

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Kerry MCDONALD

Support person present: No

1. My name is Kerry Margaret McDonald. When I was born I was known as Grace Fulton. My foster mother changed my name to GKP-GKQ by deed poll when I was twelve or thirteen years old at some point between 1985 and 1987. I started being known by the name Kerry McDonald after I was married in adult life. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1973. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My mother was called [REDACTED] and my father was called [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I was born in Perth Royal Infirmary in Perth. Looking back, given what happened next, I just don't know how social workers could have left me with my mother [REDACTED]
3. I was taken away from my birth parents when I was three months old in 1973. I have no memories of what happened but I have since learnt that it was because my mother tried to kill me. I first heard about that through a girl who was at the same school as me. The girl's name was [REDACTED]. She told me that her mother had 'caught me.' That confused me at first because I had in my mind that she had 'caught me doing something.' [REDACTED] then told me that what she meant was that her mother had literally caught me after my mother had dropped me out of a window. I haven't been

told by anyone official that that was what happened but I did later on hear that same story from a cousin on my father's side. I assume that after that incident happened social services took me from my mother and father.

Nimmo Place, Tulloch, Perth, Perth and Kinross

4. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

5.

6.



Leaving Nimmo Place

7. I left Nimmo Place when I was seven years old in either 1980 or 1981. I don't have any memories surrounding why I came to leave Nimmo Place. All I know is that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I [REDACTED] moved to another children's home in Scone.

55 Birch Avenue, Scone, Perth and Kinross

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Leaving 55 Birch Avenue

35. There was a boy called [REDACTED] who later had his surname changed to [REDACTED] who had been at Birch Avenue with me. He was about a year older than me. He had stayed there with his brother. I don't remember how I got on with him when I was with him at Birch Avenue. I do remember that I got on well with his brother but nothing about him during that period. [REDACTED] was fostered out to [REDACTED] during my time in the home. I heard later on that it was through him speaking to [REDACTED] that they were persuaded to foster me as well. [REDACTED] told me that he had been the one who had given my name to them.
36. I think it probably would have been Irene Mann who would then have got involved with me getting fostered. It was [REDACTED] me who they wanted to foster [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I didn't go to [REDACTED] straight away. I visited them initially. I think I visited them for two weekends and both those visits were good. I remember that I enjoyed both those weekends and that [REDACTED] the foster mother there, was very nice to me. After those visits I was told I was getting fostered permanently by Irene Mann. When I was told that I was going to be fostered by [REDACTED] after those two visits I was ecstatic and happy. [REDACTED] collected me from Birch Avenue. I don't remember a social worker being there on that journey or what time I arrived at the farm.

Foster care placement with [GKP-GKQ]

[Redacted] Perth and Kinross, [Redacted]

37. [GKP-GKQ] lived in a house on their farm. I stayed with them between the ages of twelve on [Redacted] 1985 until I was eighteen in approximately 1991. I was there for about six years in total. [GKQ] was the foster mother on the farm. We used to call her 'Auntie' [GKQ], [GKP] was the foster father at the farm. We used to call him 'Uncle' [GKP]. I think he was in his forties when I stayed with him. [GKQ] would have been a bit older. I don't know where they both live now but by 2015 [GKQ] and [GKP] had moved away from [Redacted] and were living at [Redacted] Perth, [Redacted]. They had sold the farm sometime after [GKQ] had health issues with her heart. I know that she lived in [Redacted] because I visited her there at that time and have a letter with their address still in my possession. They had one daughter of their own called [Redacted] but she lived in Edinburgh. She would have been in her twenties when I arrived at the farm.

Layout of [Redacted]

38. [Redacted] was a big farm. They had sheep, cows, dogs and cats. [GKQ] bred cats and dogs and kept them in separate big sheds. She bred things like collie dogs, Lhasa Apso dogs and Persian cats. She had loads of them. The house contained three bedrooms, two lounges, a kitchen and a bathroom.

Name change / the children and former foster children at [Redacted]

39. My name was changed to [GKP-GKQ] pretty quickly after arriving at [GKP-GKQ]. [GKQ] didn't like my name which I can totally understand because I didn't like that name too. It could have been when I was twelve or thirteen. That was all done officially by deed poll and organised by [GKQ].
40. [GKP-GKQ] fostered one child on the farm and had one person who had been fostered in the past still living with them. [Redacted] later known as [Redacted] arrived there

before me and was there when I arrived. He joined the army when he was sixteen. I know he was still in contact with GKP-GKQ in 2004. I believe he still is.

41. [REDACTED] had been originally fostered but would have been in her twenties when I was there. She has to be in her late fifties now. She had been placed into the care system because her father had beaten her. She had a big mark on her backside because of that. I remember her as being pretty quiet. I don't know what the arrangement was with her or why she stayed on with GKP-GKQ after she was eighteen. I know that she must have moved out at some point because I heard from the police in later life that she was living in Ireland.

