

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

EPF

Support person present: No

1. My name is EPF. This is the name I was known as all the time I was in care. I later in life used the name EPF when my mum remarried but recently reverted back to EPF at the request of my dad. My date of birth is 1979. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was initially brought up in Glenrothes. My mum and dad are and My dad was a refuse collector and my mum did some casual cleaning jobs on the side. I think she also prostituted herself. My brother is two years older than me and is two years younger than me. was four years younger than me but she died three years ago.
3. My mum and dad have never had a normal loving relationship. Drink was a big part of their lives and this led to fighting and violence. My dad would leave us for days or weeks and we were sent to stay with our grandparents. After a while we would go back to my mum's and the cycle would start again. My parents are still like that today. They are together sometimes and at other times they live apart. They are so wrong for each other that they think the opposite.
4. When I was growing up we had a lot of involvement with the social work department and the police. My mum was regularly getting battered by my dad and she would tell

the police that he had raped her. One time my mum petrol bombed our own house and another time she demolished our living-room with an axe. Another time she took me, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] out our beds and we were made to stand in a line. She then poured petrol over us then started flicking a lighter. My dad came into the room at that point and it was like she was playing Russian roulette with us. The police and social workers were always there and we would get dragged out our beds. There were often random men in the house too.

5. My mum had been in foster care when she was a child. I believe her dad had shot her mum with a sawn-off shotgun. My mum almost acted as his wife after that and they were having sex as if she was his wife. He subsequently killed himself. That was when my mum was put in care and was adopted. That is how I know my gran and grandad. I know my mum has a lot of mental health issues.
6. I spent a lot of time living with my grandparents and with various foster parents from the age of three but don't remember much about all of them. Apparently from my records the first time I was put into foster care was with [REDACTED] and we were put somewhere in Leven. I seem to only remember the bad ones where I was abused and unhappy. I am not sure when it was but at a very young age I was deemed to be out-with parental control and that was probably the start of me going in and out of care.
7. The first foster care placement I remember was with <sup>EPH</sup>[REDACTED] I don't know why I went to her at this time. I just remember skipping home from school and wearing a blue school dress. I was at Warout Primary School in Glenrothes. I went into my house and there was a woman sitting with my mum who was crying. She was upset and was telling the woman to take me away. The woman then told me I was going with her and she put her arm round my waist, scooped me up and took me out of the house. I later learned she was a social worker. My nails were digging into the wallpaper on the walls trying to stop her taking me away and I was screaming at my mum for sending me away again. I think we were often sent away by my mum so she could go out drinking.

**Foster care - EPH**

8. EPH lived in Leslie, Fife. I don't remember there being other children living with her but I have since been told that there were. EPH husband lived with her but I can't remember his name. I met him when we arrived and only saw him on one other occasion. I would have been about three or years old when I first went there. My older brother was never in care with me. He always stayed at home or went to our grandparents. and were with me at EPH EPH I can still picture the social worker who took us. She had long dark hair and a big nose. She told us that this was where we had to go for a while and we went straight from our house to EPH house.
9. I have been told that EPH couldn't have her own children so that is why she got into fostering. Her husband lived with her and I presume he worked through the day as he got home around tea time and was there most evenings. There was a lot of screaming and shouting between them and I suspect they had issues in their relationship.
10. EPH house was directly above a little shop in Leslie which was a type shop. There was a set of stairs leading up to her house and the front door was a big thick wooden door with an old knocker. The house was massive and compared to my house it was like a palace. It was all on one level and there was a big hall off which were the bedrooms and bathroom. I don't remember ever being in any of the other rooms like the dining or sitting rooms. The only rooms that I remember were the bedroom that and I shared and the bathroom. Our bedroom window was over the shop front and had big mahogany windows. The only other place we were allowed was in the garden. It was massive. I remember these three places because there was abuse in them. Our bedroom had a bolt to lock the door from the outside.
11. My brother, sister and I used to have to stand in a row and pose for photographs to make it look like we were being well cared for. In the beginning living there was brilliant. It must have been when the other children left that the abuse started.

## **Routine**

### *Mornings and bedtime*

12. There was no specific time when we went to bed. We didn't get to sleep on mattresses on the bed. <sup>EPH</sup> removed them leaving only the metal bed frame. and I just had to curl up together on the floor when it was dark and went to sleep.

