

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FDJ
[REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name is FDJ [REDACTED]. My birth surname was FDJ [REDACTED] but I changed to FDJ [REDACTED] when I was in foster care. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1982. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Dumbarton. I lived with my birth mother for the first few years. I think her first name was [REDACTED]. Her maiden name was [REDACTED]. She married a Polish male but I don't know what surname she used after she was married. I have heard from others that she was a chronic alcoholic and the subject of a lot of domestic violence. My mum died a few years ago. I have very little recollection of living with my mum. I would imagine that there was social work involvement from when I was born. I have countless brothers and sisters. There are many of my brothers and sisters who I have never met. I was in care from probably the age of three or four. I grew up in care with my brother FDD [REDACTED] and my sister, EOZ [REDACTED].
3. I believe I was living in Banff when I was taken into care. The first foster carers I went to were in [REDACTED]. They were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], and I think their last name may have been [REDACTED]. Me and my brother stayed with them for about a year. I only have fond memories from my time with them, no bad memories.
4. I am not quite sure why but we were moved from this family to go to a place called [REDACTED] which is a small village about three or four miles from Fraserburgh. I would

have been five at the time. I am not aware of any precursor to us moving, it just happened.

**Life in foster care with the [FJX/FJY] [REDACTED]
Fraserburgh**

5. The family we went to in [REDACTED] were [FJX/FJY] [REDACTED] [FJX] [REDACTED] was about 6'2" with an athletic build. [FJY] [REDACTED] was much shorter and quite slim. There was just me, my older brother and my younger sister. I went there first with my brother, [FDD] [REDACTED] I would have been five and [FDD] [REDACTED] about six years old. My sister, [EOZ] [REDACTED], joined us about a year later. The [FJX/FJY] [REDACTED] didn't have any other children. I believe that they were unable to have their own children. I have since been told that we were supposed to be there for a six week assessment but it was extended again and again. We ended up there for about twelve years.

6. When I was in my teenage years the [FJX/FJY] [REDACTED] wanted us to change our surnames from [FDJ] [REDACTED] to [FJX/FJY] [REDACTED]. My brother and sister changed theirs first. I was very reluctant to change my name and it was done very much against my will. There was huge emotional blackmail pressure to change my name. [FJY] [REDACTED] said things like "Why do you stay with us?", "What is wrong with us?", and "Don't you want to be part of the family?" [FJY] [REDACTED] was very aggressive about it. I don't think there was any consultation with my birth mum about changing our surname. The social work department had been awarded parental rights and responsibilities by that time so they wouldn't have had to consult my mum or my birth father.

7. The house we were in initially was a council house. When my sister came we moved, literally across the road. The next council house we moved into was bigger and was previously [FJX] [REDACTED] parent's house. The address there was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Fraserburgh, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. Initially I think we called [FJY] [REDACTED] and [FJX] [REDACTED] our aunt and uncle. It was our choice when we changed it to mum and dad. I shared a bedroom with [FDD] [REDACTED]. [EOZ] [REDACTED] had her own bedroom.

Routine with foster parents, the FJX/FJY

Earliest memories

8. My earliest memories with the FJX/FJY were that FJX the foster father was never there. I think he must have always been away working. My earliest memories of FJY my foster mother, was fear. I was always scared of her.

Schooling

9. I went to ██████████ Primary School where I had a lot of developmental delays. It was put down as learning difficulties. I actually had a genetic condition called ██████████ This causes learning difficulties, stunted growth and tumours. Primary school was difficult for me. In primary 4 I was diagnosed with a brain tumour so had to take some time off because of that. Something clicked with me in Fraserburgh Academy, my secondary school and I got on much better there. I have no bad memories from school. I did have some classroom support to help me. I have heard, but not sure if it true, that because my learning was so far delayed I was very close to getting sent to a special needs school. FJY told me this.

Chores

10. I was given chores to do like hoovering, cleaning and polishing. I didn't have an issue with that. FJY would just sit there smoking and reading her books. They were aggressively administered, very rigid and she has highly critical of the quality and speed that I did them in. Often she would ridicule me as well.

