

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GQA
[REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes

1. My full name is GQA [REDACTED] and my date of birth is [REDACTED] 1988. I am 28 years old. My contact details are known to the inquiry.
2. I was born in Irvine. I lived with my mum, brother and sister, [REDACTED] My big brother and sister were thirteen or fourteen years older than me. They had a different dad from me. My dad had a house near to my mum's house but they didn't live together.

Life before going into care

3. I lived on [REDACTED] in Irvine with my mum, brother and sister. My mum and dad both drank, but my dad was an alcoholic. That was the reason they didn't live together. They still used to see each other every day. My big sister eventually moved out of my mum's house. She put herself into care because she didn't get on with my dad. My brother always lived with me and my mum as I was growing up.
4. I would see my dad at weekends or after school. He was very protective of me because I was his princess. I had a good relationship with him and loved him. This didn't last long because he died when I was four and a half years old.

Moving to foster care

5. My mum looked after me, and fed and clothed me. She would maybe just take a couple of drinks but would be ok. I don't know when social workers got involved with me. Maybe it was my whole life.
6. I had a social worker called Robert Lockhart and then a woman called Eileen Fleming. I hated Eileen Fleming because she was nosy. My mum and big brother had always told me not to tell social workers anything.
7. I went to Moor Nursery in Irvine. It was a private nursery and a social work taxi took me there. I remember a woman called Isobel there who used to give me cuddles.
8. The first time I ended up in care was because my big sister poured my mum a drink and then phoned the social work department. She told them to take me into care. She wanted me to go into care because she was in care, and got five pound a week pocket money. She thought it would be good for me to have the same.
9. I don't remember being taken away, but it must have been Eileen Fleming who took me because she was my social worker. I was about four years old at the time.

First foster care placement

10. I stayed in a house on [REDACTED] in Saltcoats. There were concrete steps going up to the main door, which was white. The house was right next to a bus stop. I lived there with a woman called GQQ [REDACTED] and her daughter, [REDACTED]. I think there was a guy there but I don't know if he was visiting or lived there.
11. I think [REDACTED] was about eighteen years old. She had a massive nose and dark hair, which was cut into a bob with a fringe. I had to share a room with her, but we both had our own single beds. I remember GQQ [REDACTED] used to wear white sandals and had really dry skin on her heels.

12. The bedrooms and bathroom were upstairs. There was a big galley kitchen downstairs, which had a door to the back garden.

Routine

13. I can't remember going to nursery or school when I was living with GQQ
14. I had my own clothes that my mum had given me. I also had a cardboard box full of toys in the living room, which my mum had also given me. I wasn't allowed to play with them. GQQ kept them away from me.
15. I wasn't allowed to go into my room during the day because it was s room. I wasn't allowed to go in or touch anything. It was basically her room with my bed in it.
16. I was probably allowed to watch television but I don't remember.

Visits

17. I remember seeing my mum a few times in that house, and also seeing my sister and dad. GQQ would be nice to me in front of them. I was only allowed to play with my toys when my mum, dad or sister visited me. I wasn't allowed to play with them otherwise. I told my mum about this at the time.
18. I remember I used to look out the window and watch my mum going to the bus stop after she had visited me. She had to catch two buses to go home to Irvine.
19. My dad came to visit me, but I think he only came once. My sister was in care in Kerelaw when I was staying with GQQ. She visited me as much as she could. I remember she brought me a green dressing gown once and hundreds of sweeties. I was all excited, but when my sister went away, GQQ took them all of me.

