

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FFD

Support person present: No

1. My name is FFD My date of birth is 1969. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. Prior to going into care I stayed with my mother and step father at Camelon, an area of Falkirk. I have two younger brothers but they were never taken into care and stayed with mum throughout their childhood.
3. Until recently I understood my father was also named but from records I recently found out this was not the case. My natural father was a seventeen year old my mother had a brief relationship with. brought me up until he and my mother split.
4. I was about seven when my step father, moved in with us. He did not get on with my father. I believe it was because I was named after that he took his anger out on me.
5. During the time I stayed at the family home would regularly hit me by punching me about the head and body and pulling my hair. On one occasion he pulled out so much of my hair there were clumps of it all around my bedroom. I put some under my pillow and showed it to my mum and told her this was what he was doing to me. Nothing changed because he was also beating her.

6. Sometimes when he came home he would tell me to hide up the stairs in the house. He would be in an angry mood and come looking for me. If he found me I was given another beating.
7. The punches to the stomach were so bad that before I was taken into care I was taken to hospital to have my appendix removed.
8. While I stayed at home I was always running away because of the abuse. Most times I was found by the police and returned home. They would ask why I was running away and despite me telling them about the beatings nothing happened.
9. Sometimes [REDACTED] would send me to the shops and I knew I was in for a beating when I returned. I would run away again and make my way to my gran's in Bonnybridge.
10. In 1978 I was in the house when the police and the social work came to the house. I thought it was my step father coming home and when they found me I was cowering under a table. Sandy Morrison was the social worker at that time and he told me there was no way I could stay in that house. I was immediately taken into care.

Foster care

11. The first place I spent any time in care was at Weedingshall, Polmont. I heard rumours of problems there but I never saw anything. I was there for about four months.
12. I then spent six months with the [REDACTED] family. They were a really nice family with three daughters. They moved to England and my placement came to an end. There were no other reasons other than them relocating for me moving to another placement.

13. I have a recollection of a short term placement with a family in Banknock, Falkirk and staying at St Ninian's hostel for about a week, but they were just transitions until I was moved to Stirling. There were no issues at any of those placements.
14. My main placement after that was with FFB-FFC family in a house in [REDACTED] area in Stirling. The parents, FFB and FFC had a son the same age as myself, about ten, a daughter about nine and an adopted daughter about six years old.

Routine at FFB-FFC, [REDACTED]

15. The house was a large four bedroomed house in a well to do area. FFB was a health administrator and FFC was a nurse. I was given the guest room in the house, but moved in with their son if they had visitors staying. They lived a nineteenth century existence where they wanted complete control of everything you did
16. On the first day at the house I was told to remove all my own clothes. I was then given clothes which were hand downs from their son. The clothes I was wearing were the only possessions I had and never saw them again after that day.
17. No one gave me any direction or counselling as to what was expected of me when I moved in. During the first week I ran away. Running away was one of the main reasons I was in care. When I was returned to the house the only reaction I got was they said "Oh he's back."

Routine

18. The usual routine would be out of bed between 7.30 am and 8.00 am. After washing and breakfast we made our way to school. At the weekend I would be allowed to sleep a little longer but no later than 9.00 am.

Food

19. I don't remember much about the food other than it was okay. After school they had a High Tea out in the garden. I don't have many other memories other than we said grace at every meal.

Schooling

20. While staying with [FFB-FFC] family I attended [REDACTED] primary school in [REDACTED] Stirling. I enjoyed going to school and think I did really well there. When I was older I moved up to Stirling High School.
21. At lunchtime during the week, the son and I would walk back from school and let ourselves into the house. He would have the key as the parents were at work during the day. We would find something to eat from the kitchen and share what was available. A lot of occasions we had to share a pot noodle or a burger. They might have had money but there was little spent on us while we were at school.
22. After school and before there was any leisure or play time I was forced to sit and complete any homework. The only reason for the homework to be done was if it was not completed then it made them look bad, it was wasn't for my benefit.
23. I liked my rock and roll music as I grew up. [FFB-FFC] owned an old record player and I was allocated one week in the month to listen to my music. The remainder of the month if it was used by the family it would be for classical type music. Even if the family were not using the player I was not allowed to use it other than my allocated week.
24. I was allowed to have friends at the house and we would play records. [FFB-FFC] confiscated some of the records which did not match their tastes, records like the "Sex Pistols". The guy I borrowed the record from wasn't happy I couldn't get it back. No one else in the family was into modern records,

25. While I was at school I made my own friends. I did not get on with any of [FFB-FFC] children. My friends and the teachers knew I was in foster care but they did not treat me any different. I liked the school time as there was no bullying from [FFB-FFC] or anyone else and no one tried to beat me up.

