

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FBB

Support person present: No

1. My name is FBB My date of birth is 1952. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in a hospital in Leith which is where I stayed with my family. My entire family always called me FBB My dad was a seaman and worked on the trawlers. His name was and my mum was In those days there was no council housing and we stayed in a camp full of Nissen huts at Lochinvar which was in Granton. I do not remember this as I was so young. At that time I had a sister called who was one year older than me however my parents went on to have nine other children who were called and For the life of me I cannot remember ever living with and I cannot say definitely the order most of my siblings were born. went to a convent and the first time I remember seeing her was when I was about sixteen. They were all brought up in care some all their lives and some for shorter terms. is dead now but he was brought up in a home somewhere near Aberdeen and he spent his life up there. I only met him once and I think he was a year or so younger than me. My sisters went to a convent but I don't know where my brothers went when in care.
3. We were very poor and my parents often argued and fought and I mean proper fighting with the language being terrible. Both my parents drank but my mum was the

heavier drinker and with that came her cruelty, laziness and violence. She was also very promiscuous. There is only about a year between each of her children being born. My dad was also spending time with other women. I don't remember much about living with my parents before I went into care the first time. I have a picture of me however I am not even convinced that it is me in that picture and not one of my other siblings. A lot of my memories are based on the times I returned to stay with my parents in between care placements or hearing things from my parents especially when they were arguing.

4. When I was six weeks old my mum dumped me on a step at a children's home in Canning Lane, Edinburgh. I think it may have been called Claremound or something like that. I can only remember there was a sandpit and that the nurses who looked after us wore a blue uniform. I don't know how long I stayed there but I do have a vague recollection of sitting on the nurses knee and playing in the sandpit. I also recall being examined and can remember a woman and a man standing in front of me and being taken in a car when it was snowing. That is when I believe I was being taken to my foster carers house in Fife. These memories are not clear to me but just distant. I have a lasting memory of trying to push myself up off something hard which I have always thought was the step at that home. It's been with me all my life but I just don't know and can't remember things when I was so young. I do not think I ever returned home from Canning Lane and that I went from there to foster care.

FRN-SPO [REDACTED] foster care, [REDACTED] Fife

5. My first memory of being with my foster carers is sitting on their floor in front of a fire. I remember having wee short trousers on which were made of hard wool and the fire was red hot which made me sick. I have no timeline for my memories so it is difficult for me to know the dates and order of things from that time. My memories include two women speaking to each other but I don't remember the conversation. I believe I would have still been a baby and do have a memory of being in a high chair in the kitchen whilst my foster mother was making jam.

6. My foster parents were called FRN-SPO and whilst I stayed with them I was referred to as FBB although my name was never officially changed. I think the man's name may have been and he was tall and thin. He wore a grey suit and he worked but I don't know where or what he did. She had long jet black hair and seemed tall to me, maybe five foot six inches tall. I don't recall what I called them but it was possibly mum and dad.
7. They stayed in a terraced corner house at either or Fife. I know the address to be one of those I have provided as in later life I went back to see the house. The house had a large garden to the front and back. The front door led to a living room and kitchen downstairs and upstairs I had a bedroom at the back. I had a single bed. The kitchen had steps leading to the back garden where Mr grew lots of vegetables. I don't remember the rest of the layout of the house but it was always clean and tidy. I have no recollection how many bedrooms there were or even where the toilet was.
8. They had three other children staying with them but I don't know whose children they were. The oldest was called and he was good to me. He was jovial and he was a big boy possibly aged around fifteen. He would put me in a wheelbarrow and take me to the saw mill or race me down the street. There was who was also about fifteen or she might have been older than and a younger girl called who was between eight and ten years old. They also had a cat called Cheeky.

Routine at Foster Care – FRN-SPO, Fife

9. In the mornings when I was younger I remember sitting watching Andy Pandy on the TV and I also had Andy Pandy pyjamas to wear.
10. There was never any affection given no matter what the circumstances. I had measles once and was in bed for three weeks. There was no affection or love even as a sick child. The only kind of attention I got was from the man. He would take me fishing and into the garden. He was a kindly man and at that time things were not

bad even if there was no affection. Mrs^{FRN} [REDACTED] was very strict and a church goer although I never went to church with her. She liked things to be done in a certain way and if not she would give you a clout around the ear.

