

**Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

LYG [REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name is LYG [REDACTED]. My maiden name is LYG [REDACTED]. I was known as LYG [REDACTED] after I went into foster care in 1985. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1977. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

**Life before going into care**

2. I was born in Ayr and lived there with my family before I was taken into care. I have one brother, [REDACTED] and two sisters, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] is the eldest. He is about four years older than me, [REDACTED] is two years older and [REDACTED] is two years younger than me. I have no memories of my mum, [REDACTED] living in the family home. I only remember my dad, [REDACTED].
3. I only have a few random memories of living at home. It's always the traumatic things you remember. Every day when I came home from school, my clothes were sat on the bed and my pants were always soaking wet. My dad had a girlfriend who was much younger than him, and I remember getting up one morning and she had [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] I also have a memory of lying in my bed one night and seeing somebody pass by my bedroom window. That's as much as I can remember about being in the family home.
4. I don't have any memory of social work being involved with my family, but I have obtained my records and they say that social workers were at the house every day, about twenty times a day. My mum had met a new man and my dad couldn't cope. I

think the social worker had done everything she could to try and help us and then she had no option but to remove us. It was probably in our best interests because our dad had just given up. According to the records, we were eventually removed from the family home about one o'clock in the morning.

5. I don't remember being taken into care, but I do remember that we were alone in the house for three or four days, surviving on cold water, a used teabag and sugar, which we put in a glass cup and scooped out with a spoon. I don't know where my dad was at the time. When we were taken into care, we were manky and had head lice. I know that I had only just started primary school. When your experiences have been so traumatic, you remember significant events but not the precise timelines. So I don't know the dates or exactly how old I was when I went into the different care placements.

#### **Burnside Children's Home, Irvine (1<sup>st</sup> time)**

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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9. 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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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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#### **Leaving Burnside Children's Home**

28. A foster placement was found for me and [REDACTED] and we were told that they'd got us a family. I think it would have been the unit staff who spoke to us about it. The original plan was that the foster carers would adopt us.

29. I remember the foster parents came to visit us in the unit and then they came again with their two sons. I think we had a couple of overnights with them as well. I just wanted somebody to love me at that time, so I was excited and would have accepted anybody, and I accepted that social work wanted the best life for me and this was supposed to be it.
30. I think they had a wee party in the unit for us when we were leaving because we had been there for such a long time. I wasn't sad to leave. We were so excited that there were people who wanted us, so it was a positive thing.
31. We left Burnside on [REDACTED] 1985, [REDACTED] before my eighth birthday. A key worker, Maureen, took us to the foster carers' house. We had our typical 'in-care suitcase', which is a black bin bag. The journey from Irvine to Beith takes about a half hour, but we got lost and it seemed like a lifetime that night.

**Foster care –** [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Beith

32. I remember feeling so welcomed and I felt that we fitted in. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] sons, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] lived in the family home, and [REDACTED] had another son, [REDACTED] who lived across the road with [REDACTED] mum. I think [REDACTED] was about seventeen, [REDACTED] was fourteen or fifteen and [REDACTED] was about thirteen.
33. I think [REDACTED] must be in her seventies now. She didn't work. [REDACTED] worked a lot of different shifts as a baggage-handler at the airport.
34. Their house was a typical semi-detached house. The sitting room was to the left as you went in, the kitchen was straight ahead, the bathroom was downstairs and there were three bedrooms upstairs.
35. I was known by the surname [REDACTED] as soon as I went into foster care. My name wasn't formally changed, but I was registered at the school and the doctor's under that surname. I started school after the Christmas holidays and was immediately

known as LYG [REDACTED] PBG-SPO [REDACTED] My first passport was under that name and I had to get a letter from social work explaining the circumstances so that I could change it later. I have looked through my records to see whose decision it was to change my name, but there's no information.

36. We called PBG [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] "mum" and "dad". I think we did that because it was basically sold to us by social work and the unit staff that we were going to live with this family and they were going to be our new mum and dad. PBG [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] wanted us to call them that as well. I was fine with it. I was just so excited to have a family and to belong to someone.

#### **Routine in foster care – PBG-SPO [REDACTED]**

##### *Mornings and bedtime*

37. I slept in a bedroom with [REDACTED] MON [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] shared a room and the foster parents were in the other room. Our room wasn't really done up for girls. Nothing had been done to make it homely. It was just a basic room and we weren't allowed to put posters up or do anything to make it our own.
38. Life in the foster home was very regimental. PBG [REDACTED] woke us up about eight o'clock. We'd have breakfast, get ready for school, go to school, come back, do homework, have dinner at the same time every day, and then go out to play before bed.
39. We didn't get tucked in at night. It was just a case of going up to bed at night on our own. We were never allowed to read a book in bed. [REDACTED] and I went to bed as soon as we came in from playing outside, and [REDACTED] and MON [REDACTED] stayed up for hours.

##### *Food/mealtimes*

40. We sat at the dining table in the kitchen for meals. We got cereal for breakfast. It was disgusting and we never got a choice. PBG [REDACTED] put it out and that was it, take it or



leave it. I can't even look at cereal now. We weren't allowed a drink. She'd tell us there was no time for a drink and I think this was to stop us wetting the bed and control our fluid intake. If you didn't eat the cereal, it would be put down to you again for lunch or dinner.

41. We would go home for lunch some days at primary school. It was a ten-minute run to get home. We'd get a sandwich for lunch. In secondary school, lunch was a chopped pork sandwich and either diluting juice or milk in a plastic, green wine bottle, the same kind you would get on a flight. By the time it came to lunchtime the milk was warm and there was no way I would drink it. I used to just pour it out. We had no money to buy any other drinks or anything else. My friends at school were going to the canteen or the local shop for a pizza. We were never allowed snacks or fizzy juice. We did get treats, but only when PBG decided we could. We were treated totally different from [REDACTED] and MON [REDACTED]. They could take what they wanted, when they wanted. And they got Chinese take-aways, but we were never allowed anything like that.
42. [REDACTED] and I sat in the kitchen for our evening meal, and they all ate theirs in the living room. The boys got whatever they liked. I can't fault PBG in terms of nutrition, though. She did give us wholesome meals.
43. If you didn't like the food, you just had to eat it. PBG bought a whole cow's tongue one time and boiled it and peeled it in front of us. This was quite traumatic to watch. I was about ten at the time. She put it down to us for lunch and I couldn't eat it. I was gagging. I put it in the bin when she wasn't looking. She found it in the bin and then served it up to me again for breakfast, lunch and dinner. I was supposed to be going to Inverary with a wee friend from school and I wasn't allowed to go as a punishment for putting it in the bin.