### *Mealtimes/Food*

13. I don't remember ever sitting at a dining table and having a meal in the house. I was always hungry. The food she gave us was very minimal. It felt like food was a luxury and you had to earn it. I was never given food that I couldn't or didn't want to eat. I used to go to school and I was starving. At school lunch time I used to take food and put it in my pockets to take home for my sister. I am not sure where went through the day, possibly nursery.
14. In all my time with <sup>EPH</sup> I was never given anything that resembled a sweet. The only sweet I ever saw were the chocolate eclairs which she once showed us and told us we weren't allowed to touch. We were later punished for eating some of them but we hadn't.

### *Washing/bathing*

15. I am not sure how often we had a bath. I just remember the one time when my sister and I were put in the bath as a punishment. I have no memory of ever sitting in a bath playing with toys.

### *Healthcare/ Chores / Pocket money*

16. I am not sure what we did if we weren't well. I never did any chores about the house. I was probably too young.

### *Clothing/uniform*

17. I don't remember what clothing I had there. I just recall being made at some point to wear white sandals and a red polka dot dress and being made to stand and get our picture taken. The only thing I do remember was white pants and vest.

### *Schooling*

18. I went to school and I had a school uniform. I must have been at Leslie primary school when I was in <sup>EPH</sup> care but I don't remember ever walking there.

### *Leisure time/trips/holidays*

19. We were put in our room at night and there was nothing for us to do. The door was locked from the outside. I think we went into the bedroom as soon as I got home from school and I didn't come out again. My sister and I played role play games like mummy and baby. Sometimes we used to play a game which was counting our bruises to see who had the most. A lot of the time we just sat cuddling each other.
20. I don't recall ever going to any parks to play and we never went on any trips or holidays. I just remember being in the big garden of the house and there were lots of flowers but we weren't allowed to touch them. It was a beautiful big garden and there was grass. We even played outside in the rain and we ran around the flower beds.

### *Birthdays and Christmas*

21. My birthday wasn't recognised or celebrated in any way. It was just another day. I woke up on Christmas day and there were no presents. I can't remember any good times or any happy times with <sup>EPH</sup>

*Personal possessions*

22. I didn't have any toys or anything that belonged to me. All I had was my wee sister. We didn't have dolls so we used to pretend we were doing each other's hair by pretending our fingers were a brush.

*Supervision oversight / inspection by fostering authority/ Family Contact*

23. My social worker came to visit me at EPH [REDACTED], EPH [REDACTED] always spoke to us before she arrived or before we arrived at the social work office if we went there. I had time alone with the social worker and she would ask me how things were going. I think I went home to see my mum possibly once a month.

*Bed Wetting*

24. I don't remember how EPH [REDACTED] reacted if I wet the bed. That could be because I don't remember being in the bed very often. I did have wet pants often but I am not sure what she did or if she punished me. I never ran away from EPH [REDACTED]. I was too young to even think about it.

**Abuse in foster care - EPH [REDACTED]**

25. EPH [REDACTED] made people think that she was a caring, doting, loving person but she was quite the opposite. She was evil. Our beds had mattresses but most of the time they were taken out of the room and [REDACTED] and myself had to just sleep on the floor. The only time the mattresses were put on the bed was if she knew the social workers or someone else was coming to the house. If they called unannounced she would say that the mattresses were standing on their end to dry as we had wet the bed.
26. One time she showed us two packets of chocolate eclairs sweets and put them in a kitchen drawer after telling us that we must not touch them. She warned us that we

would be in trouble if any went missing. It was almost like she was luring us into wanting them. EPH husband was standing behind her and took the sweets out the drawer and ate some. He knew exactly what he was doing and he did this knowing that we would get into trouble. EPH husband was very cunning and 'sleekit' in the way that he did things.