42. GKP-GKQ fostered two other children during my time with them. I couldn't say how old they were but they were younger than me. I think those placements were either emergency placements or to allow their parents respite. I think they were both returned to their parents in the end. I couldn't say how long they were there in total but it was less than a year. One girl's name was [REDACTED] but I don't remember her surname. The other girl had blonde hair. I don't remember her name

Routine at [REDACTED]

Daily routine

43. I would get up about 6:00 am every morning. I can't remember how I was woken up. If I had wet my bed I would then have to have a cold bath before washing my sheets. I would then get ready and have breakfast before going out onto the farm to help out with the sheep and the cows. If it was a school day I would then go to school. I stayed at the school I was at over the course of the day then would return to the farm. After getting back to the farm I would have to do my homework. I would sit doing that with [REDACTED] I would then go to see the sheep, cows, dogs or cats or play my accordion. I would go to bed sometime before 9:00 pm.

44. At weekends, and during holidays, it was the same routine except I would play and work on the farm during the day rather than going to school. On Sundays I went to church.

Sleeping arrangements

45. To begin with I slept in a bedroom on my own upstairs in the house and [REDACTED] slept in a shed outdoors. It was a little shed made into a bedroom so it wasn't anything bad. Later on I chose to move into the shed. Around that time they changed the layout of the bedrooms and turned a box room into a bedroom. [REDACTED] initially went into there. There was a period when I went away. When I got back I was placed in the room that had been a box room. I stayed in that room until I left. It wasn't long after that that I came down to London.

Washing / bathing

46. I remember having cold baths most days in the mornings because I wet the bed. Apart from when I was given cold baths for wetting the bed I wasn't allowed to use the bathroom. Both [REDACTED] and I had to wash ourselves in the kitchen sink. We had our underwear on but we would still have to wash at the kitchen sink. That happened throughout my time there. Everybody would be in and out of the kitchen whilst we did that. People would be sitting at the kitchen table whilst we were washing.

Mealtimes / food

47. The food was alright. It was normal food and there was plenty of it. I don't remember ever starving or anything like that. If you didn't like whatever [REDACTED] gave you then you would basically do without. I liked most of the food anyway so that wasn't a problem. I wasn't directly taught how to cook by [REDACTED] but I watched her and learnt that way. Through watching I learnt to make things like cloutie dumpling.

Work / chores

48. I did do chores in the house. I think I did more around the house as I grew older. I think I chose to do that more in an effort to keep GKQ happy than anything else.
49. Every morning and evening, and during the weekends, I had work to do on the farm. I didn't mind doing that because I liked it. That for me was enjoyable and I would do that in my free time. I think that was where I decided to keep myself. I wasn't paid but I don't consider it as me giving them free labour. I would do things like clean out the sheep during lambing time, clean out and feed the cows and walk out in the fields to check that none of the sheep were stuck on their backs. Checking the sheep was one of the things that I used to get away from the house to avoid things happening.
50. Working on the farm could be dangerous at times so you would have to be careful. There was a time when a cow kicked me and I injured my hand. A calf had died and we were trying to pull it out of the mother whilst getting it to accept another calf. I was alright and didn't need any treatment. I remember that I had an accordion competition that same day and I still won even though I had injured my hand. I don't know whether the cow kicking me gave me luck but I won anyway.

Clothing / uniform

51. GKQ got rid of all the clothes I had when I arrived at the farm. She then gave me some of her stuff before getting me replacement clothes. I can't remember whether she took me out the next day or how I got my replacement clothes. She would buy me school uniforms for the schools I went to. I had no say in the clothes I was bought and didn't like them. I just had to accept what I was given.

Possessions / pocket money

52. GKQ got rid of all my possessions after I arrived at the farm. I don't remember her replacing things like the toys I arrived with. We didn't receive pocket money. GKQ would just take us out and buy us things if we needed them. I don't remember being bought things like sweets and juice though. Other than my accordion I didn't really have anything by way of possessions.

School

53. To get to school in the mornings I got a lift to Chapelhill. All the children from the surrounding areas would meet up there in a little hut ready to be taken to the schools they were at. From Chapelhill we would all get on a bus together to Methven. Children would be picked up along the way. I would then get a bus from Methven to the school I was at at that time. I think the buses were all organised by the schools so there were no bus fares.
54. I went to three different secondary schools during my time with GKP-GKQ. I initially went to Perth High School. After a short period of time GKQ transferred me to Perth Grammar School. I wasn't there very long before she transferred me again to Crieff High School. That would have been when I was about fifteen. When I got to Crieff High School I discovered that there was no one there at all that I knew from the home. I remember that because the school was so far away I had to get a lift with a neighbour to the farm who was dropping off her boys at Morrison's Academy. I was eventually expelled from Crieff High School at the age of fifteen. We had to do a project which involved helping old people in a home. I ended up taking some money and that led to the school asking me to leave.
55. Looking back at my time in all the schools I was in during my time with GKP-GKQ, I didn't get on well. I was dealing with GKQ all of the time. I was happy during the time I was in Perth Grammar but other than that I wasn't. I felt that the schools I went to treated me differently because I was fostered. I remember wanting to go and tell people at the schools that I was at what was

happening. However, I had already been in trouble for things like smoking so that wasn't an option.