Family Visits

11. In the first four years or so my mum did come to visit us. She was really unreliable and quite often she just wouldn't turn up. FJY would be jealous about our mum coming. FJY would tell us "She is probably fucking drunk and has missed the train" and "If you like her that much why don't you go and live with her?". When my

mum did turn up I have pleasant memories of her. She brought us sweets. I seem to recall that the foster parents got on okay with my mum. When she left FJY would just criticise my mum to our faces about how she had failed as a mum. By the time I was nine FJY and FJX said that we were getting too upset when my mum came and that it affected our behaviour. They decided to stop my mum from coming to see us. This was absolutely not true. This was all just to fit their agenda.

12. My mum did sometimes write letters but I know we didn't get them all. Sometimes my mum would send a postcard and FJY would just throw it at me saying "That's from her". If FJY and FJX were upstairs, being an inquisitive child, I would have a wee look about the house. My mum had very distinctive handwriting and I found some of her letters. If my mum ever brought any gifts for us they would quickly disappear. They were never very big gifts, just what my mum could afford. My real dad came to see me. FJY and FJX were really rude to his face. When he left they were telling me he was a drug dealer, alcoholic, and a gangster-type figure. My dad brought a big train set but FJY stood on it and broke it and put it up in the loft. She sabotaged it deliberately, probably through jealousy. I cried when this happened but I just got hell for crying.

Trips / excursions

13. We went on holiday with the FJX/FJY FJX's uncle used to live in Wales so we used to go there. FJX used to go fishing. We were left to play in the caravan site or in the amusement arcade. I went to Spain once with them. When we were on holiday there were huge domestics between FJX and FJY FJY once even threatened to [REDACTED] I presume to commit suicide. My sister got upset and was crying. FJY just said things like "What the fuck are you crying for?" and "What the fuck is wrong with you?". So, even nice things like holidays would end up miserable. We never went to the cinema. We never had any day trips or anything like that. We didn't do things normal families would do.

Social work visits / Inspections / LAC Reviews

14. I had a social worker and his name was Mike Birch. He would have been in his late fifties then. I believe he is dead now. I have no real memories of ever seeing my social worker when I was with the [FJX/FJY] I do remember that there were children's hearings about us but we were never invited to them. The [FJX/FJY] just said that they would deal with that. I remember being given forms to fill in about being in care. [FJY] stood over me and it was heavily monitored what went on the forms. We were threatened and told what to write. I know that letters came from Kate Ramsden who was our children's rights officer. I often saw these opened letters lying about but we never got to see what was in the letters. We wouldn't dare pick up the letters and try to read them.
15. I know there were Looked After Children (LAC) reviews and we were part of that system. When we went to the LAC reviews I remember [FJY] threatening us about what we were allowed to say. If at any time the social workers came to the house, which was rare, [FJY] would tell us to say "fuck all". That was the language she would use. Because of that it would have seemed that we were all happy families. It was a complete nonsense.
16. Steve Hothersall, who was my social worker, took me out for a walk once. There was another social worker, who I had when I was a teenager, Lou Robertson. She visited me once. There was another support worker or volunteer who came to see me a few times. He took me out. I presume social work organised this. I presume it was something to do with my social well-being, or other issue that had been identified. His visits stopped but I don't really know why.

Healthcare

17. I don't remember ever going to the dentists but did occasionally see the doctor when I was with the [FJX/FJY] I asked them if I could see a speech therapist when I developed a stutter but they refused.

Birthdays/Christmas

18. When the FJX/FJY gave us gifts they would tell us something like "Fucking remember this isn't just for you, it's for any kid that comes here". Our birthdays were never celebrated. Twice we did get a bouncy castle but most of the time any celebrations were for FJY's sisters and nieces. If we didn't appear happy FJY would scream at us that it had cost her a fortune and we had better appreciate it. FJX never came to the parties, he was always working. Most birthdays we just got a card with maybe £10 in it. There was never any thought put into it. Christmases were a bit better. We got presents but there was never a festive spirit. My brother got a wee toy, a creepy-crawly thing that bounced off the walls. FJY took it off him because it was making too much noise.

