

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

EXJ

Support person present: Yes

1. My full name is EXJ My name on my birth certificate was EXJ EXJ and growing up, my name was EXJ. My date of birth is 1968. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Cawdor Park House Hospital. My mother's name is My father's name was and he was known as I have two brothers who are a lot older than me. is the oldest, and was born on 1959. would be 55 years old now, but he died in 2013. I was in contact with him until his death.
3. I lived on in Maryhill, Glasgow, when I was very young, with my mother and two brothers. My parents were not together. I don't remember much about living on
4. When I was about three years old, we moved to a tenement on in Drumchapel. My mum didn't work, but she did some part time cleaning of stairwells. Sometimes she would take me with her and sometimes family members would look after me. My mum worked to get extra money for the family. She wasn't getting enough to live on.

5. I went to nursery and then to Cleddens Primary School when I was five years old. [REDACTED] went to a special needs placement at Northland School and [REDACTED] went to Kingsbridge Secondary School. I didn't like school. I got battered and beaten up by some of the other kids so I started to truant when I was six or seven years old to avoid them.
6. I recall being run over by a van. I remember being taken in an ambulance and getting stitches in my face. I still have a scar on my upper lip.
7. I had an accident when I was seven years old. I was playing on the monkey bars in Katewell Park, and I fell and broke my elbow. My mum's best friend, [REDACTED] was there so I ran up to her crying. She got one of her boys to run home to [REDACTED] and get my mum. Mrs [REDACTED]'s other boy called an ambulance. My mum came to the hospital and was crying. I told her that it wasn't her fault. After that everything went downhill.
8. My father showed up at the house. He did things to me that I do not want to talk about. My brother [REDACTED] also did things to me. I had to hide in the coal bunker next to the front door. I also had to hide in the roof. I was hiding to keep them away from me.
9. Living at home was hell. We lived on the top floor of a tenement building. I was so little and these bad things were happening to me. I would look at the front window and want to jump.
10. On one occasion when I was seven years old, my father abused me. My mum was in the kitchen while it was happening. I shouted to my mum that he had touched me. The next thing I know, everything went chaotic. My mum went down to the phone box and called the police.
11. The police came and took me into a separate room to interview me. There was one male officer and one female officer. They asked me who had touched me and I said that [REDACTED] had. They asked me where he had touched me, and I pointed and said "down there." My mum was hysterical and in tears.

12. The next thing I knew, I was being dragged off. I was taken away the same night. It was like being abducted. I was taken away by a social worker called Sister Paula. She was a nun and based at Drumchapel social work department. I think she lived at Knightswood. My mum had had dealings with her before.
13. Sister Paula drove me straight to a foster family in Clydebank. I had no belongings and just had the clothes on my back. Nobody explained to me what was happening.

Foster care - the EYB-EYC or EYB-EYC

14. The foster parents were called the EYB-EYC or the EYB-EYC I can't remember exactly. They were in their forties. I don't know if they had other jobs. They lived in a two bedroom semi-detached house with an upstairs and downstairs. It was on EYB-EYC in Clydebank. They had two sons called EYB-EYC and EYB-EYC I think EYB-EYC was their biological son and EYB-EYC was fostered by them on a permanent basis. They were both older than me. I was only seven years old.
15. The house was clean enough. When you came in through the front door, the living room was to the left, and the kitchen was to the side. There was a living room on the left on the ground floor, and the kitchen was through the living room. My bedroom was also on the ground floor. There were stairs leading up from the hallway, but I was not allowed upstairs.
16. My first impression of the foster parents were that they were obnoxious. If I asked for a cup of tea, the foster father would say tell me to make it myself. I was only young and I didn't know where anything was. I ended up putting salt instead of sugar into my cup.

Daily Routine in foster care

17. I had to share a room with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and didn't like that I had to share with boys. The room was a four by four and had a double bed crammed in. I had to share the bed with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and slept in the middle of them. It was horrendous.
18. The foster mother would come downstairs stark naked to wake us up. She would walk into our room with no clothes on at all and shout at us to get up and dressed. I remember looking at her naked and wondering if this was for real.
19. Once we were up she would drive us to school. I went to Clydebank Primary School.
20. The foster mother's manner suggested that she preferred the boys to me. I went numb and became totally withdrawn. I didn't speak to her at all.
21. Bed time was at 9 pm. The foster mother was strict and would just shout at me, saying: "You! To bed. Now!" We would all go to bed together at the same time. It was difficult to sleep with two boys' smelly feet in my face all night.
22. There was inappropriate nakedness in that house. [REDACTED] would come into the room stark naked too, sometimes.

