

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

ECH

Support person present: No.

1. My name is ECH I am known as ECH My date of birth is 1946. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

BACKGROUND

2. I have the usual school qualifications and a law degree from Edinburgh University. I then did an apprenticeship in Edinburgh after I qualified in 1967.
3. was living in Carlisle at the time, so I gave up the law and moved south with him. was a chartered surveyor. We had a family pretty quickly and I did not work again until the nineties, when I started child minding. We had three children. My eldest daughter was born in 1970, my son in 1971 and my youngest daughter in 1975.

Becoming a Foster Carer

4. There was massive pressure in the seventies to foster. There were lots of adverts appealing to get children out of the children's homes and we were swayed by that. We were young, we had space and we wanted to give a child a home. We had lots to offer a child and we had decided not to have any more children of our own.
5. We became foster parents in 1977. We fostered a girl called who was eleven months old. had been in Carsewood Children's Home and was very behind for

her age. She could not sit up. We were initially down to do short term fostering, so she was to come to us for three weeks, but she ended up staying with us for four years and then we adopted her. There must have been a process to switch to long term fostering, but I do not remember it. On thinking about short term we thought it would be too unsettling for our own children.

6. We were approached to consider adopting [REDACTED], as they said she would not be going back to her natural family and we adopted her in 1981.
7. There was not a lot involved in the adoption process. Maybe three or four meetings. She was definitely asked how she felt about adoption. She was a bit young, so I do not know how much she understood.

Training

8. We went to Paisley social work department to express our interest in fostering. I think it was called West Renfrewshire council then. We then went to three or four open fostering meetings in Paisley. My memory is that it was Frances Hamilton who conducted most of the meetings. She was quite senior in Paisley social work department at the time. I don't remember any training as such and we did not require any qualifications or experience to foster. I was already a mother to three children.
9. There were the odd meetings we had to attend throughout fostering, but I wouldn't have called it training. We were asked to talk at these meetings on occasion as well. It appeared we had made a success of it. We still believe we made a success of it. We are proud of what we achieved.
10. We were not given any training on child protection or looking after children who had previously been abused. Child protection was not a phrase in the seventies. We knew the children we fostered had been abused in different ways and had long social work involvement. There was no advice on discipline or managing their behaviour. I have no memory of any written guidance. We had a medical examination with our General Practitioner.

11. I am pretty certain our house was checked and we must have been vetted however, I don't recall anything that stands out. [REDACTED] came to live with us very quickly after that. We were given very little notice once it had been decided a child was coming to stay with us, maybe a few weeks or so. It was not protracted.

Foster Care Arrangements

12. [REDACTED] came to stay with us in 1979. He was seven years old. He had come from Urquhart House Children's Home in Houston. The village was small at that time and the home was a big part of the village. Lots of people had children to play from the home. [REDACTED] came to play with my son a lot before the issue of fostering came up. I think they may have been friends at school. We were immediately told that [REDACTED] needs were greater than [REDACTED] and we were asked to consider adopting him before [REDACTED]
13. One time when we took [REDACTED] back to the home, Miss Chandler's tone changed. Miss Chandler was the matron of the home. Miss Chandler said we had to commit to [REDACTED] because his behaviour was deteriorating and he was becoming more difficult. Enormous pressure was then put on us to commit to [REDACTED] and I was never sure about it. I was frank about the fact that I had not bonded with him and I am sorry about that. I was adamant I was fine with fostering, but not adoption, as I struggled to handle him. I was ignored about my doubts by the social work and the staff at the children's home. They said he would be more settled with us.
14. We were almost blackmailed by the social work department to adopt [REDACTED] in 1981. We were told if we adopted [REDACTED] then it would be easier to adopt [REDACTED] too. I think [REDACTED] adoption went through just after [REDACTED] in the end.
15. Frances Hamilton told us to give him our name and our love and everything would be fine. We were naive. We were only in our early thirties and had no experience of children who had been abused. I genuinely thought the social workers were right and

knew what they were talking about. I give no blame at all to ECI to have started out life in that way. I feel guilty that I didn't love him like I should have.

