Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Angela HARKINS

Support person present: Yes

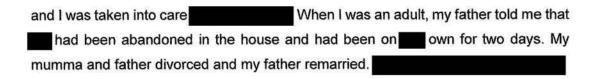
 My name is Angela Kathleen Harkins. I've always been known as Angie. My date of birth is 1967. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

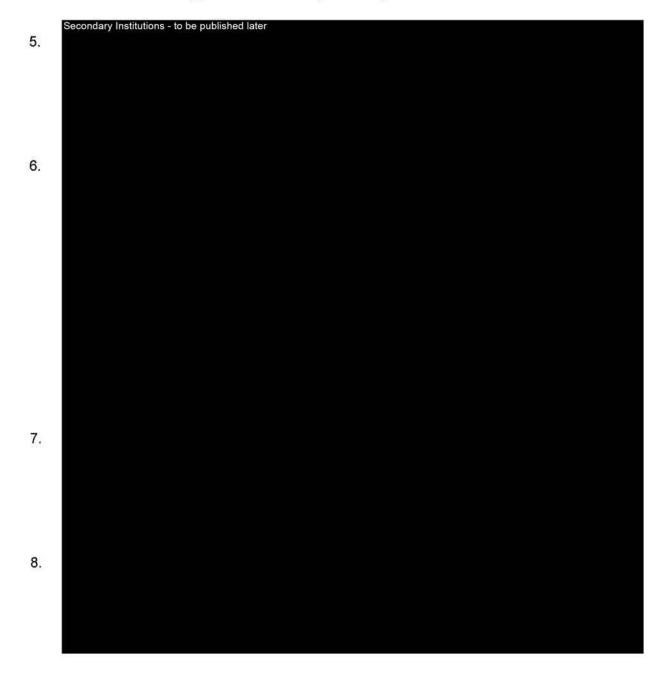
I was born in Edinburgh and my family lived in Pirniefield in Leith.
My mumma and
father were married when I was born. My mumma was called my father was called
There was a lot of violence between mumma and my father and a big fight in our house. Mumma was often drunk and later, my mumma's alcoholism and drug taking became a massive part of my life. I was with my nana a lot and she
came to live with us. She was my mother's mother. There was furniture in the house and then we had no furniture.
naked in the house and then I was in the stair. I was two or three

taken away from the house in a blanket and taken to my father. Then I was in a nice dress and was going on holiday. The holiday was going to St Helen's Nursery

screaming and it was dark. I have a terror about that. I was

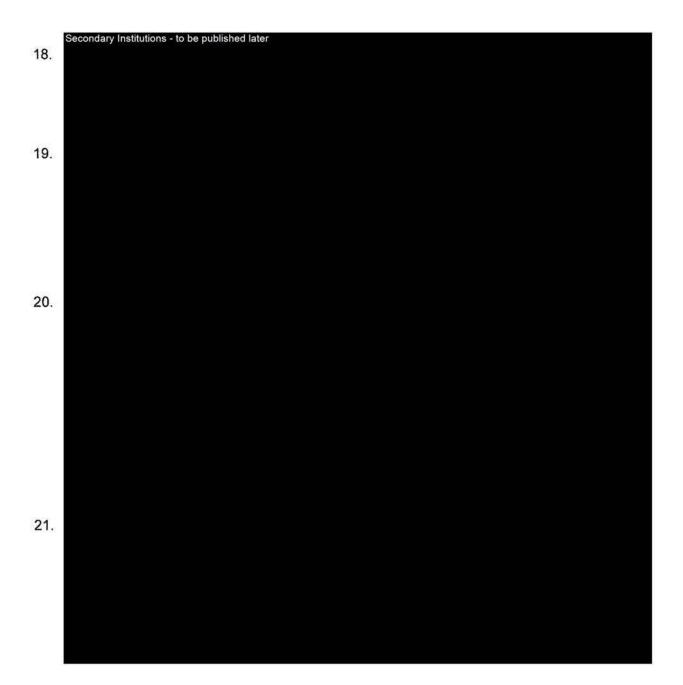


St Helen's Nursery, 7 Wester Coates, Edinburgh



	Secondary Institutions - to be published later
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	
13.	

	Secondary Institutions - to be published later	
4.		
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7.		



Leaving St Helen's Nursery

22. Then went for weekends to stay with equal to st

was really upset because I was terrified. I stayed in one room so that I wouldn't have to go near the dog.



- 23. I went to live with equal when I was about six years old. I have no idea how long I stayed there. It felt like a lifetime because so much happened there. equal seemed like an old lady to me and she had grey hair. had to call her Aunty equal I probably didn't understand what aunty meant. You did what you were told and didn't question.
- 25. The experience in foster care at EQC changed my life completely. It changed things was violent towards which was difficult for me to cope with. became disruptive.
- 26. Foster care was different from St Helen's. didn't have all the children around and didn't have the big rooms to run around in and to scream and shout in. I found it difficult to be silent in foster care. A lot of times I felt I couldn't move in the house. I was terrified of the dog but I was forced to live there. I said to couldn't move in the house. I was terrified of the dog but I was forced to live there. I said to couldn't move in the house. I was terrified of the dog but I was forced to live there. I said to couldn't move in the house. I was terrified of the dog but I was forced to live there. I said to couldn't move in the house. I was terrified of the dog but I was forced to live there. I said to couldn't move in the house. I was terrified of the dog but I was forced to live there. I said to couldn't move in the house. I was terrified of the dog but I was forced to live there. I said to couldn't move in the house. I was terrified of the dog but I was forced to live there. I said to couldn't move in the house. I was terrified of the dog but I was forced to live there. I said to couldn't move in the house. I was terrified of the dog but I was forced to live there. I said to couldn't move in the house. I was terrified of the dog but I was forced to live there. I said to couldn't move in the house. I was terrified of the dog but I was forced to live there. I said to couldn't move in the house. I was terrified of the dog but I was forced to live there. I said to couldn't move in the house. I was terrified of the dog but I was forced to live there. I said to couldn't move in the house. I was terrified of the dog but I was forced to live there. I said to couldn't move in the house. I was terrified of the dog but I was forced to live there. I said to couldn't move in the house. I was terrified of the dog but I was forced to live there. I said to couldn't move in the house. I was terrified of the dog but I was forced to live there. I said to couldn't move in the house.

