

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

EVQ [REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is EVQ [REDACTED]. When I was in care I was known as EVQ [REDACTED]. EVQ [REDACTED] My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1963. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.
2. It's difficult for me to remember where and when I was at places during my time in care. I was at some places only for a couple of days or weeks. I have tried to estimate when I was at each place and how old I was but I may not be right in some cases.

Life before going into care

3. My mother was called [REDACTED]. I am aware of my father's name but I do not wish for it to appear in this statement. I have two older brothers. My oldest brother is called [REDACTED]. He is about eleven years older than me. He wasn't my dad's son. My older brother is called [REDACTED]. He is about five years older than me. The first house I was in was [REDACTED], Loanhead, Midlothian. For whatever reason that address is imprinted in my mind. I don't know why that is.
4. I don't think I really started to learn anything about my family until I was about twelve years old. It was only then that I started to hear things about why I ended up in care. I heard them through the people I met in the various homes. I don't know for certain which of the things I have heard are right. I have heard that my father may have


killed my mother then put us all into the same bed with her. The other story I heard is that my mother took her own life. I have also heard that my father went to prison for something after my mother passed away. If that's true I don't know what that was for. I don't really know what actually happened because I have been told so many things over the years.

5. What I do know is that when my youngest brother, [REDACTED] and I were taken into care our oldest brother, [REDACTED], didn't come with us. [REDACTED] went to my uncle's in Croydon. I believe that my dad refused to provide permission to allow [REDACTED] and I to stay with my uncle.

Unknown children's home, Alloa, Clackmannanshire

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later




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Ravelrig House, Lanark Road West, Balerno, Midlothian

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later



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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Currie Family Group Home, 100 Forthview Crescent, Currie, Edinburgh

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Midfield Children's Home, Lasswade, Midlothian

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Leaving Midfield for the community care placement with Mr and Mrs EVZ-SPO

197. Mr and Mrs EVZ-SPO came to Midfield on a couple of occasions. They were one of the couples who came in to Midfield as part of the big groups. I remember that when they came to visit they came in a van and they brought their dog with them. I remember the van being parked up outside Midfield and me talking to the dog through the window. I remember that I would sometimes wash the cars in the car

park and theirs was one of them. I remember doing a really good job and spending extra time washing their car because the dog would be left in it.

198. After a while I was asked by ^{EVU} whether I would like to go and stay with this couple. I was told that they stayed on a farm. I then met Mr and Mrs ^{EVZ-SPO}. I remember thinking that I really liked Mr ^{EVU}. I think I liked him because he liked animals. He told me that they lived on a farm and asked me whether I would like to go and stay with them. I remember thinking that I didn't like Mrs ^{EVZ}. However, in the end I agreed to stay with them because they had a dog and I thought that they would have loads of animals on their farm. It wasn't because of the people that I agreed to go. To begin with I felt as if all my Christmases had come at once. I was happy with the arrangement.

Community care placement with Mr and Mrs ^{EVZ-SPO}

199. I visited the ^{EVZ-SPO} on two occasions. The first time I went to stay with them it was only for one night. I remember thinking after the first time that I quite liked it. The second occasion only lasted about three days. Both times I was there came about a year and three months into my time at Midfield. I would have been about thirteen or fourteen. It could have either been in 1976 or 1977. I think I was meant to be staying with them permanently but it didn't work out in the end.
200. Mr and Mrs ^{EVZ-SPO} were probably in their sixties. Mrs ^{EVZ} would have been a wee bit younger than Mr ^{EVU}. They lived on a farm that I think was in ^{EVU}. I think the setup was called community care. It was something similar to what I would imagine foster care would be like.