Religion

26. [FFB-FFC] were a Methodist family. Although I was a Protestant I was not a practising Christian, therefore their beliefs did not bother me too much.
27. [FFB-FFC] forced me go to their church every week. When everyone stood to sing I would not join in. The vicar noticed and stepped in. He spoke with [FFB-FFC] and I was given permission to miss church from then on. I was about fourteen or fifteen before it stopped.

Health

28. About once a year I visited the doctor and the dentist for a health check. Other than the routine checks I had no injuries or illness that required a visit to the doctor.

Visits/inspections

29. My mum visited me at [FFB-FFC] but not often. She would get the bus from Camelon and stay for a short time, sometimes she would bring my brothers. If my family came into a conversation Mrs [FFC] would just talk in a derogatory fashion about them. I think this was because we were much poorer than them and not the type of family they associated with.
30. Usually every three to four months the social work would arrive at the house to check on how things were. Usually it was timed while I was at school and when I came home they were speaking with Mrs [FFC] Very rarely was I allowed to talk to the social worker on my own. When I did get the opportunity I told them I was not happy

being with [FFB-FFC] and I wanted to stay elsewhere. Nothing I said was ever listened to and no arrangements made for any move.

31. I later learned from some records that social workers stated as a seven year old I was "a manipulative child who would turn situations to his benefit". How could any child have this ability at such an early age and to influence a strange family?

Birthdays/Christmas

32. I remember one birthday in particular where I was given a bicycle from [FFB-FFC] It was a Raleigh girls shopping bike and it was pink and purple in colour. It was the bike that used to belong to their daughter. The boy was given a brand new racer for his birthday. I still used the bike to cycle to see my mum in Camelon. I had asked Mrs [FFC] for bus fares to visit my mum but she refused any cash. The fares wouldn't have been that much. I cycled there and back and it took me hours.

Trips

33. At holiday time, when I was about thirteen or fourteen I was sent to a hostel in Aviemore for a week, while [FFB-FFC] went to their own holiday destination. Most of their holidays were centred around walking and hill climbing. I did get to go to the Pyrenees on one occasion, but this was to do with climbing which I hated.

Abuse at [REDACTED]

34. For nearly a year the social work kept trying to put me back with my family, which also meant being back in touch with [REDACTED]. He would pick me up in the van and make me deliver fridges for him to houses. When I was with him in his van I always believed he was planning to do me in. I was probably around fourteen at this time. No one was taking into account everything he had done to me. I was terrified every day I spent with him. I later found out none of the abuse carried out by him was documented within the records.

35. I found school really good and a WISC test (Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children) showed I had an IQ of 134. Just days before I sat my O-Level exams my stepfather, [REDACTED], telephoned me and was trying to persuade me to work with him in his van. I knew he was no longer with my mum and no one would know I was with him. I was so scared of what he would do to me and whatever he did he would get away with it. [REDACTED] and the social work were doing nothing to protect me from him. Because of the call I just walked out of the exam hall's immediately after signing in. I told Mrs [REDACTED] that I thought he was going to do me harm but she did not believe me.
36. Not long after he was threatening me I heard my mother had walked out on him and moved in with a new partner. But from that phone call from [REDACTED] all my fears and apprehensions returned. I believe my problems with my mental health began with [REDACTED] and continued with [REDACTED]
37. As far as discipline was concerned I was always compliant because of the previous abuse. I was too afraid to say anything, even when I did not like what was happening. One time while we were on holiday Mr [REDACTED] grabbed me and lifted me by the arms and marched me down the street. I still do not know what I had done wrong and he never told me.
38. Another occasion Mrs [REDACTED] grabbed me while I was playing in the house with a neighbours child. She took me to the floor and sat on top of me. She asked how did it feel when it happened to me. Again I never knew what happened for her to turn on me. As far as I was concerned I was playing and there were no problems.
39. In the summer when I was around fifteen I was the last to leave the house in this particular morning. On my return all the family were seated and waiting on me. Fairly soon after I moved in with [REDACTED] I knew of a globe in the house where they put their small change. [REDACTED] said that someone stole some money from it and they all believed I was responsible. He grabbed me, took me to a room, put me over

his knee and leathered me. I never stole anything from them, then or at any other time.