Contact with [REDACTED] / residents of Birch Avenue

56. I was told by GKQ [REDACTED] after leaving Birch Avenue that [REDACTED] didn't want to see me. I reacted to that by going on the defensive and saying that I didn't want to see him. When [REDACTED] joined me at Perth Grammar we bumped into each other. I don't know anything about why he was transferred to Perth Grammar. When we spoke he told me that he had been told by someone that I wanted nothing to do with him. I responded by saying that I had been told that he didn't want anything to do with me and that is why I had said that. A short time after [REDACTED] was transferred to Perth Grammar I was moved to Crieff High School. I would have been about fifteen when that happened.
57. Looking back, I think that GKQ [REDACTED] initially transferred me from Perth High School to Perth Grammar because she didn't want me to have any contact with any of the people from the home [REDACTED]. I think that she later transferred me from Perth Grammar to Crieff High School because [REDACTED] started there. As soon as he appeared she transferred me. I think that she got wind of [REDACTED] starting at the school and that is why I was transferred.
58. There was something that happened in around that time that might also be something that contributed to me being moved to Crieff High School. I reported to [REDACTED] that GKQ [REDACTED] had threatened me with a knife. I don't know why I said that because it wasn't true. There was a lot going on at that time. It could be that was reported back to GKQ [REDACTED] in some way through social workers and that was in the mix as to why I was moved schools.
59. By the time I was transferred to Crieff High School I had given up trying to report things to social services and the police. I think that might be why I didn't talk to social workers about [REDACTED] or what I thought the reasons were behind being moved by GKQ [REDACTED]

Leisure time

60. I played the accordion and was good at it. I picked that up not that long after I arrived at the farm. [REDACTED] by that time was already playing. GKQ [REDACTED] bought me my accordion. She encouraged me to take that up and practice. Other than that I would spend my time on the farm speaking to and looking after the animals.

Religious instruction

61. GKQ [REDACTED] was a Christian but there was nothing like prayers or saying Grace at home. We would go to church every Sunday. GKP [REDACTED] would drive us all there. I remember that we would all go to church on Christmas Eve.

Trips / holidays

62. I didn't get to go out on trips or go to the swimming baths or things like that. A lot of the time I would spend time on my own on the farm. I had no one to play with because the farm was so isolated. I would sometimes play my accordion at competitions in festivals. I enjoyed that and would win competitions every year. I sometimes used to play the accordion at pubs for the locals alongside other musicians. I remember going to Burns nights and barn dances. I would also go to The Young Farmers Club every week. GKQ [REDACTED] would drop me off and collect me. I don't remember exactly what we did but I remember going horse riding or doing public speaking. I remember one time getting heat stroke on one of the horse rides. There was drink but I don't remember buying one. It only lasted a couple of hours and but enjoyed it.
63. Sometimes I would go and stay with GKP-GKQ [REDACTED] daughter, [REDACTED]. She lived in Edinburgh and was a barrister or a judge or something like that. That didn't happen all that often and usually I was on my own. Those trips were fine. I don't know whether I just felt safer being with her. Looking back though, I do wonder whether [REDACTED] was aware of what her mother was doing. That confuses me. It's complicated because I was a child at the time.

Birthdays / Christmas

64. I can't remember whether my birthdays were celebrated. They probably were though and I don't remember. Christmas was alright on the farm. They had a big dinner and people came round. We were given presents but I can't remember everything I was given. They just got us things rather than asking us what we wanted. I remember the last present I received was a wax jacket.

Visits / Inspections

65. My family didn't visit me when I was with GKP-GKQ. There was never anyone who came into the farm to inspect the place. I had contact with my social worker, Irene Mann, but she only visited the farm on one occasion that I know of. That visit happened about two weeks after I first went to GKP-GKQ. During that visit I told Irene Mann that I no longer wanted to stay with GKP-GKQ. Not a single person came out to visit me at the farm after that visit took place.
66. I did see social workers later on but it was never at the farm. I remember in particular visiting social workers in Crieff. I think I was visiting them there because it wasn't very far away from the school I was at at that time. That didn't happen very often and I don't remember exactly where I met them.

Healthcare

67. I saw a doctor during my time with GKP-GKQ. Whenever I saw the doctor GKQ was there. She would be the one who the doctor spoke to rather than me. I remember seeing the doctor about wetting the bed. GKQ said to the doctor that I drank at a certain time. That was rubbish but that is what the doctor was told. I never got to have my say.
68. There was one occasion when I ended up in hospital. That happened following an incident when I accidentally kicked GKP. I was only playing. Me and him got on and it was an accident. That resulted in me spraining my foot. I had an x-ray.

