

**Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

FEE [REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is FEE [REDACTED]. FEE [REDACTED] is the surname on my birth certificate, but I have three last names. The others are FEE [REDACTED] and FEE [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1991. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

**Life before going into care**

2. My mother's name was [REDACTED]. She died in [REDACTED] 2015. My mum was married to my step-father, [REDACTED] before I went into care the first time. He was part of the travelling community. I thought he was my real dad and my surname was FEE [REDACTED] like my mum, but I was lied to. I found out when I was about seven that he wasn't my biological father.
3. From my mother, I have two brothers and a sister. My eldest brother, [REDACTED] was born in 1983, [REDACTED] was born in 1988 and my younger sister, [REDACTED] was born in 1995. We all have different fathers, so I suppose the correct terminology is half-brothers and half-sister. [REDACTED] was [REDACTED]'s biological father. He is dead too. I know my real dad has a daughter called [REDACTED]. She moved away from Aberdeen with her mum.
4. We lived in the [REDACTED] area of Aberdeen when I was first taken into care. I think [REDACTED] lived in the [REDACTED] house at some point, but I don't remember ever living with him. [REDACTED] got adopted by his grandmother. I don't know how she made that happen. [REDACTED]'s father was from a traveller family as well. My mum was abused by him and

the truth of the matter is that she was a vulnerable woman and was manipulated into allowing [REDACTED] to be adopted.

5. I remember being a happy little girl in a clean house in [REDACTED] with my mother and stepfather. There was routine, and I was comfortable and fed. I know that I was loved. We were always playing, laughing, drawing and watching films. My mum put an effort into her house and was always decorating. This was the most normal of all the houses we lived in. The only thing not so good in this house was my stepfather drinking too much, which upset my mother. I guess my early years were the best of my life. I had no worries. As I grew older, it got worse and there were plenty of worries.
6. I remember my mum being pregnant with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and I being taken into care. This was in 1995. I have clarified the date in the paperwork I got from Aberdeen council, but I always did know that I was around four or five. My mother and stepfather had court cases going on at the time and both were expecting prison. I thought we were placed into care on a voluntary basis, but I found out from the paperwork that the social work department took us due to lack of care.

**Foster care – Sheila Davies (or Mowat), [REDACTED],  
Aberdeen**

7. I was four or five when I was placed in Sheila Davies' care and [REDACTED] was twelve or thirteen. I think I was there for about a year, but I don't think we were there over a Christmas or birthday. I have read in my records the dates my mum got jailed and when she was released. It wasn't as long as a year, so I'm not sure exactly how long we were in this foster placement.
8. Sheila's house was round the corner from where I had been living with my family. My mum's friend [REDACTED] was one of Sheila's neighbours. I remember the layout of the house. As you went in the front door, the living room area was to the left. There was an archway from the living room leading into the kitchen, and in the kitchen there

was a back door to the garden. I even remember the washing poles and wire in the back garden.

9. I recall that Sheila had a husband, but they were separated and he didn't live there. Sheila had a son around the same age as [REDACTED] and a daughter, [REDACTED] who was about the same age as me. I think the son's name was [REDACTED]. I think Sheila's mother, [REDACTED], lived there too, but she wasn't supposed to be there. I'm not sure what the situation was. She would be there for days on end at times and then we wouldn't see her for weeks. She didn't really speak to us. She was kind of ignorant with us. She used to sit eating tubs of ice cream watching the TV programme Countdown and would shout to us, "Shut the fuck up", or tell us to go and play. I can still picture the house and TV now. I don't think Sheila had a job when I lived there.
10. Sheila wore old-style, big glasses and had whitey-blond hair. She had a large backside and massive hips. I remember sitting on her hips and not wanting to be there. She used to wear high-waist pleated skirts, which went down to the floor. I remember thinking that they looked like curtains. To me, she was an old woman. I thought she was about fifty. She wasn't a smiley person. She was dour looking all the time. As a child, I saw her as this huge foster carer woman who had all this authority, and I had to do as I was told.

#### **Routine in foster care – Sheila Davies**

11. The atmosphere in the house was quiet and I could feel the awkwardness. I knew that I didn't want to be there. That's the feeling you get when you're in care. You just don't want to be there. I felt like Sheila hated me. I always felt like I was gifted because I'm empathic. I have been this way since I was a child. I can feel people's emotions, even when they're not obvious. The only reason I was sometimes comfortable at Sheila's was because I had my brother with me.
12. I remember Sheila used to try and pick me up and hold me, and I would push her away. I didn't want my body to be on hers as if she was my mother. I felt physically

sick. I remember these feelings. People don't realise that children hold these memories. If that had been an adoption, I would have grown up remembering that feeling and knowing that that person wasn't my mummy. The people who make decisions about placing children in care or for adoption should realise that children have these feelings and that they remember them, even if they're as young as three when it happens.

#### *Mornings and bedtime*

13. I don't actually remember my bedroom. The bedrooms were upstairs. I think I shared a room with [REDACTED]. I think Sheila came in and woke us up in the morning. I don't remember Sheila washing my face or helping me to brush my teeth. This is something I remember my mum doing before I went into care, so I think I would remember this if Sheila had done it as part of the routine. I remember standing in the pull-ups in my potty training days with my mum. I don't even remember where the bathroom was in Sheila's house.
14. The only thing I remember in the morning is getting my bag on, leaving the house and going to nursery. I think we walked. I don't remember us getting in the car. I remember seeing a lolly pop man every day.
15. I think the clothes I wore would have been taken from my mother's house. I don't remember getting any new clothes. I never got any gifts at Sheila's and I would have considered new clothes to be a gift.

#### *Food*

16. I don't remember breakfast. I do remember being at the table at mealtimes. I'm sure the table was just at the archway. Sheila used to feed me with a metal spoon. I don't know why I was fed at that age. She fed me things I didn't want, like Ravioli. I never got anything else to eat if I didn't want to eat what she was giving me. I wasn't allowed to help myself to food. I remember being force-fed chocolate mousse but not any other food.



17. [REDACTED] was fed toast all of the time, and I mean all of the time. It was all he ate. Neither my brother or I had any issues with food before we were placed with Sheila.

*Nursery*

18. I remember Sheila taking me to and from nursery. I went to the Williamson Family Centre, a sort of mini nursery, and then Greenfern Nursery School, which was the school nursery. I think I went to the school nursery alongside Sheila's daughter. I remember us scowling at each other when we were hanging up our jackets. I was back home with my mum for my first day at school.

*Leisure time*

19. We always played outside. Sheila never offered us the chance to do anything with her. We just got left to play out on our own, always with no shoes on. I played with other kids in the street. They didn't have shoes on either, so it must have just been a thing back then. In Aberdeen, we call playing out in the back, "the backie". So I had my "backie days". I only ever got to experience that whilst living in the [REDACTED] area, both at Sheila's and living with my mum.
20. I was never given any toys or games to play with, and I don't remember any of Sheila's own children's stuff. I just remember us either out playing or being round the telly in the living room. We didn't go to any clubs. [REDACTED] was sent to a Christian camp for two weeks because he stood up to Sheila. He didn't want to go, but he didn't have a choice. I remember being hysterical and not wanting to be left on my own with Sheila when he went.
21. I can't remember being with alone with Sheila without [REDACTED] when he went to the camp. I remember being hysterical when he left and I remember him coming back, but I don't remember living with her when he was away. My wee brain has blanked it out.

*Visits/Inspections*

22. I didn't have any visits with my mum when I was staying with Sheila. Nobody ever spoke to me about when I would see my mum again.
23. I don't remember any social workers coming to Sheila's house or seeing them at their offices. I do have memories of sitting at a round table playing with wooden things. I don't know whether that's when I was at the clinic for hearing appointments or whether I was spending time with a social worker. I think it was probably the hearing appointments.

*Healthcare*

24. I always had hearing issues and sore ears as a child. I think the nursery staff picked up my hearing problems and then I had to go for appointments at the ear, nose and throat clinic.
25. I was diagnosed in 1998 with hearing loss. I can't remember the name of the diagnosis, but it has something to do with glue ear. I read in my records that my mum was a constant "defaulter" with appointments, but I also read that I missed an appointment when I was in Sheila's care. I think the problem was picked up before I went to Sheila and it was meant to be addressed when I went there, but it wasn't really properly addressed until I went back to my mum's. That's when I started receiving gromits every six months. I remember going to appointments with my mum, not with Sheila. I used to go to do a wee test which involved me pressing a button when I heard the bleeps. I got that every time the gromits were inserted. I remember getting put to sleep when they were being put in. It was scariest thing I've ever had to do in my whole life.

*Running away*

26. I ran out the front door one day onto a busy road with a bend. Sheila came out after me. I could see her as I was running off. My own house was just round the corner but my mum was in jail, so I just went back. I think I ran away because my brother had threatened Sheila's son. I think I was feart that my brother would batter him, and I thought it was my fault because he was being protective of me.

**Abuse in foster care – Sheila Davies**

27. Sheila was horrible to me. She gave me into trouble all the time and was always shouting at me. I was walloped on my little hands or slapped on the back of my head every other day. She'd come down to my level, hold me by the wrists and then she'd wallop me again and again on the back of my hands. The sting afterwards was very sore. This started not long after I went to live with her. Her hitting me made me nervous and wary of her. I watched her every move and tried my best to behave to avoid getting hit. I hated her.
28. One of the reasons I would get hit was for helping myself to food. When you're little, you just open the fridge and eat what you want. At that age, I'd take a block of cheese out of the fridge and just start eating it. I used to get smacked if I did that at Sheila's. I was clearly hungry, but she still refused me food. Her own children were allowed to help themselves to food in the fridge. They could go out when they wanted as well, but we had to ask first. It was obvious that we were foster children and the other two were her own. It was the same in every foster placement I went to.
29. I remember one time I wanted two chocolate mousses. Sheila had fed me one and I wanted another. I think I remember dragging the chair over to the fridge and getting another mousse. Sheila found me with it and she walloped me on the hands. [REDACTED] always remembers Sheila shouting, "I don't get enough money to give you two chocolate mousses after every meal!". I only remember it because he used to tell me

she said it. I know she was receiving £16,000 a year for fostering us, so I think she could well have afforded two chocolate mousses.

