

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FEY

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is FEY [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1965. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before care

2. I lived with my parents and my younger brother, [REDACTED] and younger sister, [REDACTED]. We lived in Stevenston. My mum and dad were really bad alcoholics and we weren't very well-kept. We would get fed, but dinner would be at about 9 o'clock at night. The house that we lived in is still standing to this day.
3. I'm not saying everything was bad when I was at home. When they weren't drinking, they were fantastic parents. But when they started drinking, I was basically the mother. I had to look after my little brother and sister. It wasn't right. People used to say "Your mum and dad are alxies, they're too fond of the drink", "You're black and manky, look at the state of you." I remember there being no carpets. I remember the floor was concrete.
4. My schooling wasn't good. I wasn't a bright person so I'd get help with my reading and my maths. I was classed as a dunce. People would bully me because I wasn't the brightest person. I remember the school, which has now been demolished. I remember one of the teachers would rap you on the knuckles with a ruler.
5. There was social work involvement at home because my parents weren't really taking care of us. I think it started not long before we went to Harley Place. I

remember strangers being in the house. They were Jean Hutchison and Renee McLean. I remember their faces, but I can't tell you dates. They were there a few times. I didn't realise they were social workers at the time, there to take us away.

6. The social work put us into Harley Place in [REDACTED] when I was about nine. I'm not too sure of the year. We got whipped away from home. One minute you're at home, the next minute you're gone. Nobody explained what was going to happen. They just said, "You need to come with us." I remember like it was yesterday my brother and sister screaming. I think my mum and dad were given a couple of chances but the drink got the better of them. We were taken away and that's when it started. I was with my brother and sister. My brother was 6 years old and my sister was about 4 years old.

Harley Place, Saltcoats

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later



Leaving Harley Place

48. I left Harley Place to go to foster parents in Irvine. It didn't work out.

Foster care in Irvine - address unknown

49. I remember staying in Irvine. I went there on my own because I was the oldest. They couldn't handle all three of us. I could walk to the house, but I can't remember the name of the street. It was directly across the road from Fencedyke Primary School. At first, it was great. The couple were a bit older. The man used to play the organ. I remember their son's name was [REDACTED]. They were so nice. I used to think, "Please make this last. What would it be like if it lasted? This wouldn't happen and that wouldn't happen."

50. I don't know why it didn't work out there. They had two kids of their own. I remember them being nice and wondering, "What's going on here? You're not supposed to be nice." I was the only foster child in Irvine. I don't think they could cope with what I had been through. I always remember I wasn't very pleasant. I was rebellious. Their children were a lot older than me so they weren't young people. I think it was maybe just too much for them.

Leaving foster care - Irvine

51. I don't remember getting any visits in Irvine.

52. When the foster care in Irvine didn't work out, I was taken back to Harley Place. Whenever things didn't work out, I'd be taken straight back to Harley Place. That's what we got non-stop.

Foster care in Saltcoats - address unknown

53. All three of us went to a couple in Saltcoats. I was about twelve. I was there a good few months. Social workers came to collect us from Harley Place. I remember going with a wee suitcase like an orphan. I think it was to get us out of care, but I still class foster care as being in care. The building isn't there anymore. I could go to the exact spot where it was.
54. I used to get blamed for things going missing, money and things like that. I've never stolen anything in my life. Not even so much as a packet of crisps. Never. When I got blamed, I said, "I'm not staying here."
55. In front of people, I was treated great but when people were away you were treated totally different. When you go into foster care, you should be treated like a member of the family but I wasn't. I told them I couldn't stay in the place. I was told, "It's all your fault, you should have done this, you should have done that, you should have behaved yourself."

Abuse in foster care – Saltcoats

56. The foster mother was like a sergeant major. They didn't have any children of their own. That's why they did the fostering. I think that was the problem. They didn't know how to handle us. The house was lovely. It's hard to describe being in there. One day it would be fine and the next day the guy could turn and be evil, the next day she could turn and be evil.
57. They could turn for the least wee thing you did, things that I would class as stupid, like not getting dressed when they told you to, not going to bed when they told you to or not putting your toys away. I thought we may as well have been in Harley Place. That's what it felt like.