That would have been at Pert Royal Infirmary. I don't remember ever seeing a dentist during my time with [GKP-GKQ]

Running away

69. I probably ran away about five or six times during my time with [GKP-GKQ]. I ran away both from the farm and from school. I went different places when I ran away. One time I ran away to where my father lived. I can't remember how I knew where he lived. On another occasion I ran to visit a girl who had been at Birch Avenue with me. I stayed with her for two or three days. After that time there was a knock at the door and [GKQ] was standing there. [GKQ] must have been told by someone that I was there. She then took me back to the farm. On the way back [GKQ] told me that she had sold my dog as a punishment. It was one of the dogs who she was breeding and was my favourite. I remember her name was Zola.

Work

70. During my time with [GKP-GKQ] I ended up getting jobs on two occasions. One of the jobs was voluntary. I worked in a retirement home for a woman I quite liked in the Perth area. She was really nice and I liked her. I felt safe there and I used to dream about her being my mother. That would have been when I was fourteen or fifteen. The next job I had involved moving down to Guilford. I got a job at a retirement home as a domestic. That would have been when I was sixteen or seventeen. Things happened in Guilford. I stole from one of the pensioners. After I was found out for that I had to return to [GKP-GKQ]. I remember that after returning to the farm I was punished by [GKQ]

Bed-wetting

71. I had a cold bath almost every day because I wet the bed. That went on for about five and a half years until I was about seventeen. [GKQ] made sure I had the baths. She was the one that ran the bath and made sure I got in. I was then given privacy when I was in the bath. After getting out of the bath I would have to wash my

sheets and nightwear. I would take them outside to a tub to wash them then hang them up. It didn't matter what the weather was like outside, I still had to do that. Fresh sheets would then be placed on my bed. That was the way that was dealt with by GKQ I can't remember whether she hit me for wetting the bed.

72. Part of how the bed-wetting was treated by GKQ involved not giving me water the evening before going to bed. I wasn't allowed to drink after 5:00 pm. I remember being so thirsty through the night that I would have to drink water in the morning from the hot water bottle that I had in my bed. Strangely, I remember the water tasting nice. That was probably because I was so thirsty.
73. and both had issues with bed-wetting too. I don't remember how that was dealt with GKQ

Abuse at

74. I suffered mental, emotional, sexual and physical abuse throughout my time with the GKQ-GKQ The abuse I received was just constant. It happened all the way through from when I arrived right up until I was seventeen and a half.
75. I was pretty much in a permanent state of fear during my time with GKQ-GKQ I was scared. I had no one for me and no one to go to. I was told that repeatedly by GKQ and believed that at that time. The only time when I wasn't scared was when other people were visiting the farm or I was at school. I remember walking up the road to the farm after school and thinking to myself "What is going to happen today?" I remember that the school holidays were a nightmare on the farm because I had to stay there. There was nowhere to run to to escape. I would have to spend all my time with sheep and the cows or walk the fields to avoid being in the house.

GKQ

76. GKQ was just a bitch. I believe she is still alive. She was in 2015. As far as I know she is no longer looking after children. She knew how to play things. It is confusing to people and confusing to me how GKQ was. There were some good things she did but there were also a lot of bad things. She would be nice one minute then all of a sudden things would come out of nowhere. Her behaviour was erratic.
77. The abuse started the very first day I arrived at the farm for good. I arrived at the farm with all of the stuff that I had from Birch Avenue. After arriving GKQ took everything I owned and placed it on the fire. She burnt absolutely everything I had in a fireplace within the house. That included my clothes and all the Christmas presents I had received in the past. I remember that one of the things that she burned was a doll's cot that I had. That was my favourite toy. She had to break that up to get it into the fireplace. She told me that she was burning everything because it was "a new beginning." I don't remember GKQ being there when that happened. He would have been out working on the farm. There was nothing I could do to stop GKQ doing what she was doing because I wasn't old enough. I wasn't of an age when I could stop her. I can't remember what happened on that first day after that happened. I won't have been happy though.
78. GKQ would belt me. It wasn't constant or every day but it happened a lot. It happened enough that I would always be waiting for the next time that it was going to happen. When she gave me the belt she would take me upstairs to her room, make me pull my trousers down from the waist, make me lie on the bed and hit me with a belt. She would carry on hitting me until I admitted to doing whatever it was she was accusing me of. I couldn't say how many times she would hit me but it was a lot. Sometimes she would also pull my hair and punch me in my head whilst she was doing that. Sometimes she would cut my hair to make me look stupid. It was all done to get a confession out of me. There were never any visible injuries because she was smart. I think that the times she would do these things were during times when I wasn't at school to avoid anyone seeing the injuries or what she had done. If

she wanted to punish me outside of the time I was at school she would do other things instead.

