

**Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

FRJ

Support person present: Yes

1. My full name is FRJ. My date of birth is the 1990. When I was in foster care with FRX and her family, she tried to change my surname to FRX but legally my name has never changed. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

**Life before going into care**

2. I was born in Stirling Royal Infirmary to and and I believe we stayed in in St. Ninian's. It's certainly the first place I remember.
3. I have three half-sisters and two half-brothers. I didn't really grow up with them all, as four of them are on my father's side and contact just diminished over the years. One half-brother, was adopted by my granny.
4. my mum, was a heroin user and wasn't actually living with my birth father, after I was born. She was living with a man called. My mum took drugs and was stealing money from my granny. She didn't hang about in good crowds and I was constantly being passed about between her and my granny, who stayed in Braehead.
5. As it transpired was also well-known to the police, as a child abuser. The police even visited my mum and told her about something horrible he had done to a little girl. That was to highlight that I was possibly at risk.

6. I do remember my mum taking me to a window and showing me this care home, it was a big red brick building. My mum said that if I didn't do what [REDACTED] and she told me to do, I would end up in the care home.
7. I was abused by [REDACTED] when I was about three. He was responsible for showing me pornographic material and getting me to perform sexual acts on him, against my will. It is all detailed in the minutes from the Children's Hearings I attended in 1993 to 1994. I told my granny about it within about a week and she then told my mum but my mum refused to believe it.
8. I don't remember much from back then but I remember everything coming to a head. My mum and gran were bickering in the kitchen one day and I heard the back door opening. I went through and asked where my mum was and gran told me she'd buggered off again.
9. I ran outside and chased my mum down the back path to the gate but she didn't even look round or anything, she just left. That's the last time I remember seeing my mum at my granny's and it wasn't too long after that, we got a visit from the social work.
10. Apparently I had all these behavioural issues as well. I was sent to a child psychologist then, I was between three and four years old. The psychologist did try to explain to my mum and gran that the behaviour I was presenting was quite natural, due to the abuse I had received.
11. I was praised by professionals for talking about the abuse but I don't think my granny or my mum had any capacity to understand or accept what was going on. They'd both been through traumatic childhoods themselves.
12. I remember a lady coming round and speaking to us one night and asking me if I liked living with my granny. I said I wanted to live with my gran forever but the

woman said I couldn't and left. It wasn't long after that I went into foster care with [FRX]. I know now that I should never have been put in that place with two young men.

13. It's actually recorded in the Children's Hearings minutes from 1993 to 1995 that I should never have been staying in a room with two boys. I have seen those minutes, that information is in the records I received in 2019.
14. I was also due to be adopted. My mother had told me to I was going to go to a nice family, but there was no time for that to happen, so I never got that and I was sent to [FRX].

**Foster Care** – [FRX], [REDACTED], Stirlingshire

*General*

15. I believe there's something in my records about a pre-visit but I don't remember anything like that. I think I was still at nursery when I went into foster care. I'm sure I continued in the same nursery when I was in care, so I was maybe four or five years old.
16. I was also presenting self-harming behaviours at that time, aged four. I was [REDACTED]. Everybody just ignored that. It was never explored properly as to why I was doing it. It was noted, and is documented in my records but my foster carer, [FRX], never did anything about it, she just ignored it.

**Routine in foster care** - [FRX]

*First day*

17. It was a day I'll never forget. I remember my granny taking me and sitting in this new living room and I was refusing to talk or do anything. My auntie [REDACTED] and my brother [REDACTED] were also there. I assume a social worker was there as well, but I don't remember one.
18. I just remember sitting cuddling my granny and all these cats jumping about and it all being a bit overwhelming. [REDACTED] had seven cats and one dog. I was used to having animals in my life but seven cats was quite scary. I was asking my gran not to leave and I was crying.
19. I remember meeting [REDACTED] and her introducing me to her sons, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who were a good few years older than me, almost adult. [REDACTED] was the younger one. [REDACTED] was quite skinny and tall, she had ginger bobbed hair. There was no Mr [REDACTED] she was a single mother.
20. The boys didn't seem too bothered that this wee lassie had come into their house. I remember going to my room, having a wee sleep and then getting up and having a sweetie. [REDACTED] was making the dinner and said I could get another sweetie after dinner if I was good. That's about all I remember from that first day.
21. It was a council house, they lived in, with three bedrooms, a living room, kitchen and bathroom. It was all on the one floor in a block of four, one up and one down.

*Mornings and bedtime*

22. I shared my bedroom with [REDACTED] younger son, [REDACTED] and another kid who came to stay now and again, for respite care. That was for about two years. In the mornings [REDACTED] would usually come in and tell me to get up and pull the duvet off me.
23. I would get up, go to the toilet and get my clothes on. I can't remember having a breakfast but I suppose I would have. [REDACTED] then went through my schoolbag to make sure everything was there and I would head off to school.

24. After about a year I was moved into a room with her older son [REDACTED] [REDACTED] didn't abuse me, thankfully. After about another eight months [REDACTED] moved me into her room and I was in with her until I moved out.
25. I had a single bed in [REDACTED] room, up against a cupboard, and she had her double bed. She would watch me all the time at night and she even started limiting when I could go to the toilet.
26. It even got to the stage where she locked me in the bedroom when she went for a shower. I'd go to bed every night scared, for what might happen the next day. [REDACTED] was just so unpredictable.
27. I've never been religious but I remember when I was about nine or ten, I went to bed one night and prayed so hard, that something would happen to [REDACTED] so she couldn't do anything to me.
28. Then, a few days later, she got really sick, to the point where she couldn't leave her bed and was being violently sick. She was taken into hospital for three days. I started to feel guilty, thinking it was me that had done that to her, and I prayed for everything to be okay.
29. So I got three days reprieve, and stayed with our neighbour, [REDACTED]. She gave me money for school and I could buy cream cakes if I wanted. I could do stuff and not get hit for it. Then when [REDACTED] came back, it all just went back to normal.

#### *Food*

30. [REDACTED] didn't feed me when she fed everybody else and when she did feed me, it was never anything I liked. If I didn't like it I would basically starve, so I started stealing food. I made a hole under my bed and I would hide away all the wrappings from the food I stole, thinking nobody would ever find them. [REDACTED] was tidying the room one day and found them. I got a right hiding for that.

31. By hiding I mean she gave me a physical beating. She slapped me on the head, punched me in the stomach and kicked the back of my legs. That was always what she did whenever she beat me or gave me hidings.
32. There was a time when she was really ill and she didn't have any money. I had to make my own meals, and all we had was porridge. I ate porridge for about three months. I did have a school lunch so at least I was getting something that was alright.
33. School lunches were £1.25 but I didn't always have the money. The school were good at not making me pay for a week but then they wrote a letter to FRX saying she had to pay. I remember stealing food from other kids packed lunches because I never had any snacks or sweeties or cakes. Then I would get found out and have to face the public embarrassment of getting punished at school.
34. I had to steal food though, as FRX wasn't feeding me. I would steal myself mini pots of jam, bits of bread, pieces with tomato sauce, pieces with sugar, just anything I could put together myself for something to eat. I would also sneak into the school kitchens to see if I could find anything to eat.
35. I was so embarrassed to have to do all that. The teachers would say your name in class, at registration, and ask you to pay your lunches and if I didn't have the money, I'd get into trouble. I was always getting sent out the class. I was just seen as the one who was least likely to succeed.
36. FRX would force feed me as well. I remember when I was about eight, she made this sweet and sour concoction that made me physically gag. She forced it down my throat until I spewed it all back up. Then she told me to get out her sight.
37. I thought that meant to get out the house and go away, so I did. She then reported me missing, but she found me in the street. She dragged me back to the house by my hair and my ear, shouting and screaming at me.

