

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

EQG [REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is EQG [REDACTED] and my date of birth is [REDACTED] 1968. My maiden name was EQG [REDACTED] which I used until I married. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. My mum and dad are [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. My dad is dead. My mum, [REDACTED] is 84 and is still alive. I had two brothers; [REDACTED], who has passed away, and [REDACTED]. I had four sisters; [REDACTED], who has passed away, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

Life before care

3. My father died quite suddenly when I was about seven years old, and I don't think my mother could cope with all of us on her own. She turned to drink and drugs and her life went into a downward spiral. We were living in [REDACTED] [REDACTED], Clydebank. The social work department got involved. I just remember coming home from school one day and my mum told us that we were getting put into a home. When she said this I ran away with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].
4. When we came back a while later we saw [REDACTED] getting taken away in a car. The next day we went to our school, which was Elgin Street Primary School, as normal but when we were there our social worker Graham Beattie came and took us all

away in his wee white Mini. He took us to Bloomhill Children's Home, Carman Road, Cardross

5. As far as I am aware my mum had signed forms for the social work to take us away. I have since been told by someone, but I can't remember who, that they shouldn't have done that because she was under the influence of alcohol.

Bloomhill Children's Home, Carman Road, Cardross

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Bloomhill

28. I think I was at the home for about a year, maybe slightly more. Graham Beattie, my social worker, came and picked me up and took me to Hill Park Children's Home. I have been told that we were moved because we asked to be closer to our home. Me and my sisters all went to Hill Park Children's Home.

Hill Park Children's Home, Stewart Drive, Hardgate

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Leaving Hill Park Children's Home

54. I was in Hill Park Children's Home for three years from primary 6 until my first year at secondary school. Me and my sisters all left the home at different times. [REDACTED] left first, then [REDACTED], then about a year later I was taken to the foster carers. I think there were two children's panels. My mum wanted to take us back. The first time she didn't turn up, and the second time she was drunk.

Life in foster care with [REDACTED] family, Balloch

55. We didn't go to any children's panel. I think it was Graham Beattie's decision that we should go to these foster carers. Graham Beattie, the social worker, took me and my sister [REDACTED] once to meet [REDACTED] family. We went back a second time and that time we stayed overnight.
56. My first impression was that [REDACTED] were old because they were in their fifties. I straight away thought I was going to be embarrassed with them coming to the school parents' night. Their house was at [REDACTED], Balloch and had four bedrooms. I shared a room with my sister [REDACTED]. All their children were much older and were married. I lived with [REDACTED] from the age of twelve and moved out when I was sixteen. I was working before I moved out and when I left I got my own flat. I didn't change my surname when I was with them.
57. After about a year with [REDACTED] we moved to a three bedroomed house at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Bonhill. It had two bedrooms upstairs and one downstairs. Initially it was

just ^{EQI-EQJ} me and living there. Me and had our own bedrooms. At some point one of their sons, came back to live with them so I had to share a room with my sister again. We still didn't have a television in our room but there was one in the living room so we just had to watch what they were watching. I was still going to Vale of Leven Academy School and everything there was okay. I made some friends there.

Routine in foster care with ^{EQI-EQJ} family

58. I washed all my own clothes and did my ironing. Mrs ^{EQI} sometimes got me to wash her stuff too. I didn't see it that she was trying to teach me life skills; she was just lazy. We had a bath when we wanted.
59. Mrs ^{EQI} did the cooking when I was at school. I can't really remember much about breakfast but I think we had to make it ourselves. We were given chores to do by Mrs ^{EQI}. We would clean and polish the house, do the dishes and generally keep our rooms clean and tidy.
60. I started working in a wholesale jewellers in a shopping arcade when I was fifteen or sixteen years old.
61. In my spare time I just really went out with my friends, or if I stayed in I would just watch the television. There were no books for me to read or toys to play with. I had a record player. I got it as a Christmas present when we were at but I had to give Mrs ^{EQI} half the money for it. At Christmas we might get shower gel or things like that but it wasn't wrapped.
62. I never went on any holidays, or even any day trips with ^{EQI-EQJ}. I don't remember getting any birthday presents or birthday cakes.
63. The only visit I ever got was from my sister who came to visit me once. Graham Beattie my social worker only ever came to see me once. I don't think the ^{EQI-EQJ} had a social worker. After being at for about a year and I

were allowed to go at the weekend to stay with my sister [REDACTED] in Clydebank. I think Mrs [REDACTED] must have given us money for the train.

