

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

MPM
[REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name is MPM [REDACTED] My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1962. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born and spent the first few years of my life in Glasgow. I was one of six children although I later found out my dad had two other girls from a previous relationship. They never lived with us. [REDACTED] is the oldest, then there is me, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Where we lived at first was very small, just a room and kitchen. The toilet was on the landing. There was a section that lifted out the bed to make it bigger and my mum, dad, and the six children all slept in the same bed. It was awful
3. My father, [REDACTED], worked for the post office but wasn't well paid. I sometimes followed him on his rounds and annoyed him. My mum, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] looked after the children. She was always tired and unhappy. She resented being in the house all the time looking after so many of us in such a confined space. She missed going out because she wasn't allowed to, and she missed her friends. She wasn't happy that he was out spending money. Often my dad would come home drunk and he was violent and abusive especially to my mum and he was angry at us.
4. I know now, from my social work records that the police were often called to our house. I believe it was because of drunken fights. A couple of times the children were removed

and we were split up and went to stay with various aunts or uncles. We didn't really know them very well because we didn't see them very often. We would stay there for a couple of days then be were put back into the same situation at home where the cycle was repeated. It also says in the records that we were left in the house on our own. I recall at some point myself and [REDACTED] looking after the younger ones.

5. I remember I did go to school when I was old enough. I would have been five. I went to Auchinairn Primary School. We moved house several times so I went to other schools but I don't remember them or ever settling in one particular school.
6. When I was six my mother died. We were living in a house in Balornock in Glasgow at that time. My father's drinking got worse. He invited his friends round to our house several nights a week. The younger children were put to bed then me and [REDACTED] entertained the men. We would pour their drink. We sang and danced for them. We actually did a strip tease. They encouraged us to take our clothes off. We did it because they gave us sweets and juice. They may have given us alcohol. We ended up completely naked. They never touched us. I think this was just before my dad and these men joined the merchant navy.
7. After my mum died that was when the social work department became involved with us. Because my dad was spending all his money on alcohol we were constantly asking our neighbours for food. I think they must have become concerned and contacted the social work department. We were often out playing in the street at night with no shoes on. My dad would tell us to get out the house and we had to walk the streets. [REDACTED] and I got caught stealing food from Galbraith's supermarket. The man in the shop was really good with us. He told us to come back at closing time and he gave us bread. I was looking after my young brother [REDACTED] who was nine months old. Sometimes I had to put a tea-towel on him as a nappy. [REDACTED] stole ordinary milk for [REDACTED] to drink but he didn't like it. He cried a lot and dad just told us to shut him up. We were left to be responsible for [REDACTED]
8. I suppose we were quite happy children who didn't really know anything different. The social work department eventually took us from that house and put us in some sort of

temporary home in Castlemilk. I don't know the name of it. When we arrived we were all stripped, put in a big bath and scrubbed clean. We were given clean clothes. They checked our heads for lice. All my brothers and sisters were there. We had to sleep on mattresses on the floor. It was a huge place and there were lots of other children there. The staff wore uniforms. I presume this place was run by the council. I hated that we had to go back home after being there. In this place we were clean, and our bed sheets were clean. We were only in there for a couple of nights and usually went back home again. We came back and forth several times to this place.

9. We were subsequently all put in care. We were split up. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] went to foster parents somewhere. [REDACTED] went to a baby home in Blairvadach, near Helensburgh. I am not sure where [REDACTED] went. [REDACTED] and I went to foster parents at Ruchazie in Glasgow. I think my family got tired of having to constantly look after us when there was a crisis. It was a social worker who told us that we were going into care. I don't know the social worker's name. They came and picked me and [REDACTED] up and drove us to the foster parents. I would still have been six.

Life in foster care. [REDACTED] MPN/ MPO [REDACTED], Ruchazie, Glasgow

10. When we arrived [REDACTED] MPN/ MPO [REDACTED] seemed pleasant to begin with. They were nice in front of the social worker. They showed us to our bedroom which had two nice single beds. When the social worker left we were sent upstairs but it wasn't the room that we were shown. It was further up into the house, into a sort of loft. It had two camp beds with rolled mattresses. Mrs [REDACTED] MPO [REDACTED] told us this was our room.
11. [REDACTED] MPN/ MPO [REDACTED] were rather obese. Mr [REDACTED] MPN [REDACTED] disappeared during the day, I don't know where he worked but Mrs [REDACTED] MPO [REDACTED] was always there. They had two sons who were older than [REDACTED] and I. They were about thirteen. I can't remember their names.