38. Our neighbour, [REDACTED] was there with her and saw everything. There was a number of times [REDACTED] saw me being abused by FRX [REDACTED] and she did nothing, she never spoke out about it.

*Washing / bathing*

39. Every second day I would have a shower and on a Sunday I would have a bath. FRX [REDACTED] always ran the bath but when she was ill I did run myself one and that was the best bath I've had in my life. I sneaked in some of her bubble bath in and made it nice and deep. I stayed in it for about an hour and enjoyed the moment.
40. I had to undress in front of her. When my body started changing I didn't know what was happening so I started to cut the hair away and shave it. I felt so embarrassed undressing in front of her. FRX [REDACTED] was always washing me and washing my hair and I felt so embarrassed because I knew what to do, my granny had taught me.
41. When FRX [REDACTED] dried my hair she would pull and yank at my hair with the brush. That's why I don't pull the brush through my hair now, when I dry my hair. FRX [REDACTED] didn't explain anything to me, she didn't tell me anything about my period or puberty. Thankfully that didn't happen until I moved in with the FRS-FRV [REDACTED] but I'm sure FRX [REDACTED] would have shamed me about that as well.

*School*

42. The only thing I was good at, at school, was reading. I would borrow books from the school and take them home to read. It was Mrs Caskey, the deputy head teacher, who allowed that. I think she perhaps had an inkling about what was going on at home.
43. I think my reports will say I was rather lively and needed to concentrate more. I enjoyed English and music, I played the violin, and still can. I did all of that at school myself. FRX [REDACTED] wasn't involved, she wasn't interested. She didn't help with homework and if I came home with lines I'd get a beating as well. Just as I described earlier.

44. I once came back with a certificate and I remember it had FRJ FRX on it, so that's how I knew FRX had been trying to change my name at the school. I was so excited, I went home and told FRX to sit down as I had some good news. I showed her the certificate and she said 'that's nice, well done, now get through to your bedroom, you're going to have to do a lot more than that to impress me'.
45. No matter how hard I tried I couldn't please FRX and in the end I just stopped trying. I was always so eager to please but nothing I did mattered to her.
46. I was bullied at school by a crowd of girls. I think they noticed I was always walking home by myself and I wasn't getting picked up by my parents like everyone else. I really struggled concentrating in class because I was always thinking about what was going on at home.
47. I would retaliate to the bullying though and that would get me sent out of class or put at the naughty desk next to the teacher. I was on a behaviour chart as well, I was just so different from what you might expect a normal kid of that age to be like. I spent the majority of my primary school on 'time out' doing lines or filling in vocabulary and grammar books.
48. I found myself isolated from my classmates. I think being in 'time out', being different, having behavioural issues and going back to a foster environment all contributed to being bullied. I remember being asked, 'why doesn't anybody love you?' and 'why aren't you with your mum and dad?', things like that. I didn't have answers to any of that and I think all of that played a part.
49. No one ever sat me down and tried to explain what those answers were. I was just told I couldn't stay with my granny anymore because she couldn't look after me.
50. When I was in primary four, I remember being in the girls toilets, when we were doing an art project at school. We were painting things like an octopus or a mermaid on the toilet doors. The girls were talking about who fancied which boys and they



were talking about sex. It made me think about what [REDACTED] had done to me and I stupidly opened up to them and told them what had happened.

51. They then started taking the mickey, saying I was damaged and that I was lying and making things up. I got really emotional after that and I didn't know where to turn. For a long time afterwards I actual wished that I hadn't opened up and told the girls about [REDACTED]

*Chores / work*

52. I was like a servant in that house. FRX [REDACTED] had me doing pretty much everything. She said I had far too much free time on my hands and she would make sure I earned my keep.
53. I had to feed the cats and make sure they had water, feed the dog, let the dog out the back, do the hoovering, the dusting, the cleaning, pretty much everything that she wanted me to do.
54. I felt like a servant in a home. She stopped me watching television and I was only allowed to watch it when she said I could.

*Leisure*

55. I didn't have toys, like Barbie or anything like that. I used to play with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] a lot, our neighbour's daughter. She had a big box full of Barbie's with all the kit.
56. My auntie would bring me stuff. I do remember her bringing me a nice nail polish in a lovely wee bottle, the shape of a teddy bear. It was blue and glittery and I had a purple one as well. I would hide them so FRX [REDACTED] couldn't get them.

57. I had a Pocahontas book as well but, other than that, it was just old Jackie annuals and things like that. I spent a lot of time just sitting on my bed in FRX room, sitting on my hands, back to the wall, waiting on my next order from FRX
58. It was about that time that Mrs Caskey started giving me books. I sort of came into my own then and I was sneakily reading my books when FRX wasn't giving me orders. I could escape into my books. I got the Harry Potter books and although I read them in the wrong order, I could escape into that world. I loved that, it took me away from everything that was going on every day with FRX
59. I don't really remember FRX taking us on any trips as such. She took me and my brother ice skating once. FRX adopted mum lived in Aberfoyle and, now and again, we would go up there. It was just a day trip.

*Christmas and birthdays*

60. At Christmas you could just tell the presents were from a charity shop. I remember opening presents and bits would be missing, things like that.
61. I do remember one year, it was the best Christmas ever because I got a chipped second hand PlayStation One and I got lots of great games. I remember one night I was in my bed and I'd been playing the PlayStation, but it was late. FRX came in to the room with her son and I pretended to be sleeping. I heard her say to him 'look at that, there's one happy lassie lying right there' and I think that was the only time I ever heard her say anything nice about me.
62. I didn't have my first birthday cake until I was about twelve. My auntie told me I had one at three but I don't remember that. There was presents from family but I only remember being allowed to play with one present at a time.

*Visits / Inspections / Review of detention*

63. My first social worker was ESC somebody, I forget his surname. ESC would have been my social worker from about the age of four to about five and a half. ESC was found guilty of touching little kids that were under his care. He had his sons taken away from him.
64. My social worker, when I was staying with FRX was Margaret Aland. She took over from ESC and stayed with me until I moved in with the FRS-FRV Margaret Aland died two weeks after my sixteenth birthday.
65. Margaret Aland would come once or twice a week. She would take me to the art gallery in Stirling, we would feed the two highland cows, Hamish and Hector. We would dress up, do role play, go on trips to Edinburgh, walk her dogs in the country, we did many things together.
66. Margaret took photographs, that I still have, that provide me with memories of her and those happier times. She went out her way to do that for me. She was one of the few positive role models that I had. I always said that when I grew up I wanted to be like her, and to help kids.
67. Margaret Aland told me, when I moved in with the FRS-FRV in Tullibody, that she had real regrets about not asking questions and not seeing what was going on, when I was staying with FRX
68. I was twelve and it was Margaret's last day as a social worker. She gave me a cuddle and said me she blamed herself and that was part of the reason she chose to leave social work and enter the youth justice system. She said she was so sorry that she'd never seen anything and never asked any questions.
69. I would often go and see her and I would have my school skirt on and I had bruises up my leg and nobody ever noticed. Margaret did ask me questions about my life with FRX but FRX would always tell me not to say anything or I would get double what I usually got.