40. The next day I was told by some of the guys I knew that they had gone to the house looking for me. They got no answer and climbed in through a window and took the money from the globe. They never even questioned why they did it, it was just how they lived. I told FFB-FFC but FFB-FFC never believed anything I said.
41. Because of my financially poor background I was made to feel like a second class citizen by the family. Their son was a prefect at school and I was never going to live up to their expectations. They kept trying to drag me into their world but I did not want to be there.
42. When I was about fifteen I took some cannabis. FFB-FFC caught me and thought the best answer was to take me to the local police station. The officer at the station told them that if he was to progress with their information I would have a police record which would follow me for the rest of my life. They listened to his advice and I was sent home with a warning about the use of drugs.
43. After that Mrs FFC regularly checked me and my room for drugs. She would pull up my sleeves and she would point to a spot or a freckle and say I was using needles. I have never used hard drugs. At one point she even accused me of sleeping with prostitutes.

Leaving foster care

44. As I approached my sixteenth birthday I told FFB-FFC and the social work that I was leaving. I had my case packed and ready to go at short notice. I was placed into a half-way house for around nine months and I was always supervised whilst there.

Life after being in care

45. After the half-way house I was allocated a flat in Camelon and was there until I was around seventeen. The social worker, Scott Lindsay, thought it was a good idea to put me in a flat in the same area where the only person I knew was my step-father. My mother had moved to Wales by this time. I allowed people I believed to be friends, to visit at the flat. Eventually those so called friends took over the flat and smashed it up and I had to leave.
46. I moved to Kilmahew House in Cardross and stayed for a while. I think it has been burnt down now. They put me in a drug rehabilitation programme for about nine months even though I was not taking drugs. The social work thought this was a good idea, even without me having a drug problem. I was given some support there but nothing for my mental health problems.
47. Later in my life I had a son who will be around twenty seven years old but I have no contact with him.
48. I could never settle anywhere. Up until I was thirty I would be on the move all the time. I never stayed more than a year in any one place. I moved all over the country from the south of England to the East of Scotland.
49. In 1987 I was treated for some of the psychiatric issues and medicated for the first time. I was prescribed Valium for a time but I stopped taking it of my own accord as I did not want to be addicted to this or any other drugs.
50. One of the times I was due to leave drug rehabilitation, the lady from the centre gave me a lift in her car to North Wales where I stayed for a while with my mum. Unfortunately I no longer get on with my mum, but that was to do with me and my problems.

51. I stayed at Turning Point for nearly a year again a drug rehabilitation unit despite not having taken drugs. I then moved in with a Christian family in Anglesey for around eight months. I have also stayed in Salvation Army hostels and many other hostels throughout the country.
52. I have always had a fight or flight attitude since leaving care. I have lived in my current flat for seventeen years and I still don't know if I am staying

Reporting of abuse

53. While I stayed at home the social work were aware of the abuse carried out on me. I have accessed some records and it shows that Sandy Morrison, social worker, and the police were aware but no investigations were ever carried out.
54. Teachers sometimes asked about how things were at the house. Despite me telling them about my previous issues and life with FFB-FFC nothing was ever done.

Impact

55. As a result of my time in care and the constant abuse with my family I have real difficulty in getting on with people. I have not been able to hold down any long term relationships.
56. In 2007 I was working for a short period as a care assistant. I enjoyed this but have not worked in a permanent job since. I have had many short term jobs. When I could not hold them down my doctor would sign me off as unfit.
57. I am forty seven and I still see no future for me. Without any assistance I don't see it getting any better.

58. Despite my many visits to drug rehabilitation centres, since leaving [FFB-FFC] household, I have not used drugs and to date I have never been in trouble with the police. This can be verified as you need a CRB check to work in the care industry. I feel the problems I have are a direct result of the abuse and not being given any assistance for my mental health issues.

Records

59. In 1998 I went looking for some of my records. I needed to find out some of the reasons why I was put into care and see if they would fill in some of the blanks. I managed to get some but nowhere near them all. I was told the social work deleted some of my files. I want to find out why I was moved from Stirling, where all my friends were based. Why was I moved back to Camelon where the only person I knew was my step-father?

Hopes for the Inquiry

60. I would like the Inquiry to ensure that independent advocates are allocated to children in care. The children's voices should be heard without the presence of their carers to ensure any necessary action is progressed by the authorities. I would like to see better pairing of children and carers, and for them to be allocated carers from similar backgrounds and beliefs. When people move out of care I would like to see that they are given relevant support to help them adjust to the outside world.
61. Should the Inquiry feel it necessary, I can supply them with copies of the limited records I have managed to obtain.

Other information

62. 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.

FFD

Signed.

Dated. 18/1/13