*Relationship with foster parents*

44. There was never any affection from **PBG**. We were never told that we were loved, we were never hugged, and if we hurt ourselves, we had to just get up and get on with it. I was absolutely petrified of her. Her tone, her look, her posture, everything about her was threatening. She constantly shouted. She never spoke, it was just pure aggression from her all the time.
45. I cannot say anything bad about **PBG**. He was probably the warmest person in the house. I think he was controlled by **PBG**. I don't think he was aware of the abuse. He worked all sorts of shifts and wasn't really around that much. He never had a say, so he was never involved in any decisions. I feel his life would have been hell if he had disagreed. They would go lengthy periods of time not speaking, not a single word, and the atmosphere was black. I was always anxious, worried and scared.

*School*

46. I moved school again and went to Beith Primary School. I got on fine at school. I went to Garnock Academy when I moved on to secondary school. I liked English, maths, biology and history. I got good reports from school. I didn't get any encouragement from the foster carers to do well at school. It was my own choice to sit and do my homework at night. I was never allowed to do my homework in my room. I could only do it at the dining table, and I couldn't ask for help because **PBG** would make me feel like an absolute idiot.

*Clothes*

47. We had to wear **PBG** and **MON**'s hand-me-down clothes. We were dressed in boys' clothes and we got sent to a barber for a £2 haircut. Other kids used to laugh at us. When I read my files, I saw that **PBG** got money for absolutely everything for us, clothes, bedding, furniture, and we didn't even get pocket money. These people were supposed to be adopting us, but I think she was getting too much money fostering us, and that's why the adoption didn't go ahead.

*Hygiene*

48. We got a bath every second or third night. PBG sometimes put MON in the bath with me, and in with . The boys wore their swimming trunks and we were naked. We never had any privacy in the bathroom. Even as a teenager, we could close the door over, but we were never allowed to lock it. The bathroom door was all glass and see-through, with just a net curtain which was gathered in the middle. This meant that when the light was on, you could see right into the bathroom. Anyone on the stairs, in the living room, coming out of the kitchen or at the front door could clearly see into the bathroom.
49. I came home from school one day when I was eleven and told PBG that I was bleeding down below. She told me not to be so "fucking disgusting" and to go and clean myself up. I didn't have a clue what I was doing. I spoke to , but she didn't really know either. After that, there was a supply of sanitary products, but you always felt embarrassed about using them. It was as if you weren't really allowed to use them. I didn't know how to dispose of the used towels, so I hid them in my bedroom drawers.

*Chores*

50. PBG got me and up every Saturday morning at about eight o'clock and we had to scrub the kitchen and bathroom from top to bottom and clean the living room. I understand the need for kids to do chores, but this was on a totally different level. and MON were allowed to stay in bed and they didn't have to do anything.

*Healthcare*

51. We went to the doctor for a yearly check and got our wee book filled in. I wasn't really an unwell child, so I didn't need to see a doctor very often. I went for things like a sore throat and sore ear. I remember I got an ear infection one time and needed antibiotics. PBG came and got me from school, and then I was sent up to my bed



when I got home. I was left in my room on my own with no communication from anybody. I think I got shouted down for some soup, but that was it. I wasn't looked after the way you would expect a sick child to be. It felt more like I had done something bad and was being disciplined.

52. We saw a dentist every six months, but we weren't encouraged at home to brush our teeth. PBG had false teeth so she didn't care. She didn't even wear her false teeth.

*Holidays/trips*

53. We went to family holidays every year to places like London and Scarborough. I went abroad with them when I was older and had my own daughter.
54. If it was a nice day, we'd go on trips to places like Largs, but we didn't have any hobbies. We didn't get taken out to the cinema or the swimming baths.

*Leisure time*

55. I was usually always outside playing. I didn't really have toys to play with inside, but I had bikes and scooters, all the stuff for playing outside. PBG didn't really want us in her house, so any time we could be out, we'd be out. If I had to be indoors because it was wet outside, I would sometimes sit in my room and write out a book just to pass the time and practice my handwriting.
56. All the after school activities we had gone to within the unit had stopped. My impression of this was that her boys didn't do any of those things, so we weren't allowed luxuries. Also, there would have been financial implications.
57. I had good friends, but I was only allowed to play with them in the street. I wasn't allowed to go to their houses and no-one was ever allowed in ours. No-one was allowed to phone us either. The phone would go all day for [REDACTED] and MON [REDACTED] and we were never allowed to answer it. In hindsight, I think this was all about PBG totally controlling everything because she was worried that we would open up to people.

58. I didn't have a TV in my room and I wasn't allowed to watch it in the living room. MON [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] could watch whatever they wanted.

*Religion*

59. [REDACTED] was Catholic, but he didn't practice. We sometimes went to Sunday school. It wasn't a regular thing. It was just something we did when PBG [REDACTED] wanted rid of us.

*Birthdays and Christmas*

60. I've got to say that PBG [REDACTED] did keep my birthday [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] She always got a birthday cake made for me as well.
61. She over-compensated at Christmas and bought us loads of presents. We all had our own seats where our presents were put out for us on Christmas morning. We got lots, but the boys always got more. One year we opened loads of wee presents and then PBG [REDACTED] asked me and [REDACTED] to go into the kitchen to get something for her, and there were bikes in there for both of us. We got surprise presents every Christmas.

*Family*

62. I never saw or spoke to my dad. I got a letter once from my sister [REDACTED] saying that she wanted to see us, but we were never taken to meet her. Contact with [REDACTED] wasn't really encouraged by social workers either.
63. After [REDACTED] left PBG-SPO [REDACTED] PBG [REDACTED] would sneakily have her visit when I wasn't in the house. She never came when I was there, so I never saw her.

64. I got in contact with my paternal gran about twelve years ago and she said that she wrote all the time and sent birthday and Christmas cards, but we never got anything from her.

*Relationship with foster carers' extended family*

65. PBG mum was my nana. She was a really loving wee woman. I used to do her shopping for her and go to the library for her on a Friday night.
66. PBG son moved in with his nana when he was about fifteen or sixteen. I'd see him at my nana's but he was a lot older and worked away a lot. I don't know what happened, but he hated his mum at that time. I was very close to in later life. I looked upon him as my brother. He knew exactly what his mum was like. He totally accepted that I was telling the truth when I disclosed the abuse years later. He passed away ten years ago. He was my kids' uncle. My oldest daughter adored her Uncle
67. The foster parents weren't close to their siblings, but we always knew that we had aunts and uncles and we would go to family occasions like weddings and that sort of thing. We were accepted, but we weren't close.