70. I got family visits, at most, about once a month. Contact with my granny diminished though and I would just go and visit her on Boxing Day or something like that.
71. My auntie [REDACTED] was really the only one who made the effort to come and see me and make sure I was okay. She tried to visit once a fortnight but it usually ended up once a month. She would sit with me or take me out. FRX [REDACTED] would always be in the room though, even if the social workers were speaking to me. My aunt [REDACTED] actually tried to adopt me but it wasn't allowed because she was too close to my birth mother.
72. My relationship with my brother [REDACTED] was always quite strained. He saw me as my mums favourite. It's in my records that [REDACTED] said to my granny that she should get rid of me but she told him he was the lucky one, getting to stay with her, while I was having to go into foster care.
73. Even now it's quite strained, it's as if it's been forced. He can be a very bitter and angry young man. He tries to disconnect from the family in general. There may be a bit of jealousy there as he sees how stable I am now, with a good job and a good partner. It's the rejection and abandonment that he has to deal with as well.
74. Usually I would stand by myself eating my dinner in the kitchen, while everybody else was in the living-room. If FRX [REDACTED] saw [REDACTED] car arriving, she would come and grab me, tell me to take my plate through and sit on the couch, and not to say a word.
75. FRX [REDACTED] would have me well versed on what to say if I was asked questions. When I went to school with unexplained injuries, nobody at school asked any questions anyway.
76. I remember a couple of children's hearings from when I was very young. I slid under the desk and I think it was then deemed that I shouldn't go to them if it was going to stress me out.
77. Later on, when I was about thirteen or fourteen, I started taking charge of my hearings and things like that. They had those 'Have Your Say' forms, which are

ridiculous, they still have them today. I'd had my whole life being presented with those reports, that I had to sign off, and I'd had enough, so I started writing my own.

78. I remember going along to hearings and reading out my reports and telling them what I thought and what I thought should be happening.
79. I don't remember seeing any reports from my time at FRX I remember talking about things but I didn't see any reports.
80. FRX worked in an elderly care home and when she had to work nightshifts I would have a babysitter. From about the age of eight I would go and stay with who has since died, and her family. I actually remember my social worker, ESC two boys coming to stay with because they were placed under her care when they were taken away from him.
81. lived in the old town part of Stirling, she was very nice. Her husband was and she had an adopted daughter, who was about my age, and we got on really well. We would sit and talk about things that were going on in our own houses and watch films and things.
82. I'm not sure if it was a local authority arrangement with or how that came about, it may have just been something FRX arranged. It was nice to have that though, as would give me a cuddle now and again, which was very welcome.
83. was very firm and strict. You did have to eat everything on your plate and you didn't get down until you had eaten it. I could sit for about four hours trying to eat my dinner.
84. I went to a few times a week and on some occasions I would stay the weekend. I would have to get dressed up in this awful flowery dress to go to church. I attended Sunday school when I was with them and I was quite active and energetic. I would then calm down when we had to learn about the bible and do prayers.

85. I used to look forward to going to [REDACTED] it was a much better environment than my home. She was strict but she didn't hit me. She would also show me affection and give me a cuddle and praise me when I did things right.
86. I enjoyed going to [REDACTED] I would help her with the younger ones and I felt as though I had a role, which was nice. I always knew I would be going back to [REDACTED] so the fear was always at the back of my mind. I would have preferred to stay at [REDACTED]
87. My birth mother also used to show up drunk or out her head. That was from about the age of six until about nine or ten. It happened quite often, she'd turn up drunk and I'd keek out from behind the curtains and see her face.

#### *Healthcare*

88. I remember when I was in primary four I got sent home with nits. I had nits fourteen times which is so embarrassing. [REDACTED] would get in about them with a bone comb and make my scalp bleed, digging right into my scalp. That happened quite a few times.
89. [REDACTED] put the 'Lyclear' stuff in my hair and used the bone comb but she didn't seek any help until I'd had them quite a few times.
90. I don't remember going to the dentist until I was about thirteen or fourteen. I know [REDACTED] never taught me how to brush my teeth. I'm still learning now how to do them properly.
91. I was rarely at the doctors but I did have to get braces fitted to my legs when I was about seven. I had weak ankles and basically whenever I was lying down my feet were either turned in or turned out. [REDACTED] did notice that and took me to the doctors.
92. I had to go to Stirling Royal infirmary and I got physio and I had these special boots made which were really painful. [REDACTED] made me wear them all the time and if I didn't

she would give me a beating. That was for about a year and a half. I suppose, in that regard, she pushed me to wear my boots.

93. I now have a slipped disc and hip pain but I don't know yet if there is any link between that and what happened in my childhood.

*Running away*

94. I didn't really start running away until I got to Lettre Farm, but at FRX I did think about running away a lot. I thought about whether or not I would find somewhere to stay or something to eat, and who I could go to. I always came up with no answers and ended up back at the front door.
95. I did actually run away the time she told me to get lost, after she'd been force feeding me. I only got to the other end of the FRX though and she found me. I did start to make stronger friend connections, so I could crash on their sofas, anything to get away.
96. I always came up blank with where I could go and who I could go to so that stopped me running away. I resigned myself to accepting what my daily life was and that nobody gave a shit.

*Bedwetting*

97. I urinated about twice and it was always because FRX had locked me in the bedroom. One time was when I was in the backroom. I was locked in, she put a brush up against the door handle to stop me getting out. It was to stop me stealing food because she wasn't feeding me properly.
98. I was banging on the door and shouting that I really needed to pee. FRX told me I had to wait, but I couldn't hold it on and I did a pee in the corner of that room. I was so humiliated and embarrassed.

99. The second time was when I was in a bedroom with FRX. She wouldn't let me go to the toilet without asking her and, in the mornings, I had to wait until she was awake. One morning, she was lying sleeping and I didn't want to wake her up. I just couldn't hold it in so I pee'd the bed. I didn't want her getting pissed off with me for waking her up and then spoiling the rest of the day.
100. Both times, FRX slapped me about a bit and called me disgusting and useless. Then I had to sit on my hands in my wet knickers and t-shirt behind a chair in the living room for the rest of the day. I wasn't allowed to speak to anyone but anyone that came in was told exactly what I'd done and why I was there.
101. FRX didn't feed me on those two days either and I had to ask to go to the toilet again. I was so anxious about asking to go to the toilet. Both occasions were when I was between the ages of seven and nine.
102. No one ever challenged that, and that includes the next door neighbour, FRX, who came in once and saw me sitting crying in my wet underwear.

#### **Abuse in Foster Care – FRX**

103. Everything was kind of good for the first few months. It was a happy house and you more or less got to do what you wanted, which was nice.
104. Then one morning when we were sitting in the living room at breakfast, I was sitting pushing an egg about on a plate, because I didn't like eggs. FRX said to me that I'd better eat it because it had been made for me, but I just sat and pushed it around the plate for a while.
105. FRX then pushed the plate out my hand and said that if I didn't eat what she'd made for me I wouldn't eat at all. It all kind of started from there.