16. We also fostered another child, named [REDACTED] in 1981 just before he turned five. [REDACTED] came from Greenock, so he was under Inverclyde council. He had a poor background and also came to us with a view to adoption. We adopted [REDACTED] two or three years later. There was a little bit of pressure there too and I think we got a bed for [REDACTED] and a little bit more financial support. [REDACTED] was a sponsored adoption where you got a continuing allowance. It was like the fostering allowance but not quite as much.
17. The only thing we asked is that we did not want to take on children older than our own children. Mainly because I did not have any experience of that and I did not want to push them out of their place in the family. We didn't specify a number. We just went with the flow at the time. I am not aware of how they matched a child to us. I do remember them saying [REDACTED] had to come into a family as the youngest child, as he was traumatised from a previous unsuccessful placement as the eldest child.
18. The children all had their own individual social workers. We had no independent support at all and saw very little of their social workers. We were given some background information regarding their circumstances when they came to us, but that was it.
19. The order of the children in age was: my eldest daughter 1970; my son 1971; ECI [REDACTED] 1972; my youngest daughter 1975; [REDACTED] 1976 and [REDACTED] 1977. It was fun and games but I loved it. I was in my element with all the organising and budgeting. I loved the business of it all and juggling everything. I loved the nurturing and looking after them all. My eldest daughter used to jokingly say she dreaded family meetings as she thought someone else was coming to stay with us.
20. We made a family life of it. I looked after them all for thirty years and it was great. ECI [REDACTED] was my main problem, but he wasn't with us for all of that time. We bent over backwards to make it work. All three of our adopted children took our names. That was

insisted upon, which I don't agree with now. Once they were adopted there was no further social work involvement. I didn't expect it by then.

21. It was never on the cards to carry on fostering after we had adopted [REDACTED], ECI [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I think we felt we were settled then. I don't remember any further pressure from social work to foster more. I think they just presumed we had enough.
22. It is like a bereavement now as I started off with six children and now I only have two. We sadly lost my son in 2004. It was easier to get over my son than what has happened with our adopted children because that is under a cloud and harder to move on from. I don't think this would have happened if my son was still alive.

Financial Support

23. We did not feel employed by the local council. We did not go into fostering as a job to get an income. It was a vocation. We did get the standard fostering allowance, but it was not a lot. That did not worry me at all.
24. The allowance was paid from the social work department, straight into our bank. It was probably then lost in the family budget.

Foster Home Household

25. We moved to Houston in 1972 and we still live there. It is small village. We were open and involved in the village. We moved in 1975 to an old farm house, that we did up and we stayed there until 1985. The farm house was up a farm road and was long and low. There was a sitting room on the left when you went in the front door and on the right a small snug that we called the wee sitting room. Beyond the snug was a big kitchen-diner with a laundry room off it. Up the hall there was a cloakroom opposite the front door. The six bedrooms were all upstairs and we had about an acre and a half of ground outside. The bedrooms were small, one in particular was not really a bedroom. The kids just had a ball living there. It was idyllic for them. The children were heartbroken when we later moved from there to pay for ECI [REDACTED] school fees.

26. When we did up the farm we lived in a mobile caravan outside the house. That was before any of the foster children came along. We moved in the week my youngest daughter was born and by the time [REDACTED] came along it was finished.

Placement Preparation

27. [REDACTED] just came as a friend to start with. He was in the same year as my son at school. We then got pushed into thinking we could foster [REDACTED] and it would work.
28. We were asked if [REDACTED] could come. He came for a couple of visits with his social worker at first. I remember him falling off his trike on the first visit and thinking it wasn't a good start. He would just visit for an afternoon at first with the whole family.
29. [REDACTED] used to test me and would do things like not get into the car and he would run away from me. He was nervous about being taken away in a car because he had been in a lot of placements. He associated cars with being taken away. [REDACTED] had never been in a home where the mother drove a car so that was strange to him. He was very traumatised. But then he settled and was a very talented boy. He was musical and good at football. Later on he did have a chip on his shoulder and thought the world owed him something. He never accepted the fact he had been given away.
30. I did not know any of [REDACTED] carers prior to her coming to us from Howwood Children's Home. I do remember taking her back there when she was a toddler as they wanted to see her. I think she was well cared for there, but she lacked stimulation. [REDACTED] was a good baby and I don't remember any difficulties with her settling in.

Daily Routine and Sleeping Arrangements

31. It was not regimented, but I did like routine. More so during term time and after school. It would have been more relaxed in holidays.

32. The children walked to get the bus to school in the mornings. We were a mile out from the primary school, so we were entitled to a school bus. The bus came up to the end of the farm road and they would walk up to get it. In the evenings there would have been homework after tea and a lot of playing outside.
33. ECI was in the end room. My youngest daughter and [REDACTED] shared a bedroom for most of their childhood and were in bunk beds. [REDACTED] was in what used to be my son's room and my eldest daughter moved into what used to be our room. My son moved into my eldest daughter's room. We got the new room that was above the extension and had another bathroom.

Washing and Bathing

34. There was a family bathroom with two sinks. It had a bath with a shower over it. We added an ensuite to our room when we built the extension. All of the children had access to both bathrooms. They weren't treated any differently. I can't reiterate that enough.
35. They had their privacy when they were older, but when they were little I would be doing the washing for them. I think some of them would have been in the bath at the same time when they were five, six years old. It was all absolutely natural.