11. The man took a disease in his arms which left him losing the use of both his hands. I remember he had a blue car used by disabled people but he would still take me out as he had these hook things on the end of his arms to help him steer the car. We would still go fishing and go for long walks to reservoirs or to the countryside. He also had a mate with a garage and we would all go fishing. We never went away on day trips or holidays as a family. I remember being very sad that he was ill as I liked him. That was the only type of affection I got.

12. Mrs^{FRN} [REDACTED] became a carer for her husband and when he became ill that's when things started to change. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were no longer around so it was just me and [REDACTED] in the house. I have no idea where they went they were just not there after Mr [REDACTED] became ill. I would be fed and sent straight out to play so she could look after her husband. I was a burden and was made to feel it. I would say that Mr [REDACTED] was also made to feel a burden to her. I would go and play in the parks and fields near the gas works. I met a young boy called [REDACTED] and we were really good friends. He had a heart problem. We would play at an old haunted house which had an orchard next to it and we would go and steal apples. I got caught and I fell off the wall and through the greenhouse one day we were out playing. I still have the scar on my knee caused by my fall but at the time I hid the injury as I was scared to tell Mrs^{FRN} [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] died when he was about eight years old. I found out when I went to his house for him to come out and play and his mum told me. His mum was lovely but I was so upset and cried my eyes out. He was my only friend and I didn't have anyone to talk to about what had happened or to help me understand about death. In those days everything was hard, the people were hard.

13. As Mr [REDACTED] deteriorated he needed more care and I was often made to sit under the kitchen table for hours. Mrs^{FRN} [REDACTED] would shout at me and she became nasty. Mr [REDACTED] couldn't help and she actually hit him a couple of times. This made me

cry as I liked him. In hindsight I can see that Mrs ^{FRN} [REDACTED] was under a lot of stress but things just steadily got worse.

Food

14. The food was fine before Mr [REDACTED] became ill, I don't remember much of it but there are no bad memories of food until that point. After that I survived on cat food primarily which was sent to me when I was in the shed.

Schooling

15. I went to the Primary School down the road which is where I first started school. I was taught to write and got to play with blocks. In those days you went up a class every year and I remember I was there long enough to go up a class.
16. When I was in Primary two I was in the upper playground and leant against a metal railing which was slack and it fell onto the lower playground. I got the blame for this and was sent home. My foster parents were shocked as I was accused of deliberately throwing the metal spike to the playground below and narrowly missing a child. I knew this to be wrong but in those days adults didn't believe children. I was made to feel bad about it and I had done nothing wrong. Mrs ^{FRN} [REDACTED] gave me a cuff across the ear which at that time was standard procedure if children had been accused of doing something wrong. It was not a case of anyone at the school or home asking me what had happened. I ended up back at the school but under a different teacher.
17. I walked to and from school myself as it was only a few streets away from my house and back then there was very little traffic. I crossed side streets but not any main roads. One day I tripped over my school bag smashing my front teeth out on the kerb. It was very painful and my foster mum took me to the doctors but that was it, there was no comfort given. I presume it was just a case of me losing my baby teeth. I just remember them being all shattered along the front on my mouth.

Visits/inspections

18. The welfare woman came to visit now and again. I was sent to the kitchen so she and Mrs ^{FRN} could talk. I remember the welfare woman as big and burly and she wore a navy uniform. She never spoke to me. I remember hearing her ask Mrs ^{FRN} on one of her visits if I wet the bed and she replied that I did which was untrue. I got the impression Mrs ^{FRN} wanted rid of me. Any visits were known about in advance and I would always be sent out of the room when they were going on.