Abuse during time at the [REDACTED]

Mrs [REDACTED]

201. I remember that after the first visit I realised that I didn't like Mrs [REDACTED] and she didn't like me. However, nothing happened. During the second time I stayed for three days. I remember that I was allowed to help out with the sheep on the farm because it was lambing season. However, I wasn't allowed to help out with the cows. That was because I have an allergy to dust and cows tend to create a lot of dust. Just to annoy the [REDACTED] I went to see the cows. I did that because I liked cows and I liked talking to them. I remember sitting there and telling them all of my stories and worries. I remember patting them. When I did that it effected my skin. My eyes puffed up.
202. On the third day I had went to see the cows again. As had happened before, my eyes all puffed up because I had an allergic reaction. For some reason, while I was visiting the cows, I also wrote "Elvis" on my hand. When I came back into the house Mrs [REDACTED] started screaming and shouting at me because I had been to see the cows again. She told me to wash my hands and face and get what I had written off of my hand. I was also told that I was to go to bed early without any tea.
203. I did everything Mrs [REDACTED] told me except washing off the "Elvis" I had written on my hand. I then went to bed. Later on Mrs [REDACTED] came into my bedroom. She was holding a big massive old fashioned wooden scrubbing brush with jaggy bristles. She started screaming and shouting at me. She then threw the scrubbing brush at me. It hit me in the face right near my eye. I was left with a big bruise. I remember it being bloody sore. When she did that I lost it. It was like somebody had opened up a boiling kettle. I flipped and went for her. I then literally wrecked the house.
204. After I did that Mrs [REDACTED] called the police. When the police arrived at the house they treated me like a criminal. To me what I had done wasn't really that bad. I felt that I was just getting back at Mrs [REDACTED] because she had hit me. I had done that because I couldn't hit her because of her age. The police put me in handcuffs,

grabbed me by the scruff of my neck then put me into their car. They then took me back to Midfield.

Leaving the ^{EVZ-SPO} and returning to Midfield for the second time

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Howdenhall Assessment Centre, Edinburgh

225. I believe the local authority ran Howdenhall. The reason that I went to Howdenhall was because I needed to stay somewhere after being charged with setting the fire in Midfield and before I had my court hearing. When I was there nobody discussed with me how long I was going to be there. I didn't know whether I was in there for one day or one year. I was only informed the date of my court appearance on the morning that I had to go.

226. I would have arrived at Howdenhall in either 1978 or 1979. I think I left there before I was sixteen. I remember feeling as if I was the worst person on the planet during my time in Howdenhall. I felt at that time that that was me. I thought that that would be me in prison for good.

Layout of Howdenhall

227. The place was huge. Every door that you went through could be locked with a key. That was difficult for me because I am terrified of locked doors. It was all basically cells. The girls' part was all upstairs. There was a dining hall and a school within the building. There were some offices for the staff. There was a yard outside. It had eight foot walls with barbed wire surrounding it.

Staff

228. I don't remember many of the staff members who were at Howdenhall when I was there. To be honest I didn't want to know whilst I was there. The person who was in charge was a big woman. I can't remember her name. She was a big tall woman. She was as tall as she was wide.
229. Mr ^{EWA} was one of the other staff members there. I don't know his first name but we all called him "^{EWA}". He had a bald head and he was a big man.

The children at Howdenhall

230. There were both boys and girls in Howdenhall. All the girls were between fourteen and eighteen. The boys were kept in one section and the girls were kept in another. The only time that the boys and girls mixed was when we were both at school during the day and during mealtimes. I knew a few of the other girls and boys who were in Howdenhall during my time there. A few of them were from Midfield. Others I knew from school.

Routine at Howdenhall

First day

231. I was taken to Howdenhall in handcuffs by two policemen. I don't know who exactly met me when I arrived but I do remember it was two members of staff. One was a male and one was a female. I was frogmarched by the police into a room that had a locked door and bars on the window. At the time I thought that it was a cell. I was absolutely shitting myself.
232. In front of the police I was strip searched then physically searched by the two members of staff. I had to stand against the wall as if I was being frisked. At one

point they made me stand naked and cough. I think they did that in case I was concealing a knife. The staff members then made me put on a gown that was a little bit like a dressing gown. I felt like I was being treated like a big hard criminal. To me I was just a wee fire starter. To me it was nothing that I had done.

233. I was then put into a freezing cold shower by the two members of staff. They put this smelly shampoo stuff on me for head lice. I was made to scrub myself with carbolic soap in case I had lice or scabies. I was then made to put on clothes whilst I was standing still soaking wet. They never even gave me a towel so as I could dry myself. After I got dressed the police went away. They went into one of the offices. I don't know what they did in there. I was made to sit next door.

234. I remember sitting next to the big woman who was in charge. I remember her doing a lot of writing. I had to give my name and address to her and all that kind of detail. All the big woman said to me was that if I thought I could get up to any antics in Howdenhall then I was to think again. She also said that if I did anything she would come down on me like a tonne of bricks.

