the snow, I just remember how cold and

sore my legs were. The snow had filled up my welly boots so it was uncomfortable. I have a sense of being treated a little bit better the second time around, possibly because I was a bit older and helped with the younger children.

Birthdays and Christmas

29. I don't know whether I was at Fornethy for my birthday or at Christmas time. I have no memories of that.

Religious instruction

30. I do remember kneeling down next to the bed and having my elbows on the bed. I think we said prayers at the dinner table as well. I did have a dream about being in the church there. When you went in the door, there were two sets of pews down each side and I could see myself sitting there. I can't see anybody else. I don't know whether I just went to church on one occasion.

Visits/Inspections

31. My family didn't visit me when I was at Fornethy. We didn't get any phone calls, but I do remember writing a letter home. I don't remember receiving a letter from my family. I remember we were told that there were special visitors coming, so we were all to be very good. Miss Robinson was there and there was a man there. He was wearing a brown suit and a hat with a rim round it. He was sitting at the table, but I can't see his face. I just remember seeing that one man.

Running away

32. I think I imagined running away from Fornethy, but it would have been too dark. It was very dark and there were very tall trees surrounding the place. The tall trees and the darkness was such that you couldn't see anything. As a wee lassie, I don't think I would have dared to run away. I would have been too scared. Any girl that ran away would have been extremely brave.

Discipline

33. I can remember being put into the library for talking at night time. I can't remember how I got there, I just know I was put there. I don't know who told us, but we were told that the two ladies who had given the house over were dead and buried in the fireplace of the library. I had to stand at the fireplace. There was a picture of the two ladies with a gold plaque underneath it. I remember reading what was on the plaque over and over again so I should remember what was written on it. I remember wondering how the bodies of the ladies had got in there. As I faced the fireplace, I could see the corridor on my right hand side. I could see faint light, but it was very dark. There were books behind me, but I don't think I looked back much. I wasn't allowed to turn round. I don't know how long I was there for or how I got back to my bed.

Abuse at Fornethy

34. The first time that I went to Fornethy, I can remember a girl being force fed. She was sitting at the table next to mine. I can see that happening, but I can't see her face and I can't describe what she looked like. I don't know whether I was keeping my own head down. I can see the teacher holding the spoon. I think it was like a soup spoon. She was holding the girl's jaw down and shovelling food into her mouth. The girl was boaking it back up. I was trying to look but I was trying to hide my face at the same time. I only remember that happening on one occasion. I don't know who the teacher was, but I only remember one teacher being in the dining hall during meals and that was Robinson.
35. When I was there for the first time, I remember being told that special visitors were coming to Fornethy. I remember a man in a brown suit being there and he was sitting at a table. I remember trying to talk to the person next to me. We were lining up to go out of the room. Robinson was standing there and as the line came to me she grabbed me by the neck. She lifted me off the floor and against the wall. She was screaming. I don't know what she was saying, but she screamed and screamed because I had spoken when the visitors were in.

36. I can't remember coming down from the wall. It was terrifying. I can't remember having any injuries. I've always had problems with my throat, but I don't know whether it's anything to do with what happened at Fornethy. I've got thyroid problems and a goitre. I had to go for speech and language therapy a few times because I couldn't project my voice. I couldn't go on with the speech therapy after my brother died. I don't know whether my throat problems could be related to that assault by Robinson.

Reporting of abuse at Fornethy

37. I never spoke about Fornethy when I went home. The only thing I remember talking about was a bit of backchat with my mum as I got older. I would complain that she hadn't sent me any money while I was there. She told me that she did and that my older sister had sent it. I never discussed what had happened there. If I had, I think my dad would have blamed my mum. If he thought one of his girls had been affected, he would have been upset because it was her idea to send us to Fornethy.

Leaving Fornethy

38. I don't have any good memories from my time at Fornethy. I don't even remember leaving. I have a memory of reaching home and my sister, [REDACTED], was there. She was saying, "Oh my god, look at her teeth, look how nice her teeth look." I don't know whether I'd just come off the bus. I must have brushed my teeth regularly at Fornethy and they were clean. That was something that Fornethy got right.