Routine in Foster Care – first placement - EQC

First day

27. I was absolutely devastated the day left St Helen's because of the fear I had about going to the foster home. I was frightened because FQC had Rory the dog and I was terrified of dogs. Rory became my best friend. My mum told me later that I was attacked by a dog when I was a baby.

Bed Wetting

would go mad about the bedwetting. She was angry, upset and pulling me about while she hit me. For took the sheets off the bed, put them in my face and flung the wet sheets over me. I had to wash my own sheets. There was a rubber bed and I was the only one that had a rubber bed. A lot of the time I was made to sleep on the rubber bed with no sheets. That was difficult for me. I felt bad all the time because of that.

General Routine

- 29. I don't know if I'm mixed up between equivariant shouse and mumma's house but I was always hungry. The food at equivariant school. I don't remember breakfast.
- 30. I played shops at the top of the stairs. After school allowed to go outside and play with friends outside didn't go to Brownies or dancing anymore. Identify didn't go on any trips or holidays with to the shops which might have been nearby.
- 31. I went to Drylaw Primary School. I found school difficult and I felt odd at school. Roseburn was enjoyable but Drylaw was awful. I was bullied. I hated being in school and I hated leaving school and going home to ECC.

- 32. I had temper tantrums that I couldn't control, I didn't sleep and was up all the time. I saw a doctor and I was called 'manic'. After that, EQC alled me manic a lot.
- 33. I don't remember seeing any social workers when at EQC 's. I don't have any memories of washing, birthdays or Christmas. I can't remember the clothes I had at EQC s.

Weekends with birth family

- 34. I wrote letters to Nana and got letters from her. I started staying weekends with my mum who stayed with Nana They moved from the to Nana smelt and the house smelt when went there. I had temper tantrums about going back to EQC S. EQC would be angry when went back because of the smell. I was always hungry at nana's and the house was cold. There was always confusion. I started stealing food That was when things started getting really bad at EQC 's. EQC was always mad at me.
- 35. As I got older, I started understanding things about my mumma such as thinking she was always drunk. Later on in life I realised it was drugs. I didn't really want to go on the weekend visits but I worried about my mumma all the time and wanted to go and look after her. I thought my mumma was going to die. I also wanted to see my nana because we were allowed sweeties. A man called came into my mumma's life and I saw him being violent towards her every weekend. I was terrified going to because I was terrified of dogs and all the dogs were running about the streets there.
- 36. I started going out with my father. I don't know how often did that. He had a purple car. My father would drop off at the ice-skating at Murrayfield and go off. My father smelled of alcohol.

Abuse in Foster Care – first placement – EQC

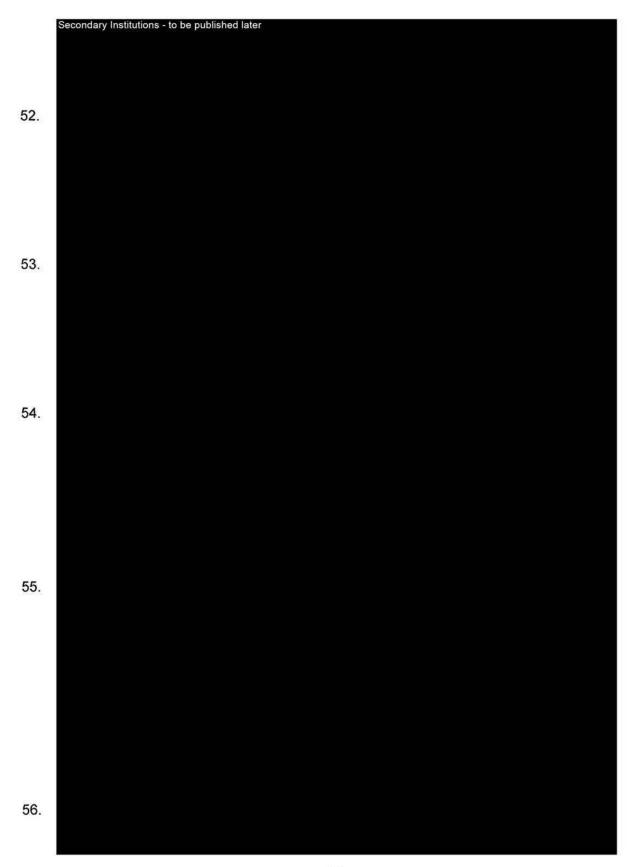
- 37. There was always aggression in and I was always frightened of her. Deat me but I can't remember why I was frightened of her. I don't know if she used anything other than her hands. She hit me all over and pulled my hair. always grabbed you by the hair when she started. The beatings were part of day to day living. I always wanted to please her which I never seemed to do. As I got older, I didn't want to stay with
- beat me up badly and n't allowed to go and see mum that weekend because you could see the injuries. My face and my ear were bleeding. EQC kicked me in the leg a lot and I always had a sore leg. She beat me and kept me in the bedroom for my temper tantrums. Rory the dog came into the bedroom once and that's where we made friends. Rory and I became attached to each other.
- 39. I was forced to eat food by not being allowed to leave the table until I ate my food. If you didn't eat the food then you got the same food the next day.
- 40. EQC also beat up set fire to the room and I thought he was going to die, not because of the fire but because of mouth and he was choking.
- 41. I went from the violence in mumma's house back to the madness of every weekend. I couldn't tell that was beating mumma up because hated mumma. She wouldn't let speak to mumma on the phone. I felt angry all the time.
- 42. EQD arrived when I was about six or seven years old. I don't know his second name. He was old. He had white hair and wore glasses. The lens of the glasses was always brown and you couldn't see his eyes. All of a sudden he was at the house all the time. He lived around the corner in the lived around floor flat. I hated a ground floor flat. I hated a ground floor flat. I hated a ground floor flat. I hated was in the house but floor wasn't. EQD told me to change out of my school