30. Any time Sheila's daughter got hurt when we were playing, I got the blame for it. There was a cupboard under the stairs that we weren't allowed to play in, but we did anyway. On the way out, you'd bang your head unless you ducked. [REDACTED] banged her head one time and we ran to Sheila and explained what happened, and I got walloped for it.
31. I was force-fed chocolate mousse. I didn't want to eat it and Sheila rammed the metal spoon into my face. The chocolate was all over my face and I was crying. My brother intervened and said that I didn't want it, that I'd had enough. I was always crying at Sheila's. I was always hysterical. I think the force-feeding happened more than once but only ever with chocolate mousse, no other food. I would accept the mousse sometimes but didn't want it at other times.
32. I recently gave evidence against Sheila Davies in court, as did other former foster care children, and I've now read everything that she did. I read that she gave children out of date food and I'm now thinking that she gave me out of date chocolate mousse and that's why I wouldn't eat it. This makes sense to me as she was trying to make me eat it and I didn't want it, whereas there were other times when I wanted two chocolate mousses.
33. [REDACTED] had to witness me being hit and he couldn't do anything about it. He eventually threatened Sheila's own son for it all to stop. I think this happened after Sheila held me in the archway and walloped me one day on the hand about five or six times, one after the other. I think I went to him crying and he went mental. My brother was really protective of me. He was the only person I would listen to, and I looked up to him as I got older. [REDACTED] did eventually assault her son because of how I was being treated.

**Leaving foster care – Sheila Davies**

34. I went back to live with my mum when she got out of jail. She got out just before [REDACTED] was born. I didn't get told that she was coming to get us. My mum just appeared one day in a blue, transit van which was full of household goods. There was a male driving and she came and got me and [REDACTED]. The way I remember it is that Sheila just opened the door and away we went. As soon as I saw my mum, I knew it was over and I was going back home. The male driver might have been a social worker, as there is a male social worker mentioned around that time in my records.

**Reporting abuse in foster care – Sheila Davies**

35. When I was back home, I told my mum that Sheila had hit me. She just ignored me. She basically told me that it would be best not to say anything and just to forget about it. I remember hating her for saying that.
36. Apart from [REDACTED] there was nobody else I could speak to. At that age, I wouldn't have known how to tell anyone. I just knew to tell my mummy. When I was living at Sheila's, I used to think, "If I ever see my mummy again, I will tell her". I used to say that to [REDACTED] and he'd sometimes tell me just to leave it, because he knew we would be moved from the [REDACTED] area if I said something.

**Living at home**

[REDACTED] area

37. I went back to the house I'd been living in before I went to Sheila's, which was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Aberdeen. My life at home went back to how it had been before I went to Sheila's. At first we were just like a normal family again.

38. I have shown the Inquiry team a photograph of me after I came out of care with Sheila. I'm just a wee girl and I'm scowling. That's the way I walked around after living with Sheila. My nickname was [REDACTED] "the bully". My mum called me [REDACTED] as well, which was my cute name.
39. I remember my emotions had changed. I'd cry when anybody said anything to me. I remember my mother saying to people, "Watch what you say to [REDACTED] she's sensitive". I knew the reason why I was like that, and I wanted to shout out that it was because I was just a bairn and I got smacked, but I knew nobody was going to listen.
40. I was different in other ways too. Before I went to Sheila's, I loved dollies and I used to watch the Sound of Music and Matilda, but when I came home I just wanted to be out all the time. I was more boisterous and was like a tomboy.
41. After a while, I started noticing the police round about my family, but it was to do with [REDACTED] running away and getting up to different things.
42. My stepfather was drinking a lot. He was drunk every day and was always stinking of beer. He and my mum would argue. He used to hit me and [REDACTED] with a leather belt. I remember running away from him, sometimes laughing, even when I was getting belted. I remember running to get under the covers so it wouldn't be so painful. It was always really painful when I got hit with the buckle. I think my mum divorced him whilst we were still living in the [REDACTED] house.

*School P1 to P2*

43. I started school when I was back living with my mum. I remember it clearly. I remember my mum getting my school clothes ready the night before and I was nervous and scared. I went to [REDACTED] Primary School, which was a couple of hundred yards away from the house. [REDACTED] went to the upper part of the primary school and we used to sometimes meet at the gates.



44. I loved school when I lived in the [REDACTED] house. I loved my teacher. I've got my reports cards from the school. They say I was arty, talkative, polite, clean and well-mannered. There were no concerns. The reports seem pretty fair as regards my younger years.

*Rosemount area*

45. We had to move house when [REDACTED] got to the age where he couldn't share a room with me. We had been sharing a room, which I think had been his and [REDACTED]'s. We moved to the Rosemount area which is in the city centre. I think we moved when I was in P3.
46. I remember my mum instantly started decorating the new house. I shared a room with [REDACTED] and my mum built a wall to give us separate spaces. We then got bunks, a single on top and a double on the bottom, and the part separated by the wall was where we kept our toys. I was glad to have a sister, a friend I could play with and someone I could protect.
47. The first Rosemount house is where I noticed what was going on. My mum was a drug dealer. The house was chaotic. People used to come and go from our house buying drugs and selling stolen goods, like bacon, blocks of cheese and clothes in exchange for drugs. I let them in sometimes. My mum would let these people take me with them shoplifting as well.
48. My mum's house was like a shop where people could buy and take drugs. The toilet was always occupied with people injecting and falling asleep for hours on end. I unscrewed the handles on the doors so I could see what was going on. This was something I felt I should do. I saw needles, I saw people injecting, I saw people "gouge out" on heroin right through my time living with my mum from about the age of six until I was about eleven.
49. My real dad, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]'s dad used to come to the house as well. They were customers. I thought my stepfather was my dad until a customer told me

otherwise. Everyone knew who my dad was except me. Finding out my stepfather was not my real dad broke me. I remember feeling so hurt. A huge part of me wanted my mum gone but the times when she was gone, I waited for her to come back. I blamed myself for my mum eventually getting the jail because I wished it so many times.

50. My mother went through different relationships after her and my stepfather got divorced and I hated them all. I can remember one was a policeman. I can't remember his first name, but I think his surname was [REDACTED] I used to use his name a lot in arguments with my mother and I would use other terms too, such as slut.
51. In the mornings, I had to get my sister up and dressed because everybody would be sleeping and "gouged out". I would make us cereal. My mum would be on the sofa and I wouldn't be able to wake anyone. It was like they were dead. If people want to know what death looks like, look at someone dozing off to sleep after smoking heroin or injecting it into their arm. I had to keep [REDACTED] away from the living room, as sometimes we'd go in and, if there'd been a party the night before, there would be cans full of "tabbies" and ash lying everywhere, and we'd be thirsty and drink them.
52. The front door used to get kicked in a lot. The door had many bolts and locks on it and there was a big wooden log wedged between the door and the hallway wall to stop the door from getting kicked in. Every time the door was opened, it had to get shut this way.
53. One time in a raid, things were stashed down my trousers and in my pants. My stepfather would get violent with the police and my brother would cut the electricity off if it was a 2am raid. I would come home from school sometimes and the door would be a mess and there would be nobody home. I just didn't understand how school or social work never came. I believe they were covering up the tracks. They had to have been or we would have been taken into care long before we were.

54. Seeing my mum in handcuffs terrified me. The police would scream and shout on their way in and absolutely ruin our house. I saw this happening heaps of times in my young life. I almost got used to it. I was always scared of the police and taught myself not to like them or trust them. I lived in fear of them coming to my house.
55. My brother [REDACTED] started to interfere with heroin too. He was about fifteen or sixteen. I saw him in the toilet, due to removing the handle, and told my mum. I thought he was just smoking. My mother wouldn't give him the drugs she had, so he would go out and break into houses and do other crimes for money to get drugs. There would be arguments between them, which were always about drugs and money going missing. These arguments would last into the middle of the night. My brother was assaulted over and over. My mum was quite scary and tough looking.
56. There were always loads of money and drugs in the house. My mum had kilos of heroin, not just little amounts. I would see people hitting it with a hammer to break bits off. My mum would bring out a broken mirror and cut the heroin on it with Stanley blades. I got properly battered by her and [REDACTED] for accidentally knocking a pile of heroin off of it with my baggy jeans on. My mum thought I'd done it deliberately. To them, that was a big loss. All of our lives were at risk if they didn't pay the people they got the drugs from.
57. My mum always told us lies about where we were going and what we were doing. But I knew what was going on. She took us up and down the country to places such as Leeds, Bradford, Manchester, London, Kilmarnock and Montrose. We travelled a lot which I hated because I was led to believe these were holidays, but this was my mum's job. We went on holiday to Tenerife and Aviemore each year and everything seemed normal. We would have an amazing time. My mum would pay for her friends to come too. But one time, the police stopped us at Aberdeen airport on our way back, so it became clear what was happening on these "holidays" too.
58. The police started coming around to the house as well. They had been around before because of [REDACTED] but then it was different. It was like my mum was their

friend. I could tell this from the way she behaved around them, and the way she spoke with them. She spoke to them the same way she did with everybody else, like they were normal people without a uniform. I know that she knew some of them personally. I picked up on this. I even witnessed a time when my mum smoked heroin right in front of the police. I was confused. I grew up confused. I thought my mum was one of them. I thought she was "It". I thought she was high up and powerful, and nothing could touch us. I thought she could kill somebody and nothing could touch her.