Clothes and Shoes

36. We did not get any help with purchasing clothes. Presumably that was what the allowance was for. All of the children got new stuff and there were hand me downs like any family. I had a friend that would give me stuff she thought might be of use and they used to enjoy looking through that. They were not spoilt but they had their own clothes. They didn't share.
37. I would wash and iron the clothes. I had six baskets for their clothes and I would put their washing in the baskets and they were expected to come and get their clothes and put them away.

38. I remember I saved up child benefit to buy shoes and things like that. We didn't go without, but we weren't flush.

Mealtimes

39. I was in favour of the family eating together. As they got older it didn't always happen. My husband would not always be there if we ate early. I was strict about breakfast and then they would have lunch at school. We would then have an evening meal together. We had a round table in the kitchen. The food was home cooked by me. I loved cooking. If they didn't like it, then within reason that was alright and I would maybe get them something else. I wouldn't serve a meal where everyone was getting different things. You learnt what they all liked. They were all good eaters. They weren't fussy. I don't remember any of that being a problem.
40. The children helped with laying and clearing the table. We did have a rota for that, as sometimes they might not be there to do it, if they were at the Boy's Brigade or the Brownies for example. I did not have any other help in the house, so they were expected to do things like that.

Leisure Time

41. They would play football and had music lessons. The girls played in an orchestra. We tried to treat them as individuals, so they did what they enjoyed and they weren't competing. They did their own thing. It's hard to say with [REDACTED] as he left us at fourteen.
42. We had an old pony, chickens and rabbits. [REDACTED] built a tree house that they used to play in. They also had a zip wire that my son built with his dad, which went from a platform in the trees. There was a burn and a climbing frame. It probably wasn't as safe as people look for now, but it was all fenced off. There was also a barn with a paddock around it.

43. They would go shopping and to the cinema. There were clubs with the school, like the chess club. There was a lot through the Boy's Brigade. They did the Duke of Edinburgh, hikes and things like that.
44. They had their own bikes and would go cycling. I was a swimmer so we did a lot of swimming at the Johnstone pool, which isn't there anymore. It was only ten minutes away. That was our Christmas Eve thing, as no one else was there and we got the pool to ourselves. It tired them out.
45. They all got pocket money and had treats.

Trips and Holidays

46. We always had a big summer holiday. There were a lot of day trips to Blair Drummond Safari Park, the Zoo and Largs beach. We had a big eight seater car with a big trailer to put everything in. We camped on the West Coast up north and we camped abroad. We had a big tent we bought at the camping exhibition in Glasgow. It was designed for eight with different compartments and I remember the guy at the place saying to us he had only ever sold one before, to the social work department. It took forever to put up. [REDACTED] and I would both go. We did a lot of that. It was hard graft, but fun.

Schooling

47. All the children went to Houston primary school. They were never all there at once. Five were at once, but my eldest daughter had moved on by then. They then went to Gryffe High School in Houston.
48. [REDACTED] had not been to playschool when he was placed with us because of his behaviour, but he was really bright. I did not have a problem with [REDACTED] at school. [REDACTED] went on to Gryffe High School and sat his standard grades and Highers there.

49. ECI had been at Houston Primary School when he was at Urquhart Children's home and stayed there when he came to us. There were warning signs at school regarding ECI behaviour. He spent a lot of time sitting under his desk. He had problems academically. In 1981 or 1982 ECI was sent to Kiel Boarding School as a weekly boarder from Monday to Friday, to give us all a break. He was very disruptive in the family and at school. There were a couple of other boys in the village that went there.
50. Any decisions on schooling were jointly made [REDACTED]. I was getting near breaking point with ECI so we needed to find a solution. We thought the weekday boarding school was a good compromise in the end.
51. My youngest daughter and [REDACTED] were very different. [REDACTED] was not getting on well at school. She was being compared to my youngest daughter all the time. In 1986 or 1987, we took her out of Houston Primary School in primary six and moved her to a fee paying school, St Columba's. We tried our best to help the children to be individuals. She did well in the athletics, but was quite disruptive in the classroom. It was an all-girls' school at the time and she didn't fit their little mould.
52. [REDACTED] did two or three years at St Columba's and then came back to Gryffe High School. We could tell they were close to asking her to leave, so we took her out and I told the headmaster what I thought of them. The headmaster got on at her all the time, even though she won athletics awards and performed in the Greenock music festival. [REDACTED] never did anything wrong but she didn't seem to do anything right, in his eyes. He knew her background and the children don't lose it. I had a good relationship with [REDACTED] and I championed her. She was very street wise, but just not very academic. I think she left Gryffe High School after fourth year, but she could have gone further.
53. I would say all of the adopted children had no motivation in life. They had no get up and go. My son was not academic, but he knew where he wanted to go. Our adoptive children did not have any special educational needs. We did organise an educational psychologist for ECI in Renfrewshire once and he was diagnosed with dyslexia. That probably didn't help him. I wouldn't have known what dyslexia was at that time.