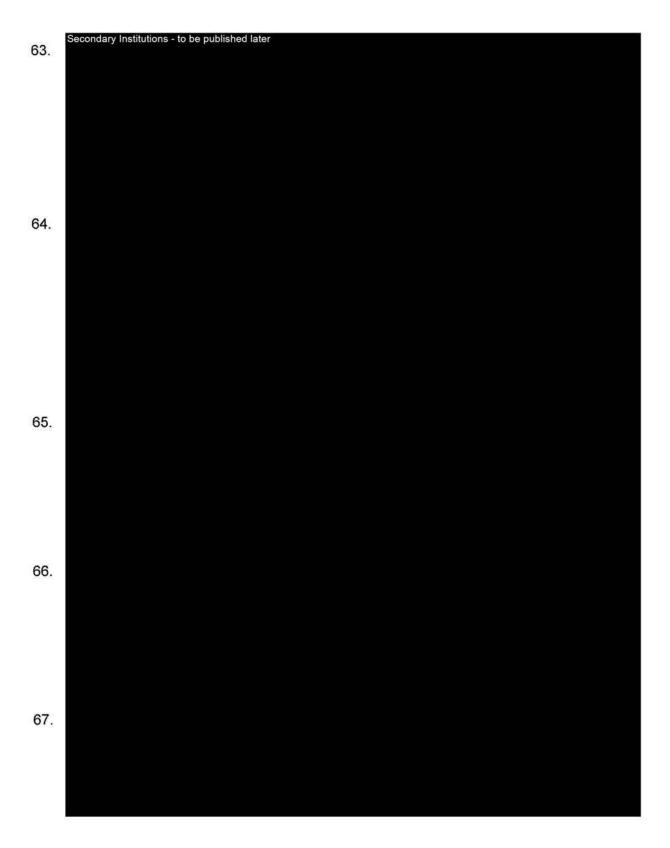
uniform and he stood and watched me. That's where it all started. wasn't told to change and it was always only me.

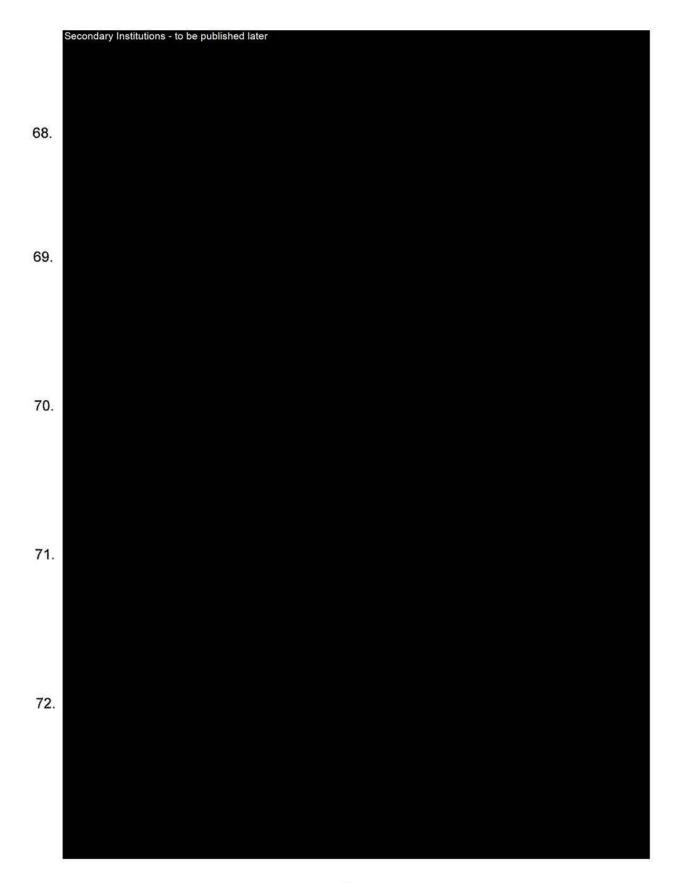
- of him. was going to help me and started taking me to his house so that I would not be scared of Sandy. I was excited going to the house because it was me on my own. Sexually abused me in his house with Sandy there. The abuse always happened in sexually abused. He smoked cigars and the smell of cigars in the house was pungent. I said I didn't want to go to sexually abused but this went on for a long time and happened every other day. I would be at his house for a long time. I was frightened and I knew he would tell me to take my clothes off. FOD hurt me and I was terrified of him. That is all I want to say about the sexual abuse.
- 44. EQD made me walk home with Sandy after I'd been at his house, even though I was terrified of Sandy. Once we left his house, he would never talk to me. It was just silence. EQD threatened to kill me, the same of the sam
- 45. I became not scared of Sandy and had an odd relationship with Rory and Sandy.