Abuse in foster care

20. The reason I remember there was a man there, is because he used to go to the toilet. I was young and if I needed the toilet, I would be made to wait for ages while everybody else went. [REDACTED] and GQQ [REDACTED] used to pick on me. They would go to the toilet before me. I would be made to wait for an hour or even longer. I would be sat in front of the toilet crying. I would try to hold it in but there is only so long you can hold it in as a wain. Eventually I would wet or soil myself.
21. When I had a toilet accident, I would be told that I would never get my toys back and never see my family again. I would then sit and cry. I would be made to wait until bath time before being cleaned up. GQQ [REDACTED] would take me to the bathroom upstairs when she was ready. I would have to stay dirty until then.
22. When GQQ [REDACTED] gave me a bath, she would skelp me. She would take off my pants, turn me around and batter me on the bum. She would then rub my wet or soiled pants in my face. She would tell me that I was really really bad. I wouldn't have had the accidents if the adults didn't all go into the toilet before me to have showers and baths.
23. There were concrete stairs leading up to the main door of the house. I remember falling down those steps and hurting my mouth. I think it was just a graze, and I was bleeding. I didn't go to hospital or anything.
24. I used to share a room with [REDACTED] We both had single beds. [REDACTED] would shout to GQQ [REDACTED] in the middle of the night and say that I was annoying her. She would say that I had wet myself. I was being made to wear a nappy at night times. [REDACTED] would go off her head saying that she couldn't sleep because of me. GQQ [REDACTED] would come into the room and both her and [REDACTED] would hit me. [REDACTED] caused all the trouble. I was just a wain, but she was older.

25. I just remember always getting shouted at by GQQ and [REDACTED]. They were like a double act. I would just sit and cry, and GQQ would tell me that she would stop me from seeing my mum.
26. A good day might have been if I made it to the toilet on time. I would get praised and allowed to play with [REDACTED]'s silver cross pram. I would be allowed to walk the length of the room about three times then it would be taken off me. I would maybe be allowed to play with a couple of my toys. I wasn't allowed to play with my box of toys.
27. I used to tell my social worker, Eileen Fleming, what was happening to me at GQQ's house, but she didn't believe me. I was crying and asking her to take me somewhere else. She said I was telling lies. I wasn't telling lies.
28. I told everyone what GQQ was doing to me, but only my mum and sister believed me. They both tried to tell Eileen. My sister was in Kerelaw in care at the time. It is noted in her records that she was trying to get me help. Eileen told them that I was a devious child, and I was making things up so that I could go home.

Leaving foster care

29. I kept thinking that I wanted my mum to come back and get me. When they didn't come back to get me, I thought I was going to be with GQQ forever.
30. I think I was only with GQQ for a few months, although it felt like much longer. I know I went to another place to stay after staying with GQQ but I don't know if I went straight there or got to go back to my mum first.

Second foster care placement

31. My second placement was with a woman who lived in a big massive, fancy house in Irvine. She had dark hair and was really nice. I think there was another wee boy there at the same time. I don't know if it was her wee boy or another foster kid.
32. The woman had a boat that she would take us out on. She was nice and looked after us. I can't remember how long I was there. I think it was only a couple of months.
33. I met the woman in Asda a few years ago. She stopped me and asked how I was. She remembered me. She was nice.

Life back at home

34. I was back with my mum before I was four and a half. I know this because my dad died when I was four and a half and I was living with my mum at the time.
35. My last memory of him is when he lived in Kilwinning, where he had moved to. I was in his house and he was making me beans on toast. My mum came to his door and they both fell out. I remember my mum and dad were both pulling me in different directions. I was about four years old at the time. I ended up going with my mum to my sister's flat, who lived nearby. She was eighteen at the time.
36. I remember my dad coming round to my sister's house that night. He was screaming and crying outside at the window because his dog had bitten him. My dad had a golden retriever dog called Rory who was blind. I remember it clearly.
37. My dad died soon after that. I loved my dad to bits. I went to his funeral. I got brainwashed as I got older by my mum because he was a drinker and had hit her a few times. I grew up hating my dad. My mum kept me away from his side of the family.

38. I was sexually abused as a child a few times. I just thought that there must be something wrong with me and that's why bad things kept happening to me. The first time it happened was when I was about four years old. It happened again when I was older. I have spoken to the police about one of the incidents.
39. I went to St John Ogilvie Primary School in Bourtreehill, Irvine. My mum was surviving on benefits; she did try. My brother was working at the time so he would buy me trainers, so I could have the right trainers at school. [REDACTED] would also help out. She was in and out of care as I was growing up. My brother always lived with us. My relationship with my mum was ok. She was all I ever had.
40. Social workers stayed involved with me my whole life. Eileen Fleming was still my social worker, the witch. Another guy called Paul came for a while, but I don't remember his full name. He was registered blind and had a deformed hand. He was nice. I liked him.
41. Eileen used to turn up to our house unannounced when I was about eight years old. She would park her red car around the corner because I used to throw stones at her car and at her. I did bully her, but I was only a wain. I only did that because she hadn't listened to me when I was in foster care with [REDACTED] GQQ She was supposed to protect me and she had put me in danger. I wanted to hurt her because she hurt me. I am not sorry. I think she deserved it. Eileen hated me.
42. I got bullied at school. When I was in primary four, I had my own playground to play in like a wee freak, to keep me away from the other kids. Apparently this was so I couldn't annoy anybody, but I was the one being bullied. I was allowed to pick two kids every day to play with me. Everybody wanted to play with me because I had my own special playground.
43. I was off sick with chicken pox one day, but the school blamed me of battering some wain at school. I was at home, off sick at the time. Mrs Quinn, the head teacher, said that she was having too many complaints about me and would have to suspend me.