106. To start with she would be nasty towards me with words then she started hitting me. If I spoke out of turn or something she would slap me on the back of my head or in my face.
107. She was always beating me up. When I say beat me up that could be punching me a number of times, in the chest area or on my body. She would also kick me, if she wasn't wearing flip-flop, and if I cried when she was beating me she would just hit me harder.
108. I always had bruises on me, but not where you would see them. I remember being bruised a lot, I had a lot on my legs and feeling quite sore, my scalp was, from her pulling my hair all the time. It would be tingly and nippy.
109. I was a flower girl for FRX best pals wedding, which was a really good day. I had my hair curled and felt so pretty. The bride gave me a thankyou gift, it was a necklace with a wee bear on it and my birthstone.
110. FRX often sent me to look for things I couldn't find, and she knew I wouldn't find. Then she would beat me up.
111. Well she asked me to find my flower girl gift and I searched for it but couldn't find it. She pulled me up and down the hallway by my hair. There were no carpets in the hall at that time it was just planks of wood with nails and I cut up my feet from that.
112. It was after that I pretty much did anything she asked. I had to ask to go to the toilet. I would come out my room, knock on the living room door and wait for her to tell me to come in, then I had to ask to go to the toilet.
113. It also got to the stage, where FRX used to time me coming back from school. If I took a different route and was later, she would beat me. That would be a punch or a kick, or getting my hair pulled, that kind of thing.

114. Quite early on in my time at the FRX, when I was about five or six, talked me into performing an oral act on him. He would have been about eighteen then and it was in the room I shared with him.
115. Afterwards he said he would treat me to a biscuit. He put me up on his shoulders, walked into the kitchen, gave me a biscuit and took me back to my bed. That was the only time he did anything sexual to me. I think he felt guilty about it, because he distanced himself from me after that.
116. FRX trapped my fingers in a door once. I remember them being all bruised and swollen for weeks. It was horrible, painful and my fingers were stinging for so long.
117. My reading was really advanced when I was about nine or ten. I would read FRX books, ones that she left lying about. I remember reading one called 'A Child Called It' by Dave Pelzar and I realised that some of the things she was doing to me came straight from that book.
118. Things like hitting me with a metal dog chain over the back of my legs and hitting me with a brush handle. It was a long wooden stiff brush and she would take the pole out of the head and whack me across the back with that.
119. She would basically use whatever was to hand. It could be shoes, a bag, but most of the time it was deep punches with her fists. If she was wearing something stronger than her flip flops then there would be a few kick thrown in as well.
120. Another was to put two whole bottles of Zoflora disinfectant in the mop bucket when I was cleaning the bathroom floor. She would then close the windows and door and leave me in there.
121. FRX was taking what had happened to the little boy in that book and was applying it to her life with me. I think that was the point that I got really scared because I didn't know what was going on.

122. If I was lying in bed singing a nursery rhyme to myself, to get me to sleep, she would come through, tell me to shut up and beat me, saying no one was listening.
123. I mentioned earlier that FRX used to work in a home for the elderly and she used to take me in now and again, if she couldn't get a baby sitter. That was fun as I could sit with the old people have sookie sweeties and watch television with them. It was the kind of nurturing environment I should have been in, anyway.
124. One day they had an open day at the home and that was fun, there was a raffle and I won two candles in the raffle. Of course FRX took them off me. It transpired that money had been stolen out a purse at that open day and I automatically got accused by FRX. It was nothing to do with me I would never have done anything like that.
125. It was a few years later that FRX was found to have stolen money out a till in a shop she was working in. That went to court and she was found guilty. In my mind I automatically linked that with the theft in the elderly home.
126. When I was ten and staying with FRX it got to the stage, that I had experienced so much and was so scared of what she was capable of doing, that I tried to take my own life.
127. FRX I've learned you can't do that but I did it so hard I knocked myself out. As I fell over I bashed my nose on a unit and it started bleeding. I did manage to get to the bathroom and sort myself out.
128. The next day FRX saw FRX and asked what I'd done. I just lied and said I'd tripped up and she took me to hospital. I remember being at the hospital and the doctor feeling along the bridge of my nose and putting cotton swabs up inside my nose. He said I'd definitely broken it but it wasn't a bad break so I only needed painkillers.
129. He did ask how it had happened but FRX was in the room, so I couldn't really say. I told him I'd been line dancing and I'd fallen over. I said I'd hit my nose on a solid oak

table and he said I was lucky it wasn't worse. I don't remember there being [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] there wasn't anything the doctor would have seen.

130. Shortly after that, she had sent me to get the paper before school one day. I gave her the paper and went to get ready for school, then she came into the room and whacked me over the head with the paper. She said it "that's the wrong fuckin paper, you're so useless, get the fuck out my sight and get to school",
131. FRX [REDACTED] never hugged me, she never said that she loved me, she never spoke to me in a nurturing way. She just ordered me to do things and I always had this fear of her. I was always worrying in case I was doing something wrong and what she would do to me.
132. I would say the abuse was pretty much daily, and over the slightest wee thing. It could be that I used the wrong cat food or got myself a glass of water or went to the toilet without asking her. Sometimes I couldn't move after FRX [REDACTED] had given me a beating, it was just so sore.
133. FRX [REDACTED] sons [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] both saw what was going on, so did the neighbour, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] saw a lot and I remember getting to the age where she was watching me getting beaten up, and thinking to myself, how can you just sit there and not say anything. She never said anything.
134. [REDACTED] once saw FRX [REDACTED] slap me full force around the face and she didn't say a thing. Looking back now, I feel disappointed because she had the opportunity to challenge that behaviour or ask why FRX [REDACTED] felt she needed to do that but she didn't say anything.

#### Reporting of abuse in Foster Care – FRX [REDACTED]

135. It was on the morning that FRX [REDACTED] hit me with the paper and told me I was useless, that I opened up to two of my classmates about what was happening at my

home. I couldn't stop crying, I think it was the realisation that I was stuck, I couldn't get out.

136. I was seeing other parents and how they treated their kids and it was so different to what I was experiencing. I would see parents cuddle their kids when they picked them up from school and I had nobody.
137. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were the two classmates I opened up to. They weren't even my friends, one of them, [REDACTED] actually bullied me. They saw I was crying, came over to me and asked what was wrong. I'm still in contact with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] now.
138. I told them I thought I was being abused. That was a big thing for primary school kids to talk about and they asked me what had happened. I told them about getting hit with the newspaper and being told I was useless, then I started to tell them more and they said I had to tell the teacher.
139. So [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] helped me go and tell my primary school teacher, Karen Campbell, and then she took me to see the deputy head, Karen Ferguson. I then had to relay the information again to the head teacher. Then two plain clothes police officers came into the school and I had to relay the information to them as well.
140. I told the police pretty much everything. That I was being hit and mentally abused every day and treated like a slave. I basically told them everything I'm speaking about with you today and then they said I could go home.
141. I remember when they said I could go home, I was quite scared because I didn't want [REDACTED] FRX to know that I'd told on her. I don't know if I said anything about that, I just remember feeling quite defeated and flat and tired. That was another occasion I was fantasising about running away when I was walking home.

142. I was terrified on that walk home. I just couldn't predict what was going to happen and I was so scared. I was in fight or flight mode as I had no idea what was going to happen, and I was so on edge.
143. I found myself back at the house and FRX oldest son came out and shouted at me for telling lies about his mum. He told me to go through to the bedroom and pack a bag because she didn't even want to look at me. I remember putting a couple of things in a Tesco carrier bag and then I was sent next door to [REDACTED] to wait. Then I went back into FRX house and there was another foster carer there, called [REDACTED]
144. There were four plastic bags of clothes sitting there and [REDACTED] took me away to her house. She asked me if I was making any of it up and I told her it was all the truth. She said to me that the truth will come out eventually. I feel she was very much on FRX side.