 Once, Sandy and Rory were fighting and that brought fear to me. I got a big beating from EQC because the dogs were fighting.
- 46. EQD told us that she was getting married to EQD n't at the wedding. The fear that he was going to come and live in that house made me feel terrified. EQD moved in and the abuse continued at his house. EQD took over took over house when he came to live there.
- There was no warning but it was always sudden and frightening. It could easily become very volatile. I never saw him be aggressive to and try to fight back, especially around saw EQD saw EQD being violent towards

me were going to get killed because of what EQD said to me and 48. I felt because of EQC a lot. I didn't worry about I said that Reporting of abuse in foster care – first placement – EQC knew EQD was abusing me because I told her. I don't know when I told EQC 49. but I was slapped for it. The sexual abuse did not stop. I told my nana about EQD abusing me. I can't remember how she reacted. I don't know what EQC or nana did when I told them but I got moved out. That happened quickly. Leaving Foster Care – first placement – EQC being moved out of EQC s's because we were I've always felt guilty about 50. moved back to children's homes. I blamed myself and I blamed nana because I had told her about EQD. I was about eight years old. One day told and then away. I don't know if moved because I had told EQC and nana about the abuse because no-one told us anything. The never saw EQC or EQD again. No-one ever spoke of them or said anything but they never left me. I was always scared I would go back there. Templedean Hall, Florabank Road, Haddington Secondary Institutions - to be published later 51.