*Running away*

68. I ran away shortly before I left the foster placement. It was a Thursday night and I kidded on that I was going to the library for my nana a night early. I had a wee, yellow backpack. My plan was to sleep in a wee bit under the library. I changed my mind because it was too cold. One of PBG brothers and his wife, and had adopted two boys, and I went to their house in Beith and said that I couldn't go back home. I think that's all I said, that I just couldn't go back there.
69. phoned social work standby. There is a written referral in my records relating to this. It mentions something along the lines of me getting into trouble for something silly and says that phoned them and told them that I didn't want to go back

to [PBG] Whoever answered the phone asked him questions, and he told them that he was aware of emotional and physical abuse, but he wasn't sure if there was sexual abuse. I hadn't told him any of this. He had probably witnessed it. According to the written referral, the standby worker spoke to me and basically said that I was being pathetic and that I had to go back. I think I just walked back to [PBG] after that. I don't remember having the conversation with the standby worker, but I do remember making the plan to sleep at the library and then changing my mind and going to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] house instead.

#### *Other foster children*

70. [PBG] used to foster babies on a short-term basis. The oldest was about two, and she had a couple from birth. I remember a wee girl called [REDACTED] who was with us until she was about three. [PBG] tried to adopt her, but they wouldn't let her because of her age. That really upset us all because that wee girl was like my wee sister. She had lived with us from when she was only three days old. It felt to me like she had died. There was no consideration given as to how I might feel about her leaving. Nobody ever asked how I felt about it. It was heart-breaking and traumatic.
71. She also fostered a wee boy called [REDACTED]. She had him from about the age of one. I was there when he arrived. [PBG] went on to adopt him, but I had left by then. I think [PBG] behaved worse towards me and [REDACTED] because she was angry at herself and her anger was shown towards us, rather than any of the boys, because we were female. She later adopted another wee girl called [REDACTED] who is only a year younger than my daughter.

#### *Visits/reviews*

72. The contact with social work was mainly through phone calls to [PBG]. They'd phone her and she would say everything was fine. I went through my records and did a chronological timeline which showed that eighteen months passed with no actual contact with us in person, and only three phone calls to [PBG] from social work. On some occasions, social work would come to the house and we were put outside or



put out of the room. Again this shows that only the foster carers really mattered and we weren't worth listening to.

73. The social workers changed frequently. I remember being taken out by them a couple of times, but PBG very much dictated what was said. It was drummed into us that we were not to say anything outside of the house. She was so controlling. We were terrified to say anything as we knew we would end up back in a children's home. At that time, I just wanted to be in a family and have somebody to love me. We didn't know the social workers anyway, and when we did see them they took us to places like Nardini's for ice cream. How appropriate is it to talk about abuse in a busy café?
74. I still went to children's panels once a year. Again, it was just a case of three people sitting across a table, asking your name and address and then making the decision to keep the supervision order in place for another year.

**Abuse in foster care – PBG-SPO**

75. My experience in this foster care placement is the worst I had in my whole time in care. I got battered by PBG for little things like coming home from school with dirty socks. It wouldn't just be one slap, she'd slap you repeatedly on the body and head. I was terrified to even breathe. You'd be left with bruises quite often, but you would hide them. There was never any major injury. I can see now as an adult that PBG was very aware of what she was doing.
76. I ran away and hid behind a tree round the corner from the house one time, and PBG beat me with a Boys' Brigade belt when I came back. I don't remember why I ran away. I remember the buckle skelping me on the back. I had marks on my back, but I never showed them to anybody.
77. I had problems with bed-wetting. PBG would make me change my sheets when I got up in the morning and she'd laugh at me and ridicule me. She would be really



nasty and make me feel horrible. The emotional abuse was unreal. She'd say I was "boggin'" and disgusting and that I should have got up to go to the toilet. We were not actually allowed to get out of bed until she said we could. I was terrified to get out of bed. I was actually violently sick one time in my bed, and I had to stay there for hours until she came. I wouldn't even have dared to alert her to the fact that I had been sick; the risk of being battered was too huge.

78. When I was about ten, PBG put a terry towelling nappy on me, because I had wet the bed, and sent me to Sunday school in it. I remember I had a wee skirt on and I had to try and hide it from the other children.
79. got battered more than me because she used to steal. I would laugh because I was glad it wasn't me. It was terrifying to see this, but I was also relieved it wasn't me. PBG didn't hit or MON. They were often present when we were being beaten.
80. It's in my files that disclosed at school that PBG battered her. If I remember correctly, had gone to school and said that PBG had walked in when the son, was trying to put his hand up school skirt, and got battered for it. PBG said was a compulsive liar, but I think PBG eventually admitted that she assaulted. was then removed from their care and I was left. I think I was about ten or eleven. I just accepted it at the time. Everybody else had walked out my life, so that was the norm for me.
81. I was sexually abused by MON and then also by the son, after left. I remember the first time it happened. I don't know the precise date, but I know where this can be found. PBG used to keep a wee, blue book in a drawer where she noted the details of the babies she fostered. I told the police about it later. The first time it happened was the same day the foster parents went to Largs to pick up a baby called whose dad had been stabbed. came over that day with my nana to watch us. and I were in our room. I was on the top bunk and she was on the bottom. MON came up onto the top bunk with me, and went to the bottom with

██████. I remember I had a purple teddy and a pink toy dog on my bed. ██████ and I were sexually abused at the exact same time that day.

82. I don't ever recall it happening again to ██████ and me at the same time. ██████ abused ██████ and MON ██████ abused me, until ██████ left and then both of them abused me. ██████ and I never discussed it, but we both knew it was happening to each other.
83. I am not going to go into full details because I don't think the Inquiry needs that. The abuse started with them putting their hands up my nightie and getting me to suck them, and then when I got older it was full sex. I remember sitting in the bath when I was about eleven and I thought I was pregnant because I had this wee pot belly. I was obviously aware of pregnancy at that time.
84. I was sexually abused on holiday as well. I remember we went to London to visit the foster father's relative, and we went out with ██████ and MON ██████ one day and ended up walking around an industrial estate. It was quite isolated and MON ██████ took me to one bit and ██████ went off with ██████. It was a roasting hot day and I know exactly what I was wearing. I had on a blue and white bikini and the wee straps kept coming loose. I was about nine at the time. It happened another time in Scarborough when I was around ten. MON ██████ was constantly touching me inappropriately when we were in the swimming pool.
85. I remember another time I was abused by MON ██████ on the stairs in the house. PBG ██████ and ██████ were at a wedding during the day and us kids were to go to the reception at night. PBG ██████ best friend was popping in and out of the house and helping us to get ready. As I said, you don't remember these events in a way where you can say on 'such and such a date, this precise thing happened'. I know it was a Friday. I know whose wedding it was. I remember what I was wearing, and I remember the colour of the curtains and the carpets.