My mum said she wasn't going to let that happen and moved me to Broomlands Primary School in Irvine. I was in primary four when this happened.

44. My mum was still drinking on and off. She would go through periods when she would drink for a whole month solid. When she did drink, she would be screaming and shouting. She would shout things like: "you dirty, lying, whooring bastard." She would do this to me and my brother. She would chuck water over us, turn the telly off when we were watching it and walk about naked. That drove my brother nuts.
45. My big brother was good. He used to take me down to the river with his pals to play football. They'd have a few beers and I would hang out with them. He took me away from the situation quite a lot. I got into watching soaps on the television to take my mind off what was happening at home. My problems went away when I watched the problems people in the soaps had.
46. My brother smoked cannabis and the police were always looking for him, but I knew not to say anything. A younger police man used to walk to school with me. He would be nice and ask me questions about my brother. I told him who he was hanging about with and where he was. My brother then got lifted. I was just a wain and didn't know. They let my brother go because he hadn't done anything. My brother knew it wasn't my fault.
47. My sister had mental health problems and used to try and kill herself. I used to cry to the teachers because I was worried about her. I spoke to Mrs McKissock, who was my primary six teacher, and also to Mrs Pilkington who was my primary seven teacher. I don't think anybody understood.

Social work involvement and care

48. I had a befriender type person as I was growing up. It was a girl called Gemma and she was from Glasgow. She was so nice.

49. There was another woman who I would go and see as part of a scheme called Kids and Carers. A taxi would take me after school to see her in Castle Park in Irvine. You could stay overnight as well, but I never got to stay over.
50. Social workers had referred my mum to a therapy group to help her with parenting skills. I think it was in the Vineburgh Community Centre. We would do things separately there. My mum would do things with adults and I would do things with children. I was still in primary school when this happened. It stopped but I liked going there. I don't think it made a difference though.
51. I didn't go back into care until I was in primary seven, when I was about eleven years old.
52. My mum would take me to Girvan, where her family lived. We would go to see my Grandparents, my aunty, uncle and cousins. My mum would take me for a holiday but she would turn it into a drinking session. She would get drunk and forget that I even existed.
53. I would see my gran and papa for a little while when I first got there. Then I would stay with my Aunty [REDACTED] who was against drinking. My cousins would all be there too.
54. I got picked up from Girvan twice by social work when I was about eleven years old, but I don't know which incident came first. One time, I was around the corner from my Aunty [REDACTED]'s house. I was crying and the police were there. The police asked me if I wanted to stay but my Aunty [REDACTED] didn't have enough room to keep me.
55. Another time, I was in my gran's house with my mum, papa, granny and sister. Everybody except me and [REDACTED] were drunk. Someone contacted the social workers. I think it was my gran's neighbour. Two women I had never met before came to take me away. They were social workers.

56. [REDACTED] hadn't been drinking and said that she would take me to her flat in Girvan but the social workers said no. I remember sitting on my gran's stairs, holding onto the banisters. My Uncle [REDACTED] walked in and I was screaming and crying asking him not to let them take me away, but they did.
57. The social worker woman said they had found somewhere for me to stay. They took me to stay with a woman in Castle Park in Irvine. She was the daughter of the woman I used to see after school in Castle Park, as part of the Kids and Carers programme. It was five minutes from where my mum stayed. The woman had two wee boys. I stayed there for a good few days and missed school.
58. I remember her house having a thick, soft carpet. I would have breakfast with them in the mornings and they were really caring. The woman bought me this new toy that was out at the time. I felt like they were really nice and that I could live there forever, but the social worker came and took me away. I didn't want to leave because they were nicer to me and had a nicer house.
59. I was then taken away from Castle Park. The social worker said I was going somewhere not far away. I thought I was going to my mum's but they stopped outside a massive house and I thought I was going to be staying with another family. It was actually a children's home called Burnside Children's Home in Irvine.