54. We got on well with the headmaster at Houston Primary School and he helped us a lot. [REDACTED] was also head of the Parent Teacher Association. I attended everything the children took part in, more so than [REDACTED]. They all got the chance to do a musical instrument. It was free back then. [REDACTED] was quite keen on that and they had concerts and things.

Healthcare

55. We did get some medical information from [REDACTED] social worker when he came to us. I think there was something about an undescended testicle. I remember going to the doctor about that. I presume it must have righted itself as it didn't come to anything. [REDACTED] social worker was a young man and he was very good.
56. We got [REDACTED] medical card at the beginning. She just slotted in with our doctor. We were also definitely given some paperwork for her to read in years to come. It said who her mother was and what her family circumstances were.
57. I remember speaking to our doctor as [REDACTED] was hitting her head off the wall in her sleep and he explained to me that it was because of her trauma. My youngest daughter had to put up with this on the bottom bunk. I also think [REDACTED] wet the bed for a bit. I don't remember it being a big issue at all. It was just very relaxed and we hoped it would pass.
58. We were not given any paperwork for [REDACTED] ECI. Nothing at all. I know [REDACTED] ECI mentioned bed wetting in his statement, but I don't remember that.
59. There was an annual medical for the foster children at one of the local hospitals. I think this was something legal that we had to do. I don't quite remember. That stopped when they were adopted. They were all registered with our doctor and our dentist. They all did the same. I didn't keep any personal records, it was all kept at the doctors.

Christmas and Birthdays

60. We would usually have family members over at Christmas. All the children got their stockings and they would have a Christmas present at breakfast from one of the animals. It sounds silly, but that came about because we did go to church every Sunday and on Christmas Day. The Minister would ask the children to bring up what they had received from Santa. We didn't open our presents until after lunch, so we had to incorporate something in that they could open before and take to church. It sounds a bit daft, but it was all thought through.
61. After Christmas lunch they always got their bigger presents and we always said they were from us, not Santa. That was so, when they got older and realised Santa wasn't coming, they didn't worry they weren't getting anything. Right from the start we did that.
62. There would be something organised for birthdays. We had quite a lot of parties at home. ██████ did have some football parties later on. There would also be outings. There would be presents and the foster children would get the same presents from the extended family as our own children did.

Discipline

63. The foster children were smacked, as were our own children. Not excessively but I am embarrassed to say they were. There was a certain amount of discipline expected. I would expect them to be respectful to us and the others in the family. I expected a certain standard of table manners and politeness. There would be time out and they would be sent to their rooms to separate them. With six children we needed a bit of separation at times, for example if they were hurting anyone else or not being kind to the animals.
64. I remember one time in particular ^{ECl} ██████ locked us all outside the house and pulled out all the electrical stuff. It was just crazy and disruptive, so he would get into trouble for that. He was maybe eight or nine at the time.

65. ██████████ and I would discipline the children. It was more wait until ██████████ comes home type of thing, so I didn't do a lot of the smacking. It was just smacking and to me it wasn't a big issue. We weren't asked to keep any records. I have a legal brain, so I would have kept records if we were asked.
66. We were not given any rules or guidance from the social work department from what I can remember. I just remember being left to deal with it.

Relationship with Foster Children

67. I was the main carer. ██████████ was home in the evenings and weekends. He spent more time with ECI ██████████. He would take him out. It took him away from the situation if he was being disruptive. ██████████ was also the one who visited ECI ██████████ when he was away at boarding school and he would sometimes take my son. ECI ██████████ and ██████████ never really lived together at the family home as ECI ██████████ went away to boarding school at thirteen, fourteen and then he went back into care. My relationship with ECI ██████████ was not good.
68. My relationship with ██████████ was excellent and good with ██████████ until his late teens. He withdrew a bit then. I treated them all the very best I could. I maybe didn't as much with ECI ██████████ as I didn't get on with him, but I bent over backwards to make it work. I showed them all affection and gave them all emotional support.
69. ██████████ got on well with the children and treated them all the same. He got on with ECI ██████████ when I didn't so he spent a bit more time with him for all our sakes. That was a joint decision. It was for me more than anyone. It did involve taking him out the house to give me a break. If we were in the house you were rarely on your own as there were eight of us. We did have friends over a lot too.