235. The big woman then took me into the girl's section of Howdenhall and into the sitting room. I remember that all the girls were sitting around. I tried to look big and tough but inside I was shitting myself. The woman then locked the door behind us. I asked the woman right away whether I could go to the toilet. She basically told me no because it wasn't time for the toilets. She did, however, say that it was time for smoking and I could have a fag if I wanted to. I was given a cigarette and had a smoke. By that time it was late so we were then all sent to bed. I remember that when we went up to bed all the doors had to be unlocked and locked as we went through them. I was then taken to my room. That first night I was so scared that I couldn't really sleep.

236. I remember that I needed the toilet during the first night because I hadn't been allowed to go when I arrived. I rang the bell in the room to get a staff member's attention and a female staff member came to the bedroom door. She started screaming at me and told me that I should have gone to the toilet ages ago. The

woman then took me to the toilet and watched me whilst I was on it. She was staring right at me. When I went to shut the cubicle door she kicked it back open. I thought the woman had made a mistake so I went to shut the door again. She immediately kicked it open again. After I finished I told the woman that I was going to wash my hands. The woman stopped me from doing that and I complained that it was dirty not to do that. She then sent me to my bed with dirty hands.

237. The following morning we got up early either at 6:00 am or 6:30 am. It was the big woman who sat in the office with me when I first arrived that got us all up. I remember her shouting at everybody to get up. After getting up we were told to put our clothes on and go down for breakfast. I was like a wee lamb. I just followed what everybody else was doing.

Sleeping arrangements

238. My bedroom held five girls. All the other girls in my room were between fourteen and eighteen. My bed was at the far corner away from the door. The bed that I was in only had a sheet and a thin cover. All the girls had to go to bed at about 9:00 pm. We all went to bed at the same time. The door had a lock and it was locked at night when you were in bed. I remember that we got up awfully early. It might have been either 6:00 am or 6:30 am.

Washing / bathing

239. There were communal showers that held up to twenty people at a time. Showers were always supervised. They were supervised by any female staff member that was on duty at that time. The staff member would just stand and watch you. I remember that the showers were always freezing.

Mealtimes / food

240. Mealtimes were mixed. There were boys and girls in the dining hall at the same time. I think we all sat at long tables. You were given a seat when you first started

and that was the seat you sat on throughout your time there. You all said grace together before you started. After that you had to be quiet. All your meals were served to you. The food wasn't great. As far as I was concerned you wouldn't give it to your dog. I suppose food is food when you are hungry.

Clothing / uniform / possessions

241. I was given my clothes when I first arrived at Howdenhall. Everybody wore the same sort of clothes. They consisted of a pair of joggers, a t-shirt and a pair of penny black plimsolls. I was given some sort of itchy scratchy jaggy nightie type of thing to wear at night. You had nothing by way of any other personal possessions. All you had were the clothes you were given.

School

242. When I arrived I told the staff that I had left school. I was told by the staff that I was under their rules, I would do what I was told and that I had to go to school. The school was located in the building. I remember being told by the staff, before I started school, that I looked quite stupid so I would be placed in the remedial class. I decided to go along with it. The teacher in the school was lovely. He really was a nice man. I remember thinking that I didn't want to leave his class because he was one of the few nice people in Howdenhall. In my experience you didn't get more than one nice person in these type of places. I thought that if I was moved class I may get a horrible teacher. I tried to act stupid during the classes because of that but I couldn't quite do it. I remember the teacher trying to get me to spell words like "door" and "cat." I remember that I would try and make my handwriting look poor.
243. In the end, Midfield called Howdenhall and informed them that I was actually quite intelligent and that I had good grades. After that I was moved into the higher class. The teacher of the higher class was horrible. I knew that would happen before I went there.

Leisure time

244. You were allowed out in the yard for leisure time. You were only really allowed out for between twenty and thirty minutes at a time. You would just walk around. It was just like what I imagine it is like being in prison. There weren't really activities. There was a television in the sitting room. You weren't allowed to change the channel. If you didn't want to watch what was on then it was tough. I know the boys had a pool table but that wasn't something that the girls had.