58. They used to try and hit us but they would stop midway. It was enough to frighten us. Looking at them, they seemed nice but behind closed doors they could just turn. You would get into trouble for the least wee thing. You couldn't do anything right.
59. The foster father in Saltcoats tried something on two or three times. His name was Jim but I don't remember his last name. Just the usual, trying stuff with his hands. I think he just wanted to know what would happen. I just froze. I thought, "Not again, not again, not again". I'm positive he heard his missus coming and that was it. He was a different man after that. I think he felt sorry for himself because he saw that I didn't cry. I was frozen, like a block of ice, like a statue. I think that's why I can't take to people sometimes. I just freeze and I don't want to do anything. I was in the same room as my sister and brother. I don't think he tried it on with my sister. His attempt was futile. I keep bumping into his wife. I'm not too sure if he's alive.

Leaving foster care - Saltcoats

60. We left foster care in Saltcoats after a few months. I didn't think they should be foster parents. They just couldn't handle kids. I think they should've had one kid, not three. Putting the three of us there was a big mistake. It wasn't as if we went there for an odd night to try it out.
61. I don't remember getting any visits at Saltcoats. Not even to see how we were getting on.
62. The foster parents just told us, "They're coming to take you back to Harley Place." Then we were put back in Harley Place, again. It was like being a yoyo, back and forth. The next place I was taken to was Clark House.

Clark House, 41 Moorburn Road, Largs

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Harley Place , Saltcoats - final stay

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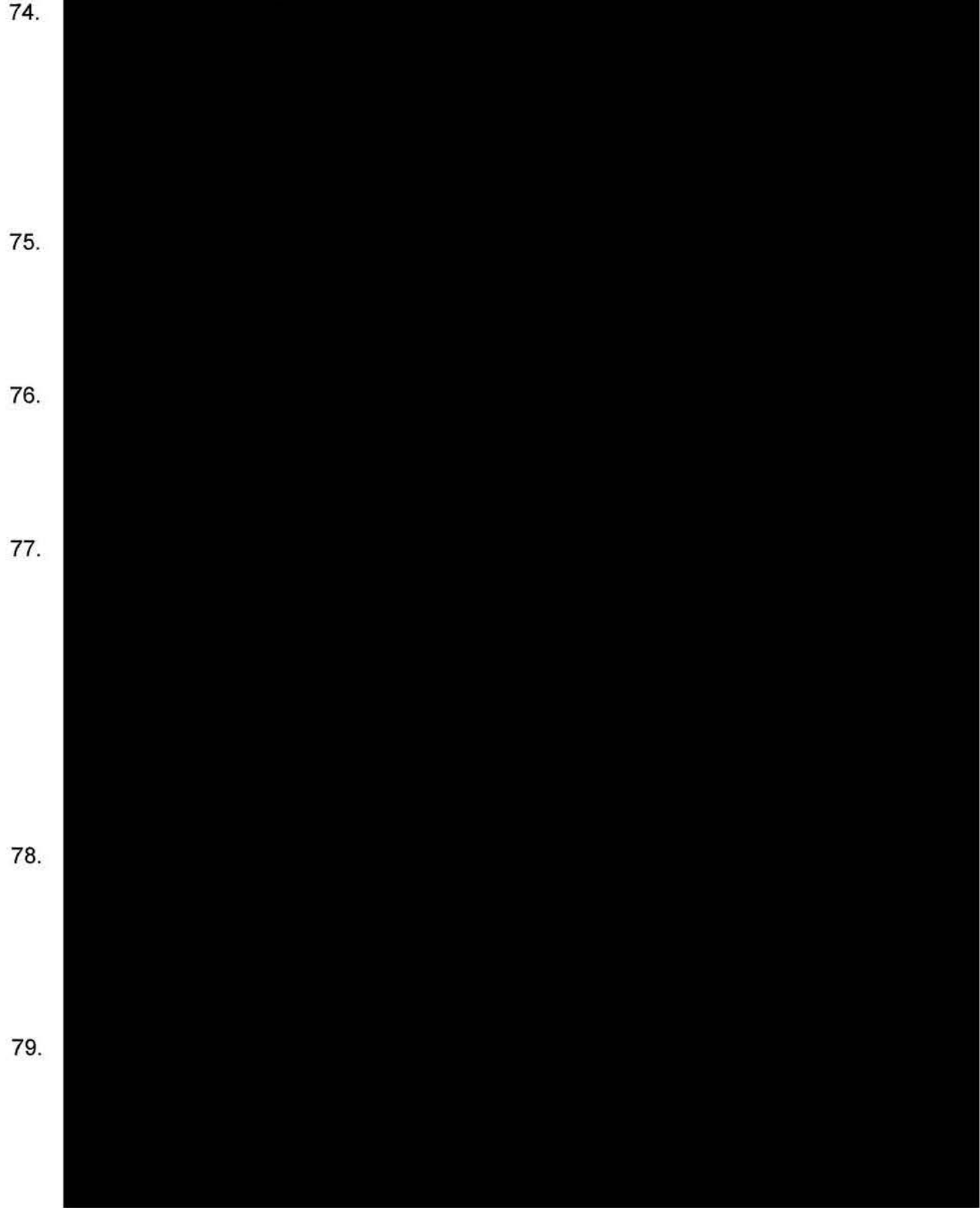
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Reporting of abuse – Saltcoats foster family