Birthdays/Christmas

19. I have no memory of any birthday or Christmas when I was staying with the ^{FRN-SPO}

Abuse at Foster Care – Mr and Mrs ^{FRN-SPO}

20. Mrs ^{FRN} changed the more care she had to give to her husband and she became very nasty and cruel. When I was late home for my tea she would send me to the shed in the back garden and lock me in. It was only an eight by six building that Mr ^{FRN} had built when he had been well. It would be for any reason really, just things that kids would normally do like accidentally dropping a dish. I was sent there even if she was just in a bad mood. I would be made to sleep there overnight. There was no heating, any form of light or electricity and no bed or blankets. I would just be wearing pyjamas and had to sleep on the floor. She started putting me in there regularly and for longer, two nights or three nights at a time. I would be starving. I definitely thought she didn't want me around. Each time I was brought out the shed I was allowed back in the house. I started to become reclusive. I would sit in silence and even at school I kept myself to myself. I remember asking myself why this was happening to me and what had I done. These memories are vivid.
21. One day Mrs ^{FRN} sent ^{FRN} to the shed with cat meat on a saucer to feed me. She put it on the floor for me to eat and this became a regular pattern for me to be

fed. I had to eat it as I was starving, there was no choice. Then one day [REDACTED] sat on the floor in the corner and started to play with herself and I had to watch her. She took a nail and pushed it into the top of my penis. It was very sore and she said if I told mum she would do worse to me. That was the first and most horrific thing that had happened to me. She would have been between eight and ten years old.

22. From around that time I was only ever given cat food to eat and this was normally given to me on a saucer to eat from the floor. [REDACTED] would bring the food to me in the shed and she would play with herself and I was forced to watch but she never harmed me again. No-one noticed any change in me whether that was physically or mentally. I never said anything to anyone what was going on as I was so terrified after [REDACTED] had hurt me. I just lived in fear that something worse could happen to me.

Leaving foster care

23. When I was five or six years old I was removed from Mrs ^{FRN} [REDACTED]'s care but I don't know why. I was collected by the welfare department and taken back to my parent's house travelling by train and car. I had had no contact with my parents or any of my family since I had been dumped in Canning Lane so I didn't know them and didn't recognise them. I had never been given any information about my family so I knew nothing about them and nor did I have any memory of living with them. In the intervening years that I had been in care they had had more children but they were all in care. It was just me living with them back at home.
24. When I got home the house was clean and tidy and we were living in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Niddrie Mains, Edinburgh by then. There was a train set given to me by the welfare department and I played with it on that first day when they were there. The following day my mum took the train set off me and it was sold.
25. When mum started to feed me I was being sick all the time. She took me to the doctors and he said I was suffering from severe malnutrition. He put me on malt extract four times a day and big brown vitamin tablets also. No-one had noticed

before I left care and my parents wouldn't have known what I looked like growing up anyway so they were not going to notice anything either.

26. I remember the [REDACTED] turned up at the door although I have no idea who told them. I had my picture taken standing over the sink, I was so skinny I looked like someone out of Auschwitz. There was an investigation and Mrs^{FRN} [REDACTED] said that I had been bad and had done things like hitting her husband but I was only five years old and in any case I liked him. She was believed and that was the attitude back then. I wasn't believed and nothing happened about me being so malnourished. No-one questioned how a child my age could have done all the things she said I did to people who were bigger and more powerful than me. I was told by the welfare via my parents that everything I had said was lies and my mum gave me a hell of a tanking for that.
27. Being at home was not good and things turned sour very quickly. I had been put into Craigmillar Primary School but someone came into the school and took me away to Redhall House in Edinburgh. I remember I was wearing the small grey suit comprising of shorts and a jacket. This was my uniform from when I had been going to school in [REDACTED]. I don't know how long I had been at school but it could only have been a matter of weeks before they removed me. I think mum had gone on the drink again. She would spend all the money on drink and be very promiscuous. I ended up going back and forward between Redhall and my family home. I was probably returned home every time my mum came off the drink. For me it was just a back and forward thing and I never knew if I was coming or going. I would last only a couple of weeks back home before they returned me back to Redhall. I felt like my life was hectic.
28. Every time I went home it was the same. I was made to do all the housework. I was up at 4am and made dad his breakfast and lit the fire. I had to run the messages and clean the stairs. I was regularly beaten by my mum. When the kids came along I did all the caring, feeding, washing and changing of them. She did next to nothing and would disappear for weeks and I would be back in Redhall. It was confusing for a child my age.