59. After a while, we no longer needed to jam the wooden log between the door and the hallway wall as the policemen, in plain clothes and uniform, would tell my mum when her door would be getting put in. I saw policemen being friends with my mum in ways I will never forget. She had sexual relations with them and was "in with them". I saw my mother giving the police money and drugs lots of times.
60. The police allowed me to live with a drug dealer. They knew she was a drug dealer. They rented out a house opposite my house in Rosemount to surveil my mother. I was aware of that. I was in that house with a woman and she questioned me. I'll never forget that.
61. I lived with my mother from roughly 1996 to 2002 with zero social work involvement. During that time, we moved a lot between Rosemount and Seaton. It usually takes ages to get house exchanges, but it seemed to me that my mum was able to move quickly to evade the police. I feel that the council facilitated this through pressure from my brother [REDACTED]'s grandmother.
62. My home life was exactly the same in all the houses. I never once had a one-to-one meeting with a social worker throughout that whole time. My mum's house would get raided and still no-one came to speak to me. I used to go to school thinking that a social worker would turn up and I would be thinking of a lie to come up with to cover for my mum, but it never happened. I don't remember any teacher or social worker ever asking me about my mum. It seemed to me that the social work and the police knew that they had to keep away from us kids.

63. There was even a time when the police did a school visit to talk about drugs, and either me, [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] went straight to a particular drug and made it clear to everybody that we knew all about it. This isn't in any of the paperwork I've got so far, but it will be somewhere. It might be in [REDACTED]'s or [REDACTED]'s records. I remember my mum going mental. Even then nobody did anything to try and protect us kids.

*School - P3 to P7*

64. I remember 1999 being written on the board, so I think I went into P3 at Skene Square Primary School when we moved to Rosemount. The younger classes and nursery were downstairs and the P4 to P7 classes were upstairs. I remember I'd go to the nursery part of the school after my classes and meet my mum to collect [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
65. We went to St Peter's Roman Catholic School when we lived in Seaton. That's where I learnt about God and praying. The school was fine. I loved praying every day. I learnt a lot about what was right and wrong through that school and I knew for a fact that what was going on at home wasn't right. I never had any bad experiences at my Roman Catholic school. The Nativity was amazing. My mum joined in with things there too. She was more interactive with us when we were at that school.
66. I went back to Skene Square when we moved back to Rosemount. I kept school separate from my home life. I loved school. I loved going and I loved the friends I had. My friends really did like me for me. I didn't dare take any of them to the house because they would have seen that my mum was a junkie and a dealer. I didn't want that for me. School was separate and I wanted it kept like that.

### Leaving home and going into care

67. My mum was jailed for ten years in 2002. Social work didn't even intervene when my mum got remanded at her trial. My mother phoned social work from the jail to get us put into care. I will never forget that day being taken out of my house and having to leave my brother. I was roughly eleven and [REDACTED] was six, coming up for seven.
68. I remember family aides came first and gave us £20. They were employed by social services, but they weren't social workers. Christine Mackie was one of the family aides. My brother took us to get something to eat and told us we were going into care. Everything we owned was then packed up for us and off we went. Christine Mackie explained to us where we were going. [REDACTED] had a heroin habit by this point, so he couldn't keep us at home.

### Foster care – [REDACTED], [REDACTED] Aberdeen

69. We were taken from our house in Rosemount to foster carers called [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] Their house was at least a good three miles from Rosemount.
70. A social worker called Jo Jamieson dealt with everything to start with. She became involved as soon we moved to [REDACTED]. When you go into care in Aberdeen, the social work department take you for initial health checks. They take you to doctor appointments and they remove your clothing and look for bruising. If they find the tiniest of bruises, they log it. Jo Jamieson took [REDACTED] and me for all those initial appointments.
71. The foster husband worked offshore in places like Malaysia for months at a time, and [REDACTED] was a childminder and foster carer. I'm sure she had another small business too. The house was always very busy. They had two sons of their own, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] had a moped and a job in Frankie and Benny's, so he must have been at least sixteen. [REDACTED] was roughly the same age as me. [REDACTED] was a bully



and [REDACTED] was quite quiet. They also had another wee girl, [REDACTED] who they fostered initially and then adopted.

72. The house was beautiful and was clean and tidy. It had upstairs and downstairs. It was just a little house when we first moved in. There was a massive hole in the back garden because they were about to get an extension built. We lived there with all the noise and workmen around whilst the extension was getting built. It was stressful. I could feel the stress off [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was quite an organised woman. She wrote everything in diaries.
73. You could just tell they were a well-off family. They were never violent or anything towards me or [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] wasn't an abuser like Sheila was. She wasn't anything like that. If anything, we became close but I just knew there were things that were not quite right. I really didn't feel comfortable at all living there. [REDACTED] was "nicey-nice" but I knew she was false. The sons made it known that they were her kids and it was their house. The rules were always different for the foster carers' own kids.
74. About seven months into this placement, the foster father told me that we were in fact distantly blood related to him through my mother. I can't remember exactly how we are related. This made me feel even more uneasy because that meant they would have known more about my family background than what was documented in social work papers. It also made me think that they were paid to take us. I had all sorts of thoughts and feelings when I heard this.

#### **Routine in foster care – [REDACTED]**

##### *First impressions*

75. The foster father was working offshore when we first got there. We were shown around the house and shown where we would be sleeping. There were bunk beds, [REDACTED]'s cot, and cupboards for our clothes in the room. I noticed the cot in the

bedroom, so I knew there was another little girl there. I let my sister have the top bunk to try and make her happy. I would say to [REDACTED] things like, "We will be alright. We've got a nice room. We've got bunk beds like at mum's. There's your wardrobe. We've got space to put our stuff". That's the way I would speak to her to try and reassure her.

76. [REDACTED] took us to Asda and bought us clothes and nightclothes, everything we needed. I think we got £500 each spent on us. The stuff we brought with us was in black bags. It hadn't been washed because my mum had been in jail for a few weeks before social services came. [REDACTED] ended up keeping what she could of our stuff and binning the rest. I remember enjoying going and getting new things at Asda. It made me feel that we were getting looked after.

*Mornings and bedtime*

77. [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and I slept in the bedroom downstairs when we first moved there. That room must have been for the foster children, and then upstairs there were two rooms plus the loft. The mother and father must have slept in the room that led to the loft and their sons must have had a room each before [REDACTED] came. When [REDACTED] came, [REDACTED] must have put them upstairs to share.
78. I wasn't going to mention this, but I used to use a flask like it was a baby's bottle. [REDACTED] never really realised how I was using it. I would keep the flask by my bed and at night I'd fill it with apple juice or diluting juice, and I would suck on it until I went to sleep. I did that for the first few months of living there. I loved it. It was helping me sleep. I quickly grew out of it and stopped using it.
79. My little sister found night time the hardest. She would cry and ask for her mummy nearly every night when we first went into care. I could hear her sobbing. It was that proper sobbing kids that age do. It was so sad. I would cry because she was crying and there was not a lot I could do. She would cry to come down to my bed beside me and I would let her. I would take her into my bed and cuddle her like my mum did at home. We all used to love going into my mum's bed, especially [REDACTED] She

was the baby. I just wanted to look after my little sister because she took my mum going to jail really bad.

80. In the morning, I would be told off and [REDACTED] wouldn't listen to my explanation for why I took [REDACTED] into my bed. I got told off for mothering her, looking out her clothes and dressing her. [REDACTED] used to write down what I was doing. It's written in my records, *FEE tried to mother her sister*". [REDACTED] didn't hit me for taking [REDACTED] into my bed, she would just make it known that I wasn't to do it. She would say, "This is your bed and that is [REDACTED]'s bed". At one point, I let [REDACTED] have the top bunk as I was trying all different things to make her happy.
81. [REDACTED] was only six and had no clue what was going on most of the time. I kept her right by my side and tried my best to explain to her what was happening. This was better than the professionals not explaining anything at all to her. All [REDACTED] knew was that my mum had been jailed for ten years, that we now had a social worker called Jo and that we were kids in care.
82. [REDACTED] got us up in the morning. She'd come in and shout to us to get up. I used to get [REDACTED] ready. I didn't want [REDACTED] to do it. I was terrified that either she or somebody else would adopt my little sister.
83. We got our breakfast and then went to school in a taxi. It would arrive about eight or quarter past eight. Sometimes it wouldn't turn up and we'd be late.
84. It was usually always daylight when we went to bed. In winter time it was darker, but I was still aware that I was going to bed early. I got put to bed for Coronation Street coming on, maybe about seven thirty. I had never been put to my bed before Coronation Street in my life. [REDACTED] drank Bacardi Breezers every night whilst watching Coronation Street.
85. [REDACTED] didn't go to his bed at the same time as us. I would be lying awake because I wasn't tired and I would hear him speaking to his mother. He was her kid so the rules were different for him.

86. When the bedroom was built in the extension, the master suite they called it, the foster parents started sleeping in there. They then put [REDACTED] into their room, [REDACTED] in the bedroom next door, [REDACTED] into the loft and me and [REDACTED] in the room downstairs.