Burnside Children's Home, Irvine

60. [REDACTED]

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

61. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
- 62.
63. A taller woman with blonde hair was my social worker then. She took me to Burnside to the social work office in Dreghorn after two days. My mum was there. She had pillows with her for some reason. Social workers had been trying to contact my mum for a few days but she'd stayed in Girvan after I was taken away. She was told to go to their office in Dreghorn when she got back.
64. I was put in a play room while social workers spoke to my mum. I kept saying I wasn't happy and I wanted to go back to the woman in Castle Park where I had been. I had seen what those two wee boys had. They had a lovely carpet and a perfect childhood. The woman had a well-kept home. I wished she was my mum.
65. I know it's horrible because I love my mum to bits and she was good to me, but there were times when she could have been better. I feel bad for saying it but I didn't want to live with the drink and the bad childhood by that point. I was crying but they wouldn't listen and sent me back to my mum's anyway.
66. I could have gone back sooner if my mum had come home earlier, but she decided to stay in Girvan for a few days after I was taken away.
67. I was banned from going to Girvan after that. I was on a supervision order and one of the conditions was that I was not to be taken to Girvan. It was considered not to be a safe place for me.

Life back at home

68. I then stayed with my mum for a while. I went to St Michael's High School in Kilwinning. My brother lived with us too. My sister was in and out of Hospital.
69. [REDACTED] had mental health problems as I was growing up. She used to pretend she was walking on water and thought she was Jesus. She also tried to kill herself. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I used to cry to my teachers at school because I was worried she'd be dead by the time I got home. She was in and out of Ailsa Hospital in Ayr for her mental health problems.
70. My brother was working and pretending he wasn't taking drugs. He had become a heroin addict. He was my idol when I was growing up. I would tell everyone he was amazing. He was a postman and I loved Postman Pat. I thought he was the tallest and strongest person in the world. He was the only person who had been there for me. That changed as I got older.
71. My brother would sometimes talk my mum into having a drink. It wouldn't just be one drink though; it would go on for about a month. It would be bottle after bottle. I would be forgotten about and my dinner would be forgotten about. She would be shouting and bawling. It wasn't nice.
72. I ran away a few times but I had nobody to turn to. I had no family I could stay with. I wasn't brave enough to sleep on the street so I would always go home. Social workers were still involved but I couldn't talk to them. They were the last people I would turn to after what they had done to me with [REDACTED] GQQ [REDACTED] I couldn't talk to them in case they put me into an even worse situation.
73. I left school when I was sixteen years old. I wasn't allowed to stay on. I sat my standard grades and passed every exam I sat, even though I never got the best of grades.

74. I went to the social work for help a couple of times when I was sixteen years old. I went to Bridgegate House in Irvine and also the office in Dreghorn. I spoke to a woman one of the times and she told me there was nothing they could do for me because I was an adult. She advised me to go homeless, which she said would help me get my own tenancy. I was also given a leaflet to call for help. I called the number, but the place had shut down ages ago.
75. I went straight to college. I was alright at college. I was happy there because everybody treated each other fairly and nobody bullied me.
76. At home, my big brother's drug habit got worse. He had been stealing my jewellery. He was also been violent towards me and my mum. My brother ended up in jail. I was at college and I told my mum I couldn't take any more. She didn't want me to leave and she didn't want my brother coming back to her house. She decided to get a house swap and move away from [REDACTED] I helped her and we moved to [REDACTED] in Irvine. My sister was in Ayr by this point, and had a son who lived with my Auntie [REDACTED] in Girvan.
77. I never lasted long in [REDACTED] My big brother got out of jail and he came back to my mum's. The situation at home got worse. My mum and big brother's drinking was getting out of hand. They were arguing and my mum would stop me from eating her food. She would shout at me and they would both gang up on me. I couldn't sleep because of the fighting so I was going to college tired and starving. I wanted to go to college because I didn't want to be like my family.
78. There were hit men looking for my brother, and they stopped my sister in the street and asked where he was. When I found that out, I decided my family situation was too much and I moved out. I was only in [REDACTED] for seven months.
79. I went to the Council to get help to move out when I was eighteen years old. They put me into Quarrier's Hostel. I wasn't sure about going to the hostel at first. I felt like I was deceiving my mum, but I went anyway.