Redhall House, Edinburgh

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Redhall House, Edinburgh

58. I left when I was eight years old. It was without warning or any explanation. The adults do all the talking and decision making. I was just put in a room and then taken in a car to Red House.

Red House, Musselburgh

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Red House, Musselburgh

104. I left Red House when I was eleven and I can only assume that my mother managed to convince the welfare she was fit and capable to look after me.

Life after being in care

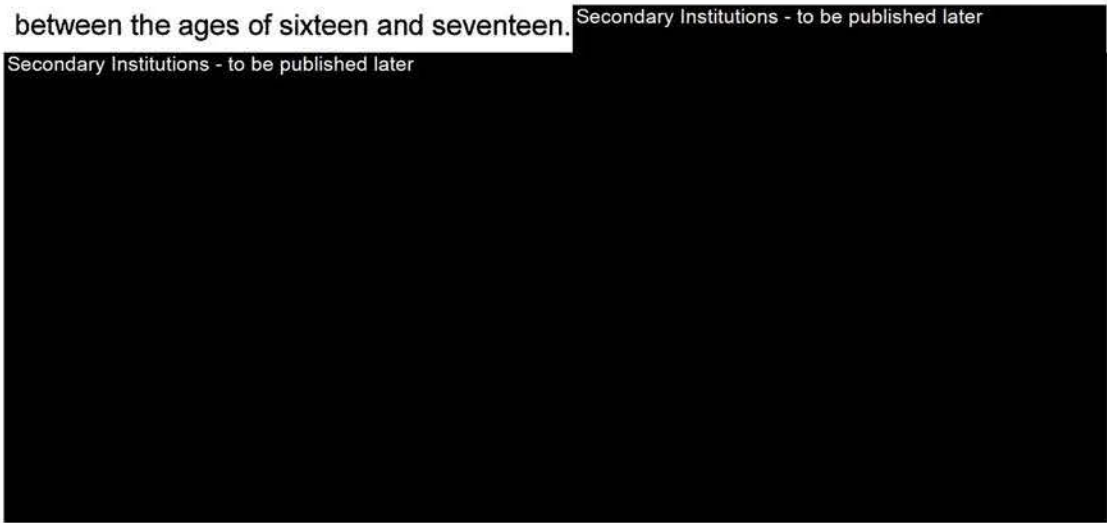
105. When I got home I was the oldest child with [REDACTED] who was barely five and [REDACTED] who was still in a pushchair. It was a full time job for me to look after my brothers and do all the housework as my mum was still drinking heavily. I was always either late for school as I had to get up at 4am to make dad's breakfast and light the fire or my mum kept me off school to look after my brothers. When I was late for school I would get six of the belt. I don't know if my dad was aware just how much school I missed as he was away working. He just thought I was an imbecile.

106. No matter how bad life was in care it was far worse at home. I was badly abused by my mother primarily but my dad also treated me badly. I was regularly beaten and locked in the coal cellar. I had to have cold baths and we often had no electricity. I was sent to the chip shop to get my dad's dinner one evening and I lost a sixpence which was what I had to pay for his chips. Mum had been drinking all day and she dragged me out of bed and hit me with the fireside brush which split my head open. She threatened me not to tell my dad what she had done and when he came home he just assumed I had deserved it anyway. I needed to be taken to the doctors and she told him I had fallen. I would say I was battered every day at the hands of my mum.