Life after leaving respite care

39. Things were fine when I got home. I think I was glad to be there. I never spoke about Fornethy to my mum and dad. My mum and dad would have been fine about me wetting the bed. They wouldn't have shouted or screamed at me because they were never like that. They would have just stripped the bed and washed the bedding.

40. I don't think my mother ever told me about puberty or anything like that. My mum took me to the doctor when I was about sixteen because I hadn't been well. The doctor asked me if I'd had my periods. My mum said I hadn't, but I'd had them for about a year. My mother was stunned.
41. I was [REDACTED] about three years ago. I read something about Fornethy [REDACTED]. Somebody had written about their bad memories. I hadn't thought about Fornethy for all those years. I'm not confident at writing, but I started [REDACTED] and I told my story. I didn't realise that I remembered until somebody had written the word "Fornethy" and their bad memories. A woman called [REDACTED] contacted me through another family member because of what I had written. She told me that there was an investigation into Fornethy. Before I knew it, I was involved helping her with admin and things like that.
42. I went up to see Fornethy last year. Before I even got there, my stomach started to churn when I saw the trees. I went with [REDACTED] and she was having a total meltdown and panic attack. My throat was sticking. I was trying to keep myself together for [REDACTED], but the trees had a big impact on me. When I looked at the house, I recognised what I had thought were faces when I was a child. I couldn't recognise one end of the building from the other. Other than the way I felt when I saw the trees and seeing the "1915" that I had thought were faces, it didn't make any difference to me. There were some abandoned cars in the grounds. When I saw one of the cars, I instantly related it to Robinson. I had a memory of it being her car. It was a mini, but I can't remember the colour of it now. I don't know whether it was her car or whether I'd seen her driving a similar mini.
43. I think [REDACTED] had been hit hard over the years. I completely regretted getting involved and writing my story. I found it horrendous. She was constantly analysing this and analysing that. I just know my story and that's it. I don't want to analyse everything. I suffer from vertigo and migraines, but they became more intense. It was constant. I had to get medication from my doctor. My husband thought that I'd made a big mistake getting involved with it all.

44. I ended up falling out with [REDACTED] over privacy [REDACTED]. She wanted people to get involved in her group. She was asking people their stories. I added questions, such as, "Are you a former pupil of Fornethy, which year roughly were there and explain in two or three words what your memory was like?" She wanted the whole story and she wanted to listen to these stories on the phone. People are dealing with their own memories and their own things. I just thought that it became too much.
45. I put [REDACTED] on and made it completely private. I hadn't told my story for all those years so I thought there might be people out there who hadn't told their husbands or their kids. It's their story to tell when they want to tell it. I just felt that we shouldn't be getting involved in people's stories. If they wanted to share it, they could share it.
46. [REDACTED] was relentless in trying to find out dates and abuse. I think she was looking for people who had been there at the same time as herself. I wasn't sexually abused at Fornethy, but she seemed to be obsessed with it. It was making me start to wonder whether I'd been sexually abused. It wasn't nice. If somebody in the group said they'd enjoyed their time at Fornethy, she would remove them. You can't do that. They were still Fornethy people and it might be nice for people to hear that there was something good about it. It was supposed to be a support group for everybody, regardless of their experience. She just wanted people who had bad memories. She also removed people who weren't prepared to contact lawyers about what happened. Because I added the privacy [REDACTED], she basically ridiculed me to the whole group. [REDACTED] has issues with her family as well. It's not for me to say. I took myself off the group and it was the best thing I'd ever done. I slept better after doing that.
47. I did have a [REDACTED] chat with some of the girls who had been at Fornethy. We didn't really chat in depth about Fornethy, unlike [REDACTED] group. It was just friendly and chatty, but people could talk about Fornethy if they wanted to. Eventually, I took the group [REDACTED]. Someone was supposed to have taken a [REDACTED] of the group and sent it to [REDACTED]. I just felt I was too busy to have that kind of nonsense. It wasn't for me.