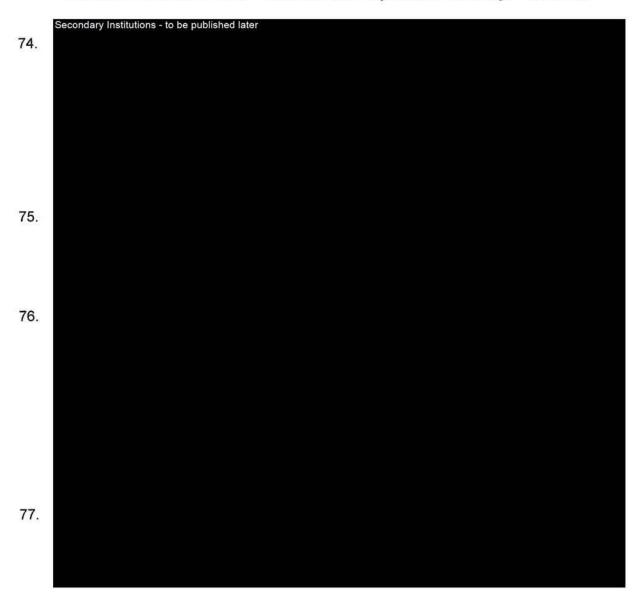


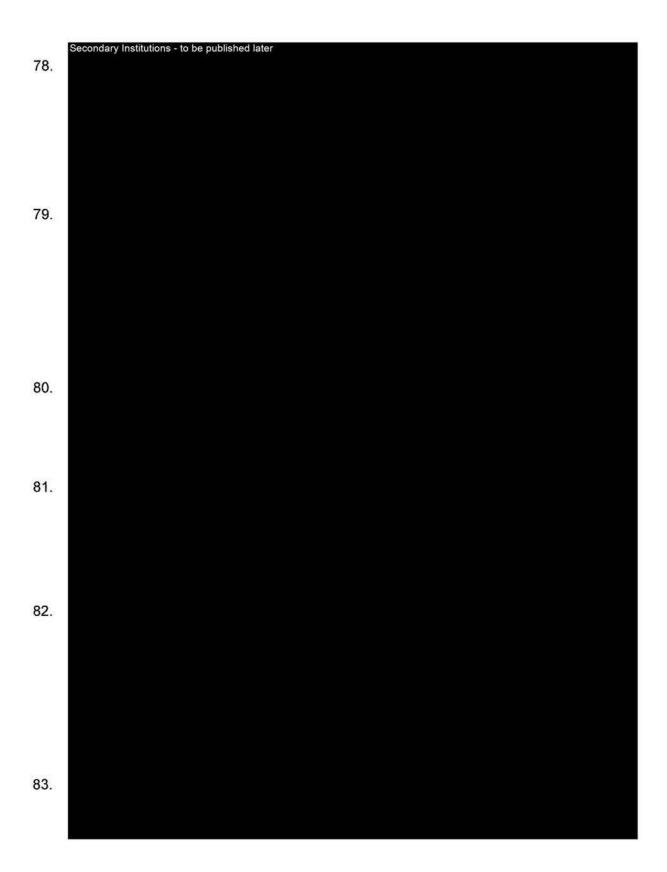




Secondary Institution	ns - to be published	latei		

Wallhouse Children's Home – Colinton and Torphichen, Edinburgh – first stay

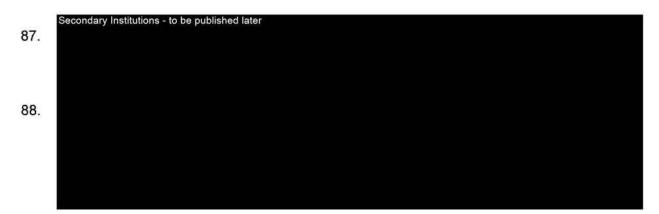


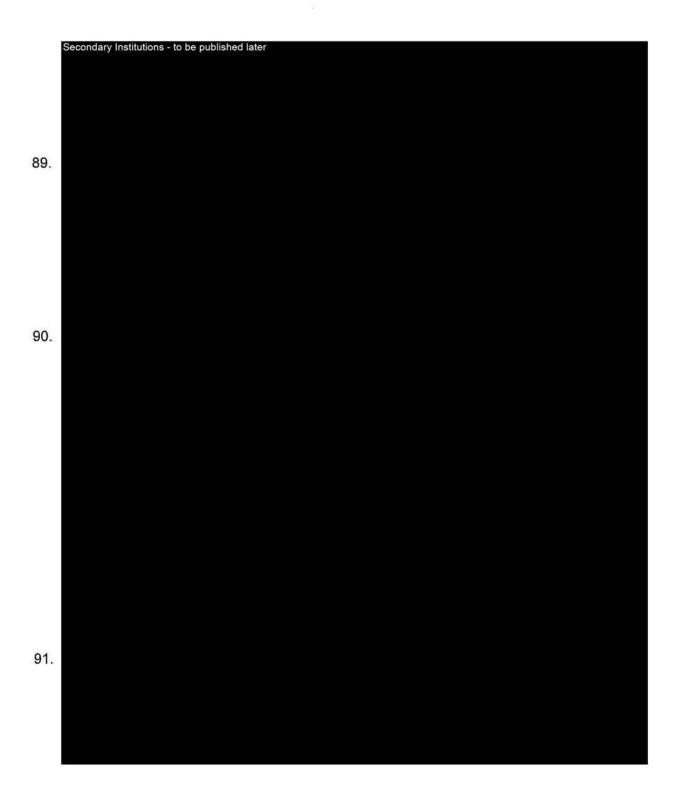


Clerwood Children's Home, Corstorphine, Edinburgh



Wallhouse Children's Home - second stay

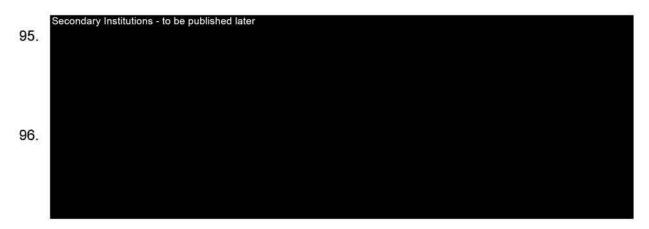




Bangour Village Hospital, West Lothian

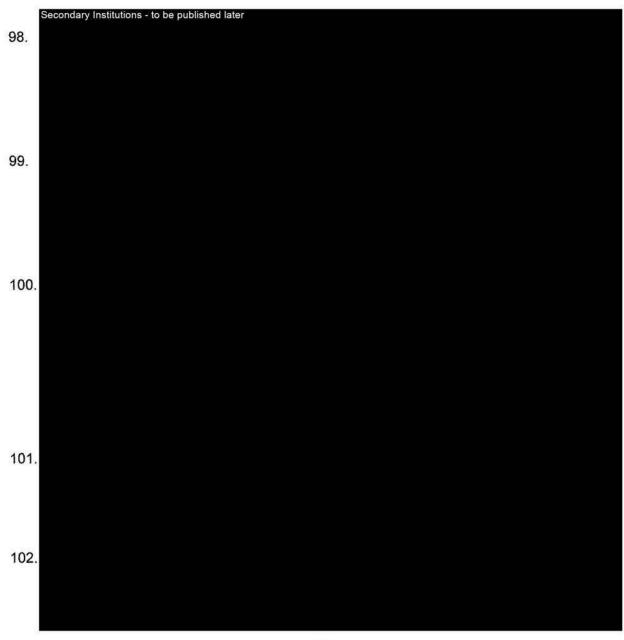


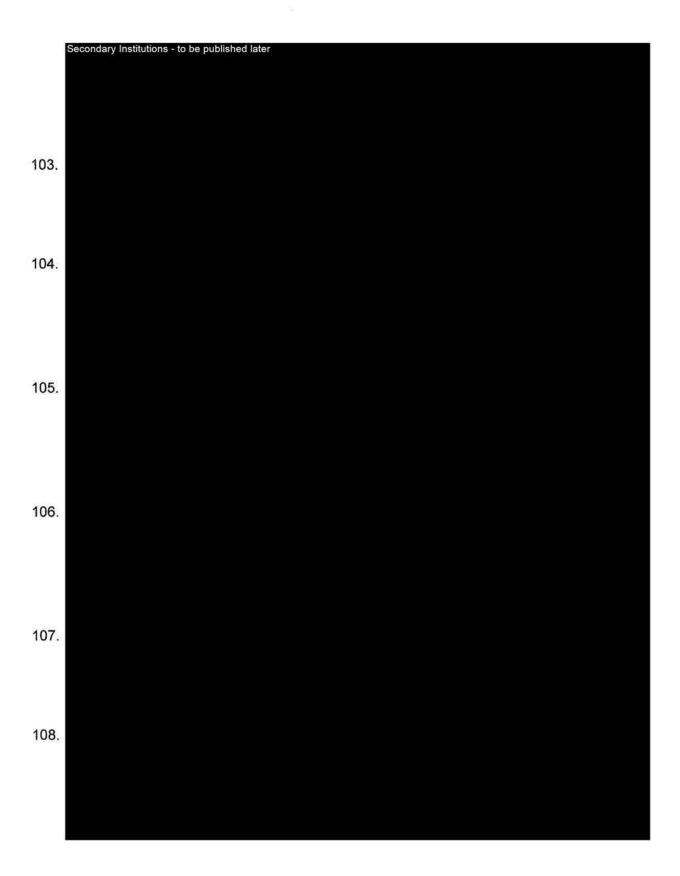
Returning to Wallhouse Children's Home - third stay

