

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

EEQ

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is EEQ. At one of the children's homes I was known as EEQ and I've no idea why. My date of birth is 1933. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. My birth certificate says I was born in the Western General Hospital in Edinburgh. My mother was living in the poor house at the time and I don't know if that was where I was born and it was convenient to say I was born in the hospital. She was taken in because she was an abusive drunkard. I've been given two different dates for my birth. One date written in my records was 1933 at the Western General Hospital and it's from some sort of register that can't be clearly made out because of how it's been photocopied.
3. My mother's name was. My father was not on the scene. I knew of him. Later on when I'd left the institutions, once or twice my mum saw him in the distance and she crossed the road to avoid him and told me he was bad. I never got to know him and that upsets me to this day.
4. My oldest sibling was my sister and she was seven years older than me. Then or was about four years older and was two years older than me. They were all fostered out. There was also my older brother and I don't know if he really was my brother. Either or told me wasn't

my brother and he was illegitimate. He may have been my mum's son by someone else.

5. My earliest memory is living in a basement flat in [REDACTED] in Bruntsfield. I remember sitting on a table and my brother was there. He was much older and he seemed ten feet tall. He was dressed in a Black Watch uniform and he was a bandsman. He was going back to Libya. We went up the stairs to say cheerio to each other. I remember that my mother had been frying fish on the open hearth. I tried to help, but it came up in my face and my mother heard me screaming. She got butter and wrapped it all round my face. I'm not scarred, but I've found I have to shave four ways to get a reasonably decent shave.
6. My next recollection was being at school in the Canongate. I think it was called Milton Road School then. There was a wee boy I ran about with. One recollection was that we ended up on London Road together and I panicked that we'd gone all the way to London.
7. When I was aged seven, I remember I was with my mum and I was getting a bus with her. I didn't know what was going on, she just told me to take my gas mask and the label. The bus came to Castle Terrace. I was crying as my mum wasn't going on the bus with me, but I was also excited to be on a bus trip. I didn't see her again until one time somebody took me to stay with her and a man I called uncle, but he wasn't really an uncle. That was in a flat in West Port where she stayed with a man called [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

### **Broomlee Evacuation Camp, West Linton**

8. [REDACTED]  
Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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## **Foster care in [REDACTED], Fife**

18. I wasn't in Broomlee for long before I was fostered out. I was fostered out to people in [REDACTED] in Fife. It wasn't a nice experience. I asked for the money I made from the potato picking in Broomlee. I was told by the new foster carers I wasn't getting it as it was to pay for shoe repairs because I kept running away. I don't believe that. The money was kept by the foster carers. I can't recall their name.

### *Food/mealtimes*

19. I remember one particular day in the kitchen that I didn't eat all the food I had in front of me. I didn't like it. I got punched, I think it was the mother, and my back went up against the big key that was in the door. I remember that vividly.

### *School*

20. I do remember having to walk to school and having to go to the Salvation Army on a Sunday, but I didn't have anything against them.

## **Abuse**

21. I shared a bed with a youth or a man. I know I woke up every morning feeling very cold because he had all the bed clothes. I don't think there was any sexual abuse, I think if there was I would have remembered or been frightened. My daughter says I told her that I sometime woke up without pyjama bottoms. I don't remember that. Maybe I've blocked it out.
22. After I was fostered I was put in the Northern General Hospital in Edinburgh for a few weeks for some reason and I don't know why. I wasn't ill. I think it was because there was nowhere else to put me at the time. I was on a ward with patients who were older.

**Strathern House, Stockbridge, Edinburgh**

23. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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**Middleton Evacuation Camp, Gorebridge**

26. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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### **Time spent outside of care**

32. Then my mother took me back again. We stayed on [REDACTED] in Edinburgh with an old lady who had arthritis and she was bedridden. Both my mother and my father were looking after her. I don't know why they wanted me back and I don't know how the powers that be allowed it. I wondered if they got money for having me at home.
33. They'd gone out together leaving me in the house with the old lady. Then I heard a commotion on [REDACTED] and I saw them fall out of a tram car and they were fighting. Then the door to the flat was bashed in and they were in the room fighting each other. I remember jumping on my father's back and telling him to stop hitting my mother.
34. The next thing I remember was waking up the next morning on my own and they'd done a bunk and left. Then a young couple came in to take the place of my mother and father and I stayed a week before another place was found for me to go to.