Impact

48. Since I've started thinking about Fornethy as an adult, wee things started to fit into place about the impact of my experiences there on me. I don't think I wet the bed before I went to Fornethy. I know it was still an issue for me when I returned home. I know I had a terrible fear of walking from my bed to the toilet. That continued for me right up until I started living with my husband. I would be bursting all night and I wouldn't go to the toilet. My husband would have to get up and stand outside while I went to the toilet. I could never understand where that came from when I was growing up, but it makes sense now. My fear of the dark is a big thing, even to this day. I get nightmares if I don't have some sort of light.
49. I used to get nightmares, but they would only consist of a spider. I would watch the spider moving across and it would start coming towards my face. I told my doctor about the spider dreams. He said it related to childhood trauma and we could explore it further. I just wanted to leave it and I never mentioned it again. I suffered that for years, even when I was married and had kids in the house. A few years ago, I discovered that I need the bedroom door shut. I get the nightmares if the door is open. I know other girls at Fornethy need their door open, but I need it to be shut. Even if it's open a slither, I get nightmares.
50. I also have a fear of the unknown. I went to Florida with my husband and my oldest son. We went to Universal Studios and things happen that you don't expect. We went into a massive room. It was crowded. My stomach turned. I knew I needed to get out of there. The lights went off. I freaked out. A door opened and everybody went through it. I was left in this abandoned room by myself. I eventually found a fire exit and was able to get out. It was the unknown. I should have been full of excitement. My son loved every minute of it, but I was terrified.
51. I have worked hard, but I feel that I've been very fortunate in my life. I've heard lots of horrible stories about Fornethy and I don't think my experiences compare to some of the things that I've heard. When I see some of their lifestyles and how bad their lives have been, it cuts me up. I feel really sad for them all. I won't allow it to consume me.

I think the fact that I haven't discussed Fornethy with my family until now has had an impact on me. Sometimes I think that it's not good for me to explore it all, but then again I think it helps. You need to face these things.

52. I recently had a dream that I was singing a song, "On top of Fornethy, all covered in snow, I shot my poor teacher five minutes ago." I had to get up and write it down. I asked some of the other girls from Fornethy on the group if they remembered the song. They said that it was a song that was sung there and there was lots more of it. I had another dream that I was driving a minibus. I ended up in a big field. The bus broke down near a farmhouse. I went up to the farmhouse. I looked round and I saw the trees. I actually jumped and I woke up because I thought of Fornethy. That was the first nightmare I had about Fornethy. I keep feeling as if something is coming back to me, but I can never quite get there. It's something about the smells at Fornethy. I feel as if it's just about to come to me when I'm in my bed sleeping. I'd like my memories to come back and to be able to remember a bit more. I'd like my memories to be clearer.
53. I've been a foster carer for many years. Maybe I do the job that I do now because of my experiences at Fornethy. It might be why I'm so passionate about fostering. I'm really protective of my kids. I want to keep them all. I remember a social worker saying that I don't tend to let my kids go. If they're going back to their parents then it's fair enough, but if they're going from me to someone else then I don't like it. I'm in the process of adopting a child. The adoption worker also commented on Fornethy. He asked me if I'd spoken to my mother about why I went to the residential school. It was before I started exploring my experiences of Fornethy and I couldn't understand why he had asked about it. He would have been thinking that I was in care, but I saw it as being on holiday.
54. I don't have a lot of trust in people. I've fostered for many years, but I find it difficult to trust social workers. If they arrange a meeting, I'll wonder why they're doing it. I'll question whether they think I'm not looking after a wean properly. I go through all these things in my head. I do a good job, but I have to keep telling myself that and be reassured that I'm doing a good job. It's almost as if I don't trust them to make good

decisions for the kids. I tend to dispute their decisions if I don't think they're right. I don't trust other people with my kids. I won't take holidays and I won't leave my kids in respite care. I tried to take a holiday years ago, but it wasn't for me. I don't care whether the other foster carers have been scrutinised like myself, I don't trust people with them.