Abuse in foster care, the FJX/FJY

19. FJY always said to me that if I wasn't happy I could leave. I was scared. She was always shouting at us. She would say that we needed her but she didn't need us. She used to shout at us. There was always lots of insinuation of what she was going to do to us. It was never actually spelled out. FJY was always right in my face and would shout at me. I was always terrified of FJY.
20. FJX didn't really do anything to me but he was 100% aware what was going on with FJY. As I got older it became more difficult for me to understand that FJX was aware what FJY was doing to us, but despite him having a strong character he didn't do anything to help us. I looked up to FJX and respected him a lot. This continued into my twenties. Now I see that he actually contributed to the pressure and stress in the house, because he did nothing to stop it. The only thing he did sometimes was he occasionally told FJY to calm down. This would be most likely if FJY was having a go at EOZ.

21. Another girl who was fifteen came as a foster child for a while. FJY didn't like it and became really jealous. She thought FJX would have an affair with her. FJY treated her like shit. That girl got pregnant and was thrown out.
22. FJX had an affair with my social worker's wife. She was his manager at work. When FJY found out about it, it led to massive domestic arguments and violence in the house. FJY even tried to commit suicide.
23. I remember when I was in primary 4 or 5 they thought I had a tumour on my brain. When we were at FJY's sister's house, FJY told her sister "If he has got what I think he has got, he is out ". I spoke to my brother recently and he remembers her saying that. When it was diagnosed she would tell me that just because I had a brain tumour didn't mean I couldn't do chores about the house. If I hoovered or did the ironing wrong, again FJY would just call me stupid and a spastic. About this time I also started to get hair on my body and my voice was breaking. She took great pleasure in embarrassing me and was mocking me. She was telling friends and neighbours I had a really big penis now.
24. One time, I would have been about eight and we were downstairs. FJY came down and asked "Who the fuck had left toothpaste in the sink?" . I didn't admit it straight away but said that it might have been me. Because I didn't say it was definitely me, we all got grounded and all our chocolate Easter eggs got taken off us.
25. FJY occasionally asked for a cuddle but it was only if ever she was in a bad place and needed it. This only happened about ten times in the twelve years I was with them. It was never natural to her. She never told me that I was loved by her. There was never any warmth or love that children need when they are growing up.
26. FJX was a real man's man. He would say nice things sometimes but there was never any love or affection from him. He was horrible to FDD He always talked down to him and even told FDD that he didn't like him. FJY was actually nicer to FDD but was horrible to me and my sister EOZ.

27. FJY got on well with FDD but not my sister EOZ. She was incredibly jealous of her. If FJX was mucking about, play fighting or tickling EOZ, FJY would go mental and start chucking things about. She would start shouting and screaming and show her jealousy.
28. FDD my brother was going to have an eighth birthday party. Everything was organised. In the lead-up to it he wet his bed. Because of that FJY cancelled his party. When FDD friends came to the door days before the party, she told them all that the party was cancelled because he was a "Tink" and had pissed the bed. That was a common thing to be called. FDD regularly wet the bed. FJY often called us cunts, little shits and bastards, things like that. It was almost a daily occurrence. FJY would call us this when she had friends round. She loved to mock us. All the neighbours who were friends with FJY would know our full history. They would know everything about us.
29. Towards the end of my time there I got closer to FJX. All the time, with hindsight, they were trying to divide us and rule over us. There was hardly a day went by that FJY didn't shout at us and make one of us cry. If one of us was shouted at and was crying, the other two would start crying. FJY would ask why I was crying for the other person and said that the other person didn't even like me. She did this all the time, trying to divide us. We weren't emotionally strong enough to deal with it.
30. I had a very difficult time growing up with my condition with all the developmental delays and tumours that it caused. If I had some nurturing, support and care from my foster parent it would have helped me get through it. FJY made me feel really stupid and she called me stupid. If ever I spelled something wrong she would call me a spastic. I didn't get any support from her. My inefficiencies were just mocked. I had difficulty measuring out ingredients for cooking. She would never try and help me, she would just make me feel thick and stupid. With my my hand to eye coordination was really difficult. I remember in my first year with the FJX/FJY I couldn't tie my shoelaces. FJY would grab me and push me across the room. She called me fucking stupid because I couldn't do it. I think she was ashamed that I couldn't tie my laces.