107. The welfare visited once or twice over the first couple of weeks I got home and if I saw them it would be with my mum and dad present. Mum and dad argued regularly with each other, fighting, breaking windows and smashing up furniture. The police would come and they would arrest both of them. That's the only time the welfare would get involved. My brothers were put into care in Glasgow for a short time as they were Catholic but I cannot remember where. I had never been baptised as I had been abandoned as a baby that's why I got put into different places. It just went on and on with them living like that.
108. One night on new year's eve my gran came to see us. I had been in the cupboard and I stepped on a piece of glass and broke it. Mum and dad had been drinking and all hell broke loose. I was tied to the settee having been stripped naked by my dad whilst my mum restrained me. Mum held my feet down whilst dad repeatedly hit me all over my head and body with a big belt with studs on it. I was battered unconscious and the last I heard was my gran screaming whilst my mum was shouting at my dad to keep hitting me. The next thing I remember was waking up in my bed with stud marks and bruises everywhere. Years later when my gran was in her nineties she told me that she struggled to live with what had happened that night. At no time in my life have my parents ever acknowledged what they did or apologised for this.
109. Another time when I was looking after my brothers I fell asleep and [REDACTED] got a belt and battered [REDACTED], who would only have been about four years old, until he was black and blue. Mum came in drunk and [REDACTED] said it was me. I got a hammering for that and [REDACTED] never admitted what he had done or ever apologised to me.
110. On another occasion I was standing at the kitchen work top eating my dinner when the door opened and my mother picked up the poker from the fire and threw it at me. I instinctively shut the door to protect myself and the poker came straight through it. She nearly killed me and I would say that was the closest she came to actually killing me. This was life back home, it was just constant hammerings every day. Everyone knew as the neighbours would hear everything going on and the police were always at the house arresting mum.

111. My life became a routine of raking buckets for clothes and standing outside pubs in the Grassmarket with my siblings. My mum would take me and my brothers to the houses of men where she would go into the bedroom with them leaving us sitting outside. One of my brothers has repeatedly asked me who his real father is. I know who he is but I just cannot tell him. I could be standing outside pubs with the pram as late as 10pm.
112. The school had made a mistake with my age so at fourteen I had to re-sit another year but as soon as I could I left school and home. I would be fifteen years old and had various jobs but I ended up on the streets for five years. I was sent to court in Edinburgh and was ordered to go home because I was not sixteen however I refused and was sentenced to three weeks at a remand home in Gilmerton. I ended up on the streets and in a hostel at 75 Grassmarket in a 6x4 box with nothing to my name. I would sleep in Princes Street Gardens, alleys or stairways. For food I would rake hotel bins because I was starving. There was no help. I couldn't claim benefits because I didn't have a permanent address and just lived by my wits. I would beg or steal to survive but I had nothing and nobody but it was better than being at home. It was hard to get out of that pit of despair and poverty and I tried to commit suicide once ending up at the Royal Infirmary. I was seen by a psychiatrist but he didn't have a clue and didn't seem interested and nor did he care. He just judged me as homeless. Regardless of how bad life was I would never go back home
113. I then got into trouble and ended up at Wellington Farm Approved School, Penicuik between the ages of sixteen and seventeen. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later



114. I have also worked as a miner and did three years of my mining apprenticeship before the 1971 miner's strike. Apprentices were not allowed to strike so we were blacklegged by the Union. Years later I did get an apology from the union but that was the end of that job.
115. I ended up getting an assistant manager job in a hotel, life started looking up and I met my wife. We got married when I was 24, got a house in Pilton with nice neighbours. My wife already had a son called [REDACTED] who was three years old then. I consider [REDACTED] my son and brought him up as my own. We had three children together, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Somehow my mum found out where I was staying and she came and smashed the windows and one of my brothers shot the door off with a shotgun. He got the jail for that. There were other incidents with my family and ultimately my mother chased us out of Edinburgh. We moved to Fife and I got my diploma in auto engineering and had my own garage business for years. My children have grown up and I am proud of each of them. I came from nothing and have a beautiful family.
116. My children have never had to go through what I did and it keeps me sane that they are safe. I know I have been over protective and it has been hard to get it right to make sure they were safe whilst keeping what happened to me to myself. It took its toll and I became an alcoholic which nearly cost me my marriage and family. When someone abuses you they steal your childhood and I feel I didn't grow up to be the person I should have been. It's hard for my kids to understand that as they have grown up in different times and never faced what I did. My wife does know I was in care and when we got married I told her about the physical abuse. My children are now aware, not the details of the abuse just that I was physically abused. I have never spoken to them or my wife about the sexual stuff.
117. My wife and kids put up with my drinking. I was not violent but I was starting to go down the route of being verbally aggressive and would say horrible things. That's just as bad as what my mum did to me and I was on the verge of calling it a day. I realised