### *Bedwetting*

87. [REDACTED] started wetting the bed soon after we moved to [REDACTED]'s. She would do it numerous times a week. It was never like that at home. There had been some occasions when [REDACTED] had wet the bed at home, but these were just accidents during potty training. My mum would say to [REDACTED] that she was putting pull-up pants on her and tell her it wasn't a nappy. My mum would try with [REDACTED] but [REDACTED] didn't do that. She couldn't deal with [REDACTED] peeing the bed.
88. [REDACTED] didn't try to address the bedwetting at all. She didn't give [REDACTED] into trouble for it, but she didn't like the fact she did it. I could tell by the way she picked up the piddled on pyjamas. She wasn't nasty to her, but she ignored it instead of trying to help her to stop. My sister is twenty-four years old now and she still pees the bed. [REDACTED] were supposed to be related to us. You'd think that [REDACTED] would have wanted to try and help her.
89. [REDACTED] was moved to the loft space in [REDACTED]'s house because of the bedwetting. This was about three or four months after we arrived. She was given a blue, blow-up bed, which I remember was retailing in Argos at £19.99. [REDACTED] used to play his computer up in the loft. There was only a TV, his computer, a blow-up sofa and a computer chair in the room. When [REDACTED] got moved up there, it was all removed and she was there alone with her blow-up bed.
90. I felt guilty and still do because I never said anything about it. I felt so guilty to be sleeping warm downstairs, knowing she could be up there cold, upset, and lying in pee. I knew there was no heating up there and it was a loft with laminate flooring. My mother had laminate flooring and it was always cold, no matter what. And blow-up

beds deflate through the night. Sometimes I would go up and she wouldn't even be on the bed or the quilt would be off her body.

91. I also noticed that the nightclothes changed for [REDACTED] from long-sleeved pyjamas to nightdresses. I had to walk through where [REDACTED]'s oldest son slept to get to the door that took you to the ladder to get up into the loft. These ladders were wooden and very steep and they used to creak, which freaked [REDACTED] out. She was young, skinny-built and little in height, so I don't know how she was expected to get down for the toilet. Also, we were shy and embarrassed around these people as it was. There were times when I would go into [REDACTED]'s room when I was going to get [REDACTED] and he would be in his bed asleep, topless. I didn't feel comfortable.
92. I don't think that loft should have been used as a bedroom. There was never any explanation given to us as to why [REDACTED] was moved up there. [REDACTED] couldn't even say that it was because the extension was being built, because our room was at the front and the extension was being built at the back. I spoke to [REDACTED] recently and she denied that [REDACTED] had been put in the loft, and then she contradicted herself and said that all the children have used that room as a bedroom over the years.

#### *Food*

93. When we first arrived, we weren't eating anything and [REDACTED] sat us down and made a food list for us. We told her what we liked to eat and she bought those things and kept the list in a cupboard in the kitchen.
94. We weren't allowed to help ourselves to food or crisps, which wasn't normal to us. As you walked in the house, there were double doors and that's where [REDACTED] kept all her things from Makro. She would buy massive boxes of crisps. She would buy lots of things in bulk, but they were locked away. There was a latch-type thing positioned high up on the door so that kids couldn't reach it.

95. We got cereal and toast for breakfast. [REDACTED] sat the cereal out and we'd pour it ourselves. She was good that way. Me, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] all ate breakfast together. [REDACTED] would be in her highchair and we'd all be sat at the table. [REDACTED] would be pottering about, writing up her diary.
96. At times, we had to eat separately from [REDACTED] own family and sometimes we would get fed with the after-school children that [REDACTED] looked after.

### *Schooling*

97. School was always going to end bad for me because of my age when I went into care. I had tried to keep my school and home life separate but there was so much media coverage when my mum was sentenced that everybody in Aberdeen started talking about it, including the kids at school.
98. My sister and I carried on going to Skene Square primary school in Rosemount. We got taxis to and from school every day. When we went back to school after my mum was jailed, some kids were nasty and would call my mum a junkie and drug dealer. I felt that I was the one who had committed the crime. But I had close friends and they were very supportive. The son of one of the witnesses who stood against my mother in her trial was in my class. I was aware of this at the time and a lot of the other children knew too. Some of the kids took it upon themselves to call him a grass.
99. Except for that short spell at St Peter's Primary School in Seaton, I had always gone to the school in Rosemount. All of my friends went to this school. This is where I came from and where I felt I belonged.
100. The secondary school for my school was St Machar. I was told two days before P7 ended that I was going to go to a completely different high school. I felt strongly about needing to go to the same high school as all my friends. I needed my friends who already knew me and my circumstances. I was familiar with these people and they kept me feeling that bit better daily and had me looking forward to the next day, even though I was in care. But, because my placement was changing, I had to



change school. I knew my education was at stake from the day I was told. I knew that I wasn't going to manage at the new school and I tried to voice to the social work that I didn't want to go, but I was forced to go.

### *Visits/Inspections*

101. I got visitations to the jail with my mum and dad. Christine Mackie, the family aide worker, took us to prison to see my mum and dad. She did all the contact. We were horrible to her. We used to put salt in her tea. I didn't like her because she used to moan about having to do the contact. She would say, "We don't have the resources to be travelling all the way down here once a month". My mum was in Cornton Vale. She used to come up to Craiginches prison for accumulated visits every so often.
102. Christine Mackie's job was mostly to do with the contact. I think that was her main role. I know she worked with my brother during his younger years as well. My brother feels that she should never have been involved with us, because she was involved with him before for some other reason.
103. We were always taken to see my mum in prison through the week. They said they didn't have the resources for night visits. We actually got to go into the prison for the visits. We walked through the prison, past all the different sections, the young offenders area and the sections called Peebles and Wallace. We had to walk through the whole of the jail where all the criminals were to have contact in the chapel. The visits were good. There was a dance mat, sofas, a pool table and a DVD player.
104. We got to see my mum once a month and then it got changed to four times a year. It was changed because apparently we were complaining that it was affecting our schooling. I remember missing out on a talent show once due to a visit and that really annoyed me. I spoke about it and then the contact got changed. No-one asked them to change it. I was only voicing that I was annoyed that one time because I had missed the talent show. They changed the frequency of contact and then logged that this was done because we had asked for it because we were missing school.

105. I didn't get to see my brother. I didn't even know where he was. Not knowing where he was used to drive me scatty. Nobody would tell me. Because we were quite young, we opened up a bit in certain ways to social work and they said we weren't allowed to see [REDACTED] because of his activities.

106. I think we saw the social worker Jo weekly in the beginning, and then not so often afterwards. Her son was murdered and she stopped being our social worker. Cathy Buchan was her replacement. I didn't speak to either Jo or Cathy about [REDACTED]'s bullying behaviour. I didn't like Cathy and didn't form a relationship with her.

*Other foster child/after-school club children*

107. [REDACTED] was only two. I bonded with her and mothered her also. I actually taught her some of her first words. [REDACTED] used to section off her hair and put little "bunchies" in. It was perfect. She was so cute. She was well looked after. It was just something [REDACTED] did with [REDACTED] at night that I didn't like.

108. [REDACTED] would wake up after being put down to sleep and [REDACTED] would either wait a while to see if she fell back asleep, or she would take her through to the living room and try and get her to go back to sleep by holding her down. [REDACTED] would be screaming, kicking and struggling because she wasn't ready to go to sleep, and [REDACTED] would hold her in a blanket like you would a small baby. [REDACTED] was two. I heard her through the wall kicking and struggling every night. [REDACTED] eventually stopped even trying to have a bedtime routine with [REDACTED]. She would just take her through with her and hold her down while she watched Coronation Street and drank her Bacardi Breezer. I used to listen to that for a whole two hours every night.

109. I used to ask [REDACTED] lots of questions about [REDACTED] like why was she in care. [REDACTED] spoke openly about her and told me she was adopting her because of the love they had for her and how they had always wanted a daughter. I recall [REDACTED] signing paperwork to adopt her. [REDACTED] said that was it, done. I feel strongly that I should not have known any information about another child. From then on it made me very

alert, open-eyed and concerned about the way the system could work. I started looking down the gun at everyone. I was terrified that me or my sister might get adopted.

110. I remember [REDACTED]'s biological mum visiting [REDACTED]'s home more than once and also her social worker visiting. It seemed to me that the mother had some sort of learning difficulty. I remember the last time I saw her. The door was closed on her and that was the last I saw of her.
111. I mothered my younger sister more so after I knew [REDACTED] had adopted [REDACTED]. This made me want to play up so she didn't want to adopt me or [REDACTED].
112. I think there were two or three kids in the after-school club and a baby, [REDACTED] used to come in the morning. I noticed [REDACTED] winding up the baby as well. She used to say, "Where's mum?", even when the mum wasn't due to arrive. She did it to see the baby's reaction. The baby would get all excited. She'd always do it when the mum wasn't actually coming, and I'd think, "Why are you doing that to the baby?". The after-school children would be there every day, but I don't remember much about them.

*Foster carers' children*

113. [REDACTED] was quite horrible. He mocked me and tried to wind me up. [REDACTED] did this too in the beginning, but over time he started to accept me and allowed me to join in and go into his room. I was left out by both of them at first and felt hated. [REDACTED] used to do little taunts and wind-ups to begin with and then it got worse. He would do it in front of the after-school club kids.
114. After [REDACTED] was moved to the loft, [REDACTED]'s taunting got worse. He used to put his face right into mine and call me names. He would do it at night so it would scare me even more. I would wake up at night and there would be A4 bits of paper stuck to the slats of the top bunk. These bits of paper had drawings and writing on them. I

kept one for years to remind myself what he did to me, but I didn't need to keep it as it has and always will be in my head.