Quarrier's Hostel – Saltcoats and Kilwinning

80. Quarrier's Hostel was on Green Street in Saltcoats. It was weird when I first went in. I was taken to my room and left there. I sat on the bed and the bed broke. I sat there for ages on my own in the dark. I didn't know what was happening. I didn't realise you had to put a card in the slot for the electricity to come on. I was too scared to press the buzzer in case I got in trouble or thrown out. Nobody had ever listened to me before so I didn't think anybody would listen to me now.
81. There were sixteen to 25 year olds in Quarrier's Hostel. We stayed in self-contained rooms with a kitchen. People showed me the ropes after I got comfortable. It was probably the wrong folk because I started drinking four bottles of Mad Dog 20/20 alcohol a day. I was still going to college.
82. I started [REDACTED] trying to kill myself. I smashed my room up one time and smashed all the plates. [REDACTED]
83. I had key workers called Gillian and Charlene in Quarrier's. I was referred to a Counsellor called Zoe Taylor at an organisation called SAY Women in Glasgow. The main reason I was seeing Zoe was because I got raped. That didn't happen in care. She dealt with sexual abuse. I told her other things too. I loved her because she was amazing, but I hated her at the same time because she asked me stupid questions.
84. I also got referred to a self-harm clinic called Penumbra on Stanley Road in Ardrossan. I spoke to a woman with dark hair there. I also went to Rape Crisis in Kilmarnock.
85. I was moved out of Quarrier's building in Saltcoats after four months. I moved to another Quarrier's building [REDACTED] in Kilwinning. This was to separate me from the people I was drinking with in Saltcoats because I was drinking too much and going off the rails. There was also a rapist in the building who I was fighting with.

86. The hostel in Kilwinning only had five or six girls in it. It was like a house and like living in a family. They thought I was a nice lassie and it would benefit me to let me stay somewhere smaller. My key workers there were called Kelly Gilmour and Angela Main.
87. I refused to unpack my bags in Kilwinning for ages. I kept saying I wanted to go back to Saltcoats to be with my pals. It is a good thing that they moved me though to get me away from that crowd, or I could have ended up on drugs. I was in the Kilwinning hostel for nine months.
88. I stuck at college, which was in Kilwinning, so easier for me to get to. I still tried to do something and I got my qualifications as a beauty therapist.
89. I left Quarrier's Hostel when I was nineteen years old.

Reporting of abuse

90. I told my social worker about being abused by my foster carer, GQQ and her eighteen year old daughter, I told her at the time, when I was four years old. I also told my mum and sister at the time. My social worker, Eileen Fleming did nothing about it and said that I was making it up because I was a devious child.
91. I spoke to Zoe Taylor from SAY Women in Glasgow about some things when I was eighteen years old. I also spoke to my Quarrier's key workers, Gillian and Charlene when I was in Quarrier's Hostel in Saltcoats. I think I told them all about GQQ and how my social worker hadn't done anything about it.
92. I was referred to Penumbra on Stanley Road in Ardrossan. I spoke to a woman with dark hair there. I can't remember her name. I told her all about GQQ and how Eileen Fleming hadn't listened to me. I felt like I wanted to tell people now because people had started listening to me. This woman told me not to bother saying

anything about it because it would make things worse for me. She said GQQ was dead. She also said she knew her, so I think she was GQQ's friend.

93. I reported GQQ to the police in Saltcoats about a year ago. I didn't report because I didn't think she mattered, even though she was part of it. The police were very nice and came out and spoke to me. They said they couldn't do anything about it and I had to report it to the Social Work Department.
94. I reported the incidents of rape to the police. None of them were in care. The one that happened when I was older was a guy called My pal had tried to set me up with him. I knew him.
95. I waited three weeks before going to the police after it happened. I showed them text messages from the guy. He even apologised in one of the messages. The guy got arrested from college where he was doing a construction course. The case got to Kilmarnock Sheriff Court but it was dropped because there wasn't enough evidence. It didn't go to trial. Nothing happened.