Siblings

70. My son was brilliant with [REDACTED] ECI There was less than a year between them and [REDACTED] ECI didn't really get on with the girls. My son was a great help.
71. [REDACTED] and my youngest daughter got on really well, but [REDACTED] and my youngest daughter were very different. There wasn't a great deep affection between them.
72. I would say the relationship between them all was good on the whole.

Contact with Natural Family

73. I did not have any contact with the adopted children's natural family initially. As the years went on and they were growing up we did discuss with all three if they wanted to follow up and find their natural family. We had a very free discussion about it. I thought it was only fair and really hoped it would be nice for them. It was a big undertaking to take on, but we initiated it. It was all done through the social work department however, as it was confidential information.
74. [REDACTED] was very keen to, so we helped her with that. It did not all go as smoothly as it should have, but we still helped her emotionally. Her mother had unfortunately died, but she did meet her half-sister who had also been adopted in Paisley and had contacted the social work looking for information too. I remember there had to be permission from both sides for there to be contact. Her half-sister lived in Crete and we supported [REDACTED] to visit her there. It didn't work out and she wanted to come back early. It wasn't a great success. She was seventeen at the time. [REDACTED] then decided to try and track down her father and found another half-sister. They thought they had found their father together in Renfrew, but it wasn't him in the end.
75. [REDACTED] was also keen to trace his family, so we followed up with that and he did go and meet with them eventually. There must have been some paperwork given to us for him, as we did manage to trace his granny. We met her in a coffee shop when he was

thirteen, fourteen. [REDACTED] asked if I would go with him. She was from Greenock. He also met a half-sister.

76. Interestingly [REDACTED] never wanted to find his natural family, he said that we were his family. I know that he has met them now.
77. I am sure some foster children come with the understanding that there will be family contact. I don't think I am professionally qualified to say where all that contact should come in, but there definitely should be advice about it.

Review of Care/placement

78. Neither child had a care plan when they came to us. I don't remember any. I may be misremembering some things. I just remember it was all up to us. I find it extraordinary that there wouldn't be a review of some sort, but I don't remember any.
79. [REDACTED] social worker was useless and not truthful to us about [REDACTED] background. They did not tell us that no one adult should be left to look after [REDACTED] alone, as he was so disruptive. We saw that on his paperwork later. I think it might have been when [REDACTED] was admitted to a psychiatric hospital and later went back into care. I just remember thinking we were never told any of this. I already had four children when [REDACTED] came to stay with us and [REDACTED] was working long hours. It was tough.
80. [REDACTED] social worker was called Mrs Sclare. I just remember her jumping the gun from the very beginning and saying she was going to tell [REDACTED] on a visit he was staying with us now. I wouldn't let her as we hadn't decided yet. I think she was under pressure from the children's home and eventually we buckled under the pressure too.
81. There were no follow ups with social work. They probably only visited us a couple of times in the child's whole placement. I could count on my fingers how many times. It was just a quick cup of tea and away. They didn't speak to us on our own.

82. I remember [REDACTED] was reviewed by the children's panel. I don't remember how long he had been with us by then. He came to us under a panel order and then it was reviewed and he wasn't under the order anymore. He had been moved around a lot.
83. There were no other official visits. There should have been a lot more ongoing support and you should not have had to find it for yourself. There should have been someone for us too and our own children. We sought help from Barnardo's because they were involved with fostering and adoption. We first contacted them for help when [REDACTED] dabbled in drugs as a teenager. They were a great sounding block. We spoke to them when [REDACTED] went back into care about our guilt over that. We went back to them when the allegations were made by the adopted children.

Records

84. We never saw any of [REDACTED] background papers until years later after we adopted him. We should have been told a lot more. We got much more information for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] social worker was excellent.
85. We did have folders for each child with their 'news' in it. It would have things like school reports and certificates they might have won. I still have my son's.

Moving Placement

86. Eventually all the children moved on and did their own thing. It is difficult because our girls would say yes, they were all well prepared for leaving and have made a success of things, but the trouble with the foster children is that they moved on and then their adult relationships were a mess. I would have hoped we prepared them all well.
87. [REDACTED] moved out when she was eighteen, nineteen and moved in with a very abusive man in this awful flat in Johnstone. That was the start of things going very wrong for her. We largely brought up [REDACTED] children as her life was a mess with abusive men. [REDACTED] was on the scene and looked after them when she could. The children adored her. She had children to different fathers. If we hadn't been there then the children

would have ended up in care. We were worried sick that the children were in the home with these abusive men. It took us into a world that was completely alien to us. I loved [REDACTED] children and we were their rock whilst all this went on.