Food

23. We would have normal food like fish and chips or fish fingers and peas. I never saw a pudding. The food was ok.
24. I would eat food in the living room. I didn't like eating in front of people. I would sit behind everyone else. I felt like an outcast, and a caged animal so I wanted to hide.

Visits and inspections

25. A few days after I had been there, my mum came to visit me with my eldest brother, [REDACTED] I said that I didn't want to see her and walked back in to the house. It wasn't because I didn't want to see my mum, but because I didn't want to see [REDACTED] because of the things he had done to me when I lived at home. I didn't feel safe around him. I didn't want him near me.
26. My mum had a nervous breakdown during this period and was sectioned.
27. My social worker, Sister Paula, came to visit me once. She brought [REDACTED] with her and took us for Chinese food.

Review of care

28. The foster mother didn't care at all about me or the children under her care. There was no washing or bathing in her house. She just didn't provide it. There was a toilet and bathroom upstairs but I wasn't allowed upstairs. I never used the toilet or bathroom. I went to the toilet at school. I never had a bath whilst living there. I was never shown around the house.
29. The foster parents were paid by the social work department. I would say that it was a money-making racket for them.

Leaving foster care

30. I was in foster care for a few weeks. The social work were discussing where they were going to send me. During that time, I ran away more than once. I didn't feel safe there and had to share a bed with two boys. I had never done that before. I had only shared a bed with my mum but I had felt safe with my mum.

31. I wrote a letter to my best friend [REDACTED] I asked her to help me. I was trying to get back to my mum. I was scared and frightened. The only way for a child to get away from an environment like that is to run away.
32. I ran away and went to my mum's house. The door opened and I saw my brother, [REDACTED] so I bolted down the stairs away from him. I ended up going to my mum's best friend, [REDACTED] house. She must have called the police or the social work and told them that I was there.
33. Sister Paula came in a car and picked me up. She took me and [REDACTED] to Maxwell House Children's Home. I can't remember if [REDACTED] came too.

Maxwell House Children's Home, Glasgow

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Children's Home in Helensburgh, Glasgow

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70. I got a new social worker called Anne Robertson who probably decided to move me on. She just turned up one day to take me away. When I left the home I had to leave everything that had been given to us. Everything was on loan until we left. I had to leave the dolly I had been given for Christmas.

71. Anne Robertson took me to live with my Aunty [REDACTED] for a week. I then went to live with my Aunty [REDACTED] in Maryport in Cumbria for a few weeks. After that I went to my Aunty [REDACTED] which I didn't like because she was an alcoholic. I was then taken to my mum's house.

72. Anne Robertson picked me up from my mum's house after a few days and took me to stay at her own house for a night in Kelvinbridge, until all of the paperwork went through. She didn't think that I was safe at home and wanted to get me away to a place of safety.

73. In the morning, Anne Robertson put me on a bus at 8.30 am. She said I was going on a sort of holiday. That was always how social workers described it when they sent me somewhere.
74. The bus was full of girls from the age of nine to fifteen, from different areas of Glasgow. No support was given and we were not told where we were going. I was just wondering what was happening to me now. I knew my mum wasn't well, but I didn't know how long I would be away for. I remember feeling sick on the bus because I had travel sickness.

Abernethy Residential Home, Perthshire

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120. I was told that I was going to be leaving, but then I had to wait a few weeks before I left. I was put on a bus with a bunch of girls going back to Glasgow. Anne Robertson picked me up. I didn't speak to her.

Life back at home

121. I had to stay with my mum and both my brothers for a few weeks at [REDACTED]. I didn't want to go to that house. [REDACTED] was still there but he was trying to get his own place. He was about eighteen years old by then.

122. [REDACTED] was still coming to the house now and again. He abused his son and me. He tried to slit my mother's throat.

123. We lived at [REDACTED] for a few weeks and then we moved to another house around the corner. It was number [REDACTED].