55. I'm extremely protective of my children. I didn't realise it until recently, but I think it came from my experiences at Fornethy. I'm glad I understand that now. If I have family visiting for the night, I'm on edge because I'm constantly watching the kids. I need a week on holiday before I can relax. I need to suss out my whole environment. We went on holiday once and I was a bag of nerves, not taking my eyes off the children. A woman at the poolside told me that I'd have a heart attack unless I could learn to relax.
56. My son says that I'll die early because of stress. I wouldn't let my son go anywhere when he was younger. I took him and his friend on holiday when he was younger. When we got back, his friend's mum asked to take him away with them. It was only for a weekend, but I was up and over. I had her kid, but I didn't want my kid to go with her. I sat my son down and spoke to him. I wanted him to know that he could pick up the phone and call me if he felt unsafe. My husband was mortified. He couldn't understand where it all came from. I didn't want my son going on holidays with the school because I didn't know who would look after him. He missed out on that. He doesn't let his kids go places because he's very protective of his kids as well. I worry that I've passed my anxieties onto him.

Reporting of abuse

57. I've been asking my sisters questions about Fornethy recently. It was a shock when we found out that [REDACTED] had been there as well. [REDACTED] said that she had a panic attack when I started talking about Fornethy. She didn't want to be in the group [REDACTED] with other Fornethy girls or anything like that. [REDACTED] remembers sitting at the teacher's table and being force-fed vegetables. She had a memory of getting up from the teacher's table, crying and then wetting herself. She was telling [REDACTED] this and

██████████ said she knew why she had wet herself. She said that ██████████ had wet the bed and didn't tell the staff. Somebody discovered it and came in and told the teacher. ██████████ panicked and ran. She was then put to bed in the wet sheets. ██████████ said that she was in the same room as ██████████, but far away from her. ██████████ was crying but she wasn't allowed to go near her.

58. When I got involved with ██████████, she told me to get in touch with Thompson's Solicitors. It's not about me getting money. I want people to learn from what happened. I want justice. When I think about the people who worked at Fornethy, I wonder how their kids turned out. You can't turn that kind of thing on and off if you're that type of person. I know those people will be older now, but they need to know what they did to those kids was wrong.
59. Thompson's advised me to report what happened to the police. I took their advice and contacted the police in October 2020. I've remembered more about Fornethy than I thought I did. When I gave the police my statement, they said that I'd told them quite a lot. I felt as if there were quite a lot of gaps and a lot of things that I couldn't remember. The police gave me an incident number, but they haven't been in touch since I gave them my statement.

Records

60. I've never tried to obtain my records from my time at Fornethy. Sandra Toyer from Wellbeing Scotland is helping me to look for them. Thompson's Solicitors have also requested them.

Hopes for the Inquiry

61. I would like to see justice. I want people to learn from what happened at Fornethy. I'm a foster carer and if I did the things that they did at Fornethy I'd be pulled over hot coals. It's probably still going on out there. Just because carers are vetted and

scrutinised, it doesn't mean that children are safe. There should be a lot more put into kids. They should be taken aside and spoken to, not within their foster homes. They should be taken away from their environment and asked how their lives are going. I know social workers prepare a lot of sheets for meetings. My kids are given sheets to fill in. I tell them to go to their rooms and fill them in themselves. I tell them it doesn't matter what they say on them. I've always told them that it doesn't matter if they say something about me. If there's something bothering them, I tell them to write it down.

62. Different agencies need to learn from what happened. They need to have more training about how to speak to kids. All these things are important. Abuse could still be happening. The whole of society needs to learn from it. We need to get people working in children's homes to make sure kids are getting looked after, regardless of their behaviour. Behaviour tells you something.
63. There was a time when my kids went to a respite carer. I came to trust that respite carer. She knew my kids really well. There was an incident when my kids came home and reported things. I reported what the kids had said to social work. They came back with some fabricated story and told me that I could continue to use the respite care. I told them I wouldn't be doing that. Some of the kids were small and wouldn't be able to make up a story like that. I wouldn't use respite care after that and social work can't understand why. The respite carers were supposed to love the children and care for them the way that I did. You have to listen to kids. They might fabricate something within what they say, but not all of it will be a lie. There will be an element of truth within what kids are saying. It took a lot for me to let my kids go into respite, but I haven't done it for years.
64. I want people to learn that what happened to us at Fornethy was wrong, especially when we thought we were going on a holiday. People need to be held accountable for what they've done. They need to be for other institutions. I went on holiday with my school for a weekend. I have fantastic memories of it. We got up to silly nonsense, yakking all night. We got up to stupid things like you're supposed to. Kids should be going on these holidays and it should be great.

65. 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..... 05 May 2021