79. The main thing ^{GKQ} would belt me for would be when she thought I was taking things from the house. She would accuse me of taking things when I hadn't. That could be things like food out of the cupboard. It could be anything really. I remember being accused of taking things like condensed milk, orange and lemon decorating things, cakes and ice cream. She would say that I had done it. When I denied that I had she would take me upstairs and give me the belt. The first incident surrounded ^{GKQ} accusing me of stealing £1. That happened within the first two weeks of me being there. I was accused of that even though I hadn't touched it. When ^{GKQ} heard about that she took me upstairs and belted me.
80. I remember that there was one occasion when ^{GKQ} accused me of stealing £100 from a safe that ^{GKP-GKQ} had at the back of a cupboard. I hadn't gone anywhere near the safe. I don't know how she thought I had done that because she always had the key round her neck and kept the code to the safe to herself. I remember she said that she had cameras in the house and knew that I was stealing things. As a child you don't question these things. Looking back, I should have just asked her to show me the footage because not once did I ever steal anything from ^{GKP-GKQ}
81. I was fifteen when I was suspended from Crieff High School. The school called ^{GKQ} to collect me from the school itself. She was alone when she collected me from the school. I remember that when we were driving down the country roads away from the school ^{GKQ} was shouting at me whilst punching me and pulling my hair. She did all of that whilst she was driving. I remember the car swerving back and forth across the road as she did that. It was scary and I thought she was going to crash the car. Anything could have happened. When I got home ^{GKQ} made me undress in front of her and ^{GKQ} in the lounge. She made me do that to check whether I was carrying anything that I had stolen. She then made me re-dress slowly.

82. GKQ [REDACTED] knew that I was a smoker. She knew that before I moved to stay with GKP-GKQ [REDACTED] I can't see how she wouldn't have known that because I went to the bathroom to smoke over the two weekends I visited the farm before being permanently fostered. GKQ [REDACTED] didn't punish me on those occasions. That all changed after I was fostered permanently by GKP-GKQ [REDACTED]. Afterwards, if GKQ [REDACTED] discovered that I had been smoking, she would give me a glass of salt water and force me to drink it. That was the only time she used that punishment. That happened on more than one occasion. It could have happened maybe as many as five times. It was about a couple of inches of salt but it was in quite a tall tumbler. She told me that I would be dead before I was twenty one because I was a smoker.
83. There was an occasion when I was fourteen or fifteen when I was caught smoking during a visit to [REDACTED] in Edinburgh. I just knew that something would happen when I got back to the farm. When I got back to the farm GKQ [REDACTED] made me sit at the kitchen table and smoke forty or fifty unfiltered cigarettes one after the other. She put them up to my lips and nose and forced me to smoke them. She made sure no smoke came out of my nose and mouth. I had to keep on swallowing all the smoke. I knew that if I didn't continue she would have just beaten me. By the time I was finished I was on the floor. After doing that she took me up to [REDACTED] room and locked me in. There were bolts on the door and I stayed there overnight. I think she locked me in the room because she didn't want me to run away and wind up in hospital. She didn't want people to find out what she had done. The hospital would have discovered all that nicotine in my system had I managed to get there. GKQ [REDACTED] did the same thing with cigarettes the following morning. That time was in the porch with ten or twenty cigarettes. She threatened to get GKP [REDACTED] to hit me if I didn't smoke them all. I later found out that GKP [REDACTED] wasn't even on the farm because [REDACTED] told me he was at the market at the time GKQ [REDACTED] made me smoke the cigarettes in the porch. She was manipulative like that.
84. GKQ [REDACTED] once put me in a sheep dip as a punishment. I don't know when that happened but it was some time before I was seventeen and a half. I was naked when she did that. A sheep deep is a trough of water and chemicals used to clean sheep and prevent flies. When she put me in the dip it came up to my throat. She

then poured a bucket of the dip over my head. [GKP] wasn't there when she did that.

85. Another punishment she used was making me write lines. She would make me write "I must not" this or that. There were times when [GKQ] made me run around the farm with just wellies on as a punishment. I think she did that twice to me. [REDACTED] would have seen that happening when it happened. There was one occasion when [GKQ] made me stand outside my bedroom door with no clothes on after I had wet the bed. I had to stand there naked until [GKP] came out of his door. I was standing there trying to cover my private parts. She said that to me to make sure I remained standing there. She wanted me to think I was being checked up on by [GKP]. That led to me not leaving where she told me to stand. Looking back, I think that was sexual abuse. I didn't know that at the time.

86. I remember that after I returned back to the farm from Guilford when I was sixteen or seventeen [GKQ] put me into the box room that had been converted into a bedroom. I was locked into that room for a week by [GKQ]. I wasn't even allowed out to go to the toilet. She put a commode into the box room for me to use.