I needed help and I went to see my GP who referred me to a counsellor. I was in my forties at this time. The counsellor couldn't handle it and gave me a booklet to read. She said I wasn't the only person to suffer in care but she couldn't believe I was still alive and hadn't killed myself. She sent me a letter to say she couldn't cope with what I had told her. It must have been overwhelming for her. There were no further appointments.

118. I came off the drink, got my act together and got a job. I stopped hating these people and this helped me deal with the volcanic like feelings I had. That's why I drank as it helped me to forget it. I changed and whether my kids can ever forgive me for the things I have said I can only hope. I have apologised and they now know about my time in care but I don't know if they can understand as they have not experienced my life. I know it's not an excuse. I have had no further counselling or support.
119. I have been diagnosed with a heart condition and at my age they cannot treat it as it would be too high risk. One day my heart will just stop. I have a 75% risk of stroke. My dad is still alive but he has suffered a stroke. I take medication daily. I have also suffered from depression, especially during the time I was drinking, but not since I learned to cope. I feel in a better place without hating.
120. It was my choice to get baptised whilst I was in the approved school. This happened in the Protestant church we attended.

Impact

121. I feel I wasn't given the chance to be the person I should have been growing up and that this affected most of my adult life. I don't think anyone can understand what it is like growing up and then dealing with the consequences of childhood abuse unless you have experienced it. I have done well in my life but it is always there. I have become a survivor. It took me years to stop hating my abusers and when I did I feel I became a better husband and father. I don't forgive them but I have found a way to stop hating them. Before then I know my drinking and the bad behaviour that resulted

from this stems from me not being able to cope with the abuse I suffered both in care and at home.

122. I am still a loner and don't really have friends. I like to work very hard and over the years I made lots of money. I don't think I can trust anyone except my immediate family. I believe that the people in charge were to blame. In care shouldn't mean your childhood is stolen, it should be safe.
123. I have had no contact with my family and most of my siblings I have not seen in over thirty years. I still visit my father once every six years but he is a father on a piece of paper and I have no love or bond with him. I felt the same about my mother when she was still alive.

Reporting of abuse

124. I have never reported anything as I was too busy surviving both physically and mentally. Most people like me never told anyone. They say that children make up stories but I am coming to the end of my life now and why would I lie. I have nothing to gain. I have not tried to get any financial redress, money will not buy back my childhood. I was abused and not on a small scale. Most of the people who abused me are probably dead but I believe they will have paid for what they did. Abuse in these places and foster care were rife and people hid behind a curtain of doing good and no one in power questioned them.

Records

125. I have tried to get my records but you have to pay for everything. I have also tried to recover the [REDACTED] article from their archives but I do not know how to do these things. Researching things like ancestry isn't something I feel able to do on my own. I have also tried to get photos from school but have not been able to find them. It just seems to me that it's all official and I don't have the power to get records from these places. Records would have filled in the gaps and help me remember more. [REDACTED] Secondary I

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

126.

Lessons to be Learned

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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128. I hope that what I have told the Inquiry can help some other kids somewhere and give a full understanding of what life in care can be like. It won't change my life but it could be used to help kids now growing up in care. We can learn from the mistakes of the past. I wish government bodies would understand what it is like to live with the torment as it's a living hell. A childhood is very precious and being brought up in abusive care means that childhood is stolen. If by coming forward I can help even one child in care then I will have done something good with my life. I cannot change what happened to me or the other kids who were in care with me.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

129.

Other information

130. 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.

FBB

Signed.....

Dated.....

6/03/2020