27. Later on EPH called me and out of our bedroom into the hall. I remember I was wearing a vest and pants. She said she had warned us about eating the sweets and she didn't believe that we hadn't. EPH grabbed me and started shaking me and dragged me into the bedroom and threw me onto my bed. My bed didn't have a mattress on it and it was metal framed bed with a metal springy base. My leg was cut on the bed and it was bleeding. She then went back into the hall and I heard screaming. I was sitting in the room crying, knowing that I couldn't do anything to help my sister. I don't know what EPH was doing to her. Her husband wasn't there when this was going on.
28. At some point I was standing on the windowsill banging on the bedroom window which looked onto the street hoping to attract someone's attention. I was begging that someone would see me and call the police. If anyone saw me they probably just thought I was a child refusing to go to bed or something like that. EPH then came into the room and threw my sister at me. There was nothing of my sister and I and we were both just skin and bone. We both huddled up together on the floor and were crying. I got into trouble because I got blood on the carpet from my bleeding leg.
29. Another time, and I am not sure what the lead up to was but, EPH threw me down the stairs and when I woke up I was in the garden only wearing a vest and pants. It had been daylight and a warm day before this happened and when I woke up it was dark, the street lighting was on, and I was freezing. My fingers were so cold they were locked in position. I went back upstairs and I was banging and banging on the front door for what seemed like ages. EPH eventually opened the door and when she did she grabbed my head hair and pulled me down to the bottom of

the garden where there is a cement birdbath. I must have told her that my mouth was really dry because she dunked my head into the water in the birdbath.

30. She then dragged me back into the bathroom in the house and started running a bath. I could see the steam coming off the hot water. She made [REDACTED] and I get in the bath and she pushed us down so that we were sitting. It was burning. She then filled a glass jug with cold water and poured it over us. When I came out the bath my legs were red where they had been in contact with the hot water. I am not sure which was worse, stepping into the burning water which made my legs go bright pink or the freezing cold water poured over me. That only happened once.
31. There were dog kennels in the garden which were big, homemade huts surrounded with chicken wire. <sup>EPH</sup> [REDACTED] had hairy Alsatian dogs which she had for protection. She always told me never to go anywhere near the dogs and to keep my fingers away from the chicken wire. I never saw <sup>EPH</sup> [REDACTED] going for family walks or anything like that with the dogs. They were vicious, nasty horrible dogs. I am not sure what I did one day but <sup>EPH</sup> [REDACTED] dragged me to the kennels and pushed my face against the chicken wire. The dog was on the other side snarling and slavering all over me. I was petrified that the dog would bite me. <sup>EPH</sup> [REDACTED] seemed to get off on the fact that there was fear in me and she was controlling it. She did this to me at least three times.
32. <sup>EPH</sup> [REDACTED] used to belt and cane <sup>EPH</sup> [REDACTED] and myself. I think I got belted or whipped every day. I am sure every morning I would wake up and wonder how I was going to get hit that day. The belt was a trouser belt. The cane was bamboo like would be used in the garden. She whipped our bare legs with the cane. If she used the belt it was the buckle end that hit us. She always hit us on the lower body. If you flinched when she hit you, she hit you again. I think by the end I became numb and accustomed to it. This meant I didn't cry or give her a reaction so I am sure she hit me even more. When I stopped reacting that was when she started beating my sister. <sup>EPH</sup> [REDACTED] knew that would affect me more by hitting her. She obviously enjoyed hitting us.

33. At other times she would make us stand at the wall and face it. She was brutal with us. I never saw my brother [REDACTED] being hit by her and I am not even sure if he was there all the time.
34. I used to have long hair and my mum made it clear that my hair wasn't to be cut. [REDACTED] EPH cut it short one time and my mum was mad at her. I think [REDACTED] EPH said it was because we had head lice.

#### Reporting of abuse by [REDACTED] EPH

35. I went home sometimes for the weekend. I was too frightened to say anything to my mum about [REDACTED] EPH. Before I left her house [REDACTED] EPH would warn us, if anyone asked about our bruises we were to say that we got them when we fell or that their dog jumped up on me. She inferred, but it was more of a threat, that something might happen to [REDACTED] if I said something different.
36. My mum must have seen me and [REDACTED] covered with bruises. [REDACTED] and me used to count each other's bruises. If my mum saw them she never did anything about it. My mum definitely saw my hair after [REDACTED] EPH had cut it. I know she wasn't happy about it but I don't know what she did about it. Mum told me in later life that she was mad at [REDACTED] EPH for cutting my hair. I think she told the social worker and she got the response that [REDACTED] EPH cut my hair because I had head lice. I don't think that was true.
37. I don't know if the teachers at school noticed my bruising but if they did they never said anything to me or did anything about it.
38. I saw my social worker on her own when she visited or if we went to her office. I was too frightened to say anything to her about [REDACTED] EPH because I knew I would suffer at the hands of [REDACTED] EPH if I did.