87. [REDACTED] would be treated the same way as I was by [GKQ]. She was also beaten with the belt by [GKQ]. [REDACTED] would have seen a lot of the things [GKQ] did to me and [REDACTED] on the farm. I never saw [GKQ] doing anything to [REDACTED]. Apparently, according to him, he was getting abused by [GKQ] before I arrived at the farm. I think that when I arrived I became [GKQ] main target. I didn't see [GKQ] abusing either [REDACTED] or the girl with blonde hair. I don't think [GKQ] would have touched them because they were there under a different arrangement to [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and me. I think she knew that, unlike us, they would be returned to their parents so she couldn't do anything to them

[GKP]

88. [GKP] was alright. I liked him. I didn't hate him like I hated [GKQ]. It was clear that [GKQ] was the one who wore the trousers in the relationship.

to report things to social workers. I learnt that no matter who I was going to speak to they weren't going to listen.

93. There was a time when I ran away and ended up going to see my father, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I reported to him what was happening at [REDACTED] All he did was call up social services and tell them that I was there. I don't know what he said to social services.
94. I don't know exactly when but sometime after I attempted to report what was happening to a social worker in Crieff I spoke to the police in Perth. I might have been about fifteen or sixteen years old but I am not sure. By that time I would have been known as [REDACTED] I don't remember the names of the police officers I spoke to. I told them what was going on with [REDACTED] My impression was that when I reported what was happening to me they didn't care because I was a kid. I was just another bad kid in the care system. That was wrong but that was the way it was handled. The police then phoned up [REDACTED] to pick me up.
95. When [REDACTED] arrived she was all 'nicey nicey' in front of the police. She and [REDACTED] had parked their car outside the police station. I got into the back of their car and [REDACTED] got into the passenger seat beside [REDACTED] in the front. [REDACTED] then turned herself around with her knees against the back of her seat and started punching me and pulling my hair. She did this whilst we were still parked outside of the police station and whilst we were driving away. When she started we were only about one hundred yards away from the police station. [REDACTED] would have been aware of what was going on because he was in the same car.
96. Looking back on my various attempts to report [REDACTED] whilst I was staying on the farm, I eventually gave up. There was no point trying to report things because it would always come down to my word against hers.

Leaving [REDACTED]

97. By the time I was seventeen and a half I had just had enough. In November 1990 I started a fire to some hay bales in a barn on the farm. I did that deliberately. The fire brigade came and you name it what else. They were all told by GKQ [REDACTED] that it was an accident. I don't mind saying that in my statement because I later admitted to the police what I had done when I spoke to them in 2004. They will have all of that on record. Apparently £60,000 of damage was ultimately done.
98. After setting the fire I ran away. I just didn't know what would happen after I did what I had done. [REDACTED] and her husband eventually found me at a neighbouring farm called [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and her husband took me back to [REDACTED]. After I came back I thought that something was going to happen but it didn't. All that happened was that the abuse stopped. I don't know whether that was because of what I did and GKQ [REDACTED] started to feel scared. I can't really remember what the remaining months were like with GKP-GKQ [REDACTED]. All I remember is that there was no abuse. By this time I wasn't in school. I would just spend my time hanging around with the animals.
99. GKQ [REDACTED] then found me a job as an au pair in Wimbledon through a magazine called The Lady. I wasn't asked whether I wanted to do that job. GKQ [REDACTED] just applied for it on my behalf. I went down to London for the interview and was then offered the job. I accepted the job because I saw it as a way to get out. I ultimately left GKP-GKQ [REDACTED] sometime after I turned eighteen in 1991.

Life after leaving care

100. I wasn't long in my role as an au pair in Wimbledon. I'd say that I only had that job for a period of weeks. I was still a smoker and the mother of the family used to leave cigarettes on her fireplace. I would take them from time to time. When the woman found out she sent me packing. I think the mother set the situation up with the cigarettes so that she had an excuse to get rid of me. She told me that she had set

up the situation with ^{GKQ} so that she could get rid of me. It was all a trap and I fell for it. The father of the family then took me to a bus station at Victoria. When he dropped me off I put all my stuff with the luggage on the bus and got on. I don't know why but I then just got off the bus. I left all my things on the bus and walked away. I just kept on walking. I ended up walking back to the Wimbledon area. I don't know why I walked back there. I was then homeless for about a year. I had no one to speak to and was on my own. During the course of that year I tried to kill myself but wasn't successful. I didn't go to hospital and just woke up.

101. Over time I met a few people and they helped me out. I don't know how that happened. They sort of supported me whilst I was homeless. I had a one night stand and fell pregnant. I decided that I wanted to keep the baby. For whatever reason I then decided to go back up to ^{GKP-GKQ}. By that time I would have been nineteen. One of the people who was helping me out gave me the money for the ticket. I don't know why I chose to go back up to ^{GKP-GKQ}. I think I had nowhere to go and I needed somewhere to stay. After arriving at the farm ^{GKQ} made me sleep on the floor in one of the lounges. I didn't reveal that I was pregnant until the second day I was there. When I told ^{GKQ} that she told me that I needed to go. She said that if I didn't leave then social workers would come and take away my baby. At that time I believed her when she said that.