Routine in foster care*Mealtimes/Food*

12. We never got a proper meal when we were with [MPN/ MPO]. We got scraps of food that were left over from their meals. We didn't eat at the same time as them. We were left in the kitchen while they ate their dinner. We took some biscuits and ate them.

Trips and holidays

13. We were never taken anywhere for the day or had any holidays with [MPN/ MPO]. When we got home from school that was us home. We didn't go out again.

School

14. I went to a school in Ruchazie but can't remember the name of it. Mrs [MPO] would pick us up after school and take us home.

Healthcare

15. I never went to the doctors or dentist when I was with [MPN/ MPO]. I didn't need any medical attention for the times I was beaten. It was usually just bruises.

Visits/Inspections/Review of Detention

16. When [MPN/ MPO] had anyone visit them, before they arrived they would have us dressed impeccably and well presented. I think I saw a social worker once when I was there. It was the same social worker who dropped us off and later took us away. The foster parents were present and we never got the chance to speak to her on our own. We were dressed smartly and just acted normal.

Abuse at foster carers, [MPN/ MPO]

17. From the very start [MPN/ MPO] made it clear that we were beneath them and didn't warrant any special treatment. If anything we were treated like glorified skivvies. We did the housework. Mr [MPN] would often make us strip naked when we were doing the chores. He would make us clean things that we had already cleaned. He would tell us that we had missed a bit and would need to start again. They were obsessed about cleanliness and for some odd reason they always insisted on us doing it naked. As soon as we came in from school, we had all these chores to do. We then helped wash up in the kitchen when Mrs [MPO] was cooking.
18. Mr [MPN] belted us. He took the belt off his trousers. Sometimes he folded the belt over and pull it quickly to make it make a loud snapping noise. He hit us most days with the belt. Mrs [MPO] had her own belt which she hit us with. It looked more like a ladies belt. Sometimes she would hit us with a wet tea towel and smack it right across the back of our legs. They would both hit us if they thought we weren't doing something properly or if the boys had told them we had done something. Mr [MPN] would hit us with the belt on our bare back or on our bare backside. Usually it was on our backside. Mrs [MPO] would tell us to take our vest off and hit us with the belt on our bare back. Most of the time [] and I were only in a nightshirt because we barely left the house. The only time was when we went to school. They never hit us near the face. Most of the time they made sure that the belt was on our back or bottom.
19. When we got food it wasn't a meal. It was usually because somebody had left something. There was a bit at the back of the kitchen, like a scullery and while they ate in the dining room we had to wait in the scullery. We were usually in there washing up their dishes anyway. The boys would come in sometimes with a bit food and make us think that it was for us. They would eat it right in front of our faces. They were really cruel. The parents thought this was highly amusing.
20. We didn't go to church. When [MPN/ MPO] and their two sons went, me and [] were stripped naked and locked in the wardrobe in their bedroom. Mr and Mrs

MPN/ MPO did this to us. They went every Sunday. We were locked in the wardrobe for hours.

21. On several occasions [REDACTED] and I were tortured. The boys did it and the parents watched. The boys instructed us to strip naked and lie on the floor and to spread our legs and our arms out between the beds. They tied us to the bed frames which were either side of us. They then ran their bikes over us. MPN/ MPO [REDACTED] were laughing and thought it was really funny. They were absolutely vile. The boys regularly hit us. They punched and kicked us.
22. We had to do housework every day. One time Mr MPN [REDACTED] told me I was to scrub the kitchen floor. I refused. [REDACTED] did it but he made her strip naked. She had to use a scrubbing brush and a big green bar of soap. When she was scrubbing she was sliding all over the floor. The boys found it hysterical because [REDACTED] was slipping all over the place. It was sick.
23. MPN/ MPO [REDACTED] would force me and [REDACTED] to stand on one leg and see how long we could stay like that. When we were doing that one of the boys would slap us with a ruler. They would also make us hop on one leg and we would hop around the room. They would make us do stupid things like that every single day just for their entertainment.
24. There were times when the parents were downstairs and the boys would tell us to do things. If we refused they would say that they would tell their mum that we had done something. They might hide things then tell their mum that we stole them. Mr and Mrs MPN/ MPO [REDACTED] would believe everything they said and we were beaten by them with the belt.
25. On one occasion one of MPN/ MPO [REDACTED]'s friends was visiting. She was in the living room. When we were alone she said that she hoped I was grateful for what MPN/ MPO [REDACTED] had done for me. She then slapped me on the face. I was so confused. I told her I was, while holding my face. I didn't know what was going on. Their friends were horrible.