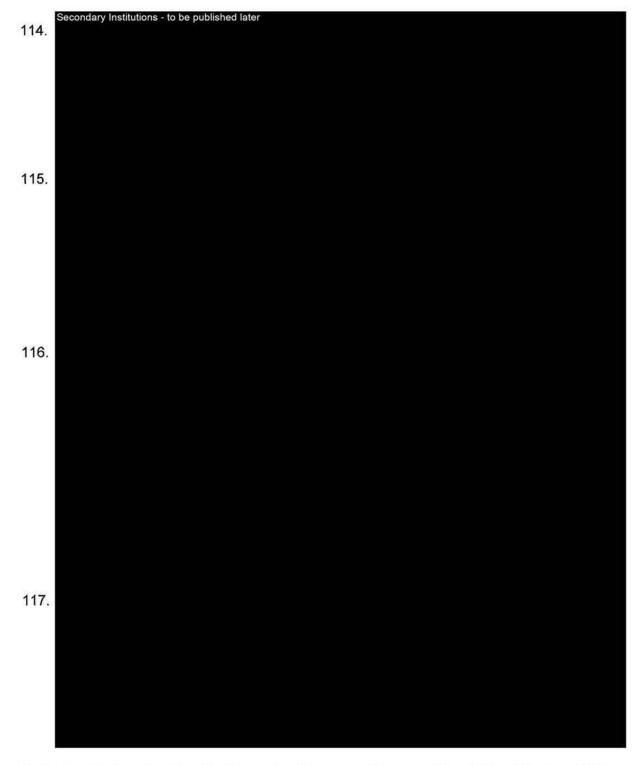




Doctor Guthrie's School for Girls, Edinburgh



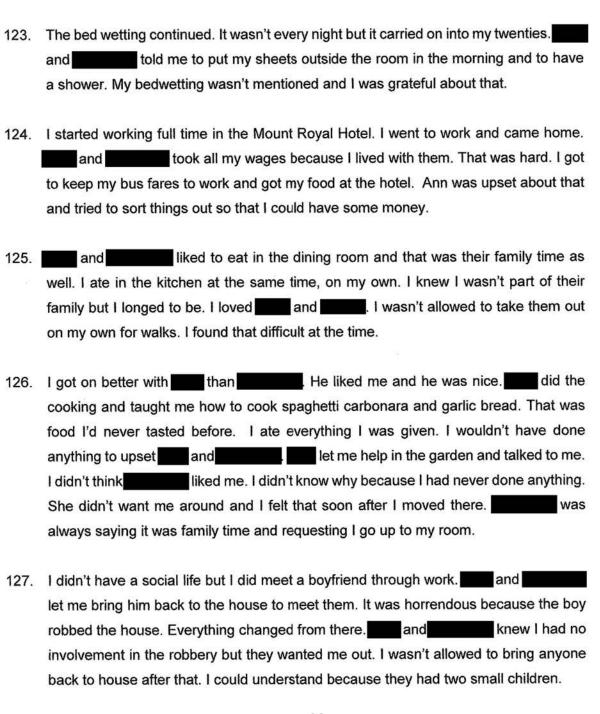




118. I started having day trips to and and start is house. Then I stayed for tea, then an overnight stay and then a weekend stay. The hope was that I could leave Doctor

	Guthrie's and go to live with them. I thought that was amazing before I'd even met and The visits took place over a long period of time.
119.	Secondary Institutions - to be published later
	Foster Care – second placement - Edinburgh
120.	I did move in with and when I was almost sixteen years old. I didn't stay there for long. I can't remember their second name or the full address but it was something. The house was beautiful. I felt overwhelmed by it and didn't want to go because of that. I'd never been in a house since foster care at and it was difficult for me. The house felt small and I felt enormous. I felt like I took up too much space even though I was an underweight teenager.
121.	Downstairs was a kitchen, living room, dining room and bathroom. There were three bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs. It and had children called and who shared a room. At first it was great. They asked me what colour to paint my bedroom. I got out of Doctor Guthrie's and went to live with them. It wasn't great living with them but it was okay. They didn't abuse me.
	Routine in Foster Care – second placement -
	General Routine
122.	I had my own room that and and decorated for me. I stayed in my room all the time except when it wasn't family time.

family time and I had to go up to my room. That was hard and sometimes lasted all day. I wouldn't have gone into the living room and put the TV on or helped myself from the kitchen. I can't remember if I was told that but I just knew I wasn't allowed to do that. At the time, I thought it was incredible that there was a bathroom downstairs. I was only allowed to use the bathroom upstairs.