#### Leaving Foster Care – FRX [REDACTED]

145. I don't know who, but someone took me away from [REDACTED] in a car to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] house, in Plean. It was the dead of night, pitch black and I went in and got introduced to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I was shown into their little girls' room, and I was put in the top bunk.
146. I remember waking up the next day and I had school. It was quite disorientating to wake up in a new place that I'd never seen before. It felt strange getting dressed to go down for breakfast. I remember I got to choose what I wanted, which wasn't a normal occurrence for me, and then I got a taxi to school.

#### Emergency Foster Care – [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Plean

#### *General*

147. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had [REDACTED] and an older brother, who were their biological children, and there were two foster boys there as well. It was a three bedroom house with the girls in one room, all the boys in another room and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were in a room in the middle.
148. I don't really remember much from my time at the [REDACTED]'s. It was a busy house though. Initially, I was only there on a four week placement, and I was told they were struggling to then find me somewhere to live, so I was there for about seven weeks.
149. I do remember [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were big fans of Bon Jovi. [REDACTED] even looked a bit like him. They showed me Bon Jovi videos and I remember really getting into music.
150. I also remember being there for a Halloween. There were decorations and sweets and I didn't know how to act as I'd never been guising or anything like that. I got dressed up and we went round their friends' houses trick or treating and it was great.

#### *Discipline*

151. I remember the punishment for speaking out of line was to sit at the table in the kitchen and I wasn't allowed to speak to anybody. It was a lot lighter than anything I'd been given before, so I appreciated that kind of punishment.
152. I would perhaps be nasty and call [REDACTED] a wee bitch, or swear, or take a sweetie without asking, and that would result in me being sent to sit at the table. It would only be for about five minutes then [REDACTED] would usually come over and ask what made me do it, how I felt about being punished and then explain how it impacted on the whole family.
153. I didn't cry at all, it was just a totally new way of doing things in my mind. It was probably my most positive foster placement to be honest.

154. The [REDACTED] family looked like I imagined a family to be. The punishment they used, to make you sit and think about what you have done, is probably what I would use with my own kids.

**Leaving Emergency Placement – [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]**

155. How they came up with the next place is beyond me. I think I saw my social worker, Margaret, about twice when I was with the [REDACTED], but she did tell me she hadn't been in contact because of the guilt that she felt from [REDACTED] FRX.
156. It was Margaret, my social worker, who took me from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to FRS-FRV [REDACTED] in Tullibody. That was her last day as a social worker. She had been my social worker until that day.
157. I don't remember much in the lead up to leaving, I don't think there were any visits or anything like that. It kind of caught me off guard, with Margaret leaving, and me moving into a new placement.

**Foster Care – FRS-FRV [REDACTED] Tullibody**

*General*

158. I remember showing up at FRS-FRV [REDACTED] house in Tullibody with all my stuff and being shown into a room. I was about twelve or thirteen.
159. In the house there was FRS-FRV [REDACTED] [REDACTED] their oldest adopted daughter, [REDACTED] their biological daughter, [REDACTED] their grandson and a little girl, [REDACTED] also came and lived there after a while.



160. [REDACTED] had severe behavioural difficulties and [REDACTED] was [REDACTED] with learning difficulties. [REDACTED] the grandson, always wet himself, because he was just lazy. He had a lot of behavioural issues as well.
161. [REDACTED] was in her late twenties and wasn't really allowed to speak to us much. She was kept sitting at the corner of the breakfast bar. If she fell asleep sitting there she would get a slap on the face from [FRS] [REDACTED].
162. [REDACTED] was in her twenties as well, and she was absolutely doted on, and got whatever she wanted. [REDACTED] was two years older than me and he slept in the attic, up a set of ladders. He was always wetting himself because he was too lazy to come down the ladders and go to the toilet, which was just at the bottom of the ladders.
163. [REDACTED] was another little girl who came to stay, she was very timid. I think she had been through a lot in her short life. She was just starting primary school.
164. [FRS] [REDACTED] was like a ball of fire and was very brash. She was more quick tempered than [FRX] [REDACTED] but she did make sure we left with a breakfast inside us and that we were presentable, in the morning.

#### **Routine in Foster Care – [FRS-FRV] [REDACTED]**

##### *Mornings and bedtime*

165. Everything was more hectic than at [FRX] [REDACTED]. It was a bit slap-dash in the mornings with everyone trying to get into the one bathroom. I would get up, get washed and dressed and head out to school.
166. [FRS] [REDACTED] would usually be nipping at me for something or other and I just couldn't wait to get out the door. I would always walk very slowly back from school, get in and we would all sit at our places for dinner. After dinner it would usually just be up to my room.

*Food*

167. I was fed well at the FRS-FRV. I sometimes got things I didn't like and then I went without, but that was more through choice. I wasn't allowed anything else, and FRS would say she wasn't making five different dinners, so I understood that.
168. I often found myself sneaking down to the kitchen at night and taking yoghurts or FRS special chocolates out the fridge. Part of that was because I needed to eat more but part was revenge for how she was treating me. So if she did something to me, like read my diary, I would steal one of her special chocolates.

*School*

169. I finished up at Raploch primary when I was at FRX. Then I was taken up to Abercrombie primary in Tullibody, once a week to get to know people as I was to be going to Lawrence Hill Academy in Tullibody.
170. I got in trouble quite a lot in my first year at Lawrence Hill Academy. My guidance teacher, Mrs Dodds, was quite good but I was put on a behaviour slip to make sure I was behaving in classes and attending classes. I had to get the teacher to sign that so that was a wee bit embarrassing.
171. Everything was so disruptive at home and I was self-harming to cope with it. Miss Dodds did sit down with me every week and if I had a red card she would tell me how disappointed she was but they never really probed very much. I think she once asked if everything was okay at home, and I told her it wasn't really, but that was it, she didn't ask anything further.
172. A red card would be given for speaking out of turn or being disruptive in the class, that was usually reacting to the bullies, who were doing things behind the teachers back. I never resorted to violence though.

*Holidays and trips*

173. FRS-FRV had a static caravan down in Dumfries and Galloway, Southernness I think it was called. That was quite good but FRS always kept me away from other kids. She said I was a liability, which I don't believe was true, so I just ended up playing on the monkey bars in the park by myself.
174. Some of the time things were positive. When FRS was in a good mood she could be a really good person. Most of the time though, she was a bit crabbit.

*Visits / Inspections / Review of detention*

175. My social worker, when I was with FRS-FRV was still Margaret Aland. She passed away when I was sixteen, and was the best social worker I had, hands down.
176. After Margaret Aland it's a bit blurry and the contact was a bit sporadic during that time, it certainly wasn't as regular as it had been. I do remember getting Sarah Sharkey when I was thirteen, but that was after I had left foster care. She was a good social worker, I was actually her wedding, and I think she did all she could but I think she was a bit out of her depth with FRV and his behaviour. She didn't seem to know how to deal with that.
177. While I was living with the FRS-FRV in Tullibody I found my biological father. My auntie had a family tree book and from that I discovered his name was and he lived in Tullibody.
178. Then I just went on pure gut instinct and started chapping on doors in Tullibody and asking if anyone knew . I met a guy who told me the street he stayed in, so I went there and chapped on more doors. Eventually my dad answered a door. I asked him if he was and he said he was. He just seemed to know who I was, and things just went on from there and I started to see more of him.