Abuse in foster care with [REDACTED] family

64. When we went to visit [REDACTED] they told us that we would have our own bed but I ended up sharing a double bed with my sister [REDACTED]. We were told we would have new quilt covers but the ones we got were the cheapest you can get - that candlewick material and they were that horrible brown colour. They said in their scrapbook we would get a television in our room but we didn't.
65. When I got home from school or from work I got ordered by Mrs [REDACTED] to take the dogs out for a walk. I had to walk the dogs every night, all year round. If you didn't take the dogs out Mrs [REDACTED] would make your life hell. She wouldn't speak to you and the atmosphere would be terrible. She also didn't like it when I answered her back. When I was working and didn't get home until later at night Mrs [REDACTED] wouldn't have any tea ready for me to eat. They would have eaten and sometimes I had to wash their dishes before I could make my own tea.
66. I needed a new school shoes and one of them kept falling off but she never suggested we buy a new pair. If her own children needed anything they would get it. The [REDACTED] were not interested in us and didn't even bother coming to any of our parents' nights at school.
67. After I had been living there for about six months Mrs [REDACTED] told me one time to go to a farm that was quite far away to get some eggs. I told her to go and get them herself. She started shouting at me and I told her that I didn't want to stay there anymore. I can't remember how I told him or how he knew, but a few days later Graham Beattie the social worker came and visited me.
68. I was never shown any love and affection by [REDACTED]. She wasn't very nice to me. I think the dogs actually got treated better than I did. Mr [REDACTED] was okay with me

and tended just to agree with Mrs [EQI]. It was obvious she wore the trousers in their marriage. Mrs [EQI] was always grumpy and moody. Sometimes they just wouldn't speak to me for days. She should have been a bit more sensitive with us. I never had a relationship with them and I have no good memories of the foster carers.

Leaving foster care

69. When I left [EQI-EQJ] I didn't even say cheerio to them, I just walked out with my stuff and didn't look back. I have never gone back to see them or even contacted them. I felt rotten leaving my sister [] with them, but I didn't really have a choice because the flat I was moving into only had one bedroom.

Life after care

70. A woman came to see me when I was still at [EQI-EQJ] and helped me get supported accommodation. I think she was from the supported accommodation team. The flat was owned by Clydebank Housing Association and it was one house with separate rooms for us to live in, but we shared the bathroom, kitchen and shower room. I also got help to get stuff for the flat, but once I had moved in I didn't get any more help. I liked having the freedom in my own flat but I ended up turning night into day. I didn't cope very well on my own. I wasn't buying food and I usually just took my washing to my sister []'s house. I never saw my social worker after that one time he visited me at [].
71. When I was seventeen I started going out with []. We are now married and have been for 28 years. I now work part time as a facility assistant at a local primary school. We have two children aged 28 and 24.

Reporting abuse in foster care with [REDACTED] family

72. At the Vale of Leven School I was probably quite rebellious but no one ever asked me why.
73. Graham Beattie, my social worker, came to see me when I told him I didn't want to stay with [REDACTED] family anymore at [REDACTED]. He spoke to us upstairs in the house and told us we hadn't given it long enough because we had only been with the [REDACTED] family six months by then. I told him I was not happy at that home. He never followed up that visit, and I don't think I ever saw him again.
74. I never saw anyone else from the social work department. I could have phoned Graham Beattie when there were issues with [REDACTED] but I didn't want him to think I was phoning about every single thing so I suppose I just got on with it.
75. I lied to my husband initially about what I had been through and haven't really gone into detail with him about my past family life. I just really told him small bits. He knows I am giving a statement to this Inquiry but he still doesn't know everything. I have talked to my sisters about it, but only in private.

Impact

76. Because of what has happened to me I am not very good at showing affection or telling anyone that I love them. My own daughter has even made comments about my lack of affection. I do lots of things for my children to show that I love them, but I just can't hug them or tell them that I love them. I think it is just because we have never been shown any love or affection. I think that is the only way it has affected my ability to bring up children. I also have an issue with trust.
77. I may occasionally have flashbacks about my time in care if I see something on the television or on the news. I recently drove past Cardross. You couldn't see the home

but it did bring it back to me. What has happened to me has probably made me a stronger person, because I won't let things happen to me.

Treatment / support

78. I have not had any treatment or support because of my time in care. My father-in-law passed away about two years ago and I found that really hard to deal with. I was given sleeping tablets which helped me.

Lessons to be learned

79. I think the authorities need to listen to children more. We also need to ensure that people who work in care homes and who want to be foster parents are doing it for the right reasons. They also need to be better trained. Not all children in homes are bad and it could be for other reasons. People should understand that.

Records

80. I have never tried to get any of my records.

81. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed... 

Dated... 17/7/17