115. The drawings were of stick men in a cell with the words, "Ha, ha, ha" above them. On another occasion, there was a bit of paper with the name 'Pumba', the animal from the Lion King, written on it. I was sleeping one night and he threw a basin of freezing cold water over me. I remember getting the shock of my life, and I shot up and saw him run off and jump over the stair gate. At first I thought I was dreaming, but I was fully awake and soaking wet in my bed. I was crying and hurt and just wanted my mum. I was being bullied by this much older boy. I hated him. I felt lost and broken and didn't know what to do.
116. Because of his bullying, I started to make myself believe that I actually looked like Pumba and that I was fat. He always called me this at the dinner table, in passing, or right in my face. He called me this throughout my stay there. He would say it on the sly, away from anyone else, after having being told off. I would tell [REDACTED] Half the time she couldn't be bothered getting onto him and other times she would remind him that I was just a kid. The way she put it was that he and I clashed. As far as I'm concerned, you shouldn't have children living in your home if they are clashing with your own children. He was old enough to own a moped, so he was an adult. [REDACTED] couldn't actually discipline him because he was an adult. He actually should have been assessed to make sure it was okay for him to be around us.

#### **Leaving foster care – [REDACTED]**

117. [REDACTED] were short-term foster carers. They told me that the longest they could keep us was eighteen months. I used to think, "I've just been told my mum's got ten years and now you're telling me you're short-term. Where am I going, then?". Whilst living there, I was very worried and scared that [REDACTED] would get adopted, but I was also worried about the placement being short-term. I didn't know where we'd be going next and I knew not to get settled.

118. I think we left just because the placement time ran out. I think we were there for the full eighteen months and left in 2003. We were asked what kind of carer we would like and we made a list of things we wanted. I think social work took it and tried their best to get us someone that met the requirements on our list. I remember logging that I didn't want any other children there, I wanted my own room, and I wanted me and [REDACTED] to stay together. The list we made is among the paperwork in my social work files. I have shown it to the Inquiry team.
119. [REDACTED] and I left [REDACTED] together. I remember being told that they had found someone really nice, a single woman with no young children of her own. It sounded good. We met her and visited her house. It was lovely.
120. I had given [REDACTED] an antique child-sized ring, with three emeralds in it, to keep for me, but she didn't return it to me when I left. I have spoken to the police about it, but they told me they can't do anything about it as it's a civil matter.

**Foster care – [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Aberdeen**

121. [REDACTED] lived in the posh end of Aberdeen. She was about fifty-odd. Her kids, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were in their thirties. Her son lived in the house, but he was at work most of the time. I really liked [REDACTED] I still keep in touch with her and [REDACTED] now.
122. I loved [REDACTED] house. She was an interior designer and I loved that idea, but the house was dirty most of the time with dog hair, piles of washing and there were always dishes needing to be washed or put in the dishwasher.
123. We had our own space in the house. I remember mine and my little sister's bedrooms being lovely, which made me feel a little bit better about being there.
124. I had an attitude problem and was misbehaving when I lived at [REDACTED]. I was not happy on arrival. I couldn't be bothered with anything or anyone. It was like I had just given up. I just wanted to be with my mum and I had all this new stuff to deal with. I

had to meet a new carer, family and go to a huge, new school I wasn't familiar with and meet a new bunch of kids. My attitude towards the authorities had been flipped upside down completely by this point, and I didn't feel that they had my best interests at heart any more.

125. I became very difficult rapidly in this placement and to this day I strongly feel it was because of my school situation. If I hadn't been moved, things would have been different. I turned into a loner, I shut down all emotions and I became aggressive, moody and hard to live with. I just didn't care any more.
126. ■ did the best she could and she deserves some recognition for being the carer she was. There was no abuse or violence living at ■ and I did have a good relationship with her, but there were a few things I didn't like about living with her. I do feel she did her job properly, but she made mistakes.
127. ■ was trying to make me speak differently, not forcefully or in a bad way, but I would use my Doric and she would say to me that I couldn't speak like that in her house. She didn't like my Scottish accent or Aberdonian twang. That was my identity, but because she made me feel horrible about the way I spoke, I started speaking properly. I just wanted to be liked. But I couldn't keep it up because it just wasn't me.
128. ■ had me reading dictionaries and stuff. She'd ask me what certain words meant, like the word "respect". Although I was a bairn, I knew what it meant, but I couldn't give the meaning fully enough to satisfy ■. So I would have to go and look up the word in the dictionary and learn the full meaning. That really mentally tortured me.
129. Three days before our first Christmas with ■ she told me that she had wanted only one foster child, a younger one. I knew then that she didn't want me.
130. ■ also showed me documentation on her laptop that she was able access with a username and password. It was all to do with my family background and history. I remember reading the first three lines and I felt physically sick. I felt that she



shouldn't have been showing me this stuff. I was about twelve years old. I texted [REDACTED] recently and asked if she remembered showing me it. She denied it at first and then said it can still be accessed now, in some archive library or something.

131. I feel that [REDACTED] got better treatment from [REDACTED] and I got picked on. [REDACTED] was spoiled. She used to text [REDACTED] from another room asking her to come through to see her, and then she'd ask [REDACTED] to put the light off or something like that, and [REDACTED] did it.

#### *Food*

132. [REDACTED] noticed that the foods [REDACTED] had written down on those bits of paper were all tinned and not very nutritious. We had been eating pizzas, bread, sandwiches and tinned foods. [REDACTED] wasn't happy about it, so we got healthier food and got to try new food at hers.

#### *School*

133. I was so upset that I didn't get to go to St Machar and I knew then my school days were over. I knew this would mean having to start again, not knowing anyone and having to explain things to people. I was told I was going to the Aberdeen Grammar School, where all the kids' backgrounds were posh and proper, and there was me just out the drug dealer's house.
134. I was left confused because the only explanation I got was that they couldn't fund the taxis any more. I just wanted what was best for me and, although I was only a child, I knew what was best for me and they never listened. Social work had funded the taxis for two years. I don't know why they couldn't have done it for one year more and then I would have been old enough to get two buses. In any case, why couldn't the foster carer get up and drive her own car and take me to school. She was getting paid to look after me.

135. Some days I got made to walk to school and other days I got bus fares. I don't know why I didn't get my bus fare every day. She got about £16,000 a year and I had to walk to school, which was quite a distance away, in the freezing cold sometimes.
136. The school games fields were very close to [REDACTED]'s house, but she would never allow me to go straight home after PE at the end of the school day. She obviously didn't trust me to be in the house when she wasn't at home. I had to go back to the school on the school bus and then walk home from school.
137. I went to school the whole time I was living with [REDACTED]. I was forced to go to the after school club too. I felt that everyone knew that my mum was this big-time drug dealer and at times I believed I had a reputation to live up to. I felt very weird and out of place, a loner. I was brought up hearing and using the traveller language and Doric. My new school was flooded with well-off people who spoke proper and had everything set up for them by hard working parents. It was evident they had perfect lives compared to mine.
138. Some of the kids' parents were journalists or friends with them. This meant that the children knew my business. Some children would say to me that their parents didn't want them to be around me. This made me feel paranoid and wary of everyone, including friends, teachers and the authorities. I felt like I did the wrong. It was the worst time of my life in care.
139. I tried to speak to [REDACTED] about how I felt about school, but she always had an intellectual answer for everything and I couldn't cope with it. She was forcing me to be like the kids in school, to be someone I wasn't. It just didn't work for me. My education started breaking down. I tried using guidance for support and the kids would mock me for doing this. I gave up in the end.

*Chores*

140. [REDACTED] used to make us clean our rooms and I would end up having to clean [REDACTED] [REDACTED]'s as well. I had to do my own washing as well. It wasn't fair. [REDACTED] didn't learn to do anything for herself. She still doesn't clean or do washings.
141. [REDACTED] also made me and [REDACTED] clean the toilet once a week. It was horrible having to clean her son's pee off the toilet. She'd come back and inspect it and tell us it hadn't been done right. She was always nitpicking. She got onto me about it more so than she did [REDACTED]
142. Even though she made me do these things, I feel that [REDACTED] did teach me how to do things for myself. She would say that she wanted to make sure I was independent. She would try and teach me to cook as well. Looking back as an adult, I would say that some of the chores were fair, but how dare she make my little sister clean pee off a toilet and constantly tell us that we hadn't done it right.

*Trips/Holidays*

143. We used to do heaps of things with [REDACTED]. She took us out all the time. We'd go to Little John's for a meal and we went clothes shopping. She used to take us shopping and she'd spend a lot. I used to think she was spending money she didn't have. She took us to Marks and Spencers and John Lewis, not your Asda or other crappy shops that [REDACTED] took us to. [REDACTED] was proper.
144. She took us on holiday to London and Salou. Even after I had left and was in a children's home, she took me on holiday to a skiing resort in France. It was the best holiday I've ever had. [REDACTED] got to go to Dubai heaps of times. To me, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] did get a real chance with [REDACTED] to lead a good life.