26. There was no sexual abuse when I was at [MPN/ MPO]. It was all physical and emotional. It was humiliating. It was mostly their boys that did it while Mr and Mrs [MPN/ MPO] watched.

Reporting of abuse in foster care.

27. Mrs [MPO] always said to us that if anyone noticed any marks on us I was to say that I had been climbing or doing something like that. No one ever did ask. I even had a black eye one time. I got the black eye when I was turning to get away from the boys and I went into the wall. No one ever noticed or asked how I got it. Mrs [MPO] once told me not to do PE. I don't know if I had bruises or not but I had been belted across my back and it was sore. I had to just say that I wasn't feeling well. A couple of times she got me on the legs with a tea towel which left bruises but I had woolly tights on at the school.
28. We were too frightened to tell anyone what was going on in [MPN/ MPO] house. We wanted to tell the social worker but I was frightened that she wouldn't believe me and we would be left there and it would be worse for us.

Leaving foster care, [MPN/ MPO]

29. We stayed with [MPN/ MPO] family for six months. I have no idea why we left. We were just told that we were going back home. I was pleased in a way to be going back to familiar territory. I think my dad had said that he was ready to take responsibility and he must have proved to them that he could.

Life back with dad

30. We were taken home to my dad by the social worker. I think he wanted us back but that wore off within a few days. After that he didn't seem to care that we were there.

He seemed annoyed that he had been lumbered with us again. All my brothers and sisters ended up back with my dad about the same time. I was pleased to hear that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had lovely foster parents where they had been.

31. My dad was drinking and being horrible to us. He was calling us disgusting names, saying we were whores just like our mother. We didn't know what that meant at the time. We were looking after the wee ones again and he was treating us badly. He seemed annoyed all the time and was smoking heavily. Although I didn't want to go back to foster care, rather than put up with him, I wanted to go back to the home in Castlemilk. We were only back living with my dad for a few weeks. We went back to Castlemilk and that was good because they had a playroom with plenty toys and we had regular meals. That was short lived and we went back to my dad's house again.
32. When we were at my dad's he told us we were going for a two week holiday. A male social worker who I hadn't seen before took us in the car with my dad. I can't remember his name. In the car was me, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. All the way we were chatting and quite happy. We were excited because we were going on a holiday. This was in 1971 so I would have been nine.