88. [REDACTED] was expelled from boarding school for pulling out a knife on another child. We had downsized our house by this stage to afford [REDACTED] boarding fees. We had a really bad summer with him when he could not go to school and then he went to a psychiatric unit in Dumfries for six weeks. I found him in bed with [REDACTED] and he was masturbating against her. My youngest daughter was in the top bunk and I said to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I don't know how to handle this. That was the final straw for me. [REDACTED] has no memory of it as she was still asleep. My youngest daughter has no memory of it either. My eldest daughter had also asked for a lock on her door, as she said she had been waking up and [REDACTED] was standing over her.

89. [REDACTED] must have been admitted to Crichton Hospital by someone, but I can't remember who. I said to [REDACTED] then, I can't have him back. I remember telling the psychiatrist at the six week review I couldn't have him back and he went through me. He was not supportive at all. [REDACTED] didn't come back after that. [REDACTED] knew it had to happen and was supportive of it as well. He could see what was happening but he still supported [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] went to Beech Avenue Children's Home in Paisley and [REDACTED] continued to visit him with my son.

90. I later had a reconciliation with [REDACTED] when he was living and working at a hotel in Pitlochry, which was a big turnaround. I think he was about twenty three. The reconciliation was at my instigation because I felt it was the right thing to do. We decided to put it all behind us and all was very sunny. He came back down to Houston one Christmas and later moved in with [REDACTED] but they didn't get on, so that never lasted. I think there had been some contact with them prior to this. I think [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had been up to Pitlochry to see [REDACTED] for a week or something.

91. [REDACTED] later asked us to help with looking after his children as his son, [REDACTED] was hyperactive and they couldn't cope. He then asked us to help him buy a bigger house. I could go on for hours. Why would you do that if you suspected someone?

92. The police called us one night in 1997, before my youngest daughter was getting married and asked us to bail [ECI] out. I think some fines had caught up with him. Apparently he wanted to attend his sister's wedding so we did. We did everything for him.
93. [REDACTED] moved out when he was eighteen, nineteen. He was the only one left at home then and we bought him a flat in the village. We tried to set them up in a desperate attempt to make their adult lives work. He wasn't really doing anything and we discussed it with him and he said he would like his own place. We didn't buy any of our natural children houses.
94. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] ended up working at Kibble Children's Home for a while. [REDACTED] was there for some time doing social care I think. I am sure he eventually had to leave as there were some doubts around money going missing. I am sure him and [REDACTED] heard some stories working there.
95. I never got anything back from [ECI]. He was very disruptive to the other children. He could be quite dangerous. One time he threw a television at me. I did not have feelings for him and I so regret that. At one point we found support for ourselves in Professor Stone at Yorkhill Hospital. He was a family psychiatrist. We tried to do everything to avoid [ECI] adoption breaking down. Professor Stone just said we had big problems. This is why [ECI] went to boarding school. It was a desperate attempt to prevent the adoption from breaking down. I also had to protect the rest of the family. He went during the week and was home at weekends initially, but then he had to move school because Keil closed down. He then went into full time boarding, but that didn't work out either.

Convictions

96. I have no criminal convictions.

Allegations of Abuse

Awareness of Abuse

97. I was never aware of any behaviour that I considered to be abuse of our foster children and I was never aware of them needing any medical treatment because of abuse. I do not consider any discipline or punishment we used as abuse. I regret the smacking, but it was the culture back then. They were still getting the belt at school.
98. If the children wanted to speak to anyone about any abuse they could have spoken to the school, the Boy's Brigade, extended family, and they had godparents. I think they would have had the confidence to do this. ██████ would have. ██████ godmother lived close by and she spoiled her rotten. ECI ██████ wasn't christened with us, but we stood in as sponsors when he was at the children's home. ██████ had already been christened by the time he came to us.

Reporting of Abuse

99. We were not made aware of any reporting of abuse from the children or other people at the time. I did not see or think I should have reported anything. I have no doubts in my mind.

Reporting to Police/Criminal Proceedings

100. My foster children have made allegations to the police against ██████ and there was a criminal trial. The police before the criminal trial were less than honest and didn't investigate properly. After the conviction, the police who looked after us were brilliant. ██████ was convicted of lewd and libidinous practices against ██████ and ██████ and he was not proven against ECI ██████. The judge agonised over the sentence and said a custodial sentence was not appropriate, but she had to give ██████ a two year probation order and he had to be on the sex offenders register for the duration of the order. I lost my faith in the jury system after this.

101. The day after the sentencing we got a text from ECI saying he was so sorry and that it wasn't meant to have gone this far.