88. I didn't say anything about what happened at the Saltcoats foster home. I didn't tell anybody about it at all. Not even my sister. The foster father had a family. I thought, I'm not going to put a family through what I went through. Then I would think, "What if it happened to them and you said nothing?" But I just couldn't bring myself to say it.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Once again, nothing would get done. I thought it wasn't worth putting myself through that.

Life after care

89. When I was staying with my sister, I fell pregnant with my oldest son, [REDACTED]. My son was born in [REDACTED] then I turned eighteen the following [REDACTED]. I got a house on my own in Stevenston. Then I fell pregnant with [REDACTED]. He was born when [REDACTED] was

- two. My daughter, [REDACTED], was born when [REDACTED] was four. It was a struggle, being a single parent. Social work did help me. Some days, I would just sit down and cry for no reason. I'd tell myself to pull myself together.
90. I moved to Ardrossan with the three kids. [REDACTED] would go to a playgroup there. A bus would come and pick her up. [REDACTED] my partner [REDACTED] son, also went to the playgroup and that's how I met him. We met at the bus stop and that was us. We've been together ever since.
91. It was a struggle with the kids because I was by myself. My parents stayed round the corner from me. I used to go round there and they'd be half pissed. There'd be cans lying all around the place. The kids loved it and they were great with the kids so I bit my tongue and didn't say anything.
92. I thought it was normal. I'm surprised [REDACTED] still with me. I get so angry. I get so moody. I like to go up to my room to watch TV. That's my time. I don't like being annoyed in that hour. My daughter came in once. I told her, "Get out." She said, "Why?" I said, "Just get out my room!"
93. Then she came to me saying that my sister's boyfriend had fondled her. His name is [REDACTED] That was it, I just lost the plot. I felt terrible that I shouted at her. She didn't know what had happened to me at that time. [REDACTED] her step-dad, told her, "Don't annoy your mum, she needs a wee break." I felt terrible, because she'd been through that. He didn't try to have sex with her. He just fondled her.
94. It was reported to the police straight away. But it was her word against his. She got a letter saying, "We do not disbelieve her, but because under Scots law it's not proven so we can't take it any further. If anything comes up years down the line, it'll be taken up straight away."
95. For her to turn around and tell me that, it was the first time. I was so shocked. All the social work got involved. I felt so bad for her because of what I went through and what she partly went through.

96. I never spoke to my sister for ten years. I couldn't understand how she could stay with a man who did that. She's still to this day with him. I'll say hello to him now, but that's it. I try to involve my sister in conversations, but I do that because of my sister. I'll say, "Hi [REDACTED] hi [REDACTED]" things like that. If we get invited to weddings, parties, I would speak to them but I hadn't spoken to her properly for about ten years. Then one day, I bumped into her at the job centre. I thought it had gone on long enough. I started talking to her again.