### **Leaving foster care - EPH**

39. I am not sure what happened that we left EPH. I have very few memories of my brother at EPH and he didn't come with me to any other foster carer. came with me to EPH then after that she stayed at home. I remember being home for a short while then getting put to different foster carers. I can't remember who I went to first or the order. All I know is that I went back and forth from my mum to different carers. I was passed from pillar to post.

### **Foster care in Saline, Fife**

40. I would have been around twelve or thirteen, maybe younger, when I went to foster carers in Saline, Fife. This was a married couple and they had an older son. I don't remember much from there but it was a house with an upstairs and a downstairs. I had my own bedroom and I got taxis back and forward to school. They were a really nice couple and she made me rolls every day for my lunch. She then saw me off to school. This could have been the first time I thought that this was what normal family life should be like. I went to school and had a normal day at school then when I got home I would tell her about my day.
41. I would then go upstairs and chatted with their son. My bedroom was directly opposite his bedroom on the landing. Initially he was quite distant and spent most of his time playing on his computer on his own. I can't remember his name but he was very tall, had a tanned complexion and was good looking. He was seventeen or eighteen, possibly older.

### **Abuse at foster carers in Saline.**

42. After a while their son started inviting me in to his bedroom but I had to wait until his mum and dad were sleeping. It started off that I would go into his room and we would play games on his computer. We did this for a while and we became quite close. It

was a slow process. Looking back as an adult I should have read the signs but as a child I thought he was showing an interest in me and he liked me which I wasn't used to. He made a pass at me but I went along with it because this was someone showing me attention. Before I knew it we were lying on his bed canoodling. We were kissing, cuddling and then I was touching him and he was touching me. I don't think we had penetrative sex. At the time I thought it was all normal. Straight afterwards he was quite abrupt and told me to get out his room.

### **Leaving foster carers in Saline**

43. The foster carer's son, at some point, told his mum that I had made a pass at him so I was quite quickly removed from their house. I remember being in a taxi and I thought I was going back to Saline but I was taken to other foster carers. I asked my social worker why I couldn't go back to Saline and I was told that a situation had happened and I had to move on. I was with the foster carers in Saline for around a year or just less. I can't remember where I went straight after Saline.

### **Reporting abuse at Foster carers in Saline**

44. I never told anyone about what went on at Saline. I didn't see the point and by then I still didn't consider what we had done was wrong. Looking back now I think what we were doing was wrong because he was an adult and I was a minor. I was twelve or thirteen and he was seventeen or eighteen.

### **Various Foster Care placements**

45. There was another carer who I was fostered to in [REDACTED] Kirkcaldy. She was like the mother I never had. She did baking with me and lots of other things. I had my own room there and she tried to make it as good as possible for me. I made the mistake of telling mum how happy I was with her and how I was having a great time.

The next thing I knew I was removed. This seemed to happen quite often. My mum didn't like me getting attached to any of the foster carers and when I got too close or if I suggested they adopt me she took me away.

46. I was with other foster carers in [REDACTED] Methil. They were an older couple. Everything was fine with them and I got quite attached to the couple. I think they couldn't care for me any longer so I had to leave. I have since found out from my records that she had cancer and although they wanted to keep me her health prevented that.

### **Social work contact**

47. There was very little contact with social workers in all the time I was with these foster carers. They only ever showed up if things got a bit rough or if there were any issues or to take me home or to the next set of foster carers. I went to some children's panels because my mum was fighting to get me back. Most of the time she was told that she wasn't fit to look after me.

### **Abuse back at home**

48. In between the foster care placements I was back living with my mum and dad. When I was with them, as a teenager, I was sexually assaulted by a man called [REDACTED] who is believed to have moved to the London area. Another older man called [REDACTED] also sexually assaulted me. The police were involved and [REDACTED] went to court but it was deemed that I wasn't stable enough to give evidence and there was insufficient evidence to proceed against him. [REDACTED] has since died.