Prior Statements

102. I spoke with the police in relation to the allegations made against [REDACTED]. I have lost complete faith in the police. Their investigation was flawed. The senior female police officer was not entirely truthful. She acted like my daughters never existed. I asked when she was going to speak with them as they had been in the family home too and she said they didn't need to. The girls got stroppy about that and insisted, so they were eventually interviewed.
103. [REDACTED] had mentioned there were photographs to the police and they did not check any of our computers or phones. They also denied stuff. The senior female officer said at trial she did not see any family photographs in our house and we had a whole wall dedicated to family photographs. She totally gave the wrong impression and was really unfair to us.
104. I remember being interviewed by the police but not to any great extent. My impression was that the senior female officer had made her mind up that she had a case. They didn't seem interested. My daughters had that impression too. I did give lots of interviews and statements to the defence counsel. I remember that clearly.

Specific Allegations against me that have been made to the Inquiry

105. In his statement ECI states that *"The sexual abuse by Graeme happened every time that ECH was away because ECH did a lot of hillwalking which she did with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. She had a horse that she took away to competitions with her children. Anytime it was just me and Graeme in the house I would get into trouble for something. There was always that excuse for him to mete out that kind of special punishment. I was made to feel that I was the special one getting the special punishment. Although*

these punishments always took place when she wasn't about I still think in my heart of hearts that she knew. She had to know something was going on because the level it was at you can't hide that all the time. What makes me even more suspicious is that as far as I know it only happened to the adopted children. I do question if that was all part of their arrangement. With the stuff in the letter ██████ found about "off the shelf children" and the stuff in ██████ records where it says ECH didn't want to adopt any children it all says to me that this was a case of you do what you want with them but don't touch ours."

106. That bit about 'off the shelf children' was a bit of family banter. We would say the adopted children were chosen by us but you are stuck with your natural children. It was said as a nice thing at the time. I also wrote a letter to each of my children which was to be read by them in the event of my death. The letters said how much I loved them and was proud of them. In my letter to my eldest daughter, I'd thanked her for being so accepting of our "off the shelf children". The letters were kept with our wills. All of the children were to inherit equally from ██████ me. For ██████ to have seen that in a letter means she must have gone into my personal papers and read that letter. I feel such a sense of betrayal from that. We applied to adopt ██████ so I don't see how her records could say I didn't want to adopt children.
107. We have already spoken about smacking and time out and being sent to their room, but I can't remember anything specific that ECI ██████ was sanctioned for. To me what ECI ██████ is saying there would be abuse, but we did not abuse ECI ██████. I did not love him or like him very much, perhaps that is abuse, I don't know.
108. He is embellishing a little bit as I rarely took my horse away to competitions. I didn't go to competitions with five children in tow. I did hillwalking, but later when I did not have all the children at home. There might have been some hill walks, but not on a regular basis. ECI ██████ from the age of thirteen, fourteen was no longer with us. I started hillwalking with my son when he was sixteen, seventeen. I got rid of my horse when ██████ came along as I couldn't cope. He has totally embellished it all.

109. I know [REDACTED] was the instigator of all of this. His wife was quite toxic and did not like us. Apparently she didn't take to [REDACTED] as he gave her a hug when she came in the door to our house one time. She was his daughter-in-law. She was living with [REDACTED] in the flat and [REDACTED] was paying low rent, so [REDACTED] suggested to her that perhaps she should be contributing. She was not impressed.
110. A lot of this has come from drunken evenings in the pub, between the three of them. That I am absolutely convinced of as [REDACTED] told me this. She came over when the allegations came out and said it was all nonsense because [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were separating and the marriage had all gone wrong. She said they had all been meeting up in the pub and discussing it. It was crazy. Things were going wrong with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] seemed to have memories of something and we know he was abused before he came to us. I think it just all snowballed from there.
111. [REDACTED] then goes on to say *"I can remember getting whipped with a riding crop once by [REDACTED] I only remember getting hugged from her twice, once on the day I got adopted and the other when I got a spelling test correct. With [REDACTED] it wasn't really physical. The way she behaved was more emotional and mental abuse."*
112. I have no memory of hitting [REDACTED] with a riding crop. I do not think the passage of time could have affected my memory of this. I think the three of them have stirred each other up. If a child was treated in this way, I think it would be abuse.
113. I wouldn't have been as physical with [REDACTED] with hugs as I was with the others because I found it hard with him. If the emotional and mental abuse is because I didn't show love to him, then he is right. I feel guilty about that because I couldn't give him that.
114. [REDACTED] said *'When it came to punishments the punishment would be a smack on the arse or the old fashioned Victorian brush handles with the wooden brush heads on them skelped across your backside. If [REDACTED] wasn't there or if the house was empty it was a different kind of punishment. He would tie me up with no clothes on and he would get you to go into stretch positions and take photos of me. That was like the next step of it.'*