179. As my relationships then grew stronger with him, it grew weaker with [FRS-FRV] [FRS-FRV] so I would often run away to his house. I was desperate for some kind of family connection as I had no regular contact with any family members. I now realise I was putting myself in a vulnerable position but it was just because I was so desperate.
180. His house was a tip and, I didn't realise at the time but, he was a hoarder and a suffered from manic depression. He was happy to see me though and he told me all about my other sisters and my brothers. He told me how delighted they would be to see me, things like that.
181. My dad's name is [REDACTED] he's not on my birth certificate, and his name is wrong on my files, it's actually [REDACTED] on some of them.
182. When I told [FRS] [REDACTED] I'd found my dad and had been visiting him, she called the social work and told them. My social worker then visited me and told me not to see him until further notice. I just kept seeing him secretly, for a while after that.

#### *Healthcare*

183. I started my period when I ran away from [FRS-FRV] [REDACTED] one time. When I got back to the house [FRS] [REDACTED] asked if that was why I had been so moody. I didn't know, it just happened. I hadn't had any discussions or talks with [FRS] [REDACTED] about having my period. I'd just had very basic sex education at school.
184. So [FRS] [REDACTED] just gave me money and sent me to the shops to buy what I needed. She didn't come with me or explain anything, like a mum is expected to do. She should have come with me and explained things to me. A foster carer is meant to be like a mum.
185. I don't remember going to the dentist or going to the doctor when I was staying with the [FRS-FRV] [REDACTED]. I only remember going to the dentist from Lettre Farm onwards. I am

now having to deal with lots of fillings and root treatments so, as an adult, I'm now dealing with the consequences of that.

*Running away*

186. I did run away from FRS-FRV [REDACTED]. It was just because of all the arguing and the sleaziness coming from FRV [REDACTED] I'd had enough and I just wanted out of there. I slept rough for three nights and I got my period whilst I was sleeping rough.
187. A friend lent me underwear and some sanitary products. I just huddled down and slept as best I could in a back garden area. The police ended up catching up with me.
188. The police asked why I had run away and I told them my foster carer was being a bitch. They said that was no excuse and took me back to FRS-FRV [REDACTED]. FRS [REDACTED] told me I was such an embarrassment bringing the police to her front door.
189. It wasn't long after that I spoke to my dad and he made a complaint about them, so I was moved into Brucefield in Bannockburn.

**Abuse in Foster Care – FRS-FRV [REDACTED]**

190. At first FRS [REDACTED] seemed alright. I remember one day though, I was tidying up my clothes and I obviously wasn't doing it fast enough and she lifted her hand, with a shoe in it, and motioned as if she was going to hit me.
191. I flinched and she shouted at me, calling me a stupid cow, for thinking she was going to hit me. Then she threw the shoe across the room and I started crying. She shouted at me again. I'd say it was more emotional abuse with her and she just couldn't be bothered with me.

192. FRS [REDACTED] would pull me about now and again, but her punishment was to get me to brush the stairs. She made me use a steel wire carpet brush, instead of using the Hoover like any normal rational person would do. I would brush from the top landing down all the stairs and then sweep it all up. It would take me about two or three hours because she would walk up and down the stairs dragging dirt about and I'd have to redo it all.
193. Another punishment FRS [REDACTED] did was to have us sit on our hands on the stairs. She did that with me and quite often with her daughter [REDACTED] for speaking out of turn.
194. Their biological daughter, [REDACTED] was treated totally differently. I had a lot of love for her though, she was a really lovely innocent soul. If she had an epileptic fit, when FRS [REDACTED] was out, it was usually me who was first to get to her and look after her.
195. FRS [REDACTED] and I didn't get on because she found, and started reading, my diaries. I was self-harming, I'd started my periods and my emotions were all up in the air. Things from my childhood were coming flooding back so I was using a diary, as a way of releasing all that anger and confusion.
196. There was a lot of personal, emotional, reflective stuff in my diary. There was a lot of reflection on [REDACTED] and it was my way of processing and coping with things. If I had self-harmed, I'd said why, and things that were happening in the house were in there as well. That kind of alluded to the abuse I was receiving from FRV [REDACTED] as well.
197. FRS [REDACTED] had found the diary and was reading it with her daughter-in-law, so it was being shared around the family. One day I came home and FRS [REDACTED] was standing crying, pointing to the diary. She was asking if that was the reason I was feeling the way I was feeling.
198. I told her she shouldn't be reading my diary and that it was all my own personal private thoughts. She said it was no wonder I was so fucked up and confused. I just broke down in tears after that and she actually gave me a hug, which was not something she ever did.

199. It was shortly after that both <sup>FRS</sup> and myself told the social work that things weren't working and I was moved on. My dad had also made a complaint about the <sup>FRS-FRV</sup> as well as I had told him about <sup>FRV</sup> and his sleazy behaviour.
200. The abuse really came from <sup>FRV</sup>. He would say he'd buy me fags if I'd suck his cock and he would grab at my breasts and tell me he wanted to fuck me and try to touch me up. It was all really sleazy and perverse. I never did anything to him but he really creeped me out.
201. If I was in my bed, in the top bunk, he would try and get his hands on me but it never got to the point of him actually doing anything. We weren't allowed to lock the bathroom door, so he would walk in on me if I was on the toilet or in the bath. He would look me up and down and say I was sexy, stuff like that.
202. He was just so sleazy and the behaviour was totally inappropriate. I never felt comfortable when I was around him.
203. If we were sitting on the same sofa he would try to feel up my leg. I would move my leg and he would say it was only a game, he was only playing, and it was just a joke. At thirteen and fourteen I knew it was no joke. He and <sup>FRS</sup> were both in their fifties.

#### Reporting of abuse in Foster Care — <sup>FRS-FRV</sup>

204. I did tell my dad about <sup>FRV</sup> saying he wanted to fuck me and my dad looked absolutely repulsed. I was repulsed when it was happening but I just felt powerless to do anything about it. My dad reported that and that did eventually lead to me being taken away from them.

205. It was after I had left the FRS-FRV that I told my social worker, Sarah Sharkey, about FRV and she got the police involved. I was in care in Bannockburn when I spoke to the police about FRV
206. That was in a room at my school and the police asked some very probing questions about it all. They also asked why I'd taken eight months to report it. I told them I was staying with the FRS-FRV at the time and I didn't want to repeat what FRV was saying to me, to other people, in case I had to go back, like happened before, when I spoke to the police. So, I didn't know who to tell or who to talk to.
207. I told the police the reason I was reporting it was because of the concerns I had about other people in that house. There was a very young girl and the house and there was an adult female with severe behavioural difficulties. If anything had happened to her I don't think she would have had the capacity to be able to tell people.
208. I told the police that was why I was reporting it but I felt they were very dismissive. It was like they didn't believe a word I said. I think, because I'd taken time to report it, that was just another reason for them not to believe me.
209. After I told the police about FRV behaviour, they interviewed FRV. Apparently he was so distressed during his interview the police decided not to take it any further. I couldn't believe that, of course he was distressed, he'd been caught and he was guilty.
210. It was my social worker that told me the police had interviewed him and that it wasn't getting taken any further because he was so distressed and they didn't believe me. That was so heart-breaking, to actually open up and talk about something like that going on in your life, and to be told by a professional, that they don't believe you. That was not justice, there was never any resolution. FRV was never held accountable for what he did. That annoys me.