31. When I was at Fraserburgh Academy in the 90s, they banned a certain type of clothing because it promoted drug taking. I kept getting into trouble at school because FJY insisted that I wear these clothes. She thought it was funny to send my brother to school in a horrendous jacket as well. She just took great pleasure in it.
32. I can't say I was ever assaulted by FJY at any time. There were explicit threats of violence and I was maybe grabbed and pushed a wee bit sometimes. It was more the constant shouting and the threats that I remember. FJY used to nip and throw things at EOZ when she was five or six years old. I remember FJY once ripped a knitted cardigan off EOZ after EOZ started crying saying she didn't want to stay there anymore. FJY was in uncontrolled rage when she did this. FJX's sister was present when this happened. I also saw domestic violence between FJX and FJY. He wouldn't punch or kick her when we were there but he might grab her by the throat and throw her to the ground.
33. FJX was a complete failure as a father. He could have stopped what was going on in that house and protected us. He could have spent time with us. He was a fantastic footballer and a fantastic joiner. He could have turned his hand to anything. One to one time with FJX was nice, like when he used to take me to the hospital. I started watching him playing football and we used to watch Monday night football together. I looked up to him and I felt safe with him. Living with him I developed some resilience. I still care for him. FJY was horrible and I have no feelings for her, none whatsoever. As I got older, the less and less respect I had for FJX more because of what he didn't do rather than what he did.
34. There was always pornographic material in the house. There were pornographic video tapes and magazines left lying about. There were pornographic magazines in unlocked cupboards. There was never any attempt to hide any of it. When we were out the house with them we were never happy or free spirited. Other children would be skipping along beside their parents but we would just walk by their sides with our heads down. If we dared to speak or chat we would just get told to "Shut the fuck up". The FJX/FJY made out to everyone that we were one, big, happy family. That

certainly wasn't the case. Even though I had been with them twelve years and called them mum and dad, I was always reminded that I was a foster child.

35. If ever we showed interest in taking up a hobby or other interest **FJY** would ridicule us and dissuade and prevent us from going. Sometimes she refused to let us go, even if it was an organised event. There was no reason for her doing this.
36. For a period of about a year, when I was in my teens, for some reason she told us that we must stay in the house for three nights a week. She just wouldn't let us go out. On these nights she wouldn't let us go to our rooms, we had to sit in silence in the living-room.

Leaving foster care

37. I remember the day I left **FJX** and **FJY**. They were fighting and he was holding step-ladders over his head. Sandra was lying on the bathroom floor, crying. I think he was going to hit her with the ladders. I ran to stop him but he threatened me. He said "I'll smack you, get to fuck". Because of this incident I walked out and left home. I was seventeen or eighteen at the time.
38. After a while I went back and occasionally visited **FJX** and **FJY**. I still felt that I wanted to see **FJX**. At Halloween 2009 I visited them. The children were in the living-room using a mirror to put Halloween make-up on. **FJY** said to the girl, who was about ten, something like "Don't fuck about with my mirror, fuck off to your own room". That was the point that I told myself that I couldn't take it any longer and I decided to go to the social work office in Fraserburgh.

Reporting of abuse in foster care

39. There were no teachers or friends at school that I could have told what was going on with my foster parents. It was really when I was in secondary school and started to

make friends and go to their houses that I realised my relationship with my foster parents was different and wasn't normal. I opened up to my friends a bit and told them about how crazy my foster mum was sometimes.