Lagarie House, Rhu

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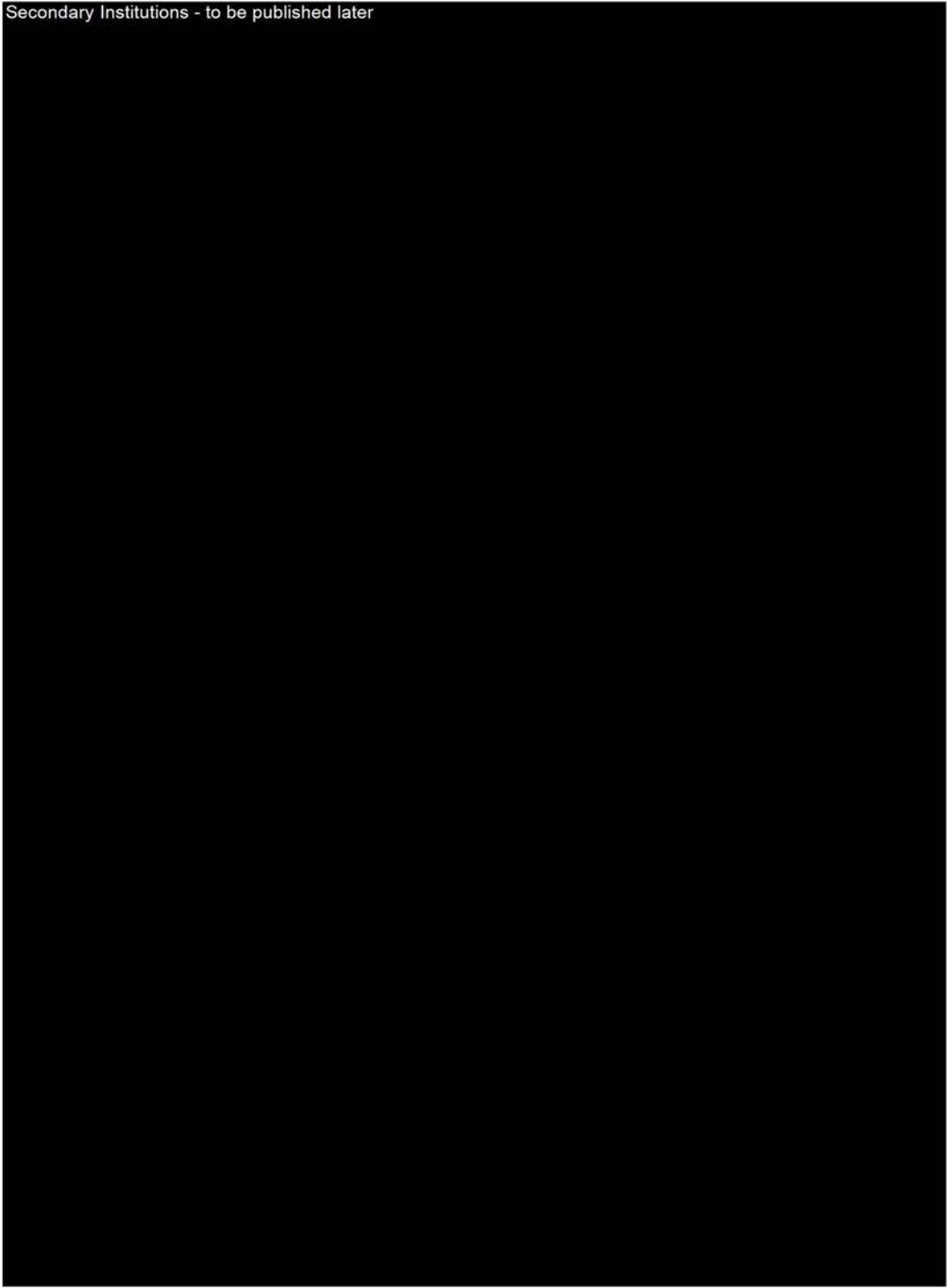
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Life after being in care

150. When I left Lagarie my dad took me to a house in Glasgow and left me with two men who I presume were his friends. I was sixteen and they were in their late forties. I felt very uncomfortable and didn't like it. I think my dad must have arranged all of this. Lagarie wouldn't have been aware I was going to be staying there. My dad wasn't there because he was at sea, working. I shared a room with one of the men and we slept in separate single beds in the same room. Nothing happened with him but I was frightened to go to sleep in case something did. I was there for about eight weeks. I must have written to my dad and told him I wasn't happy because I was moved from there to my step mother [REDACTED]'s house in [REDACTED]. Her full name was [REDACTED] then [REDACTED] then [REDACTED].
151. [REDACTED]'s house was filthy and she was a drinker. I didn't know her and she didn't know me. She had three of her own boys, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], who were all between ten and thirteen. I often got them up and ready for school in the morning. I shared a bed with [REDACTED], which I felt was strange, but so did he. We slept back to back or top to tail. [REDACTED] was a bed wetter and I used to cover up for him, [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later. I would wash his sheets and put them through the spinner and dry them so [REDACTED] didn't find out. I knew what it was like for [REDACTED] because I had been a bed wetter. [REDACTED] used to slap me and even punched me full in the face. Sometimes I would actually fight with her. I was scared of her. When my dad came home after being away with the navy he was violent to me and to her boys. [REDACTED], my sister, came to stay with us for a while too. So did my brothers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].
152. I did a secretarial course and got a place on a YTS scheme. I was in a placement for disabled children. I bought a typewriter from a charity shop so practised my secretarial skills on that. I was at [REDACTED]'s for around a year and a half. She had friends who sometimes came round and drank in the house with her. One of them, I don't know

her name, came into my room and slapped me on the face. She said I was lazy for not doing anything to help [REDACTED] and that I was a snooty wee bitch.