128.	The way I was treated sounds strange but I didn't care. Secondary Institutions - to be published later Secondary Institutions - to be published later I loved my work and it was amazing
	to go on a bus to work and to go home. I tried to please and and do
	good things, especially after the robbery. I played with their children whenever I could.
	I wanted to stay there forever. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
	Secondary Institutions - to be published later . I didn't run away from
	and see a see see and
	and it was a lonely existence.
	Respite Care - family member – Aunty
129.	and were going on holiday and I wasn't allowed to go with them. I had
	to go and stay with my Aunty for two weeks. That was awful. I didn't really know
	Aunty but Ann couldn't find anywhere for me to go. By now,
	my mum was an alcoholic and I didn't know my father.
130.	I had become obsessive about bathing and keeping clean. I was wetting the bed and
	I wanted to look after myself. I couldn't have a bath at Aunty s because the house
	was dirty. I had to sleep on the sofa. Aunty flung me out on the second night
	because I wet the sofa. I slept on the street and in their shed. I went to work. I don't
	know how I managed. I went back to stay at and and state of s but they didn't want
	me there.
	Leaving Foster Care – second placement - and and
131.	I became sixteen years old and I was told I had to leave and and seems 's. They
	wanted me out anyway. I was heartbroken when I had to leave. Ann got me shared
	accommodation in a flat. That was the end of my time in care.

Life after being in care

132.	When I was sixteen years old I moved into shared accommodation owned by Links Housing Association in Leith. The flat was crazy on a level that I had never experienced before. I was an institutional person because I'd always been in care. There were five other people in the flat who were all kids coming out of care.
133.	There was a punk rocker who smashed the place up every night and kicked my door in. I made a friend called who was later murdered. was my friend and there was another guy living there. There was no-one at the accommodation to monitor what was happening. I was frightened of the punk rocker.
134.	I was out of the care system and there was no-one around to help me. I didn't know to look after myself, how to shop or how to cook, apart from spaghetti carbonara. I had all my wages but I don't know where they went. I had to get out of the flat and I started becoming homeless and living on the streets. They were terrifying years and I don't know how I'm still alive. I lost my job because I wasn't going to work. My life was chaotic and it's all a blur.
135.	I started working for Hairdressing when I was seventeen years old and that's when my life changed for the better. They helped me find a flat and I trained to be a hairdresser. At that time, came back into my life and helped me. My mum came back into my life and I tried to look after her. I moved to Cheyne's Hairdressing and helped me a lot.
136.	I'm a qualified hairdresser. I lived abroad for a few years and all around the United Kingdom. I've been a nomad my whole life. I would just get up and go and leave everything behind. I reconnected with my mumma and eventually moved back to Edinburgh.
137.	I've always taken photographs and I held an exhibition of my work in 2019, with the

help of Crisis, a charity for homeless people. The exhibition was successful and a lot

of people wanted to buy my work. That was good and I didn't expect that. It was a great boost for me. Crisis are now helping me to start my own beverage business.

Impact

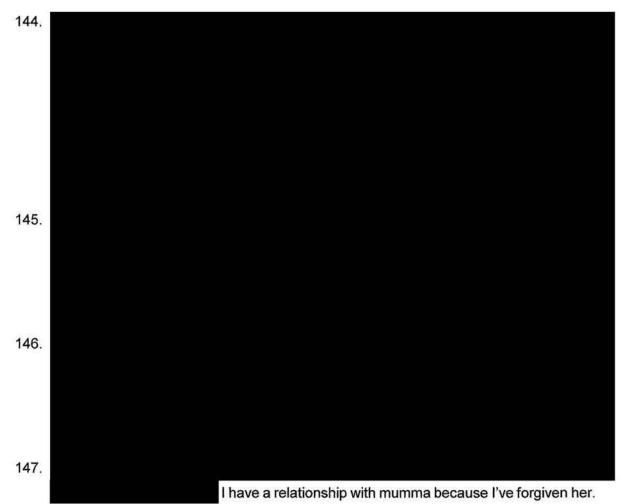
138. I've lived in fear all my life and that has held me back so much. I've always felt I was going to be murdered and something bad was going to happen. I'm frightened of men and women and never feel comfortable. I have to find something about an individual that makes me feel comfortable before I can allow them into my life. I feel safe in my car or when I'm with my animals. I have never reported any of my abuse to the police because I felt that something bad would happen if I did.

139.	Secondary Institutions - to be published later							
	Secondary Institutions - to be published later	At EQC	's it felt like					
	being in a waiting room you were never getting out of and it was	fear all th	ne time. I was					
	always feeling upset and not sleeping.							

- 140. One of the difficult things about being in children's homes is that people leave and you miss them. You worry about them. I still do. You attach yourself to the other children and they become like family. I was moved around a lot in care so that I found it difficult to put down roots as an adult. That's changed now.
- 141. I never had an education from the age of eleven or twelve. That has impacted every part of my life. My eyesight was never checked during my years in care and I was never given glasses, even though I told everyone I was blind. I always felt blind and unable to go to school. took me to the opticians and I got glasses when I was seventeen years old. My life changed and I taught myself how to spell and read properly. I became a bookworm.
- 142. You can't have physical health without having your mental health. I haven't had my mental health and so haven't been able to look after my physical health. My mental health wasn't good in care and I wasn't looked after properly. I now have a diagnosis

of Bipolar Disorder. Having a sore leg started in sand I was always told there was nothing wrong with me. Doctor Patience, my psychiatrist, told me that people who have bi-polar can have those feelings. The pain is psychosomatic but it is painful. He helped me to understand it better. The pain only comes when I'm manic or stressed.

143. I have a lot of flashbacks and tremors. The tremors are upsetting. Men and any violence or aggression are a trigger. I get frightened very quickly. I don't like being around drunk people and I don't like raised voices. I'm terrified of drunk men and that can set me off. I don't go to bars.