*Healthcare*

145. I started to have lots of thoughts and flashbacks when I was living at [REDACTED]'s. It actually started happening when my period started. I used to think about what I saw living at my mum's, the needles, the living room being packed, the police. I had heaps of thoughts. I still have these thoughts now. My moods changed and I started going all weird. I noticed it myself. I told [REDACTED] I was having flashbacks, but she didn't report it to social work or a doctor, and I still have them to this day.
146. I received treatment on my teeth at the Albyn dental practice when I was about twelve or thirteen, which went wrong. I needed a filling in a front tooth and the dentist never cleaned the hole properly before filling it. I got an abscess and it swelled up to the point my eye was closing and it was travelling to my brain. I got admitted to A & E and was in hospital for seven days.
147. When I was lying in the hospital bed, [REDACTED] told me that the hospital wanted answers from Albyn. [REDACTED] wrote to them and she got some sort of letter of acceptance of liability. I didn't read the letter but [REDACTED] let me see it. It came a few months after I came out of hospital. [REDACTED] never fully explained it to me. It was like she put it away to be dealt with later, but it never came back up again. I've got a picture of my teeth before I went to [REDACTED]'s and it shows that there was nothing wrong with them until I went to that dentist.
148. I went to counselling sessions at Castlegate, Voluntary Services Aberdeen (VSA), but they were they were of no use. Counselling did nothing for my body, my mind or my soul.

*Visits/Inspections/Reviews*

149. Cathy Buchan was the social worker when we were living at [REDACTED]'s. We only ever saw her in Looked After Children (LAC) reviews, children's panels at Kirkgate House or at [REDACTED]'s house. We never did anything nice like going to the cinema or carnival

with her. [REDACTED] would be there sometimes when she came to see us, and sometimes we'd see her on our own.

150. To begin with my mum and stepdad came to the panel and LAC meetings. The social worker, the foster carer, and her key worker came too. [REDACTED] and I would be there too. It was a chance to get a visit with my mum. Although she was in handcuffs, it was still a visit and we weren't really worried about the handcuffs after a while. We were still having contact with our mum in prison at this time.
151. I knew they were making decisions about us at the meetings. We would get those 'Having your Say' forms to fill out. Those forms were pointless for children. You would write something in there and always be told that it couldn't be done. So, the truth of the matter is that children don't actually have a say.
152. I also got in touch with a children's rights officer and I used to go and see her. No-one suggested I do that. I did it myself. Her name was Vicky Robertson. She was rather good. She got stuff done when I went to her. I used to go to see her in one of the council buildings. I went to her a few times about different things.

*Respite care*

153. Whilst living at [REDACTED]s, she used to put me out to respite to this lady in [REDACTED]. Her name was [REDACTED]<sup>EYL</sup>. I liked her. I used to go for the weekend and went for a week one time. [REDACTED] came too once. I rather enjoyed it. She'd put music on and we'd sing in her car. She was different from [REDACTED]. I felt [REDACTED]<sup>EYL</sup> was on my side. She was "sound".
154. The only time there was a problem was when [REDACTED]<sup>EYL</sup> took me to a sort of gala day with her boyfriend. I believe his name was [REDACTED]<sup>FHJ</sup>. They both drank all day and then I was expected to get into the car he was driving. He was drunk. I had seen him drinking out of plastic pint glasses all day. I refused to get in at first but then I had to. I don't think [REDACTED]<sup>EYL</sup> should have had him round foster children anyway. I reported this to my children's rights officer but nothing got done.



**Leaving foster care – [REDACTED]**

155. Mine and [REDACTED]'s relationship eventually just broke down. I remember the day I gave up pretending to be someone I wasn't. I walked out of [REDACTED]'s because I had had enough. I was sick of her nitpicking about everything. She lifted her hand to me that day but she didn't hit me. I told her I would tell my brother if she dared hit me.
156. I left and never went back. I think I went straight to social work. [REDACTED]'s son and daughter tried to talk me round, but I wasn't for going back.
157. I would like to say that I did have good experiences in this placement and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were good people. I am still very welcome to call them to this day. I am going to go and see [REDACTED] again and tell her why I behaved the way I did. Although it was frustrating for me at the time, I know now what she was trying to achieve by being the way she was with me and showing me the documentation on my family history.
158. [REDACTED] stayed with [REDACTED] throughout most of her time in care, so she should really have been okay. It upsets me so much that she isn't okay today, and I feel that that's because she has been failed by the system.

**Temporary placements [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to b**

159. After [REDACTED]'s I stayed with heaps of different people. I was in about sixteen different placements. At one point, I used to walk from school to the social work office and sit there until about six or seven o'clock at night because I had nowhere else to go. I would sit in one of the offices and use their phone.
160. The amount of times I had to move and pack and unpack my stuff was crazy. I'd be in a foster placement and the foster carer would come in and say, "The social worker is coming tomorrow. You've got another placement". I'd ask how long I'd be going there for and they'd tell me it would probably be a couple of days. I would go for two

nights here and two nights there to all these different families, sometimes single people and sometimes couples. I then got the children's rights officer involved.

161. Social work then found me a place in Torry. It was called the **Secondary Institutions - to** because it was on **[REDACTED]** It was like a normal house, a sort of close support unit. It had a living room, kitchen and I had my own room. It must have been run by Aberdeen City Council.
162. I was the only child living there. Staff would be there all day and then different ones would come in to do the nightshift. When I later moved on to a children's home, I noticed that some of the staff from **[REDACTED]** were there. I only remember one staff member's name, **FHH** I think her surname was **FHH** She was in the children's home when I went there.
163. I was on my own in **Secondary Insti** I could walk about and do what I wanted. I refused to go to school. I did a lot of sleeping and sitting about my bedroom doing nothing. I refused to sit with the staff. Then sometimes I'd feel it was a shame for them and they had a job to do, so I would go and speak to them. I used to speak to **FHH** about why my placement had broken down.
164. I lived there until a place came up in a children's home. I think I was there for a couple of months. There's paperwork which shows that social work weren't sure about putting me in a children's home because they didn't know how I would cope, but they went ahead and put me there anyway.

### Seaview Children's Home, Aberdeen

165. **Secondary Institutions - to be published later**

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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**Snowdon Residential School, Stirling**

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

### **Life after being in care**

246. I moved from care to living in a hostel. I was sixteen years old. It was a hostel for all different kinds of people, not a youth hostel. Whilst I was living there, the person next door to me murdered the person underneath me. I used to hear the guy who committed the murder laughing. He had a weird laugh.
247. I just kept myself in my little room in the hostel. The hostel had four floors. I was on the fourth floor. There were four rooms on each floor, and the living room, kitchen and staffroom were on the bottom floor. Each floor had a toilet and you sometimes had to go to the toilet on another floor if there was no toilet roll.
248. I had Throughcare support from a woman called Wendy Paterson. She was great. I used to see her weekly at the office in Spring Garden to get my Pathways money, which was £46 a week. We'd have a chat about Stopover and how I was doing. The money went to the hostel and I got £23 back. I think I got a further £18 or £19 payment each week. I wasn't entitled to any benefits until I was eighteen.
249. By this point, I wasn't seeing Cathy Buchan any more. I can't remember the last time I saw that woman. She did contact me after I'd left Snowdon and told me that she'd moved the stuff I left there into her garage, but I didn't arrange to go and get it.
250. I had started a college course in hairdressing when I was in Snowdon in order to get off my supervision order and out of there. I only went twice and then left. I got the kit but ended up selling it for survival purposes. They told me it was a six-month process to learn how to blow dry and I just wasn't up for that. After everything I'd been through, I just wanted to go and do my own thing.

251. Stopover was getting shut down as part of Aberdeen council cuts. They wanted to close down all the units run by the Cyrenians. I was part of the protest against it. ■  
■ I spoke to officials and I stood with my banner outside the council buildings. At that time, the council were moving from one building to another across the road, and they were cutting all our resources to enable them to fund the move. The thing that really annoyed me was that they were spending £50,000 on vending machines for the new building.
252. I started dating an older boy, ■ when I was sixteen. He was twenty-two. I used to stay at his rather than Stopover. I moved from Stopover to the main part of Clifton when a place came up for me. Clifton was a youth hostel and was also run by the Cyrenians homeless charity. Clifton was where Snowdon had planned for me to go when I left there. It had the chalets at the back and you had to work towards getting one of those. Clifton had strict rules. You had to sign visitors in and you could only let someone stay for two overnights. They were really good with me, though. They ended up allowing ■ to stay for nights on end. We were no bother to anyone. They let my brother stay too.
253. I got pregnant with my son ■ in ■ 2008 when I was staying in the main part of Clifton. Wendy then supported me to get a chalet. She used to come to Clifton to see me and she made all my midwifery appointments. It was good in the main house at Clifton. You had your own cupboard and fridge in the kitchen and we all had keys so no-one could take your food. You'd sometimes meet other people in the kitchen and share food.
254. I got a job part-time job in a call centre. I think that was when I was pregnant with ■ I can't really remember dates.
255. The chalet was a tiny, mini-house with a back and front door. It had a square lobby, a tiny kitchen and living room, with a pull-down sofa bed, and the tiniest bedroom behind the sofa. The kitchen had cupboards, a fridge and cooker, and the washing facilities were in the main house. It was good, but I didn't like it after a while because

- it was too small for all of us. We used to go to [REDACTED]'s grandmother in Stonehaven a lot of the time.
256. [REDACTED] was trying to force me to be the little wife, doing all the cooking, cleaning and looking after the baby. He was also from a traveller family and that's what traveller men do to you. I did genuinely love him. I had his baby, but when my son [REDACTED] came along, the love for [REDACTED] just disintegrated. I didn't want him near me. I just wanted my bairn and him gone.
257. My mum got parole when I was pregnant. She was out of jail when I had [REDACTED] I stayed with my mum for the first ten days after giving birth. I got out of hospital on [REDACTED] and there were hardly any health visitor visits over Christmas and New Year. It was just me and my mum.
258. After Clifton, I got my first flat. [REDACTED] was about five months. [REDACTED] assaulted me when we were decorating the place and I stood on a nail in a dado rail and ended up in A &E.
259. [REDACTED] got offered a flat in the same area and I decided to move in with him, even although the council had got my flat decorated for me. The emotional and physical abuse from [REDACTED] got worse. I left him after he grabbed me out of the bath because I hadn't done the dishes. My little boy was sitting in his highchair eating toast soldiers at the time. That was it for me. My mum had been battered and there was no way I was allowing that. I packed my stuff and went back to my own flat, and I've never lived with anyone else since. I was seventeen.
260. My mum got a flat in the city centre when she got out of jail. I was instantly involved with my mum. I wanted my son to have a grandmother. I had lived with the fear my mum would die in jail.
261. [REDACTED] was still living with [REDACTED] and was hurt because I was seeing my mum whenever I wanted. This affected her badly. She was self-harming . She got moved