86. I would say the sexual abuse happened at least twice a week. It happened on the upstairs landing, on the stairs, in the bath, when PBG put MON into the bath with me, and in my room when I couldn't get out to play because it was wet outside.
87. As far as I'm concerned, there is no way in this world that PBG didn't hear what was going on. She wasn't in the house the first time it happened, but she was downstairs at other times when it was happening on the landing, the stairs or in my bedroom. You could hear every single creak in the living room below. She had three older brothers and I believe that she was abused herself and therefore thought it was acceptable. When I first met with the Inquiry team, I said, "I didn't have a lot of anger towards her because I understood the reason why she thought that. I don't accept it and never will, but if that's what happened to her, it's probably all she's ever known". However, on reviewing my statement, my views have changed. I am angry now and I believe that PBG needs to be held responsible for her actions and her lack of actions to protect me as a child. Regardless of what may or may not have happened to her in her childhood that doesn't make her behaviour acceptable. I didn't become a perpetrator of abuse despite what I suffered. If she genuinely cared for young people, no-one would have even suffered verbal abuse, never mind sexual abuse in her care.

#### Leaving foster care – PBG-SPO

88. I went to school and phoned social work from a public phone box the day after I ran away to PBG brother's house. I spoke to my social worker, Bob Jess, and said that I wasn't going back. I didn't tell him why. I was around thirteen at the time.
89. I think Bob picked me up at the school and we went to the house to get my things, and then I was taken to Dalrymple Place. PBG was the only one in the house. She showed no emotion. I was quite upset, and I was saying that I had maybe made the wrong decision, even although I knew in my heart it was the right decision. Despite what had happened, they were the only family I ever knew so I was upset at leaving.

I still kept in contact after I left and I used to go and stay with them at the weekend.  
As far as I was concerned, they were very much still my family

**Reporting of abuse in foster care – PBG-SPO**

90. I remember sitting outside the headmaster's room at school and then being called in and asked about the incident when PBG battered [REDACTED]. The police and social workers were there. I hadn't witnessed it, so I didn't know what they were talking about and had nothing to say. Nobody asked me how things were at home generally. To be honest, I probably wouldn't have disclosed the abuse anyway because I just accepted it. That's what I put up with to be in a family, rather than be just another number in a children's unit.
91. PBG [REDACTED] accepted that she physically assaulted [REDACTED] but nothing was done regarding [REDACTED] because I think [REDACTED] was just dismissed as a compulsive liar.

**Dalrymple Place Children's Unit, Irvine (1<sup>st</sup> time)**

92. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

93.



94. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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102.	Secondary Institutions - to be published later
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*Visits/reviews*

106. I had no contact with my own family, but I still saw the PBG-SPO. I would go there for overnight stays. I was never allowed back in my bedroom after I left. I slept in the living room on a sofa-bed behind the couch. It was as if I was never to be made comfortable in that family environment again. They got an allowance for every overnight I spent there. The routine was still the same and the sexual abuse continued, but with greater force. On reflection, I think the bedroom situation was to make me more accessible to the boys. I believe I was not allowed back in my bedroom as it was easier for PBG to deny any knowledge of the abuse taking place, or that she colluded in it, when I was sleeping downstairs and her bedroom was upstairs.
107. Because I was in a children's unit, there was very little social worker involvement. The unit staff tended to deal with everything. The unit staff kept daily logs, so the social worker would just phone the unit and get an update. You'd maybe see a social worker once a year.
108. The usual thing happened at the children's panels. You would just go in and say your name and address, they would basically say that the order was to be continued and away you went. My life seemed pretty normal to everybody. Nobody knew about the abuse and nobody asked the type of questions that would lead to me disclosing what was happening.
109. The charity Who Cares wasn't as active back then as it is now. There wasn't the same encouragement to speak to them like there is now. You knew you could phone them, but they didn't really come to the unit so you didn't know them. We used to get paid to go to their conferences, so some of us would go along for the money. We'd go along and listen to talks and get £50 for it. My impression at the time was that it was just people speaking rubbish. That happened a lot going through the care system, people just talked rubbish to me.



Secondary Institutions - to be published later

110.

### Leaving Dalrymple Place

111. I had only been in Dalrymple for about eight months and then I was told that I was going into foster care, and I didn't want to go. I think the decision was made at a review or children's panel and I had no option. I think I had a couple of overnights with the foster carer and I knew that I didn't fit in there. I thought she was crazy. I remember faking illnesses and trying to stall it for a while. I don't remember the day I left Dalrymple.

### Foster care – FVQ, [REDACTED], Stewarton

112. I called the foster carer by her first name. One of her daughters, [REDACTED] lived in the house. She was about ten years older than me. Her house was a typical semi-detached house, which was really dirty inside. It was the dirtiest place I had ever seen, apart from my family home. The carpets were stained and the furniture was really old. It never felt homely. I moved the living room furniture about loads of times just to try and make it homely. I had my own bedroom, but it was just a basic room with an old bed. A few weeks before I left, she bought a pink carpet for my bedroom. I stayed in this placement for about seven or eight months.

**Routine in foster care – FVQ**

113. FVQ didn't care for me at all. There was no structure and I could basically do what I wanted. She was a cleaner and went out to work early in the morning. She bought frozen food and I just had to help myself to whatever was in the freezer. She was a heavy drinker and she used to go round to her ex-husband, [REDACTED] in the evening and drink with him. I remember waking up one night and [REDACTED] was urinating on the floor beside my bed. I just shut my eyes. I didn't say anything about it to anybody the next day. I think he was that drunk he thought he was in the toilet. [REDACTED] was actually fine. He was always good to his daughters.
114. I used to just sit in the house on my own FVQ didn't take me out or do anything with me. There was an old black and white TV that I'd sit and watch. I didn't have any friends when I was there. I wasn't going to school, so I didn't socialise much. I would take myself into Kilmarnock town centre at the weekends and go about on my own. [REDACTED] was around sometimes and we would sit in her room some nights and listen to her record player.