### **Moving to Ribleton House school, Glenrothes**

49. I was at Glenwood High school in Glenrothes when it was identified that I had dyslexia and slight learning difficulties. I don't think I understood much of what was going on at school so I think I played up a bit and tried to be the class clown rather than admitting that I didn't understand something. I then started going to Ribleton House School on a part time basis. After a while I was sent to stay permanently as a resident at Ribleton House. The reason I was sent there was because my mum didn't want me and she said she couldn't cope with me. My social worker at the time was Gail Norrie from Glenrothes social work office. She was my social worker from when I arrived at Ribleton and she arranged for the full time residential place for me.

### **Ribleton House School, Glenrothes.**

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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### **Leaving Ribleton House School**

83. I left Ribleton House School and went back to my mum's. I still went for periods to other foster carers until I started to get attached to them. My mum didn't like the idea of this happening so she would take me away from them. At some point my social worker Gail Norrie took me to Glenrothes social work office and I filled out some paperwork with another social worker. It was paperwork for me to go to supported accommodation. Gail explained it was for me to go and live with somebody at their house with my own bedroom and I would be allowed to come and go, within reason. It was to get me ready and support me into living on my own.

## Supported accommodation in [REDACTED]

84. I ended up in supported lodgings in [REDACTED], Glenrothes with a lady called [REDACTED]. The social work department arranged this. I had a good relationship with [REDACTED] and there were no issues living there. My social worker helped me settle in but then contact with her petered out and I was left to get on with it. I was with [REDACTED] from the age of sixteen to seventeen and a half. When I was there I learned how to compile my CV and how to present and sell myself at job interviews.

## Life after being in care

85. When I left the supported lodgings at [REDACTED] I went back to live with my mum. I met my partner [REDACTED] and I fell pregnant and had my first child [REDACTED]. We split up and with my next partner [REDACTED] I lost a child. I subsequently met [REDACTED] and with him I had other children, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Because of [REDACTED] I got involved taking heroin. I became addicted and couldn't get any help from my GP to come off it. My life spiralled downwards and I needed more and more drugs. I started off taking £10 bags but it increased, at my worst point, to £250 a day. I had to resort to crime to pay for my addiction. After that I was in and out of prison in a cycle that I couldn't get out of. I came out of that cycle when I received an eight year prison sentence. I saw so many waifs and strays coming in to prison. One prison officer became a mentor for me and convinced me that I was much better than them and that prison wasn't the place for me. She told me I should get out and make a life for myself.
86. The next time I was in court, waiting to be sentenced, I asked the sheriff to read a letter I had written. In the letter I explained how they kept putting me in prison and I was just coming out and reoffending because I wasn't getting the support I needed. The sheriff agreed and put me on a Drugs Treatment Testing Order. I complied with this order and have never been back to prison.
87. I have since met my current partner with whom I have had two children and my life is back on track.

## Reporting of abuse

88. When I was in prison a lot of people tried to encourage me to report the abuse I suffered to the police. I didn't see any point because I was involved in drugs and in prison so nobody was likely to believe me. I decided to wait until I was drug free, in a good place, stable and my memory was better.
89. I have told my daughter little snippets of my abuse at appropriate times. When I contacted the police they wanted to speak to my mother and ask her if, when I came home from [REDACTED], my hair had been cut and if she saw the bruises on my body. They wanted to know if she knew where the bruises came from and if she thought that [REDACTED] abused me and my sister. My daughter messaged my mum and asked her about my time with [REDACTED]
90. My mum replied that she remembered [REDACTED] and that she lived in Leslie, Fife. She said that [REDACTED] couldn't have her own children so that is why she fostered. Her first husband was very controlling and hit her. After she remarried her ex-husband returned and caused bother at the house. My mum then went on to say that [REDACTED] regularly left the kids playing outside even in the rain. Sometimes she made the children stand and face the wall. She goes on to say that [REDACTED] cut my hair without her permission and that [REDACTED] fostered another child about the same age as my brother [REDACTED]. This boy put a Dinky car in a sock and started swinging it about and it hit [REDACTED] on the face really close to his eye. My mum went on to say that [REDACTED] fostered other children after us and apparently did a lot of cruel things to them too but nothing ever happened to [REDACTED] for what she did.
91. I think it was after I contacted the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry that the police contacted me and they arranged to come and see me. In November 2021 a female police officer Lauren Hunter came and I have given her part of my statement. She is going to return at some point and finish taking my statement. As an adult I have asked my brother [REDACTED] about his time in care but he doesn't want to talk about it.