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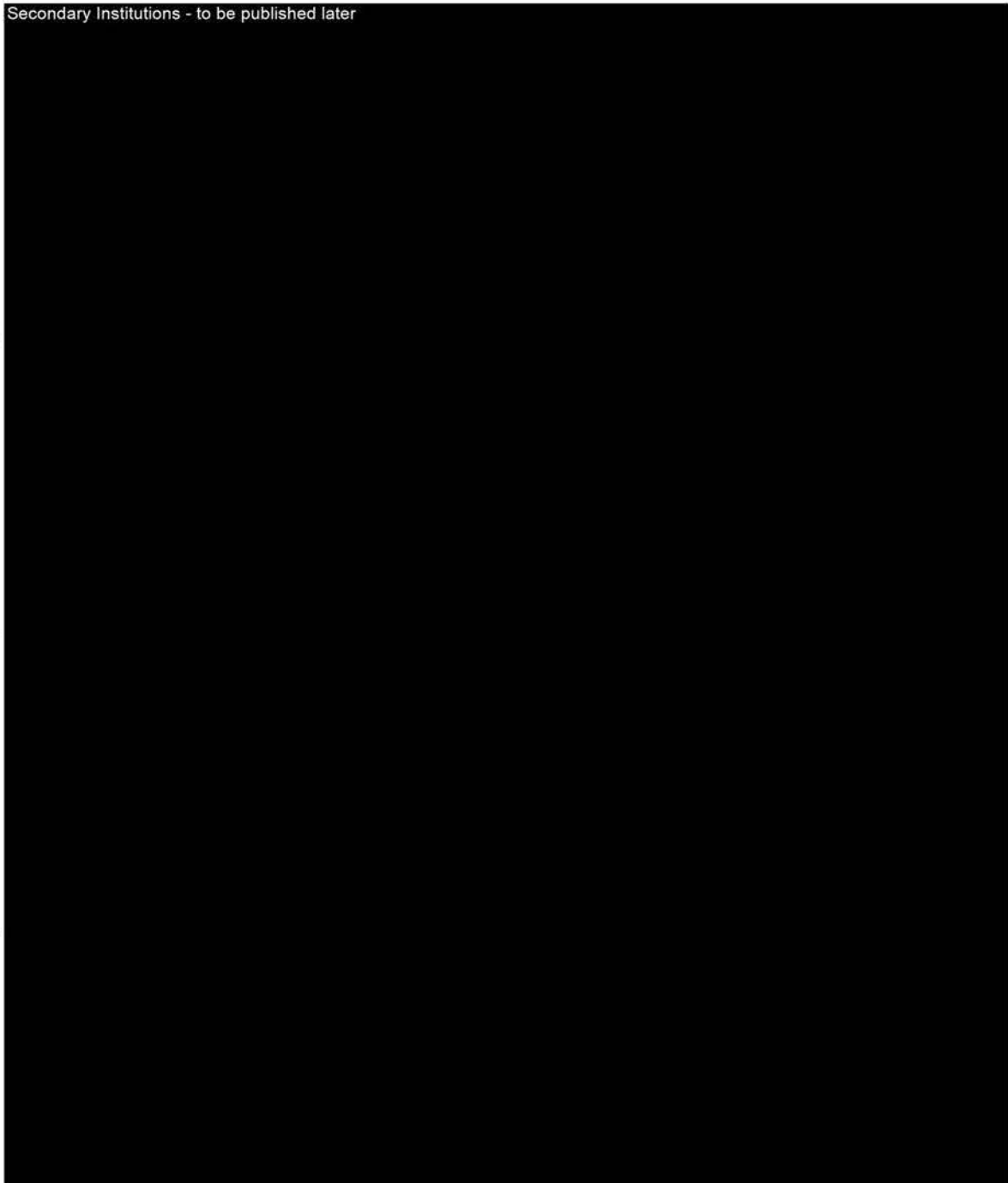
97. I used to go from one relationship to another, thinking I'd found somebody nice and then they'd turn. That's why for a while I was wary about [REDACTED] because he's so different. After being in there, I was frightened to trust anybody. I still don't trust anybody. I don't fully trust [REDACTED] I don't think I'll ever trust anybody fully because of that feeling they're going to do something. And [REDACTED] been fantastic. I don't know what I'd do without him. I just feel sometimes that things like this would have been better done years ago.
98. I don't say anything bad about my mum and dad in front of their grandkids. Secondary In
Secondary Institutions - to be published later She gave birth to me but she was never a mum. I hear the kids talk about her and I think, "She's not like that." She was an old bag and I hated her. I was never shown love so I couldn't love her.

99. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
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100. Sometimes, during the day, I get so angry with the kids. I have to walk out the room. It's, "Gran," Then it's "Nanny," "Gran," "Nanny," and I sit down and say, "Shut up!" Then they say, "Nanny, you shouted at me." I don't mean to do it but it gets too much

for me sometimes. It's hard because I sometimes find every day is a struggle. I've got to get on with it. I try to struggle through with all the voices.

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Support and counselling

105. I went to see a woman from Break the Silence. It was just me talking to her and she wouldn't ask me any questions. I decided not to go back. I didn't even phone them, I just didn't turn up.
106. I don't know who it was that suggested Sergio. It's the best thing I did because he's a good help. If I feel down I can just pick up the phone and say, "Sergio, phone back." It's just getting to speak to somebody. It's good to have somewhere to go where you have somebody to talk to. I've been seeing Sergio for about eighteen months. It does help because he sits and listens to me. I feel relaxed with him. He doesn't tell me stop talking rubbish or say he doesn't believe me. Sometimes I say to him, "Look, Sergio, I'm actually tired and I want to stop it." And I've only been in there for half an hour, but that half an hour feels like a life time. I go in there and come out feeling relieved. I feel so relaxed when I'm in there.
107. If I'm watching television, my mind goes haywire, it goes everywhere. I watch it but it's not going in. I get a lot of voices in my head. I'm trying to sort that out with Sergio.
108. I've also got a psychiatrist. He doesn't listen to me and I get so angry. I've tried to explain to him about the voices and self-harm. He just says, "Go to In Care Survivors, they'll sort it out." Sergio can't help me 24/7. I get really angry.
109. I did go to a group at [REDACTED] to do with the mental health team. There were seven people there. The next time I was supposed to go, I was rushed into hospital so I didn't make it. There were three people at that meeting. The next time there were only two, so they cancelled the meetings and they never got back to me.
110. I'm not a good person for speaking on the phone. I'd rather speak to somebody face to face. That's what happened with my friends down in England. They phoned me up one time and all of a sudden I broke down. A couple of days later, they were at my door. They said, "Right, you're coming with us." It was great. It's a totally different way of life down there. We communicate on Facebook. I'm not one for telephone conversations, it's either face-to-face or on Facebook. They're there at the end of the

line if I need them. Kath is trained as a counsellor so she knows the signs of depression. I was down there a while back, for a few days.

111. I had a breakdown. The doctors there gave me a di-hydrocodeine. It calmed me down a bit and it wasn't too bad. I just wish sometimes they'd change my medication and try something different, but they'll not.
112. I didn't get on fantastically with my GP, but she's now retired. I've just started seeing a male doctor. I've not seen him yet about my depression or anything like that because I've just started seeing him, but he's nice. So I'll be able to go and see him and tell him how I feel.

Self-harm

113. I don't have a clue why I started self-harming. I was just sitting in my room, watching telly and [REDACTED] said, "What are you doing?" I said, "Nothing". People say I must have known but I didn't. I don't know to this day what made me do it. I didn't even know I was doing it until I looked down and [REDACTED] quite badly. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] When I did that, [REDACTED] asked how I didn't know I was doing it. I didn't even realise I was doing [REDACTED]
114. [REDACTED] I had to go to University Hospital Crosshouse, then one of the doctors sent me to what I call the "doo-wally" ward. I went in for two weeks. The first time I was there, not once did a nurse or a doctor come and ask how I was. The only thing I was told by a doctor was to stop falling asleep during the day. That's all they did. When I was back in again for a second time, once again, nobody spoke to me.
115. I still get thoughts to do that today. It's a struggle. I try to tell my psychiatrist what it's like, but he doesn't listen. Next time I go, Sergio's going to come with me. I'd rather go places with him like going places with him because it's good to have somebody there who knows me and listens to me and doesn't say such and such will help you out. That's what gets me angry. My psychiatrist thinks Sergio's going to make

everything better for me but he can't. He can only be there to listen to what I call a load of crap.