- from [REDACTED]s to two other short-term placements I think, and then eventually got home to mum's. I think she was sixteen.
262. My mum lived properly for a good three or four years. She was still on her licence. I had [REDACTED] round her and she was a good source of support with him.
263. Eventually, we started going up the town to bars, taking [REDACTED] who was underage with us, and then my mum started taking drugs again. I blame going into town and my mum meeting the people she knew from before. [REDACTED] started taking drugs too. I also tried it, but it wasn't for me. I knew as a kid that I wouldn't do it. I had seen too much.
264. I stopped going down to my mum's as often as I did before, as I couldn't trust them. There was a lot of emotional blackmail from my mum. She'd say, "Are we not good enough for you and your son?". The effect on me of my mum going back on drugs, to go all the way back after a long jail sentence and to involve my sister too, was massive. I felt powerless again. The only power I had was over my son, and I did everything I could to protect him, and I always will.
265. I couldn't turn to anyone else for support, as, if I had, I would have opened a social work case for me and my son. So it was best for me to shut up, say nothing and just go and visit them rather than stay there.
266. I've looked after my son, on my own, the way I should have been looked after. He will be ten in [REDACTED]. I've lived in five different flats in the same area and have been in the one I'm in now since last August. It has now been decorated throughout through Future Pathways.
267. Apart from one drug charge, I have not been involved with the police. I got out of care and put an end to the way I was behaving in care. All I wanted was to be out and live my life like any other normal person. Being in care felt like I was doing time too.

**Impact**

268. I don't have the words to properly express how my experiences have affected me. I feel higher up than anybody else. I've told doctors and counsellors the same thing. I think it's because of a lifetime of living with trauma. It makes you intelligent and aware. I am always mistaking my thoughts for paranoia, but it's not paranoia. My instincts are always right or on point. I know more about life than any of the people I speak to. I have had so much life experience at the age I am and have seen things nobody should have to witness.
269. I have an amazing memory, which can be a good thing, and people always wonder how I can remember stuff from so far back. But I uncontrollably can't stop thinking. It's like an obsession. I think about my childhood all the time. It just never stops. I remember everything and re-live it. I blame myself a lot for what has happened to me. Nobody is harder on me than me, but I need to remember that I was a child and I was neglected by all the authorities and everyone that was meant to protect me.
270. I have never really been a child. The times when I was didn't last long, even in care. All I knew in care was to fight, but I survived, and a lot of people don't because they turn to drugs.
271. I've spent years crying. I would cry after every visit with my mum, I cry before I go to sleep and when I wake up in the morning, while I'm watching films, listening to music, when I'm with my bairn. I cry all the time.
272. I have a short fuse and get irritated very quickly. I can't handle every day noises, such as the noise of other people's children, the sound of mobile phones, the noises my dog makes. I just can't deal with it.
273. I have lived for twenty-three years with the thoughts and memories of what happened to me whilst living with Sheila Davies. I was really only a baby then, and I felt that she didn't like me. I am very empathic. I can feel people's emotions. I know when someone's lying to me, and I know when they don't want to listen to me. I can



feel it. When somebody's about to cry, I can feel it. I cry when someone cries, sometimes about my own stuff, but also about the other person's problems as well.

274. Any problems I've got with the texture of certain foods in my mouth is Sheila Davies' fault. I can't eat bananas because I can't deal with the texture of chewed-up banana. I know this is her fault because she force-fed me chocolate mousse.
275. I bite my nails and I used to chew my hair. I started doing this after I'd been fostered by Sheila Davies. I think these are obvious signs of anxiety.
276. When I was living with [REDACTED] my identity was robbed. I had no choice but to try and be somebody I wasn't. I felt like I was wearing some sort of mask and I just wanted to take it off. Having to go to a different school from my friends, one where the pupils came from such different backgrounds to me, ruined my education. I feel strongly that if the authorities had listened to my thoughts and feelings, my attitude and behaviour would have been better at [REDACTED]s and I would have had a better chance at education and a more positive life. Records show that my education broke down when I went to the new school.
277. I wouldn't have committed all those crimes when I was [REDACTED] Secondary Insti if I had been looked after properly. I've been criminalised thanks to the care system. They used to tell me not to worry because the charges wouldn't affect me after I reached sixteen, but I don't know if that's true. I did work in a care home for a while so I think it might be true, as I don't think I would have got that job otherwise.
278. I have suffered a lot of trauma throughout my life and suffered from anxiety and depression. It's all as a result of my childhood experiences, but the mental health doctors just look at you like you're a "bam". I refuse to go near a mental health hospital ever again. I don't think they are honest with people who have mental health problems.
279. I will refuse any medication from a doctor because I don't trust the doctors or the medication. I've had medication. I was on Quetiapine, which is used for the treatment

of schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and major depressive disorder. I've also been on Sertraline, Diazepam and Propranolol. Half my community were on the same meds. I don't get it. Are we all "schizo"? I have spoken to Future Pathways about getting a second opinion on my mental health.

280. I went scatty about a year before my mum died. I knew she was going to die. The feelings I had from knowing this sent me overboard to the point I went to Cornhill, the mental health hospital. I was hearing a voice telling me that my mum was going to die. I had lived with the fear all the way through care that my mum was going to die in jail, but this was different. I now know the voice was my own voice, and I was telling myself that my mum was going to die. Nobody was listening to me. I wasn't listening to myself, really. But it was driving me insane, the thoughts, the feelings, it was awful. Even when I was around her, I could see death in my mother. I could smell it, I could see it, and I could feel it. You can't explain that to a mental health doctor. As I said, they look at you like you're mental.
281. I have hearing and dental issues, which were neglected by my parents, foster carers and social workers. I have been diagnosed with hearing loss and the diagnosis is something to do with glue ear. I have had to live with being deaf since I was a child. I hate being deaf. I'm loud and I have to lip read. I have dental problems because of the treatment that went wrong at the Albyn dentist. I can't address any of these issues on my own because I don't care enough and because I'm fearful of mistakes. I am still traumatised because of previous experiences in hospital.
282. For years I have had abdominal pain and I know it is due to stress. I am still stressed to date.
283. I have been involved in the criminal culture, only because I felt it was all I knew and was all I could turn to when my mum passed away. I've smoked cannabis for ten years and will continue to do so until the day I die, if I need to. Cannabis is the medication I use for my empathic behaviours, bipolar-like behaviours, if I can't sleep and for sore tummies. I turn to cannabis for everything and it works.

284. Not only was I abused in care, but I was also a victim of systemic failures which destroyed my family, my childhood and my mental health. My siblings and I were severely neglected and by-passed by the very people who are meant to serve and protect. This will affect me for the rest of my life. I will never forget.
285. Grampian Police knew my mum was selling drugs and they let her carry on doing so. My mum was vulnerable and the police took advantage of her to get information about other people and to get money into their own pockets. My brother was an addict on heroin by the time he was fifteen. They didn't care about us children. I will never forgive the police, nor will I trust them.
286. Aberdeen Council Social Work Department did nothing to protect us. The records I have been reading have made me see that it was the authorities' failure that had more of an effect on me than anything else. The authorities knew my mother was involved in heroin. The whole community knew. There were a lot of drug busts, police arrests and court appearances. Why was there no social work intervention? I had already been in care and returned to my mother, so they knew about us kids. I believe no social workers came to my mother and questioned her about her kids because they would have got battered. It was like my mum was a gangster that everybody was scared of.
287. I feel also that I was failed by the social work department because I could have had options other than going into care. I had other family. I had a grandma, who I maybe could have gone to, and I've got another sister.
288. I do not trust anyone, boyfriends, friends, none of the authorities, including GPs. I only have one proper friend. Her name is [REDACTED]. There are others that might think they're my friends, but I only speak to them because I know them. I find it unbearable to be around some people. My lack of trust in people makes it hard for me to get a boyfriend, make new friends, get a job, to move out of Aberdeen, to do anything really.

### **Treatment and support**

289. I had counselling from the VSA when I was at [REDACTED]s. I can't remember the lady's name. I didn't stick at it. The counselling was more for anger management. Even then, I wasn't telling her anything.
290. I am now getting counselling to help with my experiences in childhood from Breathing Space, arranged through Future Pathways. I've had about twelve sessions. I get this over the phone every Tuesday. I'm not going to lie, I find it quite patronising. I'd like proper, intense, therapy where you lie down, and acupuncture to go with it. That's what I need.
291. Future Pathways are referring me to trauma specialists, Anchor, in Edinburgh. I am going to see Ian Connor. I want to get a second opinion on my mental health.
292. I've been friends with [REDACTED] since I met her on a bus when I was at [REDACTED]s. I saw her and asked her the time, even although I knew it, just to strike up a conversation with her. She is someone I can speak to. She's posh. I don't know how we've become such good friends. She just got it. I've told her nearly everything about my childhood, not everything as some things might affect our relationship. I've been going on about it for years to her and she thinks it's part of my supposed mental health issues, but it's not. I'm hoping now that I've said everything today, I won't keep going on about it the same way.