153. From working I got paid but [REDACTED] took half my money. This meant I didn't have enough money for my lunch when I was at college. When the other girls went for lunch I just went for a walk. I didn't get fed well at [REDACTED] and she was cruel but she was the same to her own boys and they were probably malnourished. I only had one thin coat and one pair of shoes but she refused to give me money to buy anything.
154. At no time when I was at [REDACTED]'s house did I ever see a social worker or anyone else in authority. No one came to check on how me or my siblings were getting on or what the conditions were like in her house. I cleaned the house for [REDACTED]. There was no way if social services visited they would have thought [REDACTED]'s house was fit for children to live there.

Move to London

155. At the end of our time there she accused [REDACTED] and I of stealing her engagement ring. As a result she put us out of her house. My dad was there and he didn't stick up for us. [REDACTED] and I ran away to London. After a couple of days I thought I needed to go back. I wondered how I was going to get my dinner. I didn't know how to do my washing. I only had one pound and I ended up in Centrepont which is an emergency shelter. I still wanted to get back to Lagarie because it was familiar and there were certain aspects that I missed. [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later
[REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later
156. At some point [REDACTED] and I squatted in a flat on [REDACTED]. Two guys felt sorry for us and took us in. We were naïve and we went with them. Their girlfriends objected and we had to leave.
157. In London I got a job as a chambermaid in a hotel and with the job I got a room. [REDACTED] sneaked in and slept in my room at night. [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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The

hotel found out that [REDACTED] had been staying in my room so I lost that job.

158. When I was eighteen, I was back staying at Centrepoint. One day I met a man that I later married. He was from Iraq and he appeared very romantic. I very quickly fell pregnant to him and I was shocked. I later found out his visa was due to expire and he only married me so he could remain in this country. His mum came over to this country too and she thought I was useless because I couldn't cook. She slapped me to the head if I didn't do the cooking properly. My husband treated me badly and hit me during the pregnancy. I know my husband intended for the baby to go back to Iraq with his mum. I went into labour but sadly my baby was stillborn. My husband and his family were furious and blamed me for not looking after myself during the pregnancy. The beatings from my husband got worse and I ran away back to Glasgow.
159. For some reason, and I don't know why but I went back to my step-mum's house. I suppose I didn't know where else I could go. [REDACTED] and my dad were both horrible to me and I realised I couldn't live with them. I ended up living in a hostel, a women's shelter in St Vincent Street in Glasgow.
160. My husband came and found me and took me back to London. I only stayed with him another couple of nights and I went back to Centrepoint in London. There I met a man, [REDACTED] who was divorced with two children. He was twenty years older than me and I hooked up with him quite quickly. He said he would look after me if my husband came back looking for me. We subsequently got our own place in Notting Hill and I had my first daughter. Not long after she was born I fell pregnant again. [REDACTED] was born prematurely and had brain damage. He didn't get home until he was four months old. I wasn't coping with [REDACTED] and a health visitor came and said she had a friend who was desperate to have a baby. I let them take the baby and I thought it was temporary but before I knew it I was signing adoption papers. Six years after my first daughter was born I had another girl.

161. At some point in our relationship I had suspicions that [REDACTED] had cheated on me and after that I couldn't trust him. I felt different towards him and all intimacy stopped. We got a council house in Hackney but the area was quite rough and I had difficulty settling in. [REDACTED] often wanted to go out socialising but when I said I didn't want to he went without me. I decided to leave [REDACTED] He died in 1994.

162. I went back to secretarial college to continue my studies and I got a job in an office. I was doing typing and filing. I then trained as a childminder and registered with the council as a childminder. I then got a job as a proof reader for several well-known publishers and also did it freelance. I subsequently came back to Scotland. I went to university and did degree courses in medieval history and psychology. I now live in Glasgow with my partner.