116. I take what I call my "doo-wally tablets". Folk ask me why I call them that, and I tell them if I don't say that I'll end up crying. I take quetiapine and citalopram and a lot of other medication. My husband deals with all my tablets. At night time, he brings them up to me. If I do it myself, he listens to what I'm doing. He'll say, "You've already taken them." I say, "I'm sorting out tablets for the morning." Sometimes I take them at night time and get them ready for the morning in a dish. He keeps thinking I'm going to take them again.
117. I attempted suicide. I've done that a couple of times. [REDACTED] thinks I've only done it once. I came so close to doing it again in recent months. I can't even tell you what stopped me doing it. I try to tell my psychiatrist about the voices in my head, one side saying, "Don't do it, think of your family," and the other side saying, "Do it, do it, they don't love you anyway". It's non-stop. I try to put it to the back of my head.
118. I still [REDACTED] I've actually [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I've done that a few times. I feel better when I do that. I'm not myself. I know I'm not very well. It's come to the point that my psychiatrist has got to do something.
119. I don't want to go into the hospital again but it's coming. I'm so worried because I don't want to hurt myself. These scars are from years ago. I'm trying so hard. I tried to say to my doctor and they did nothing about it. So the only thing I can do is see Sergio. I see him once a fortnight, but if I need to see him more I phone him and he tries to arrange it.
120. I just thought to myself, "Enough's enough". I get too angry. I get angry at myself. People used to say, "Pull yourself together." You can't exactly pull yourself together when you've been pulled apart by your arms and all other places.

Records

121. They tried to tell me my records were burnt in a fire. If they were burnt in a fire, how did they manage to find a bit like that? But it's not in there. I thought they were at it. I could have taken it further, but I decided, "What's the use?" They weren't going to tell me because I think they knew what was going on. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

122. I accessed my records once with the lawyer and once with Sergio's help. Each time, what I got was different. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

123. We raised it with the council and they asked us to put in a letter of complaint. We did that and we didn't hear anything back. I knew I wouldn't get a reply. They met with me but it was a waste of time. I saw a medical book but it was my son [REDACTED] because [REDACTED] dad battered [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was away from me for a while. I realised it wasn't my records, it was [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later

You get different records from each place.

Final thoughts

124. A while ago, maybe about eighteen months ago, I went to the National Confidential Forum. It felt so clinical. I wasn't treated nicely. It was like chalk and cheese compared to the Inquiry. I didn't feel comfortable at all. They never even phoned me back to ask how I was. They never even phoned Sergio. There was no follow up. So I thought if they wanted me back, they could sing for it. I wondered what the point was of going in the first place if they didn't even bother.

125. I think being able to talk to somebody is important for survivors of abuse. Going to speak to somebody makes things a lot better. You never get on with your life – nothing will ever be the same. But talking to somebody, to a stranger, is different than talking to a member of the family. I tell Sergio things that I can't tell [REDACTED] [REDACTED] knows that and that's why he doesn't come in. It's very rare he comes in with me and Sergio, usually just for five minutes. He comes to collect me.
126. There was a thing on the TV the other day about three young girls. I thought, "That's me." I watched something else on TV about in care survivors. I thought, "I don't care anymore what happens to me. Look how they went in front of the camera." Folk will know now. Anybody who knows my name, I don't care. I used to think I didn't want to talk about it. In the past couple of weeks, I've wondered why I couldn't speak years ago. I thought, "Why should I have felt like that because I've done nothing wrong?"
127. I would feel better for people who have been in care if people do believe what has happened. I've seen people standing in front of the camera, and I thought they were so brave. Then I thought to myself, "Why are you hiding away? Why are you hiding yourself, when you've done nothing wrong?" I thought to myself, "I don't care who knows my name or who knows what happened to me. I've been through enough. If anybody's got anything to say, they can say it to me."
128. [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later
[REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later For you to get it out and for somebody to believe you and to talk about it, because building up and building up doesn't help. I hope people can feel better after being here and being able to speak about it and not having it trapped inside. I know there are a lot more people. My sister won't do it. My brother's now deceased.
129. [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later
[REDACTED]
Nothing will ever be the same again. There are always things I wish I'd done differently, reported things earlier. But reporting it and being told you're rubbish and then all the years down the line thinking why I didn't report it. Then I just clicked,

because I did report it and nothing was done. That's what really, really angers me. Because it could have saved some other people from going through it.

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Secondary Institutions - to

To speak to the Inquiry makes me feel better as well. Anybody who could talk about what happened will probably feel a lot better. It makes a big difference. I think it's been good for me, but the memory and pain is still there; it'll never, ever go away. But this may make me feel better. I'd try anything.

Other information

131. 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.

FEY

Signed.

Dated 1/9/2017