**Leaving Foster Care** – FRS-FRV [REDACTED]

211. My sister, on my dad's side, [REDACTED] came up from England to visit, for a week. She hadn't been up in years and she knew I had reunited with my dad. We all met in the Masonic Lodge in Tullibody and caught up and that was really nice. It wasn't a social work approved visit or anything like that. I spent a lot of time with [REDACTED] that week.
212. The day [REDACTED] was due to fly home, she came round to the house. FRS [REDACTED] was really snarly with her and wouldn't let me go to the airport to see my sister off. [REDACTED] started shouting and swearing at FRS [REDACTED] and they had a big argument, before [REDACTED] took me away, by the hand.
213. I was of the opinion that FRS-FRV [REDACTED] had been responsible for so much nastiness and had told me so many lies that I wasn't going back there. I saw [REDACTED] off and I didn't want to go back after that, but my dad said he didn't want anyone to get into trouble, so he drove me back to the FRS-FRV [REDACTED].
214. I wanted to be with my dad and he wanted that too, but he said it would take time, and that I had to go back. FRS [REDACTED] put me in purgatory for about two weeks after that. She didn't speak to me, she told everyone in the house to ignore me, she made me brush the stairs, she made me clean the bathroom, I had to run errands, I wasn't allowed out, I wasn't allowed on my computer or to sit and watch television, basically everything was taken off me.
215. Things did move very swiftly from there because, as I said, the social work became aware and my dad had also made a complaint. I was about fourteen or fifteen when I left and I have a feeling it was my dad that picked me up, but I couldn't say for certain.
216. Initially, I went to a respite place in Belmont, near Dundee. I was there for about three weeks before going to Brucefield residential unit in Bannockburn.

217. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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**Brucefield Children's Residential Unit, Bannockburn**

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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238. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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**Lettre Farm, Killearn, Stirling**

241. 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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### **Life after being in care**

271. When it was decided I was able to leave care and have the order removed, I was introduced to the [REDACTED] family in Thornhill. They provided supported accommodation.
272. I slotted in very well with the [REDACTED]. I had what is called a Pathway Plan with my Through Care worker, a guy called John Elliot. I learned to go shopping, to cook and many things I knew anyway.
273. I remember I was anxious, I was constantly re-assessing myself but it was all good in supported accommodation. I ended up going back to school. I had left aged sixteen with four standard grades.
274. My birth mum was then back on the scene and I was doing well at school, working and studying. I also maintained some contact with my dad.
275. I had received compensation for the case against [REDACTED] and my gran had held that money so I remember I was pushing to get that money around that time. Eventually I went and lived with my mum and my gran gave in and gave me the money, which I managed to blow.

276. I met a guy, [REDACTED] and that wasn't easy, as I was so mistrusting and just had to take things slowly. I remember I did karaoke work, and other jobs, but the relationship with my mum got strained so eventually I moved in with [REDACTED]
277. [REDACTED] and I tried for a council house but weren't successful so we then had to present as homeless. I then spent a couple of years moving between bedsits and homeless hostels, which wasn't a good time. I felt terrorised living in one bedsit, with neighbours fighting and domestic abuse going on. I was so anxious and on edge all the time.
278. I did complain and eventually we were moved to a ground floor flat. That was in [REDACTED] and I was still with [REDACTED] I needed a fresh start though so [REDACTED] and I then decided to move to Inverness, to live with his uncle.
279. We stayed with two of his uncles, but it didn't work, and we returned to Stirling, where we were homeless again for a while.
280. Then I got a job at [REDACTED] and I also realised [REDACTED] wasn't for me so we split up amicably.
281. I then saw another guy from [REDACTED] who was in his forties. I was in my early twenties and that turned out to be a big mistake. He proposed to me, I said yes and then I became his property. We never actually got married.
282. I was physically and sexually abused by him, he was a bully, was abusive, spoke so derogatory towards me and just ordered me about. I eventually confided in colleagues about him and I ended up going to Woman's Aid for help. I broke down telling them and they arranged for me to get out.
283. I got a flat through Woman's Aid and I stayed with them for about a year and a half. I then got a flat in the [REDACTED] in Stirling, in [REDACTED]

284. That was when I met [REDACTED], he's known as [REDACTED] he was a drug dealer and I got involved with him and got myself into drugs, but I knew I still wanted to do something.
285. I did a Universities and Colleges Admission Services access course on Politics and Social Policy and then another course on History and Politics. I basically studied what I'd been living.
286. I eventually left [REDACTED] and moved in with friends for a while. I rented a room in Alva, finished my second year at university, then I got a university flat at Stirling University. I actually had a breakdown in my second year.
287. That was when I met [REDACTED] and I moved in with him and his dad. I did my dissertation and completed the degree, graduating in 2018. Smoking weed was actually my coping mechanism. I believed it was better to smoke cannabis rather than stop my studies.
288. Who Cares? Scotland were a great help to me. They saw a passion in me and wanted to help, to change my life and my perception. They helped me claim back the power I'd lost for so many years.
289. My life is positive now and I want to be part of it, part of a time for me. My main drive is to do something that makes other peoples experiences a little better.
290. I've been working hard over the last six years to try and change the care system. I spearheaded the [REDACTED] which changed the age of leaving care up to twenty one, with stronger after care up to the age of twenty six.
291. I also helped to achieve the 'Care Experience Bursary' for students going into university. The National Advocacy Framework came from the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] So many children who have come from a care background don't know what their rights are. I didn't know anything about my rights until I met Mary Bateman.

292. Mary Bateman, was my advocate, and came into my life not long after I moved in to Lettre Farm. She comes from 'Who Cares? Scotland' and has been there, for me, for many years now. She has taken more of a back seat now and doesn't worry about me, now that I have [REDACTED] looking after me.
293. I didn't know I had a right to input into the children's hearings system, I didn't know I had the right to be consulted about decisions that were being made about my life. I then started taking over my children's reviews. That was after leaving the [REDACTED] FRS-FRV and starting at Brucefield.
294. I do still have contact with my brother, on my mum's side, and my sister, on my dad's side, but no one else at all.

### Impact

295. I believe the system set me up to fail in life. I had no love and no hugs, more just slaps. Part of me wanted to be wanted and loved, even if it wasn't a positive love, because we need love and security. There's no aspiration when you're in care.
296. I've mentioned that I was presenting self-harm behaviour aged four, when I was [REDACTED]. That continued in school when I started [REDACTED].  
[REDACTED]
297. I did that until I was about thirteen or fourteen, when I actually started [REDACTED]. That was at [REDACTED] FRS-FRV. I have scars from that. I didn't see the link between doing what I was doing when I was four, and the [REDACTED] and other self-harming, but I see it now.

298. [REDACTED] I would bite my nails, I was constantly anxious, things like that. I wore long sleeved tops to school and did the best I could to hide all the scars and marks.
299. I went to a podiatrist clinic in Strathbrock Community Partnership in Broxburn in 2019 which is operated by West Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership. The podiatrist told me I had deformities that were linked to trauma. He told me the shape of my toes and the condition of my nailbeds could be associated with the trauma I experienced in my childhood.
300. I saw FRX [REDACTED] as an adult, in Stirling city centre. I was with a friend and I just stopped. She asked what was wrong with me. I had pins and needles shoot from the tip of my head to the tip of my toes. I just froze in fear. I remember thinking I'm an adult now, she can't hurt me, but it was just a sudden flashback and the fear hit me.
301. FRX [REDACTED] still lives in that same house, she's never moved, and she still has all her cats. I've spoken to her once or twice since I saw her that day. It was just chance meetings.
302. She accused me of saying things about her oldest son, [REDACTED] selling drugs. I said it was nothing to do with me and that I couldn't care less, she told me there was no need to be rude. I then told her there was no need for her to abuse me for all those years. She was silent and walked away.
303. I really do feel as if I am haunted by my experiences. There are days when there's a dark shadow and I can't get rid of it. I don't get dressed on those days, I don't get up and washed, I'm so exhausted. That's hugely debilitating but I feel I must keep fighting that dark shadow.
304. I have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, I have anxiety and I have depression. It's something I have to survive with and it impacts on my daily life. There's days I'm really down and can't do much. There are times I get myself into a negative mind-set and I can't get find my way out of it.