### **Canaan Lane and Redhall Home, Edinburgh**

35. Secondary Institutions - to be published later  
[REDACTED]

### **Redhouse Home, Musselburgh**

36. Secondary Institutions - to be published later  
[REDACTED]



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**Life after being in care**

45. I was working at the paper mill for six months when I fell out with the foreman over an incident at work and I left the job. After I left the paper mill I went to work in the gasworks as an apprentice gas fitter. I could have stopped on there, but I would have had to go to night school to study theory.

46. I got my papers to join the forces and I joined the Navy for a seven year stint. I had no family to be with so there were no problems with being away. I was allowed to continue staying at Redhouse for fourteen or fifteen months before I moved into naval quarters to live in. By the time of my first leave from the Navy, some of the money I'd saved when I was at Redhouse I'd spent on good clothes. I was afraid to leave the clothes in at Redhouse. I asked my mum to look after them until I next came back on leave. I came back six months later and she'd pawned the clothes. We fell out over this.
47. I got married for the first time to [REDACTED] and we started off living in Edinburgh before moving to married naval quarters in Devonport, in England.
48. Sometime after I got married, my mother became mentally unwell and was an inpatient at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital in Morningside. I went up to her flat to make sure it was secure. They hadn't made their bed so I did that for them and discovered she had money under the mattress. I put it into a savings book for her. When she came out she called me a thief and I showed her the savings book, but she didn't want to see me again. A long time after that the police came to find me as she was in hospital and she died soon after.
49. When I was de-mobbed from the Navy I came back to Edinburgh and I couldn't get a job in engineering which was what I was doing in the Navy. Instead I went into nursing geriatrics in a home for old people for nine years. Unfortunately I was dismissed because I got drunk, not on duty, it was New Year's Day and the people coming in to take over from me were wishing me a happy new year and giving me a wee dram. I ended up drunk and dismissed because of it. I wasn't unemployed for long and I ended up working in the Agricultural Department driving a forklift for the next nine years.
50. My first wife and I adopted [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] thinking we were unable to have children naturally. We went on to have two daughters of our own called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and then our son [REDACTED]. Then [REDACTED] left myself and the children and she moved away. I had to stop work in the Agricultural Department so I could look after the children.

51. Then I managed to get a job with the drainage department for the Corporation. I was there for twenty-odd years. I enjoyed the job but I didn't enjoy the people who worked with me as they were lazy. I was made a foreman and I was very strict with other workers, but a lot of the time I did their job instead to make sure it was done properly. I enjoyed working and I was lost when I retired.
52. When my first wife left, I took an overdose of Distalgesic painkillers. I'd had a drink the night before. I woke up in hospital and I was in overnight. I had no intention of doing myself harm, it just happened. When she passed away my children had not had a relationship with her several decades. Following the end of my first marriage I married [REDACTED] and we've been happily married for many years.

### **Impact**

53. My time in care turned me into a different person to the one I should have been. My education suffered. I have a lot of intelligence, but I don't know how to use it appropriately like I should have done. In the Navy I couldn't write well on paper so I didn't get promoted, but people who could do the paper work were promoted. They were people who were not good at practical stuff and they got promoted.
54. When I was in the Navy I got a present sent to me from my sister [REDACTED] who I'd not seen since I was at Broomlee Camp. I got an address and it turned out she, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had been fostered out to a Mrs [REDACTED] in [REDACTED]. I went up to visit and it was only [REDACTED] left by then. Then much later on she was getting married and that's when I met up with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Then the contact ceased. I met them all much later on. There was no writing back and forth between us. They were all like strangers to me.
55. I have a cutting from the [REDACTED] of an article written in 1996 about me and my family. I was reunited with my eldest sister [REDACTED] and that was reported in the [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]'s daughter had originally written to the Sunday Post to say that she was looking for me. My first wife saw the article. I phoned up and one

thing led to another and I met up with [REDACTED]. There was no emotion there at all. She was a stranger to me and I didn't know her. She was staying in Northampton at the time as was my sister [REDACTED] and my brother [REDACTED]. He wasn't very forthcoming about me being his wee brother. I stayed with [REDACTED] after we met when I was on leave, but there was no emotion there.