## Impact

92. There are a lot of blanks in my memories from my childhood. I put that down to my abuse of drugs. It is also possible I have blanked some of the memories in my head. My first experience of drugs was with my mum at the age of thirteen smoking 'dope'. My mum's house was used for parties probably every weekend. It was after I left care and lost my second child that I started taking drugs more often.
93. Because of the time EPH put me and my sister in the roasting hot bath I have never been able to have a hot bath. It takes me back to my unhappy time with EPH. When I have a bath now the water is always just lukewarm and would be suitable for a baby.
94. I am petrified of dogs, regardless of their breed or size. This has been ever since EPH pushed my face against the wire of the dog cage in her garden. If I see a dog, even if it is the cutest little thing, my heart starts pounding and I almost have a panic attack. I feel I have to get away from it as quickly as possible.
95. The care system let me down with my education. I left school without any qualifications. I should have had more support and some sort of mentor to help me. With a better education I could have followed a better career. When I was growing up and even into my adult life I always wanted to be a police officer. Because of what my life in care did to me I went the opposite way and ended up in prison. Had I been encouraged in my younger life it could have been so different. I could have gone much further but they mucked it all up for me. It will affect me for the rest of my life.
96. I have never had any support or guidance in relation to leaving care. No one sat down with me and taught me how to budget my money or pay bills or anything like that in relation to living on my own after care.
97. Because I have never been anywhere that birthdays were celebrated I still don't celebrate my birthday now. To me it is just another day. Me and my sister wet our beds probably until we were about fifteen. It was embarrassing. I think it stems back

to my time with <sup>EPH</sup> [REDACTED] when I couldn't go to the toilet because I was locked in the bedroom.

98. I don't have a normal relationship with my mum. I would walk past her if I saw her in the street now as she means nothing to me. She used the social work department as babysitters to suit her life. Whenever she wanted she would contact them and ask them to take us away. I am now very close to my partner's mother and she is what my own mum should have been. I grew up without a mother figure in my life. I have tried to give my mum chances to change and be part of my family but she didn't take it. She was too inconsistent and let me down. I can never forgive my mum for all the things she did to me.
99. I got involved in drugs after I left care. I used heroin to mask the pain and to stop me thinking about my time in care and to take the pain away. My brother [REDACTED] became a cocaine addict. I got involved in drink and drugs and ended up in prison. We have all been affected because of our time in care.
100. It upsets me when I am out for a walk and I see people in their houses sitting round their dining table having a meal. I never had that and I have always missed having family experiences like this. I want my children to never have to ask if they can have anything when they visit me. I want them to feel at home and to be relaxed and feel loved. I always wanted a nice house with nice things. I now have a nice house and I hate the idea of anyone coming in and spoiling or messing up my house.
101. Since I left <sup>EPH</sup> [REDACTED] house I have never been back in Leslie, Fife. I have never stepped foot in it and if ever I am driving somewhere and the route takes me through it I take an alternative route. It brings back too many bad memories. I am angry that <sup>EPH</sup> [REDACTED] took what she did to us to the grave because she is dead. I am sad that because <sup>EPH</sup> [REDACTED] is dead I won't get to watch her in court on trial for what she did to me and my sister.
102. I came forward to tell people about my experiences in care because I know what it has been like for me carrying it about in my head every day. There are some days I

cope with it better than others. I see it almost every day on the television about children getting abused and it brings it all back to me. I was diagnosed with depression at sixteen and in my notes it states this relates to past family trauma.

103. I have great difficulty in trusting anyone. I feel that anyone coming into my life has an ulterior motive. I am always suspicious of anyone that wants to be my friend that they want something from me. I still feel that way today. I try to see the best in everybody but at the back of my mind I am wondering what they are trying to get out of me.
104. People have commented that I have very few friends and they are right as I only have one very close friend who I trust. I have met the most amazing guy and we have a great relationship but I don't trust him. I know that he could walk out that door any day and not come back. This has happened to almost everyone else in the past who I have loved or become attached to. They have either left or been taken away from me. This has caused me major trust and anxiety issues. It takes me a long time to get to know someone or to let them get to know me properly. I don't let my guard down easily. As a child me and my sister would cling on to anybody that showed us attention.
105. I try and make a conscious effort to contact my children every day. Sometimes it goes for days, sometimes weeks, without any contact and I feel really guilty. When I apologise to them they don't see it being an issue but I tell them it isn't normal. My partner's mother phones me every day and I think I should be doing the same with my children. I don't have strong attachments to my children because when they were growing up I was too busy taking drugs. I feel bad about that although they say they have forgiven me. I am now trying to be a better role model for my children.
106. I think because of my upbringing I have developed a split personality disorder. One minute I can be sitting sobbing my eyes out then when I need to if my children are there, I switch it off and they get to see my 'mum' face. Sometimes I can be very emotional but at other times I can appear to be quite cold hearted and uncaring. I connect this to time in care. I have never been officially diagnosed with a mental health disorder but I have done a lot of research on it and I believe I have a split