40. There is no doubt that our neighbours would have heard the constant shouting and screaming and the domestic violence. FJY took great pride when she was telling her friends that she made me stand to attention like a soldier when she was roaring at us.
41. I am sure that Lou Robertson, social worker, who once visited me at the foster parents was aware what was going on. She is the only one who has ever challenged FJY. She spoke to her about how punitive she was and the derogatory way in which she spoke especially towards my sister EOZ.
42. There was a library getting built in our village when I was with FJX and FJY. FJY wrote a letter to the local paper condemning it, saying the mobile library was adequate. Her letter was published. FJY subsequently received hate mail. She got a letter which went on about how FJY was driving about in a fancy car wearing posh clothes, yet she treated us like shit and dressed us like shit. This shows that what was going on was being noticed. I am fairly sure that the social work department were aware of this letter. I never read this letter but FJY talked about it openly to her friends.
43. Three or four years ago I bumped into Ian Crockett who was an LAC review officer. We spoke to each other and he remembered me. He told me that he wasn't surprised that I didn't get on with the family. He said that for years he had tried to get us out of there but was told there was nowhere that would take three children. He was mildly apologetic. In the last LAC review I went to, FJX was asked by Ian Crockett if he would do presentations and talk to other prospective foster carers. This doesn't really make sense to me.

44. If any social workers came to the house, we were sat down in front of the foster parents and they would ask us how things were going. Would they really expect us to say if things were wrong? I was too frightened.
45. When I was at Fraserburgh Academy, my guidance teacher, Mrs Buchan, took me aside. She said that she had heard that there were problems at home and asked if she could do anything. I was too frightened to tell her anything.
46. FJX [REDACTED] had a lengthy affair with the wife of my social worker, [REDACTED]. He was aware of the affair. He would have been aware of the domestic violence between my foster parents but he did nothing about it. I think FJY [REDACTED] started meeting other people and this led to more domestic arguments. If someone phoned the house she would make EOZ [REDACTED] go to the phone box and phone the house so that the last number that called couldn't be ascertained. She also gambled quite a lot and went to bingo probably two or three nights a week. FJX [REDACTED] was away overnight quite a lot with his work. FJY [REDACTED] would threaten us "Don't you fucking dare tell your dad I was out". Some money went missing from a jar once and she blamed my brother FDD [REDACTED] for taking it. Years later she admitted to everybody she had taken it to fund her gambling.
47. When FJX [REDACTED] had the ladders over his head and I thought he was going to hit FJY [REDACTED] I intervened and he threatened me. Seeing FJY [REDACTED] crying on the floor and him threatening me was too much. I decided I wasn't going to put up with it any more. I would have been seventeen or eighteen years old at that time. That same day I went to the social work offices in Fraserburgh and I told Allan Strachan what had happened. I went through pure fear. I was completely shaken up so much by FJX [REDACTED] threats. Allan Strachan was a worker in the youth strategy team. He would be the first person that I ever told about the violence, the affairs and what was going on in the house. Nothing ever happened with that information as far as I know. I believe Allan Strachan left the social work sometime after that. I went back to my foster parents a few days later and told them I had spoken to Allan Strachan. They were not happy and asked me "What the fuck did you tell him".

48. FJX [REDACTED] has a sister called [REDACTED] and a brother, [REDACTED] who, I still speak to. Both said that they had reported things to the social work department when we were living there. They both hated my foster mother. [REDACTED] told me that she remembers the time FJY [REDACTED] ripped the cardigan off my sister. She has also said to me that she was aware how bad FJY [REDACTED] was to us. I occasionally see [REDACTED] and his wife [REDACTED] and they talk about our ill treatment too.
49. I stopped visiting the FJX/FJY [REDACTED] for about a year. They never visited me. I went back and started going to see them again. I know I should have reported them to the social work in that year but I didn't. I will always regret the fact that I didn't report it. After the incident at Halloween 2009 when FJY [REDACTED] was abusive to the other foster children I was still seeing my clinical psychologist Susan Simpson and she helped me write a letter to the social work department. We compiled a letter and I hand delivered it to the social work offices in person. I think the woman I handed it to was Aileen Ritchie. The letter was three pages long. There was nothing in this letter about my experiences in foster care with FJX [REDACTED] and FJY [REDACTED]. The letter was all about what I knew was going on with the children that were currently living with them. I was seriously concerned for them. Aileen looked at me like I was scum and she just said that she would pass my letter on to David O'Neill, the children and families manager.
50. I never heard anything back from David O'Neill for a few weeks. Susan Simpson discussed it with me at one of my therapy sessions. Susan was with me when I phoned the social work office to query my letter. I was told that it wasn't a child protection matter and the letter had been left on David O'Neill's desk. He was currently on two weeks holiday and he would pick it up when he got back. Susan was angry when I came off the phone when I told her. She phoned the social work back. Susan told the social work that the letter was disclosing on-going emotional and physical abuse and that the environment in the FJX/FJY [REDACTED] household was not safe for the children.
51. A social worker called Mel Manion subsequently arranged to meet me. I explained what I had seen going on in the house but I don't really think he believed me. I also