124. I got a new social worker called Margaret Kiernan when I was about twelve years old who was based at Drumchapel. Margaret Kiernan remained my social worker until I was sixteen years old. I knew my mum hated her, so that made me dislike her too. I had also, by this point, lost all trust in social workers in general.

125. Margaret Kiernan decided that I should be taken away from my mother. I went to a children's panel when I was about twelve years old and the decision was taken that I would be sent to St Euphrasia's. There had been a discussion with my mum about this

whilst I was at Abernethy. I had already been to visit St Euphrasia's when I was eleven years old.

St Euphrasia's Children's Home

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Leaving St Euphrasia's

213. I was given a leaving date when I turned sixteen, and I left St Euphrasia's soon after I turned sixteen. I had been there for five years. I also left school at the same time.
214. I was basically told my time was up and it was time to go. Even if you had no stable home to go to, you were just sent home. I wasn't given any guidance or support for leaving. I had no social work involvement. I was just on my own.

Life after being in care

215. I went back to my mum's when I left care. She was living at [REDACTED]. She was threatened by the neighbours so she moved in with my Auntie [REDACTED] at her house in Charing Cross.
216. I was with my mum for a few weeks. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] weren't there. I went into a hostel on [REDACTED] in Glasgow after a few weeks. I didn't have any financial support. I didn't even know that I could get support. I just did odd jobs to get money. Then the social worker, Margaret Kiernan, helped to get me a flat when I was seventeen years old.
217. I went to Anniesland college when I was seventeen years old, and did painting and decorating.
218. [REDACTED] was getting into trouble with the police. He got lifted for shoplifting and stupid things. My mum got cancer a few months after I was out of care. I looked after her,

and she passed away a few years later. I then had to help out my brother [REDACTED] who was later diagnosed with autism. He died a few years ago as well.

219. I had my first child when I was 21 years old, and I had to grow up really fast. I learned to take care of bills and my child. I did it all myself.
220. I now have four kids, and I have brought my children up differently to how I was brought up. I have never forced them to do anything, like dishes or clean floors. I tell them to see the doctor if they are stressed, and encourage them to see the doctor. I have been very supportive of my kids. I see them as individuals and have always been there for them.
221. I have never reported anything that happened to me in care, to the police or to anyone else.

Impact

222. I didn't like wearing dresses; I was a tom-boy. It was probably because of what happened to me at home with my dad and brother. I had it in my head that I shouldn't wear a skirt. I felt more comfortable in denims and dungarees. My mum used to put me in dresses and I would take them off and put on trousers. My mum didn't understand how bad the abuse was and how it affected me.
223. I had suicidal thoughts as a child because of what was happening at home with my family. I was put into care, but I never got any psychological help or counselling. I was failed by the system.
224. Then what happened in care also affected my mental health. My mental health has suffered from childhood and throughout my adult life.
225. I have had problems with food ever since the age of three. I have always found eating difficult. My mum would put food down for me but I couldn't eat it. I just refused. It had

nothing to do with neglect or my mother. It was a psychological problem that stemmed from my abuse at home. That was never addressed when I went into care.

226. At various homes I used to hide food in hankies. I don't know how I got away with it. I would hide the hankie and then throw it in the bin. The staff didn't see. Some of us kids had to be fly and I was fly. I should have been put in hospital as I was quite underweight. I had so many illnesses and ear infections. My issues with food have stayed with me throughout my life.
227. My education has suffered because of my time in care. I was moved around and not given proper schooling. When I did get to go to school, I never got the support from the home. I was just left to my own devices.

Current treatment and support

228. I have been prescribed and taken Flouxetine and other anti-depressants from the age of nineteen upwards. I still take them, as well as other medication.
229. I have seen a psychologist and psychiatrist for the last couple of years. I was recently referred to Glasgow Association of Mental Health through Future Pathways. I also see a counsellor now.

Records

230. I got my social work records in 2018. It was an organisation called Birth Link who helped me get my records.
231. I have read my records and what is written in them is crap.

Final Thoughts

232. Social workers need to tell the truth to kids or kids won't trust them. They need proper training and need to believe kids when kids they tell them what is happening.
233. When it is recognised that a child has been abused, whether by their family or in an institution, they should be removed from that situation. Then they should get counselling at the time, as a child, so that it can be dealt with.
234. 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..... EXJ [REDACTED]

Dated..... 02/08/2019.....