102. I then came back down to London. I just kind of hung around being homeless whilst I was pregnant. I managed to then get some support via a cab firm I used to hang around. A man there managed to give me a room to stay in in his house with his wife. That eventually fell through because of some issue with the council. I then got put in a bed and breakfast in Thornton Heath in South London. That is where I stayed until I went into labour. After I gave birth a social worker got involved. They arranged for me to go to a mother and baby unit through Christian Family Concern. The place I went to was a place on Birdhurst Avenue in Croydon. I remember that when I was there I was watched constantly. I stayed there for six months before being put into a halfway house for about a year afterwards.

103. I met my second child's father, [REDACTED] during the time I was in the halfway house. I eventually moved in with him in Croydon. [REDACTED] was from Ghana and married me so that he could stay in the country. I stayed with him for two years. I then met [REDACTED] who is the father of my fourth child. Sadly I had a third child pass away because of a virus. I am still with [REDACTED] We have been together ever since we met. I stayed in Croydon until 2016 when I moved to Rye in East Sussex.
104. I have been a mother throughout my time after leaving care. The only job I have had was a job with McDonalds. That didn't end well. I only lasted a couple of months. I found the staff bossy, had an argument and left.

Contact with [REDACTED] after 1992

105. I didn't have any contact with [REDACTED] again until 2004. I was up in Perth visiting people with my husband. [REDACTED] somehow heard we were there and tried to speak to me at the hotel we were staying at. I refused to speak to her. Somehow after that [REDACTED] managed to get my address. I think she might have got that from a wedding invite I had sent to her in the past but I am not sure.
106. [REDACTED] sent me a letter sometime around 2005. By that time I heard that they had sold the farm and were living in [REDACTED] I still have a copy of that letter and would be happy to share it with the Inquiry. The letter is strange to me. Reading it then, and now, it sounded like a threat. She talks a lot about the fire and it does make me think that she was scared that I may report her further for the things she did when I was fostered by her. I think that she mentions the fire so much because she wanted me to know that if I reported things she would in turn report me for the fire to either my husband or the authorities. My family and the police already knew about the fire so that part of her threat was empty. I also interpret her comments surrounding potentially destroying photos of me as a threat too. I wasn't bothered about the photos of me at [REDACTED] wedding but I had mentioned to her in the past that I wanted photos so that I had something about my past. I think that was all a power thing with her. She was still trying to control and manipulate me. I think she also was trying to make me know that she knew where I lived.

Impact

107. I wouldn't have come down to London, then in turn become homeless, if I hadn't been in care. I had no preparation for life when I was sent down there and had no support.
108. I find relationships difficult because I don't trust people. I probably would have a better way of communicating with people if I hadn't been in care. I think if I had had parents then I might have the tools to form relationships better. I don't get on with my husband's family. Part of that surrounded incidents that happened near to a time when my first child was taken into care and my second child was taken by [REDACTED]
109. [REDACTED]
110. I have difficulties dealing with authority and those in authority. I don't trust any of them. I haven't got time for the police. I can't stand them. I had social workers for a long time after leaving care. I just couldn't trust them because of my experiences with social workers when I was in care. The way social workers said certain things to me just pissed me off. There were times when I would speak during case conferences and say that I was abused in care. The social workers would just respond by saying that it was all 'alleged.' They just wouldn't listen to me. What I was telling them wasn't 'alleged' it was all true. All that would aggravate me and things just wouldn't work after that. I remember having to just try to keep my cool when I was around them to avoid them looking at me badly. I did that even though I knew that if I had spoken up it would be just because I was defending myself. I knew

that social workers would not have looked at it like that and think that I was being violent if I spoke up.

111. I thought before my kids were born that I wanted to do a better job than those who were supposed to be caring for me as a child. I didn't want my children to go through what I went through. I didn't want to treat my children the way I was treated when in care. I couldn't act that way because I knew it was wrong. If anyone touched my kids then there was trouble. In the end my time in care has affected the way that I have been a parent. I have basically messed up at doing that. I haven't done well. I tried to do what I wanted to do as a parent but I couldn't. My oldest child ended up going into care. She was quite hard work and I couldn't understand why she was the way she was. In some ways I was starting to turn into what my foster mother was like. I just couldn't deal with that. I have seen some of the things she has experienced in care and it reminds me of my experiences. I think that has also led to me having a difficult relationship with her. She knows that I grew up in care but can't see how that has affected the way that I am now. My second child was passed between her father and me. That went on for years. I have a better relationship with my youngest child because I am still with her father and she has a relationship with his family.
112. I don't have any qualifications. I failed at school when I was in care. I think my time with GKP-GKQ effected how I did. I did used to study but when the exams came I couldn't do them. It was probably because I wasn't able to concentrate because of all the stuff that was going on in my head.
113. The things I experienced in care has affected my mental health. I suffer from depression and anxiety. I have had suicidal thoughts. That was particularly so after [REDACTED] passed away in 2018 and my rescue dog, Peanut, passed away in 2020. Before [REDACTED] died it was me and him against the world but now it is just me. I still have thoughts of wanting to go. If I was diagnosed with something like cancer I wouldn't take chemotherapy. For me it would be my time and that would be it.