*School*

115. I was supposed to go to Stewarton Academy, but I rarely went. This is the only time in my education that I refused to go to school. I don't know if the school tried to speak to FVQ about it. I don't think she was that bothered. [REDACTED] was more concerned about it. I remember lying in my bed one day and [REDACTED] was trying to persuade me to go. I was saying that I couldn't go. I remember feeling that I'd just had enough and I was close to telling her about the sexual abuse. When I reflect on how I was feeling while I was living at FVQ I think in some way I was missing the abuse because that was the only form of affection I had been getting. I wasn't getting any affection at FVQ and I think that's why my emotions were all over the place. I didn't know where to go, what to do, or who to speak to.

*Work*

116. FVQ cleaned a hotel and I got a job collecting the coats in the nightclub on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, from 11 pm to 3 am, and then I'd walk home on my own. I was about fourteen at the time. I sometimes worked in the restaurant during the day as well. That was the only money I got. I never saw any of the money FVQ got for me from the local authority. I took the job to give me something to do and to get me out of the house.

*Visits/reviews*

117. I didn't carry on going to the PBG-SPO at the weekends when I was at FVQ out of a kind of loyalty to FVQ. She used to give me a hard time because I still felt connected to the PBG-SPO. I don't remember what she used to say, but I remember me saying, "But they're my mum and dad".
118. I vaguely remember one official visit at FVQ. I don't think it was a social work visit. I think it was Norma, my key worker from the unit. I don't know whether I specifically said to Norma how I felt about living there, but they knew from the outset that I didn't want to be there and that it just didn't feel right to me.

*Family*

119. My sister [REDACTED] contacted me and came to stay overnight once FVQ showed [REDACTED] so much more affection than she showed me. I remember I was working in the restaurant during the day and FVQ took [REDACTED] into town for lunch. She had never done that with me the whole time I was there. That was another reason I decided I'd had enough of living there.

### Leaving foster care - FVQ

120. The placement came to an end shortly after Christmas. This was around the time [REDACTED] had come for the overnight. Christmas day was hell. There was no tree and there wasn't even a Christmas dinner. FVQ gave me one wee present, a make-up box, and nothing else. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] I am not materialistic, but it was obvious that no thought or emotion had gone into my gift, which just reinforced the feeling that she didn't care about me at all.
121. I phoned PBG that day and I was hysterical. I think she actually came and picked me up from FVQ. I spent Christmas day with the PBG-SPO and then a couple of weeks after that, I went back to Burnside Children's Home.
122. I think I called the social worker and said that I couldn't stay at FVQ any longer, and I asked them to come and get me. They didn't ask me why. They would have had breakdown placement meetings to discuss what was going on, but you don't get to go to them. I don't think I was going to children's panels at that time. The local authority had parental responsibility for me from about the age of twelve or thirteen. I vaguely remember leaving FVQ. I felt no connection to her at all. I was just like, 'Take me back home'. I never saw FVQ again after I left.
123. FVQ never fostered again. I had been her second foster child. I think the first one moved on for similar reasons to me. I still see Norma Grier now, and she has said to me that I should never have been placed there. She was my key worker and she knew that it was the wrong choice for me, but she was just a unit worker and it was not her decision to make. I think the decision had been made because in those days they thought that it was better for people to be in a family setting rather than a children's unit. That certainly wasn't my experience. My most positive memories from childhood are from the children's homes rather than foster care.

**Burnside Children's Home, Irvine (2nd time)**

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

124.

125.

126.

127.

128.

129. I started staying with PBG-SPO again at the weekend, and MON continued to sexually abuse me. had moved out by then. MON was older and used to go out drinking. I would be sleeping in the living room on the fold-down bed or sofa and he would come in when he got home. I could smell the alcohol before I could even see or hear him.

130.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later



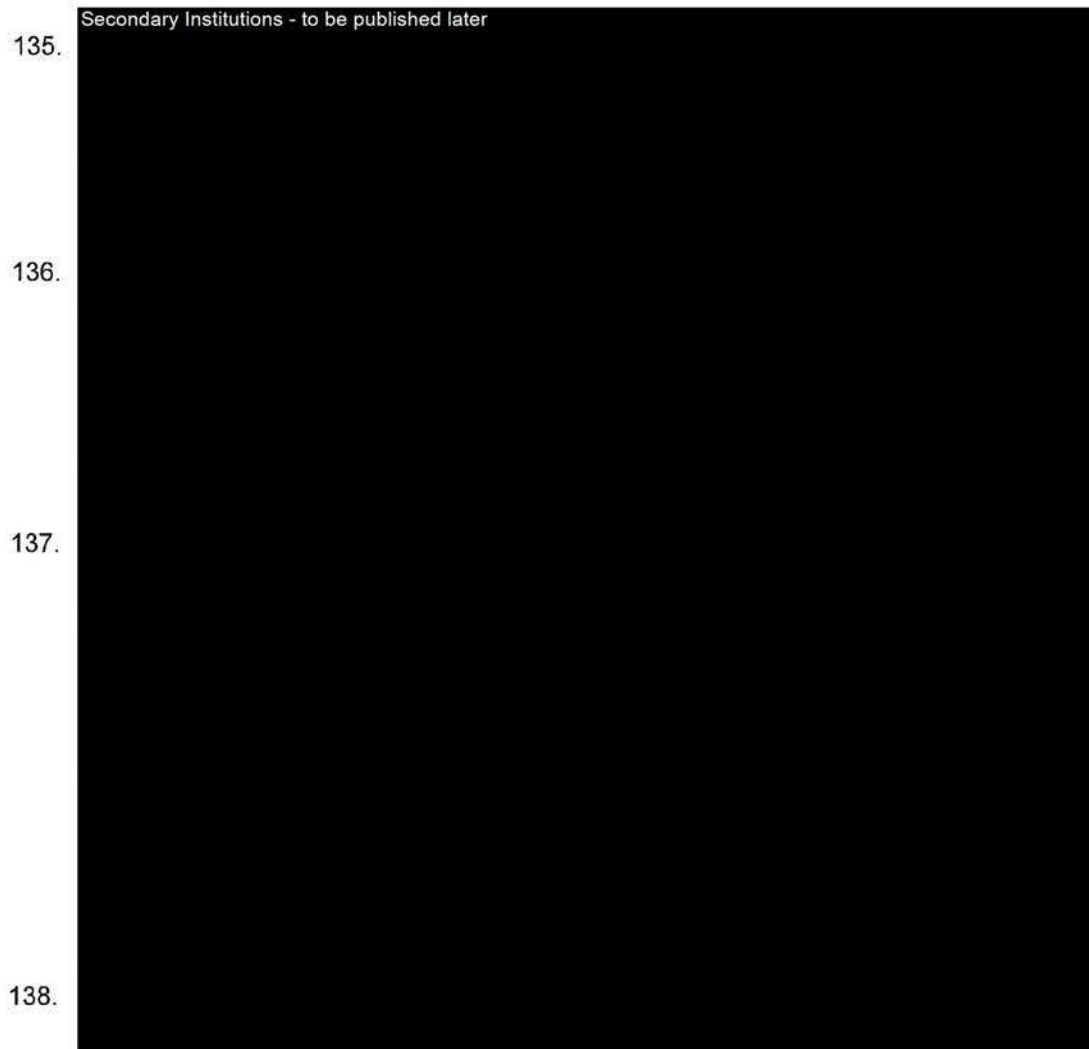
Secondary Institutions - to be published later