personality disorder. If somebody looks at me the wrong way I convince myself they aren't just glancing at me, I feel they are looking down their nose at me and I can become quite aggressive.

107. My mental health in my adult life has not been great. I have attempted suicide three times. At times I have felt worthless and don't deserve to be here. I sometimes think to myself that I was put on this earth to be abused. I often wonder if <sup>EPH</sup> [REDACTED] abused me before I was old enough to remember anything and not able to defend myself.
108. Drugs and alcohol have been a big part of my life. Had I been in a loving nourishing family environment I think I would have been a totally different person to what I became and what I am still battling with now. I am still carrying with me what happened to me all those years ago. I can deal with it better on some days than others. I was damaged as a child and a young adult and I have just been left to get on with it as an adult.
109. I suffer from night terrors. My partner says that most nights I toss and turn and my eye lids flicker all night and it is like my brain doesn't switch off. Sometimes I have to function on only two hours sleep. I often walk about like a zombie.

*Impact on sister* [REDACTED]

110. My sister [REDACTED] always had a thing for older men. She was sexually active from a very young age and her boyfriends were always older. I think she needed a father figure in her life but some of them were violent towards her. She was always very protective of them and covered up for them. She got involved in drugs after leaving care and died through drugs two years ago.

### **Treatment/support**

111. I have seen psychologists and they have told me they would teach my brain to be like a filing cabinet, and that while it was always going to be there I could shut it away.
112. I have been offered counselling but I have never actually started it. I try and deal with it all myself. I am considering looking at counselling in the future. I am on medication to help me sleep.

### **Records**

113. I applied for my records because there were blanks in my life that I wanted filled so I could let the past go and move on. I contacted and emailed an Elaine Watters who was at Leven social work department asking for a copy. Because of Covid it took over a year to get them. She sent a hard copy to me.
114. In the records it is recorded that I was sexually assaulted by my father when it was discovered at the age of three. This was the reason I was put into care. Social workers at that time described me as a glum, solemn child with an air of sadness and the weight of the world on my shoulders.

### **Lessons to be Learned**

115. My school should have noticed when I shut down or how hungry I was and realised that something was wrong. Any adults that saw or were aware of my bruises should have raised suspicion and some enquiries should have been made. They should have acted on their instincts and it doesn't matter if they are wrong.
116. The social workers were responsible for me. They put me into people's houses where I was supposed to be looked after, loved and protected. It was quite the

opposite and these people continued to abuse me. When I was taken away from these places I was put back into the care of my mum and dad. They did this knowing that I had been abused by my father. This shows that the social work department seriously let me down.

### **Hopes for the Inquiry**

117. I hope by coming forward I get some sort of closure and that the abusers I have spoken about in my statement are dealt with. I know that some of them will be dead. I would like to put it all behind me and should I get any compensation I can do nice things with my children. Money won't make the memories go away for me but it would be good to get a little help to do something for the future. The people who abused me shouldn't just get away with it.
118. I hope that speaking about my time in care will encourage other people to come forward and share their experiences to stop children in the future being subjected to the abuse I was. Children need stability and consistency in their lives. They shouldn't be moved from pillar to post otherwise they become very insecure.
119. It would be good if there was one person that the child can trust and speak to at any time. This has to be an independent person not attached to the abusers or the social work department. In the event that any abuse, especially sexual abuse is suspected or made known, the child should be removed immediately and the matter fully investigated. The child should not be returned to that care situation unless it is established it is a safe environment .

### **Other information**

120.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

121. 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.

EPF  
[Redacted Signature]

Signed.....

Dated..... 19-01-2022 .....