305. I've kind of resigned a lot of my life to living on anti-depressants because it just seems like there will be there six months of calm, then two years of really bad mental health issues. Those are all connected to the past.
306. I was diagnosed with dyscalculia in first year of university, which may not be significant, but it might help explain why I was chucked out of class when I was younger and why I had such disruptive behaviour. Nobody saw that or asked, they just didn't care.
307. I think all the successes that I have managed to get over the last few years are in complete spite of everything that's happened. I was surprised to reach the ages of sixteen, eighteen and twenty one, all the major birthdays.
308. Music can trigger things, or a sight or some other sound. I can then get a feeling from tip to toe. I am rooted to the spot, like when I saw FRX in the street. I've been back to FRX house and stood outside. I had a panic attack.
309. Trust is a big thing. It took me a long time to trust and it takes time for me to trust people. I can also be quick to bark at people and I can't accept being wrong. That can make me angry, really angry.
310. Until I met I felt worthless. I'd been told by residential carers, by primary school teachers and by foster parents that I would never amount to anything, that no one would ever love me and that I would never achieve anything.

### **Reporting of abuse**

311. I only told people of the abuse as a child, never as an adult. I didn't trust anyone or believe they would do the right thing. I never trusted the system after they let me go back to FRX

312. I've learned from my care records that [REDACTED] was convicted of lewd activity. That was showing me pornographic material, but he was not convicted of what he actually did to me personally and physically. I feel that something has been hugely missed there, within the justice system.
313. He only got six months for that but he took away a child's innocence, in my eyes anyway. He pleaded guilty but then appealed and ended up with just three months. There's something so fundamentally flawed about our justice system in cases of child abuse.
314. I remember going to the court in a car, with my mum, to see [REDACTED] and being told to sit down low so he couldn't see me. I didn't realise until we were driving away that, that was who she was visiting.
315. That made me question why she was wanting to see him, while I was in the car, and knowing what he had done to me. She was fine with that and it makes me wonder whether she was complicit in any of the abuse that I received as a child. I don't know if she was maybe allowing men to groom me. I can only speculate.

### **Counselling / Support**

316. I saw a psychologist when I was only three or four, as I was displaying behavioural issues that were understandable because of the abuse I suffered.
317. I also saw a psychologist, Sue Sibley, from about the age of six until after I left [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Sue Sibley is now Sue Aitken. Sue saw my name [REDACTED] last year and got back in touch with me to tell me I was doing really well.
318. I opened up a lot to Sue, but not really about the abuse while I was in care. I think I was primarily there for the abuse that happened before I went into care. When I was about eleven I also opened up to her about my self-harming. She obviously had a



duty of care and had to report that and after that I stopped opening up and trusting her.

319. I'm currently awaiting Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). I was told today, that an appointment has been confirmed but that it's a minimum one year waiting list.
320. I've been through so many rounds of counselling with Open Secret, the Care Survivors Service, CALMS, the Wellness in Mind and other places. There just is no fix, no curing me of the mental health conditions that I'm now suffering from.

### **Records**

321. I obtained my records from Stirling Council in 2019. That took some time, in fact, I received an apology from Ricky Sneddon, the Head of Children's Services Department for the council's mismanagement of my request and he then became my main contact.
322. The council have done their best with them and, even although there's a fair bit redacted, I have learnt a lot from my care records. So much came flooding back to me when I read them, it was like opening a door.
323. It was horrible to see me being described as a damaged wee girl, as being destructive and aggressive. It said I was [REDACTED] at the age of three or four. That's called self-harming but it was never looked at, never reported, nothing.
324. The psychologist I saw when I was only four is in my records and he's the one guy I will always remember that stood up for me. I don't remember his name but he was based in Stirling and it would have been NHS.

325. I did have a bit of a breakdown when I went through my records and I couldn't read through it all at once. On paper, my gran didn't do all the things my family have told me she did do. They may have been trying to protect me but reading that was difficult. There was even a bit that said she was considering whether or not to stay in contact with me, or just disappear. That really hurt.
326. I do want to read them and I will, slowly, over time because I want to reflect. Ricky Sneddon is holding on to them and we have an arrangement whereby I can access them whenever I want.

### **Lessons to be learned**

327. First of all, if you're going to promise someone a new family, you have to deliver it. I was promised I was going to be adopted and get a new mum and dad then I was chucked into foster care. I was told that was because they didn't have time to complete the process, which is absolute bullshit, of course they had time.
328. Records need to be written in a person centred way. The professionals that write them need to realise that a lot of these kids are going to read them when they're adults, so it has to be person centred.
329. There also has to be more positive things recorded. The only things recorded for me are that I like singing nursery rhymes and reading books. There was surely more to me than that at that age, and none of that was recorded.
330. Comprehensive checks have to be made for foster carers. FRX should never have been a foster carer, she kept me like a slave for seven years. Children should be matched up with foster carers, through placement moves.

331. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

332. I think the police practice needs to change. They need to work from the point of believing victims and not ostracising them and making them feel it was their fault. There shouldn't be attitudes like 'he didn't really do anything so why are you complaining' or 'why have you taken so long to report it'.
333. I also think letting young children be in more control of their meetings is important. Give them the opportunity at least, to have more input into how they are being cared for.
334. The Children's Hearings members also need to let the child know, from the very beginning, that they have the opportunity to speak to them on their own.
335. Every child in care should have an advocate. Children should be learning what their rights are and the people around them, that are there to support, should be helping them to realise their rights.
336. The advocate has to be independent, not organisations like Barnardo's who offer advocacy but also a care service. It should be someone like Who Cares? Scotland who are completely separate and are just there for the kids. Not the parents or the carers.

337. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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339. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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#### **Hopes for the Inquiry**

349. I certainly hope there are some convictions for some people. For some people it's about getting justice and having that acknowledgment that what happened to them was wrong. It's the same for me as I was disbelieved for so many years. It's only through this process now that I feel believed and it shouldn't have taken this long.
350. I know there is a lot of work underway with the religious institutions and I hope the same attention will be given to those who have lived in foster care and residential care and received abuse at the hands of their carers.
351. I just hope for some change. It can't go on the way it is otherwise we will continue to fail generations of kids. If that's the case I've wasted the last six years of my life fighting for a cause that's never going to change. We need to get the rest of society to follow suit, to get the community on board.

352. Kids are taken into care because their home lives are so shit that they are unsafe. The whole reason is to get the kids out of that vicious cycle, yet when they are chucked out of care, they go straight back into the same cycle because they go back into the community they came away from. One with no support or education or any means to better their lives. It shouldn't be that way.

**Other Information**

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

Signed. FRJ .....

Dated. *01/10/2019* .....