Treatment and support

114. I have seen doctors because of my mental health. I am currently on medication for depression and anxiety. I saw counsellors in Croydon and Hastings after saying that I felt I wanted to commit suicide. When I received counselling one of my counsellors asked me to write down what I had experienced in the past. When I wrote down my thoughts it covered all my time in care and my adult life since leaving. It came out all jumbled and all over the place.
115. I remember that one of the things I have discussed with counsellors was my issues with wetting the bed when I was in care. I have been told that that was probably because of psychological reasons and nothing to do with when I was drinking before going to bed. I am currently waiting for further counselling.
116. The only other treatment I have is smoking marijuana. I self-prescribe that because without it I couldn't get through the day and avoid the thoughts I have about my past. I don't want to hide that. I have never done any harder drugs and it's one of the few things I have to cope.

Reporting of abuse after leaving care

117. I spoke to a solicitor whilst I was in England about my leaving care grant. That might have been when I was about twenty two years old in about 1995 or 1996. I had discovered that those leaving care were given money to set themselves up. The solicitor explored whether that was something I could get because I hadn't ever received that. Apparently social workers in Scotland told my solicitor that I had come down to London on my own accord. The solicitor advised me that I wouldn't be eligible for a grant because I volunteered to come down to London. That wasn't quite true. I was manipulated into taking the job by ^{GKQ} [REDACTED] and felt I had to take it to get away.

118. I met with Izzy Bruce in Perth in 2004. She was a staff member at Birch Avenue when I was there who had become a social worker in later life. I met her in the Station Hotel opposite the station. I sat down with her and told her what had happened at [GKP-GKQ]. Her exact words to me after I told her what had happened were "you should have come back to the home." I told her that if I had known that at the time then I would have done that. I wouldn't have known that at the time I was at [GKP-GKQ] because [GKQ] had me totally away from everybody.
119. Another thing I talked about was returning to [GKQ] pregnant when I was nineteen. Izzy Bruce told me that had social services become involved at that time then they wouldn't have taken my baby away. [Secondary Institutions - to be published later]
[Secondary Institutions - to be published later]
[Secondary Institution]
120. After speaking to Izzy Bruce she referred me to a police officer she knew at Perth police station. That led me to speaking to the police in 2004 at Perth police station. The police officer's name was Lynn McIver. Lynn McIver listened to me and took a full statement from me surrounding what happened at [GKP-GKQ]. The police then undertook an investigation. They managed to make contact with [REDACTED] who by that time was living in Ireland. They attempted to take a statement from her but unfortunately she didn't want to proceed with things. The police then contacted me to say that they couldn't do anything further.
121. I initially didn't want my children to know anything about my time in care. I didn't even want them to know what my birth name was. However, my children are aware of what happened to me during my time in care. My oldest child became aware of my time in care and my real name through social workers she met. They had no right to do that. My middle child has read what I noted down after seeing my counsellor and was in tears when she was reading it. I cried too when I saw her react like that. Before then she knew some of what I experienced in care but not all of it. I think she now understands that I didn't have the tools to be a parent because of my experiences in care. I haven't gone through everything with my youngest. She knows a little but I have managed mostly to keep her away from it.

Records

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

122.

Letter from ^{GKQ} [REDACTED] sometime after 2005

123. I still have a copy of the letter that ^{GKQ} [REDACTED] sent to me and would be happy to share that with the Inquiry were I to be asked.

Lessons to be Learned / Hopes for the Inquiry

124. Looking back on it all, I wonder whether I should have just stayed with my own parents given what happened later on during my time in care. What was the point in taking me away if I just was taken from bad to worse? Foster parents need to act like they are parents. There is a reason why children are taken away from their own parents. Foster parents, and social workers, need to make sure that children who are placed in foster care are safe. A child in foster care should feel secure and not feel frightened and threatened.
125. If a child in care comes to a social worker and reports things that are happening then they have to take notice. I trusted that through the government and the law things would be done when I reported them but they weren't. I hear from time to time of people who abuse children who are like ^{GKQ} [REDACTED] I just think to myself when people try to report them "you've got no chance mate." I don't believe that ^{GKQ} [REDACTED] ^{GKQ} [REDACTED] should have got away with what she was doing but she has. I have been left as

the one who is suffering. She doesn't suffer a thing. I don't know whether speaking to the Inquiry will lead to something happening but I would love to see ^{GKQ} [REDACTED] in jail.

126. 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... [REDACTED]

Dated... 10.2.22