131.

132.

133.

134.



#### **Life in my own tenancy**

139. I was a vulnerable young person and my house was a place to party. I was earning good money, so my whole weekend was about taking drugs and partying. I knew my limitations, though, and I didn't party on a Sunday because I had work on the Monday. I fell pregnant at eighteen and I think that saved me. I don't know where I might have ended up if I hadn't got pregnant.

140. I got support from Anne Duncan, now Tait, at Throughcare. I remember the first time she phoned to introduce herself and she said she was coming to see me. I don't do new people in my life, so I told her to "fuck off". I was sick of being introduced to people and I didn't want to meet her. She didn't give up, though, and we got on great once I got to know her. She was the one I went to when I thought I might be pregnant. I went to her office to do the test and was shocked when it was positive.
141. I also kept in touch with the staff from Dalrymple. They came round to my house and helped me decorate. They'd pop in for a cup of tea and they'd go and get shopping for me. They were like my family unit, even although I was still in touch with the PBG-SPO. I had had no preparation for moving on to living independently, but they gave me plenty of assistance when I was in my own flat.
142. My daughter's dad was quite violent. He lived with his parents, through the back from my house, and he stayed with me when his parents chucked him out for being cheeky. His parents never took to me. They wanted him to go running back to them and weren't happy that he had somewhere to go. I fell out with him one night and was on my own when I felt the baby move. I got the fright of my life and phoned Dalrymple Place. I spoke to a staff member, Mrs Fletcher, and told her something weird was happening. She said it was just the baby moving and told me to come round the next morning for breakfast. As I was walking in that morning, I had really bad pains, so the staff took me to the hospital to get checked out. I was then told that they had a spare room at Dalrymple and they asked me to come back and live there.

#### **Dalrymple Place, Irvine (3<sup>rd</sup> time)**

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

143.

144.



Secondary Institutions - to be published later

145.

146. I was still in contact with the PBG-SPO and PBG told me that she would have no contact with me again if I didn't stop seeing my daughter's father. She didn't know that he had been violent. She just wanted to control things. She instructed me to move back to Beith and said that she would support me to look after my child. PBG actually phoned me the day I was having my daughter to tell me that they had found me a house in Beith, but it took me three months to move because I didn't really want to go.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

147.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

148.

### Life after being in care

149. I moved into my own house in Beith in April 1997, but PBG totally controlled me. I had to be at her house every day. She used to take over the care of my daughter, and I couldn't do anything right according to her. She would totally belittle me. My self-esteem was so low. I couldn't tell her when I had friends at my house at the weekend. If she phoned my house and I wasn't in, she would question where I had been. Once I started work, she used to phone me every day to make sure I was there. MON and [REDACTED] had moved out by this time, but they still came in and out of the house. To the outside world, they were my brothers and they were my daughter's uncles.
150. I started working in the council in November 1997. I didn't want to live as a single mum spending my days around PBG-SPO all the time. I used to take my daughter to PBG in the morning before work and she would watch her. She got paid for watching her. The social work paid about £50 a day when I first starting working, and I had to pay her £50 a night if I wanted a night out. I did a training course before I started working, just to get me back into work, and I think PBG got about £180 a week to watch my daughter for two or three days.
151. Before joining the council, I volunteered a wee bit with Throughcare, doing their admin and that kind of thing. I always knew that I wanted a better life for me and my daughter, and sitting getting a giro every week wasn't for me. I had to have a purpose in life. PBG had always drummed it into me that I was nothing, that nobody loved me and that my children would end up the same as me, so I don't know how I got the strength and determination to change that.

152. PBG had adopted [REDACTED] by this point and also the little girl [REDACTED] is a year younger than my eldest daughter. I remember PBG slapping [REDACTED] across the face because he spilt some milk on the worktop one morning. I was in her house dropping my daughter off before I went to work. I shouted at PBG and was really going nuts at her for hitting [REDACTED]. It was the first time I had answered her back, and she couldn't cope with it. [REDACTED] had learning difficulties and was still at primary school at the time. This would have been around 2002. I remember I went to work that day and I was going to a meeting with a senior manager and was close to telling her. I didn't say anything because I was concerned about the impact it might have on me and my daughter.
153. It wasn't until [REDACTED] got to about five that I decided I couldn't live that way any more. I told [REDACTED] how I felt and he advised me to get a tenancy swap and said he would help me move. So that's what I did, and I moved away. I didn't let PBG see my daughter again. Moving away was a massive decision for me. This was my daughter's family from birth. She believed that they were her grandparents and uncles. Not only had she lost her natural father, but I was ditching a full family network, which I felt I had to do to protect my child and myself.
154. I had my own flat in the town centre and was a single parent for eight years until I met my husband. He had been in a children's home too. He was the first person I told about the abuse. He and I went on to have a daughter together. In hindsight, it was just a marriage of convenience. I just needed somebody to love me because I had basically lost my whole family. We are now separated.
155. [REDACTED] from Throughcare became like a mum to me. Her daughters are aunties to my kids and they are also my best friends.
156. I kept in touch with [REDACTED] until he died ten years ago. He was my children's uncle. He believed me when I told him about the sexual abuse [REDACTED]. He challenged them, and he never spoke to any of them again after that. PBG turned up at [REDACTED] funeral even although she wasn't invited. That was the last time I saw her.