115. I don't think we had Victorian brush handles. I am sure we didn't. That would be abuse. It is not possible the passage of time has affected my memory of what has been alleged. I think [ECI] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] all have memory problems and they have convinced themselves of untruths. They have talked themselves into this. I don't know what a stretch position is. If photos were taken, where are they? All our photos went to Boots to be developed and nothing was digital then. The police didn't look for photos although we have lots of photo albums with the children in them.
116. I know in my heart of hearts there was no abuse to [ECI] from [REDACTED]. He was in a caravan with him alone in Rannoch or Aviemore. [ECI] allegations have changed since the trial. There is a mixture coming in now.
117. No evidence was allowed at the trial of the adopted children's backgrounds before they were taken into care. The jury did not know what abuse the children had suffered before they came to us. We found out later [ECI] had scars on his penis and burns before he was taken into care, [REDACTED] had had a lot of placements and [REDACTED] was taken away from her family because of neglect. [REDACTED] mother and grandmother had been in care too. We hoped we had broken that cycle by showing them family life but they have had difficulty making relationships. [ECI] had difficulty relating to [REDACTED] and is now blaming that on [REDACTED] however he asked us to look after [REDACTED] a lot. We had expert witnesses on false memory at the criminal trial and it all made sense. One was brilliant, but one was very snooty and waffled a lot and it didn't go down very well in Paisley.
118. It is absolute nonsense. They used to beg us to look after their children. We worked a lot with [ECI] on parenting [REDACTED] and with [REDACTED] school. We didn't have problems with [REDACTED] because we had a routine with him. We took [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] two eldest children on holiday with us regularly. We had only seen them a matter of weeks before the allegations came out. I am sure they interviewed [REDACTED] as well and nothing came of that. All of this has come about because [ECI] allegations were found not proven at the trial.

Helping the Inquiry

119. There should be a lot more discussion around mixing foster children with your natural family, for the sake of the foster children. It is very wrong that they are made to feel different. Our children will probably say our foster children got more attention than they did. Our children were high achievers and our adopted children were not, but we went out of our way to make sure they felt special about the things they could do. We didn't expect them to be like our natural children, but they must have felt it.
120. I don't think there was any discussion in depth from the children's homes or social work department when we were fostering and adopting. There should have been a lot more. Do the children resent that? I don't know. I know [REDACTED] has a massive chip on his shoulder.
121. I think there should have been red flags when placing the children with us. There should have been much more of a constant social work involvement so any issues could have been discussed. [REDACTED] had been in many homes, even before the age of five. They should have realised it would have been difficult for them to settle. [REDACTED] did settle eventually because I introduced him slowly to a playgroup and then to school. There was something lacking somewhere.
122. There needs to be a lot more structure and foster parents need to know where they stand and any protection they should be taking for themselves. There should be more ongoing contact with the foster children and social work. I know things have changed now, but we were just left to flounder. We were strangers thrown into this world. On reflection, perhaps we should have asked for more help but we did seek help from Professor Stone and the children were also adopted. I did say to Frances Hamilton that I had reservations about adopting [REDACTED] ECI
123. There has to be better training for safeguarding children and better awareness of damaged children. It needs to be more realistic as to what you are taking on and not just that if you love them and incorporate them into your family everything will be okay.

We had to look for support if we wanted it. That was a big part of it. We did not know how to deal with the damage. It never crossed our minds that we had to protect ourselves.

124. After we reconciled with [REDACTED] Barnardo's asked us to speak to a group of people having trouble with the children they cared for. We spoke mainly about [REDACTED] the problems we had had and the reconciliation. Little did we know what was to come later. Barnardo's saved us after these allegations, with counselling and understanding. They knew exactly where we were coming from. They were suggested to us. I don't know where I would be without their support.

Other information

125. We have lived in Houston for fifty years. In all of these years there is not one person that has ever doubted us. Recently new neighbours have moved in and since finding out [REDACTED] has this conviction, they have totally shunned us and they are in our face. It makes life difficult for us and we have considered moving. I kept strong for so long but then I lost it and became depressed. I am on medication and I don't see me coming off it. I'm too scared to.
126. I would like to quote you something that I read from Eartha Kitt last week. She was given away at the age of five. *"If your mother gives you away for whatever reason she did not want you, why would anyone want you, if the most important person in your life*

didn't want you." I don't think they ever get over being rejected. I did not realise that at the time.

127. 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... ECH

Dated... *26th April 2022*