met with David O'Neill the children and families manager. I reiterated things to him. He said that he was always worried about me going to the [FJX/FJY] family. He just seemed to focus on the fact that there were heavy smokers. I told him the vivid and brutal stories of what I saw going on with the children in the [FJX/FJY] house. Weeks and weeks passed and I heard nothing.

52. On Boxing day 2010 I got a phone call from my brother and he told me that one of the current foster children had made an allegation of sexual abuse against [FJX] the foster father. I went straight to the house. The girl concerned had been put into her bedroom. It turns out [FJY] had asked her directly if there was something going on between her and [FJX] before the girl actually said anything. I phoned the social work department and spoke to the out of hour's service. The police got involved. Unbelievably the social workers left that girl to stay in the foster parents' house overnight even though she had made a complaint of sexual abuse against the foster father. We weren't happy leaving her there overnight so she went to stay with [FDD] my brother.
53. I phoned the social work department the next day. I told them about my involvement and that I was a social worker. I told them about my concerns. [FJX] was asked to leave the house for a couple of weeks whilst they carried out an investigation. I told them that [FJY] would attack the girl and there would be violence. [FJX] went back and they removed all the children and they didn't go back. Police interviewed me at Fraserburgh police station and they told me that the social work department had told them that they had no record of my letter to them about my concerns; the letter that I had handed to Aileen Ritchie. I gave a full statement to the police and it included everything that had happened to me when I was living with the [FJX/FJY]. I believe that [FJX] was charged but he was never prosecuted with anything. After I had given my statement to the police I got abusive calls from [FJY] because I had spoken to the police. I told the police about these calls from her.
54. I got a letter from Jan Saunders, a senior social worker, who acknowledged that I had sent in a letter. It was a pitiful letter from her saying that no proceedings were being taken. Susan Simpson told me that she had been told by Annie Beckie, a child

psychologist that Jan Saunders was accusing us of having crawled out of the woodwork.

55. Around 2010 I met with a Liz Adam from the Care Commission and I told her about everything that had happened. I told her about my concerns about the social work process and the way that the children were left with the family after the complaint of sexual abuse had been made. I told her about Jan Saunders apparently making the comment about us crawling out of the woodwork. I complained about them not passing on the concerns I had made in the letter which I handed to Aileen Ritchie. I never followed it up about my complaint about the social work department because I don't think I was in a very good place at the time.

Life after Foster Care

56. When I left the **FJX/FJY** I went to stay with my brother for a few days. He had his own accommodation by then. He had already left the foster parents some time before under pretty bad terms. I then left my brother's house and went to college in Aberdeen and stayed in a flat. The social work paid my rent and gave me a £50 per week allowance. I was glad to be away from the foster parents but here I was living in my own flat with no real skills. I couldn't cook and had no budgeting skills or help. **FJX** and **FJY** never offered me any help to buy food or give me any other support. It was a very unsuccessful attempt at living alone. I was only away from the foster parents for three or four months and I was deeply unhappy. I went back to live with my foster parents. I was eighteen. It may sound strange that I went back but it was all I had. There was no-one else I could turn to. I knew that I had failed at living on my own. Back with my foster parents I very quickly realised it was a huge mistake to have gone back so I left again. I ended up getting a short-term lease in a flat in Fraserburgh, then I went to the university halls of residence. The whole time I never got any visits from my foster parents. All feelings of being part of a family were gone.