I understand and I know she had no help to deal with her addictions. My father died and I didn't know what I was mourning for, the father I never had or the father I could

- have had. I moved around a lot after that. I was reported as a missing person for twelve years because I ceased contact with my family.
- 148. I've been unable to have relationships of any substance. That's always been down to me. I don't trust people. I've never been able to have children or get married. I've lived on the rougher side of life and I've not enjoyed that because it's not me. I feel that I don't fit into what society classes as normal and so I don't fit in anywhere.
- 149. I tend to keep myself to myself and I don't have confidence. I think I can't do things but I can. For example, I thought there was no way I could do a business plan but I have done a business plan. All through my life I've self-sabotaged. I've never done what I wanted to do because I've always felt that I'm not good enough.
- 150. I try to please people because I have a fear of being rejected. I can't cope with rejection so I withdraw. I've ruined my life because I've withdrawn from so much. I can see how role models work and how imperative they are in your life but I have never had one. I don't know how to find a role model.
- 151. I'm attracted to men who are not settled and relationships I've had with men who are settled don't last. I was going to get married when I was 25 years old but I couldn't cope and left the relationship. I feel claustrophobic if people are in my space for any length of time. I spent many years living with a lovely man who was a drug addict. Later, I was in an abusive relationship with another man. I'm terrified of sexual relationships. I feel dirty. I don't see sex as it is, a loving, emotional, spiritual connection to another person.
- 152. I don't have friends and I feel lonely. I've felt lonely all my life so that's normal now. I would like to break that and learn how to trust people. I make friends quickly and easily but the friendships don't last. I drift away. I don't pick good friends either. I love helping underdogs and I'm attracted to people who I want to give to all the time. People don't want that. They just want to be your friend.

- 153. In my thirties I became an alcoholic. I spent days locked away binge drinking. I went into rehab. That freaked me out because it reminded me of being in care. Rehab planted a seed in me so that I was able to recover. I don't drink alcohol now. A counsellor in rehab saw me in the Big Issue magazine reported as a missing person. I reconnected with my mumma after that and rehab supported me to do that.
- 154. I tried to commit suicide in 2013. I was sectioned in hospital under the Mental Health Act because my mental health was so bad. I was in hospital for over a year in Glasgow. Doctor Patience changed my life. He helped me to understand so much. My life started to turn around after that and had never been stable until now. My life became more settled and I became more in control of myself. I have a better relationship with mumma and it's also more under control.
- 155. For a long time, I disassociated from my time in care. I never told anyone I was brought up in care. I felt shame about what had happened to me in care because I blamed myself for a lot of things. I feel ashamed of my past. Now, I think about my time in care a lot. Being in care set me up for nothing.
- 156. What happened to me in foster care destroyed my life and still does. I'm haunted by that and it never leaves you. Life could have been different if that hadn't happened to me, especially with forming loving relationships. Care, and the people who were meant to care for me, destroyed my life. It wasn't until I went into hospital in Glasgow that I was able to take back my life. I can lead my own life now, on my terms and for myself.

Other action taken

Revisits

157. Secondary Institutions - to be published later



Treatment / support

- 160. I was diagnosed with bi-polar when I was sectioned. I was medicated and I still am today. My manic periods where I go off wandering and fall apart are under control. This is the best my mental health has been.
- 161. I have a mental health support worker who I can go to and speak to. I feel comfortable speaking with her. I feel she understands me. We talk about lots of things and not just mental health. I've never had that kind of relationship with anybody. I have an amazing community psychiatrist now.

Records

162. When I applied for my records, I hoped to get some reminders of my time in care. The only reminder I got was a photocopy of a badge I had in the Brownies. The badge says I am in the Roseburn Brownies. That was nice to get because I had never remembered the Brownies before then. Everyone talks about their childhood and their memories but I never had those until I got that photocopy. I don't associate that little girl with me. I even remembered the woman who was Brown Owl and what she looked like. That was really nice. The badge is important me and I have it in a frame on my bedside

table. I was disappointed that there wasn't anything else in the records but it's better than nothing.

- 163. I got my records through the post. I opened them and there were lots of receipts for different things, such as clothes. The way the records were written wasn't even as if they were talking about a person's life, let alone my life. At the beginning of the records is a bit about when first went into care. Everything is blanked out about my father, my mother There's a bit about me which is not very nice. It talks about my temper tantrums.
- 164. I can barely read the writing in the records and I was disappointed that things were blacked out. My father belongs to me. I don't know anything about him because mumma refuses to speak about him. It would be nice to see something written about him.

Lessons to be Learned

- 165. Children in care should have an independent third person who travels through care with them. The person should monitor and check social work and foster care. The person and the child should have the sort of relationship where the child knows the person is there to listen to them. No-one listened to me, noticed me or understood me.
- 166. Society's perception that children in care are bad has to change. If society thinks children in care are bad then the children in care think they are bad and unworthy. When your primary carers reject you then someone has to come in and put you somewhere. How can I be responsible for being in care, as a three year old child?
- 167. Foster carers need to be monitored. There wasn't enough supervision when we were in ______. There weren't enough questions being asked about my behaviour _______, and the changes in it. Someone must have seen signs of the violence towards me. _______ How can a man like

EQD	come ir	nto our	lives v	vithout :	social	workers	question	ning wh	o is this	s man	and why
has	everythi	ng chai	nged?								

168. Families shouldn't be split up. It's not easy to place bigger families with more than two children and I understand that.

It's not

okay to move a child around frequently. Learning how to form long and meaningful friendships is important. You don't know how to do that when you're moved from place to place.

169. It's imperative that children have a memory bank with photographs and reminders of their care experience. Children need guidance and love to develop as human beings. We didn't have that. If carers can't give love then they shouldn't be doing the job.

Other information

- 170. I don't want anyone to go through what I went through and to lose what it rightfully theirs.
- 171. 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 10 02 22	•