### **Court Proceedings**

293. My brother reported Sheila Davies to the police in 2017 and they came to me and I gave a statement. Sheila's trial was earlier this year. I wrote a letter to the court demanding she go the jail, but it wasn't taken into consideration. She was spared jail and only got two hundred and forty hours' community service.

294. Before the trial, the Crown Office sent out letters saying that I wasn't needed for the case, then the police came to my door to tell me I'd been sent this in error. These are the kind of errors authorities make that really anger me. This sort of thing should not be happening. The consequences can be massive. People won't turn up for court and will end up having to spend the night in a cell because warrants will be issued. It's typical of the failures I've seen in the system.
295. I gave evidence in court and had to stand up in the dock and point to Sheila. I thought she was going to be a really old lady, but she wasn't. She wasn't even as big as I remembered.
296. I spoke about the Inquiry in the dock. I was getting interrogated about why I hadn't reported it before and I just said, "My Lord, I'm starting to struggle with that question. I'm only here today because a public inquiry into child abuse in Scotland has been set up".
297. I thought I was the only one Sheila had abused, but seventeen statements from other former foster children were given, which resulted in only six or eight charges against her, all assaults. Some of the kids lived with her before me and some after. She was charged for what she did to me. My brother [REDACTED] appeared as a witness. Witnessing abuse is abuse in itself and I don't feel like justice was served for any of us.
298. Some of the other survivors came and spoke to me after I'd given my evidence and asked me what a public inquiry was. I just pulled up the number on my phone and gave them it. I didn't have the words to explain it to them that day.
299. I found out that Sheila and her mother had owned a child's nursery, All Stars Nursery in Woodside, Aberdeen that got shut down by inspectors a few years back. The nature of the complaints was similar to mine and the other survivors I met outside the court. The complaints were about the manager, who was Sheila, leaving the children to cry, force-feeding them out of date food and making comments that they were spoilt. These children will probably end up with psychological damage like me and it



will be blamed on themselves, rather than Sheila. She will be forgotten about. She still didn't get the jail for what she did to the nursery children. I don't even know if there were any charges brought. She wasn't doing that job when she was fostering me. Maybe she used her money from fostering to start the business.

300. It came out in court that Sheila shouldn't even have been fostering or working with children. Before she had the nursery and before I was placed with her, she'd had a child removed from her care. I don't know whether it was a foster child or one of her own, but that's what came out in court.

### **Records**

301. I recently got my records from Aberdeen social services. My children's reporter stuff is not in the social services records because the social work is council-run and the reporter is run by the government. I only got my charge sheet from the children's reporter. They told me my records have been destroyed because of how long ago it was. Birth Link applied to the council for my records and paid for them. You have to apply for the records from each individual resource, health, education and the council. I phoned to check the cost and it's £50 for each resource.
302. The social work records are printed on both sides of the paper which makes them difficult to follow. This also causes problems if you want to show someone information on one side but don't want them to see what's on the other side.
303. I am still waiting on my education file. You get a green folder with all your school photos, reports and information on things like the times you fell over and needed an ice pack applied. I want to see it all.
304. I have read every single word of every single bit of paper in my records apart from the medical notes, because I don't understand them. I've read everything social work had to say about me and I want to bring to the attention of the Inquiry some of the things that are not right. The reports don't reflect what was actually going on, and

that's where my anxieties about not being believed are coming from. There were so many of them, people in authority, and I was just a child. I am an adult now, but I am worried that there's still a chance I won't be believed .

305. The paperwork suggests that there was social work involvement when I was living at home with my mum, but I know there wasn't. I definitely know that they weren't involved to the extent they should have been. My mum was arrested and there were never any social workers checking on us children. If they did come, they didn't do their job properly.

306. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]. The story is about us not being allowed to keep our dog because we supposedly lived in a house with shared access. We didn't, but it's what's on the back of the paper that bothers me. It is written by Catriona Davey, a social worker who I don't remember ever meeting. She must have written it around the time [REDACTED]. It reads, "*I am not allowed in toilet when mummy in with her toilet. Mum had been giving dad a needle in prison. He was crying*". It seems to me that this Catriona Davey has come out and visited us, spoken to me and then written what I said on the back of the paper. What she's written tells me, and should tell any social worker, that I was a bairn who was seeing needles and heroin, and still I got left in that house.

307. I am annoyed about some of the things written about me and I've highlighted all the lies. There's a note from when I was in care that says, "*FEE is well aware of her family circumstances and is quite loyal towards them*". There's another one that says, "*FEE has a good relationship with her mother and is quite loyal to her. However, she does get angry because her mother is in prison and her loyalties are changing*". Imagine writing about a bairn being loyal to their mum. Of course I was. And, I didn't have a good relationship with my mum, so that was wrong. They also use the word "attractive" to describe me. They shouldn't be making comments like that.

308. It also says in the records that I would benefit from being able to remain at the grammar school. Why write such a thing when I was telling them something different?
309. I've read that whilst I was in Sheila Davies' care that the social work department visited and I would draw pictures of my mum, dad, brother, the baby and me, but I would scrub out me and my mother. That really hurt me because my mum must have read that. I think what I've read in the records has clarified aspects of mine and my mum's relationship. I know that my mum used what was written in that paperwork against me. What is written on the back of the newspaper story alone, probably ruined my mother because it meant I was "grassing" on her.
310. The records also prove that I wasn't listened to as a child. There is a copy of a letter I wrote to social services on 15 February 2006, when I was fourteen, saying that I had asked several professionals how I would go about changing my social worker, Cathy Buchan, and that I had been told to write a letter stating the reasons why I would like to change. I wrote that her attitude towards me had changed dramatically and I could no longer trust her. I said that the past year had been difficult for me and that my behaviour had not been the best.
311. I got a letter dated 22 February 2006 from a Liz Stein, senior social worker, refusing to change the social worker and saying that, "*what you want may not always be in your best interests*". I was fourteen and had told them I was going through a difficult time and that I couldn't trust my social worker. How was it in my best interests to keep the same one in these circumstances?
312. My records show that I was failed again by the social work department when they put me into a children's home. They knew I wouldn't cope in a children's home with all these other kids with different circumstances and different behaviours, but they put me there anyway, and my behaviour got worse.
313. There is also a memo in my records dated 22 October 2002 written by Phyllis Kavanagh, senior social worker. This is after my mum got sent to prison for ten



years. It says, "*The team had no prior knowledge of the family prior to mum's imprisonment therefore background information will be gleaned ..*". This is not true. I had already been in care and the police knew all about my mum's activities.

### **Other information**

314. I have waited so long for an opportunity like this and I can finally open up because of the Inquiry. By the end of this process, I will know that I have done the best I can to remember everything and give as much information as possible, and I hope that as a result, I will have done something for the future of Scotland, its people and children, especially in Aberdeen.
315. I may be wrong with ages and dates, but everything I have said is the truth. I really hope I'm listened to, because I've got knowledge about the way things are run, and my knowledge is different from the people involved in the Inquiry because I've lived it.
316. The entire system needs to change. Most of the children I met whilst being in care are now in jail, dead or messed up on drugs and ill. Due to my experiences, I know I could be of help as an employee, but I refuse to be part of a system that is infested with failures and cover-ups. I've dealt with all the different authorities and I know how they work.
317. One thing I have learned is that all jobs are just jobs to people. People don't actually care about children. The police should have told the social workers everything they knew about my mum. Even if they didn't have enough to prove it, in order for the kids to be safe information should be shared between the authorities.
318. One of the things that people don't realise is that initially social workers and foster carers are strangers to children. People expect children to go and live in a stranger's home and settle in just like that. Anywhere you go in care, you feel out of place. It's horrible. You live in someone else's home in foster care and that's really difficult for a

child. No child wants to do that. No matter what a child's mother is like, every child wants to be with their mother.

319. Social workers should talk to children properly and explain things to them. This would help to stop them feeling that they have no control over what is happening to them. It is horrible to be a child in care feeling that things are being forced on you, and you have no option or control. They should have sat and talked to me about my mum getting such a long jail sentence, and they should have recognised that I would struggle with having to wait all that time to be with her again and live with all the information I had.
320. The authorities should not only talk to children but also listen to them. I wasn't listened to as a bairn. I did everything I could as a bairn to try and fix my life. I went to social work heads and children's rights officers, but I was powerless and I just gave up in the end. I stopped going to school or caring about anything.
321. I also felt that we were being lied to when they gave us those 'Having Your Say' forms. They never did anything I wrote. Children should not be lied to. They should be told that they don't actually have a say, rather than have them believe that writing something on the form might make a difference.
322. Nobody knew what life at home was really like for me. I didn't want to see folk sticking needles in their arm every day or all the other stuff. But you don't want to tell anybody because you know you'll be taken away from your mum. Since going into care in 2002, I needed to have someone to tell. Authorities need to care more about the children they take into care and make more of an effort to find out what they've experienced so that they can get them the right help to deal with the traumas.
323. I think it's wrong that foster carers get paid the wages they get. Sheila was getting £16,000 for us and that wage has doubled in twenty years whilst benefits to help people bring up their own children have reduced. This sets people up to fail with their own children and results in children having to go into care, which keeps foster carers in jobs.

324. Another change I would like to see is that people who have worked with children in care in some capacity should not be allowed to be involved when that child has grown up and had their own family. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

325. 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.

FEE

Signed .....

Dated 21/11/18 .....