57. I was still occasionally popping in to see the foster carers even though I hated and despised [FJY] I idolised [FJX] and put him on a pedestal so felt I needed to see him.
58. I subsequently trained and qualified as a social worker. I am currently working at a children's home for children with social, emotional and behavioural needs. I met my current partner about three years ago and she and her son have been good for me. They have provided me with a lot of stability and helped me try to forget my past.

Impact

59. When we were living with the [FJX/FJY] they deliberately tried to separate and divide me, my brother and my sister. Because we were all so stressed and anxious all the time, it affected our relationship with each other. Because of this I would say I didn't have the relationship I should have had with them.
60. When I was with the [FJX/FJY] I developed a stutter and it got progressively worse. It started in primary and continued into secondary school. I could hardly speak sometimes. I asked [FJY] and [FJX] if I could go to a speech therapist but they never let me go. They told me to practice in front of the mirror. The school must have seen my stutter too but they never offered me any help.
61. When I left foster care I met a girl and I really liked her but it didn't go that well. I recognised then that the experiences of being rejected so much by my foster parents and all the emotional abuse made me unable to deal with any kind of rejection.
62. After leaving foster care I started to suffer from fear and worry and I thought there was something wrong with me. I entered a three year relationship and I was okay in that time. My life was perfect for a while. We had a horrible break-up and my mental health took a massive, massive dip. I subsequently developed a large tumour in my backside and I was told that if elected to have it removed, I may die. I wasn't being

macho I just didn't care at that point if I lived or died. Before surgery I was referred for a psychological assessment.

63. I suffered a lot from anxiety and felt a lot of sadness. I have no doubt that without medication I would be very depressed and possibly even suicidal. As I see my own child growing up I can see more and more what I didn't have. Not in terms of material things, but more in terms of stability and happiness. My son is free spirited but I was never allowed to be like that. My sister's mental health is not good either.
64. I have a chronic cough on and off and at times have even been hospitalised. Doctors have told me that by growing up so long in a smoke filled environment will undoubtedly have affected my own health. The FJX/FJY used to smoke regularly in the house and in the car.
65. I have been diagnosed with generalised anxiety. This was during the time I was seeing Susan Simpson, the psychologist or when I was at Cornhill Hospital. I have tried coming off my medication for this but had to continue taking it. One of the ways it affects me is it gives me bad dreams. I dream I am back at the foster carers' house and I have never left and can't escape. I have this dream probably every week. I always feel that I have let them down and shamed them.
66. I think about my time in care all the time. Sometimes I try and put it to the back of my mind and therapy has definitely helped this. The best thing for me is my current relationship where I have a son to look after. It has made me a very loving, caring, supportive parent and I spend a lot of time with my son. All these things I never got from my foster parents. I find it very difficult if I see my son upset. I know this is not a bad thing and it is all about finding a balance.
67. I have a general distrust of people. I have a good relationship with my partner and I don't think she will run away and cheat on me but I just wonder if she really does like me and I have difficulty understanding why she would want to be with me. Because of constantly getting put down, belittled and ridiculed by my foster mum I have little

confidence or self-belief. Because we were never allowed to have fun or express myself I am not a naturally outgoing sort of person.

Treatment / support

68. When I was about to have an operation to remove a tumour I was referred for a psychological assessment to make sure that I was of sound mind. I think doing this probably saved my life. I ended up seeing a clinical psychologist, Susan Simpson, for two and a bit years at Cornhill Hospital in Aberdeen. That would have started around 2007. This became nothing really to do with my surgery. It was all about understanding my experiences and the trauma - why I felt the way I did and how to cope with it. Even though at that point I was a qualified social worker I still didn't understand what my experiences were or how it had impacted on me. It was thanks to those two years of therapy that helped save me and understand what was going. I am not getting any counselling at the moment. Susan Simpson taught me how to deal with flashbacks, which can be triggered by certain smells or situations. She gave me some self-soothing strategies which are very effective. I am still loosely in contact with her.