56. Thanks to my sisters I have family photographs of us together as adults at family events. I've missed having a family to turn to. I went to stay with [REDACTED] once at her home, but she behaved strangely to me and I left to go home. [REDACTED] came to stay with us a few times but we had no thanks from her for our hospitality.
57. In terms of personal relationships, with my wife [REDACTED] I had my insecurities and fear that I would lose her. Even now I still feel insecure, but I don't know what I'm insecure about and there's always a doubt. It's something I don't want to think about or explore.
58. I've had problems with alcohol. When I was in my early forties I asked to see a psychiatrist at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital in Morningside. I told her I was an alcoholic and I felt insecure. No questions were asked of me and nothing came of it. They were no help at all. I didn't feel they were interested and I was wasting my time. The issue was resolved when [REDACTED] threatened to leave me and never come back. I stopped drinking whisky, which was the problem. Now I drink rum with water and it's just one at night and a bottle often lasts for a month. I had to help myself in the end. I've not had any other support.
59. I developed a dislike of Christmas and I don't appreciate it even now. I'm very poor at receiving gifts, I love to give, and I don't know how to react. It embarrasses me. I didn't have any experience of receiving gifts. I don't know if it's because of my time in care, at Christmas I always feel sad because I didn't know my father. I'd have liked to have a father to guide me and give me a decent upbringing. I think if I'd been fortunate that way I would have progressed better in the Navy if my father had been around to guide me.

60. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

61. I have no awareness of, or memory of, any sexual abuse when I was in care I've always had an issue with going into gents toilets and I can't urinate if anyone else is there. I don't know if that is relevant to any experience of my time in care.
62. At hospital appointments over the years I've been asked questions about my own and my family's health and I don't know the answer. I know my sisters have all died from dementia.
63. I was very strict with my own children mainly because of the strict way I was brought up. I'm quite ashamed of it. I never thought I would be like that and it was mainly temper that made me do it. It wasn't a planned thing and it wasn't because I was regimental. I just felt it was because I was told myself as a child, don't do this and that and only speak when I was spoken to. Overall I think I was quite a good dad, but quite selfish too in a lot of ways. I think it was because the jobs I had were always shift work and tiring.

### **Records**

64. I've never understood why I was put back in the care of my mother who was an abusive alcoholic. It wouldn't be allowed today. I've tried to recall many things to get answers. I've written to everyone I can think of in Edinburgh and Fife to ask about records of my being fostered. They have no record anyone being fostered in Fife from 1940 onwards which seemed odd. There must have been someone fostered in that time. There are no records in Edinburgh either.
65. I submitted a Subject Access Request to the City of Edinburgh Council to request my records. It wasn't a straightforward process. Birthlink helped me with getting records and they were very helpful to me. They also helped me put together a family tree.

66. I feel there is information missing from the records I have. The authorities kept telling me it all happened too long ago and no records were kept then. I felt indifferent when I got them as if they didn't relate to my life at all. I felt as if the records were describing someone else.
67. The papers I have in my possession are, my own notebook of recollections and thoughts, my application to get my records, information from Birthlink about my family tree, records from the City of Edinburgh Council, various letters from the children and families team about what they could and couldn't do regarding my records and information about the redress scheme. I also contacted Kezia Dugdale in her role as an MSP to ask for help in tracking down my records. I have also previously spoken to the National Confidential Forum about my experiences of being in care and I gave them a statement.

#### **Lessons to be Learned**

68. Depending on their age, I think for children in care it's important to keep your chin up and think positively. If you think someone is being cruel to you in care find an appropriate person to speak to and report it.

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

69. A lot depends on the person who is being interviewed and depending on what their experience has been. If their experience was bad or cruel, and that person has behaved badly they are likely doing it because of the cruelty they experienced.

**Other information**

70. 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.

EEQ  


Signed .....

Dated... 23/2/22 .....