Impact

163. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secon [REDACTED] I know that I was over protective of them. I never let them go anywhere for a sleepover until they were sixteen, even with members of my family. I found it very difficult to even trust their dad when he was with the girls. If he got out of bed through the night to go to the toilet or went for a cigarette I used to be right behind him. I would wait with him until he was back in his bed. I never let him bath the girls. I would always

do it. He was a lovely kind guy but I couldn't relax when he was with them. We never went out socialising together because I couldn't trust anyone to look after my girls.

166. I didn't even like leaving my girls at nursery. I was worried that something may happen to them. I knew that the staff were trained and qualified but I still couldn't be relaxed about it. From a very early age I taught my girls about their personal safety. They knew exactly what to do if ever they felt uncomfortable, or threatened in any situation and how they should raise attention. I have always taught my girls to be honest with me and not to be afraid to tell me anything.

167. I would have loved to have got more qualifications at university but I was hindered when my girls were growing up because I was too frightened to leave them with anybody else. I had to be there for them. I didn't trust anyone else.

168. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

169. My relationship with my siblings was affected. Most of us went our own way and when I went to London we haven't really kept in touch. I didn't recognise my own brother when I saw him recently. We never really acted like a family. I have become closer to my sister [REDACTED] in the last year. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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170. I only have a group of around twelve people who I would class as friends and I trust. I generally don't trust anybody who I don't know well. I find it very difficult being in a big

group of people and prefer being with people who I know. When I speak to people I never go into any detail about my past. I am very defensive and give very limited information. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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175. For years I have been seeing a psychologist and three years ago I went through a series of tests and I was diagnosed with PTSD.

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Treatment / support

177. About ten years ago I went to my GP with depression and subsequently with anxiety. I have been prescribed various tablets for my depression and anxiety and it has been changed several times. I am also on sleeping tablets. I first started seeing a psychologist about five years ago. I am currently seeing a psychologist who I have been seeing for the last year. I am going on an eight week anxiety management course. I was referred to a mental health charity called Coach House Trust and I hated the suggestion that I had mental health issues and it was only recently that I accepted that in fact I did. These were stifled for a while and I didn't do anything about it.

178. In the last few years my short term memory has been affected. I think this is because there has been so much going on in my head. I have other issues which may also have affected it. The Coach House were really helpful because they gave me a booklet of photographs covering from my flat to their clinic so I knew where to go.
179. When I went to the psychiatric unit they referred me through the NHS to do art therapy. I now love painting and use that as an escape. My short term memory has recently become affected so I am currently painting from a picture we took when we were in Crete. I can't actually remember being there. I also got involved in music therapy which has been paid for by Future Pathways. I use both of these therapies a lot at difficult times. I have become involved with Future Pathways and they have asked me to become involved in a film they are making. I also have a really good GP and she always gives me as much time as I need.

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Records

184. I have never actually tried to get any of my records. Future Pathways have said that they could help. [REDACTED] tried to get my records but he said he had found lots of paperwork for other individuals but all he could find for me was one photograph.

Lessons to be Learned

185. I think that things have moved forward. People are listening more to children and believing them. Children have more of a voice now than they used to. This is improving

the lives of children in care. I think professionals need to look for signs of inappropriate behaviour. I think they need to be aware of the signs of child abuse and ask children the right questions. I know there are good people out there who are listening and are aware of what has gone on in the past. This will all help to make it safer for children in the future going into residential care.

186. There needs to be more safeguards implemented for children in residential care, in particular outlets for children to go and talk to an adult in a safe place where they can feel assured there will be no repercussions. The nominated person may not necessarily deal with what the child says but as long as it didn't get back to whoever the complaint was about.

Other information

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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189. About eight years ago I phoned the phone number I found for [MPN/ MPO] who were my first foster carers. I don't know what possessed me, I just had an urge. It was on a Sunday morning and I managed to get hold of this document with their name and address on it. I phoned and a female answered so I asked for Mrs [MPO]. She asked who I was. I told her to cast her mind back to 1969 when she fostered two young girls from the [redacted] area of Glasgow. I reminded her that she had tortured us, as had her sons. She started screaming awful abuse down the phone. I was shaken and

reverted back to a little child. She told me never to call her number again. She hung up but I held the phone for ages. I was shocked. I never attempted to ring her again.

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197. I am so pleased that we have had this chance to talk about my experiences. I hope something comes of everything I have said.

198. 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. MPM [Redacted]

Dated. 20-03-2019