Life after care

96. I got help from Outreach Support, which is part of Quarrier's, where they give you tenancy support after leaving. I was still seeing Zoe Taylor from SAY Women in Glasgow.
97. I met my boyfriend when I was nineteen years old. We started going out two years later, in 2010.
98. I got my own tenancy in Ardrossan when I was 21 years old. I was so happy. My gran had died years earlier and left me some money. I eventually got it and spent it wisely. I got a cooker, washing machine and bed. I decorated my house.

99. I have been with [REDACTED] since I was 21 years old. We have a little boy called [REDACTED] I love him to bits. Seeing his smile everyday makes everything better.
100. I have had social workers try to get involved with [REDACTED] but I sent them on their merry way. I let them come in and see my house and whatever they wanted to see and filled out their form. I was happy that they were taking the time to do that and I told them that. They marked their file for no further action and left. They were barking up the wrong tree.
101. I have a good relationship with my mum now. She hasn't drank for four years.

Impact

102. I think Eileen Fleming was more to blame than the foster carer, GQQ [REDACTED] who abused me. I was taken away from my mother and was placed me in a worse situation because of a stupid decision Eileen Fleming made. She then didn't believe anything I said because she thought I was a devious child. It has affected the rest of my life.
103. I am not making stuff up about GQQ [REDACTED] If I was making stuff up, I would say it about everybody.
104. I feel that whenever bad things happen to me that it is my fault. GQQ [REDACTED] used to tell me that things were my fault. She was allowed to get a job as a foster carer so I thought maybe everybody else was right and that I was wrong. I have done stupid things in the past that I am not proud of. I feel that I am not a good person. I've always been told I'm a bad person.
105. When I was pregnant with [REDACTED] I did everything by the book. I watched what I ate and didn't drink alcohol or coffee. I felt like that was the only thing I had ever been in control of. I don't want [REDACTED] to think I am a bad person or to be a bad person. He keeps me going.

106. [REDACTED] and I haven't had the best of relationships at times, but we always stay together.
107. I don't have confidence and I think I am stupid. I was thick as mince at school but I still tried. I went to classes and still passed my exams. I used to go to school and worry about my sister. I went to college because I wanted to be better than my brother and sister, but I'm not; I'm worse. I've been trying to build my confidence up because I don't have any.
108. I don't like talking to people I don't know. I pretend I have confidence but I don't. I always feel fat and ugly.
109. I have had key workers and been to see support groups like Penumbra, Rape Crisis and Women's Aid, but I am not somebody who will talk to anybody. I don't like how they ask you to talk about your thoughts and feelings. I don't understand my thoughts and feelings and I never will. I know I felt numb as a child when things were happening, but that's all.
110. I am not good with trust. I have no trust.

Records

111. I tried to get my social work files from Ayrshire Council last year. Everybody has shrugged me off. I was left in a room in the social work office at Saltcoats Town Hall for over an hour on my own. Nobody came back to speak to me. I think it is because I am naming social workers as being the people in the wrong.
112. It would be useful to have my records to find out about dates. I am not making dates up but I might not have them absolutely right because I am remembering them as a wain.

Other information

- 113. I understand why I was taken into care with my mum and dad drinking. My mum did still look after me when I was younger. If I had been listened to as a child, I wouldn't have had these problems.

- 114. I feel that Eileen Fleming and Robert Lockhart have a lot to answer for. They were social workers who should have been helping me. There are too many wains getting killed every day because social services are a scam. They are all doing what they want to do.

- 115. I wasn't listened to when I complained about my foster carer. My social worker said I was lying and that I was a devious child. If a child is sad and upset, they need to be moved. Even if I was lying, I should have been moved.

- 116. Children need to be listened to, no matter how small they are and what they are saying. I never made any complaint about any other foster carer. They should have realised that and investigated my complaint.

- 117. There need to be better tests about who is allowed to become a foster carer or social worker.

- 118. 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... 

Dated. *06/12/17*