[REDACTED]

157. When my oldest daughter reached the age of eight, I couldn't even look at her because all I could see was the child I had been at that age. I eventually messaged my sister [REDACTED] saying that I needed to go to the police about what had happened to us. This was in 2004 or 2005. People will find this hard to believe, but [REDACTED] and I had never discussed the sexual abuse. [REDACTED] came back saying that she wasn't sure that she was ready, but I should go ahead and do it if that's what I wanted to do.

158. I phoned [REDACTED] after I messaged [REDACTED] and told her that I needed to go to the police. She was in my house within ten minutes, and she phoned the Women and Children's Unit at Ayr police station. The police came to my house and took a statement from me. I only reported the sexual abuse.

159. [REDACTED]

160. [REDACTED]

161.

162.

**Impact**

163. I've suffered from low mood over the years and have been on anti-depressants, diazepam and sleeping tablets. I've been off my work for six months every year for the last six years. I've now been diagnosed with complex post-traumatic stress disorder that needed intense ongoing therapy and support since the age of sixteen due to the psychological distress and trauma the care experience has left me with.
164. I feel as though I have lost out on so much, in terms of my adulthood not my childhood. It's only in the last year that I have actually started to appreciate who I am. I have always felt that I am not worthy and have been a people-pleaser. My husband abused alcohol and drugs and I put up with it because I didn't think I deserved any better. My thinking was that I was only ever worthy of abuse, so why would anything different come my way?

165. I have always analysed and questioned everything and thought that the world was against me. Silly things would happen, like one of my children would become unwell, and I would think it was because of my past and that that was all I ever deserved. I'm a bit better now and kind of accept things for what they are.
166. It has also affected my ability to trust people. I question everything people say to me. For instance, when someone says to me that my hair is nice, the thought that immediately comes into my head is that they're talking rubbish. I tend to reject people before they get the chance to reject me. I've ruined relationships because of this. Some people think that I'm really confident, but it's a front.
167. I never got any affection in care and it kills me today that I didn't show my kids affection when they were growing up. All I ever wanted was to be loved and I wasn't, so I didn't know how to show love. My kids would cuddle me and I would cuddle them back, but I would be cringing inside. I wasn't like a mum. The first time I felt real emotion was when my daughter was really ill when pregnant and she was rushed to hospital. I had just gone on holiday. I couldn't control my emotions when I got back and ended up having to go to the doctor. I was crying constantly, saying that it was because of my past that this had happened. I had always known how society expected me to respond and what to say, but this was the first time that the emotion was actually heartfelt.
168. I had no control over my emotions when this happened and I had to get sleeping pills from the doctor. I hadn't had flashbacks for years and I was waking up all the time with PBG voice in my head. Her voice was going right through my head telling me how much of a failure I was and how my daughter was the way she was because that's what I deserved.
169. Fortunately, I can now cuddle my granddaughter and actually appreciate her wee smell. But the fact I couldn't give this to my own children really kills me, and it's had an emotional impact on them as well. My eldest daughter has very low self-esteem and she thinks about herself the same way as I do about myself. She's a wee lassie



who has achieved so much and I don't want her to live the way I have lived for the past twenty years. I want her to appreciate herself. Her life has been all about rejection, and I feel that this is my fault. I rejected her dad, then I rejected the PBG-SPO and then my husband rejected her when we separated. My daughter believes that this is all down to her. I can tell her every day that that's not true, but she doesn't believe it. We both think the same way.

170. It has also impacted on me physically. I have been a comfort-eater, resulting in me being obese. I have type 2 diabetes which is managed by daily medication. I have psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis caused by stress. I get twelve-weekly injections for psoriasis, which I've been getting for about three years. Prior to that, I had to go into hospital three or four times a year for tar and steroid treatment and would be an in-patient for about six weeks each time. Along with that, I was trialling potent biological drugs which caused severe headaches. It was totally debilitating. The drugs wipe out your immune system and make you susceptible to infections. I was put on the drug, which I now inject at twelve-weekly periods, at the age of thirty-seven. I had to decide at that point that I would have no more children, as it was not safe to get pregnant and any pregnancy would have to be terminated. I am not fit to go to work on the day of the injection and the day after, so I have to take annual leave on these days every twelve weeks.
171. Not being allowed to go to the toilet during the night when I was in foster care also still impacts on me now. I don't go to the toilet when I need to and I'll hold it in for hours, resulting in recurring UTIs and kidney infections.
172. My health problems have impacted on my employment because I've had to take time off due to PTSD. I am currently at Stage Three of the 'maximising attendance procedure' and one more absence in twelve months will result in me being dismissed.
173. I think all the school moves affected me educationally. I believe I could have achieved a lot more in life if I'd had stability in my education. There was no

encouragement to continue with education or go to university, and I never got the opportunity to reach my full academic potential.

174. Whenever I smell stale beer or anything similar, it takes me right back to the PBG-SPO living room and being sexually abused by MON
175. Being in care has also impacted on my relationship with my siblings. We don't know each other. There is no emotional connection between us. We acknowledge each other if we meet. We have each other on Facebook and we acknowledge each other's children's birthdays, but it's no more than you would do with a random colleague. It's actually had a massive impact on my relationship with She knew what was happening and she could have saved me, but she left me at the PBG-SPO when she moved on elsewhere. I can barely look at her now.
176. My mum lives not too far away from me now. Neither she or my father have any interest in mine or my children's lives. I understand that the circumstances they were in when we were children didn't allow them to continue being parents to us, however I have given them three or four opportunities to be grandparents to my children and they are still not interested.
177. Another big part of the impact is that I will need to leave the job I've been doing for twenty-two years, a job I have enjoyed. Senior managers that failed me still work in the local authority and it's quite challenging for me to go into my work. One of the senior managers starts crying when I speak to her. I also feel as if they think they're doing me a favour by employing me, rather than me being there on merit. I have now asked to be re-deployed elsewhere.

### **Treatment and support**

178. Over the years, I went to mental health services, referred through my GP, but they were just not specialised enough to help me. A lot of the psychologists are not qualified to deal with child trauma, and in my experience you've got no chance if



they're not specialists. Half the time I would sit there thinking, "Who is it that needs mental health help here?".