Records

69. Around 2010 I decided to seek my own social work files which I got quite easily. They were sent through the post to me and they were really ragged. They were very shabbily presented and were heavily redacted which I can understand why. I was never offered any kind of support or help when I got these records. I was in a poor place mentally when I got these files as I had just finished a three or four year relationship. Seeing my poorly presented files, and having read briefly about life with my mum, this gave me the impetus to take control. I decided I didn't want to live anymore. I was convinced I wanted to die. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] It was a definite suicide attempt. I ended up in Cornhill Hospital for a short while and have been on medication since then to control my

anxiety. I am in a better place now. My records have been in a box for the last seven years now.

Lessons learned

70. When the social workers came to visit they would speak to us in front of the foster parents. That shouldn't happen. Even if it did, any social worker worth their salt should have been able to recognise that from a basic assessment that we were not happy. They should have seen that we were wearing the cheapest of cheap clothes. Our bedrooms were really sparsely furnished and the chest of drawers were falling apart. Even at the LAC reviews the foster parents were always present. Because of that the hearings were false. They were left with the view that everything was rosy and that the FJX/FJY were great foster parents.
71. Social workers or anyone with any mental health or behavioural experience who saw us should have very quickly been able to recognise that we were damaged children. Had we been seen individually by social workers away from our foster parents there is more chance of us opening up to them. With proper training and questioning they would have been able to ascertain we were not happy. Even at LAC reviews the foster carers were present so we were too frightened to speak out. Because of my experience as a social worker I have no doubt that having loving, caring foster parents would have made all the difference.
72. The social work department must have known about the affairs going on with my foster parents and the domestic violence. The whole social work department must have known about the affair between FJX and [REDACTED]'s wife. The police were at our house more than once too because of the shouting and swearing. We should not have been exposed to what we were. It may have been difficult to find somewhere that all three of us could have gone but being separated may have been better than being left where we were in an abusive situation. .

Hopes for the Inquiry

73. In the future there has to be proper assessment of foster carers before they are allowed to look after children. The child has to be the centre of plans and assessments. There has to be better supervision of children in care.
74. Training has to be given to the experts so they can identify the signs of abuse. Children often won't stand up and speak out but it is obvious through observation of children and multi-agency work ensuring continual assessment is made.

Other information

75. There was mention a couple of times of FJX and FJY adopting us but they made it clear that it wasn't going to happen. They said that they would lose out financially and get nothing out of it. This reinforced to me that they were only fostering for the money.
76. At some point FJY and FJX fostered a six month old baby boy. It was like he was the blue eyed, blonde haired baby boy that they always wanted. FJY tried to commit suicide once. I would have been in primary 7 or in my first year at secondary. [REDACTED] She called my brother through because she was in some sort of pain or distress. She got him to phone for an ambulance. The paramedics and the police came. A social worker, Joe Bryce, came the next day. He tried to reassure us that everything would be okay. He was very blazé about it all. She ended up in Cornhill Hospital in Aberdeen. Cornhill is a mental hospital. She was in there for two weeks. My foster dad must have taken time off work to look after us. Would you believe he actually took us to visit the woman he was having an affair with, [REDACTED]'s wife. He told us not to say anything to FJY as they walked hand in hand round the park. I am not aware of there being any sort of review after this suicide attempt.

77. Steve Hothersall, who had been my social worker, became a lecturer at Robert Gordon University (RGU) in Aberdeen. I was invited to do a presentation at RGU on residential care in 2008 or 2009. I was walking in the university along with Linda Bruce, a head lecturer. Steve spoke to me and said to Linda that I had been one of his success stories. Linda was mortified and when he went away she apologised and said that she would speak to him about it. That was just the arrogant type of guy he was.
78. Unbelievably, ^{FJY} [REDACTED] my foster mum even re-enrolled herself at school so was at Fraserburgh Academy when I was there in my second year. I have no doubt this was just to keep an eye on us. Neither of my foster parents ever came to parents' evenings. They never came to sports day or any school plays or anything like that. They just weren't interested in us.
79. 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... ^{FDJ} [REDACTED]

Dated... 07/02/2018