179. I saw a woman called Agnes Steven about fourteen years ago. She was a person-centred therapist. I had just been to the police and disclosed the abuse and she gave me good advice on how to stay safe and not let my thoughts run away with me. I also did about twenty sessions about ten years ago with a therapist called Pauline Brown from the NHS. She did psycho dynamic therapy and I found this helpful.
180. I then found out about Future Pathways from Anne Tait, and I got an appointment quickly with the worker, John, and he referred me to Dr Ian Connor for psychotherapy. I was able to connect with Dr Connor and it was clear instantly that he knew what he was talking about, so the therapy worked. I saw him for about a year and half, and some days I just sat with him and sobbed like a baby. The way I describe the treatment is that it's like getting half way up the biggest mountain you've ever seen in your life, and then falling all the way back down to the ground and having to start again. The struggle was real, but it was worth it because it has completely changed my life. The minute you get to the top of that mountain, your life changes. I have now finished my therapy with Dr Connor. I can still contact John from Future Pathways if I need to speak to him.
181. It was difficult to go through the therapy and cope with everyday life as well, especially when my husband wasn't supportive. Our marriage broke down. The therapy was working for me and I was starting to see things differently, but my husband would numb the pain of his experiences in care by taking drugs and alcohol. He knew I was going to get better and end up leaving him. I ditched friends too because my life was no longer a soap opera and they became jealous of what I was doing.
182. I'm currently on anti-depressants and take diazepam only when I need it. I've not really needed it and I don't take sleeping pills any more.

183. I still work at the local authority which was responsible for my care. When I started to go to therapy and it came out that I had been abused, the director was very apologetic. She said that the local authority had failed me and that they would support me in whatever way they could. She told me to do what I needed to do to get through it and that any time off work would not be questioned. She offered to pay for taxis to take me to my therapy appointments. When she was leaving the post, she told the new director about my situation, but he didn't treat me the same way. I wasn't allowed the time off and I had to use my annual leave for appointments. I was almost dismissed at one point. I felt totally rejected again as an adult and I told him that. [REDACTED]

## Records

184. I got my case files about a year and a half ago. I made a subject access request and passed it to my manager. When the director was handing them over, she said that PBG [REDACTED] was "one ferocious woman". A similar comment had been made to me by Bob Jess when I started working in the local authority. He said she was "an evil, manipulative woman". That's what they thought about her, yet I was put into her care. He also said that he felt that things weren't right, and that the boys had the best of everything. They had good trainers and we had black sandshoes, but to social work it seemed the best option at the time.
185. I went back to my desk with a stack of files and then I spent about two weeks reading them at night, taking photos and writing bits out. It was really quite traumatic. What I found hard to accept is that social work are involved only when significant negative events occur. There are no positive events recorded in my files. The first thing I should have been able to see when I opened my files was my birth certificate, or even a photograph of when I won a colouring-in competition when I was in P1. There is no evidence of these happy events. The first few pages were all about how

my dad couldn't cope, how I was wearing ill-fitting shoes and how unkempt the house was. All the significant events seem to be negative events. There are no school report cards saying how great I did, not one mention of them.

186. I couldn't read through all the records. I looked out particular bits because I knew the periods I was looking for. I don't want to look at them now because it reinforces to me how negative my life was. I was going to go through them with Dr Connor, but he said I didn't need to do it because I remember so much anyway.
187. One of the reasons I got my records was to reinforce my belief that I gave signs and clues that I was being abused and these were not picked up. It was clear when I read my files that I was right. I went through them and I was able to identify all the opportunities there were to find out about the abuse.
188. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
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189. I don't actually recall telling anybody I was pregnant. I only know about this because I read it in my records. I know that they didn't ask me any questions because if they had, it would be documented in the records.
190. There is another entry on a review form which I filled in when I was moving to Dalrymple Place from Burnside. It was a form with questions asking how I felt about

certain things and what the good and bad points were. I had noted as a bad point about contact with the PBG-SPO "I don't like how the boys come in and wake me up all the time and put the light on, and if you don't know what is wrong with that then there is something seriously wrong with you". I was clearly open to making a disclosure about the sexual abuse, but I wasn't asked any questions about my comment.

191. Anne was reading my records with me and within about an hour, and with no explanation as to why, she told me she had to go. A day later she messaged me to apologise and said that what she had read in my records was horrific. She said as a qualified social worker she saw so many failings and she couldn't look at the records again.
192. There is another entry in my records which says, "LYG [REDACTED] is feeling sorry for herself. Wee baboon". It's upsetting for me to read this as an adult. I was feeling sorry for myself, so how did that make me a baboon? They talked about me in these records with no kindness or compassion. They referred to me as if I wasn't even a human being. This is something that needs to change. Staff need to think about how the things that they write will impact on people when they see their records as adults. And, once again, it's another negative thing that's recorded. Given what was happening to me, if feeling sorry for myself was the only thing I was doing wrong, I think I was actually doing pretty good.
193. Also in my records there is an entry which shows that a social worker, who was my worker for a short period of time, expressed concerns to her senior, May Henderson, about PBG [REDACTED] and the care that I was receiving. She has recorded that her senior said that it wasn't ideal but it was the best option they had available.
194. I only learned that the original plan was for PBG [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to adopt me when I read my records. Nobody had ever discussed that with me.

**Lessons to be learned**

195. The local authority should have been more vigorous in their checks when I was in foster care. You shouldn't just leave a child in a foster placement and assume that everything is all right because the carer tells you so. When they did meet with me, they should have spoken to me as an individual and asked appropriate questions that would have led to me opening up. Had someone done that with me, I probably would have disclosed the abuse.
196. I think it would be good to have something in place to allow young people to speak to someone who is not their normal social worker, and they should be able to meet with that person outwith their care environment in a place they feel comfortable.
197. I think one of the biggest lessons to be learned is that staff should remember when they are documenting something, that it is someone's life they are writing about and they need to consider the impact that their words will have on that person when they read them in the future. Also, they should record things other than negative events or reactions. A child's file should contain things like report cards, swimming badges, and copies of dance certificates, because as you move from place to place, you have nothing. I have no wee mementoes of my childhood or photographs of me as a child to compare with my daughters or grandchild.
198. I hope that children are listened to in the future and that they don't get pushed into placements that they themselves know are not right for them. I was pushed into that second foster care placement when it was clear that the foster carer was only in it for the money. Anybody who isn't even specialised in childcare could pick up my file and see that. It is always going to be difficult to get people who are genuinely in it for the right reasons, but serious efforts need to be made to make sure this happens.
199. I don't think anybody can stop abuse, but if I can help to stop at least one person suffering the way I have suffered, I'll feel that I have done my job and my pain has been worth it.



197. 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.....LYG.....

Dated.....22/05/2019.....