Smoking

245. You could smoke in Howdenhall. You were only allowed five fags a day. I remember that after breakfast you were allowed to have a fag in the girl's sitting room. The staff gave us our cigarettes and controlled the matches. I remember people going to hand me matches and them being stopped by staff from passing them to me. That was obviously because of what I was there for.

Trips

246. Some people did get to go out in the minibus. I wasn't one of the people who was allowed to go out. I think that was because I was classed as a risk or a danger.

Visits / Review of Detention

247. There was a room that was like a visiting room. It had a settee and a chair in it. EVU was the only visitor who came to visit me whilst I was in Howdenhall. When he visited I was left alone with him and the door was locked.
248. There was no contact with social workers there. Nobody like that came to see me. There was nothing like a review of how I was getting on. I had nothing like a key worker or staff member put in place to speak to me more than perhaps other staff members. We were all just a number. I don't think we were even viewed as that.

Healthcare

249. They had a wee room which had a wee woman in it. It was a bit like a first aid room. I don't know what the woman's role was. I don't know whether she was a staff member, a nurse or what. She never introduced herself to me. There was one incident which involved the plastic knives we were given during mealtimes. I took one of the knives and sharpened it on one of the walls outside. I was going to use it on Mr ^{EWA} to get him back but ultimately decided that that wouldn't be too clever. I ended up [REDACTED] You would call it-self harming nowadays. That was something that I needed.

250. On one occasion [REDACTED] in front of a staff member and other children. I still have [REDACTED] because I did that. I remember doing that and receiving no medical treatment. All that happened was that I was taken into a room by a member of staff, had a plaster put on the wound by the wee woman then given a fresh pair of trousers. The wee woman just said that I was a nuisance. I didn't care that I didn't receive any other treatment. At that time I just didn't care what happened to me.

Bed-wetting

251. There weren't any toilet or washing facilities in the bedrooms. If at night you wanted to go to the toilet you had to ring a bell for someone to come and take you to the toilet. I remember that on the first morning I was there the big woman got us all up. I remember her screaming at those girls who had wet their beds. I remember one small girl in particular who had wet the bed getting bullied for wetting the bed by the woman. All the other girls started calling the small girl "Pishy." The big woman told me to say that to the girl. I refused to say it because I didn't want to be cruel. I remember the girl was then made to strip her bed. I don't know whether she was made to have a shower after that.

Abuse at Howdenhall

252. The staff in Howdenhall were animals and they treated us like animals too. It was no wonder, given the way we were treated, that we acted the way we did. I kicked off whilst I was there because I am just one of those people who will, when told they can't do something, do that just to annoy people. I just couldn't keep my mouth shut when I was there. I was somebody who would rebel. I am still like that to this day. You regularly received beatings from the staff in Howdenhall. It felt like that happened pretty much daily.

253. I wasn't really scared of the other people who were in Howdenhall with me. I knew that I could more than hold my own if people tried to fight me. What did terrify me was the locked doors. I was always being put in locked cells on my own as a punishment. That could be for anything between twenty minutes and four hours. That happened to loads of people there. Sometimes it was given as a punishment because people didn't do as they were told. Sometimes there was no reason why people were put there. That was something that I didn't like then and still don't like now.

The big woman

254. The big woman was the person who gave most of the beatings. I can't remember her name. If she gave you a beating it would be for things like not making your bed properly or not following instructions. I remember she would tell me to turn left or right and I would get it wrong because I didn't know my left from my right. She gave me beatings because of that. Other times I remember getting hit for sticking up for other people. When she beat me she kicked me in my back or wherever she could. I remember her doing that in front of everybody else. Everybody would be standing there watching and nobody would do anything. That included the boys, girls and other staff members.

Mr^{EWA} [REDACTED]

255. One dinnertime I was trying to be a smart arse because I was trying to fit in. I was trying to act tough in front of some of the boys that I knew. When we said grace I said "for what we are about to receive the pigs have just refused. Amen" instead of what we usually said. ^{EWA} [REDACTED] was standing behind me when I said that. He grabbed me by the scruff of my neck and my hair and dragged me through the dining hall. I remember that everybody was laughing at me. He then dragged me all the way upstairs, put me in a tiny wee room and closed the door behind him.
256. I found the room terrifying because I didn't like small spaces. The room was probably less than six foot square in size. All that it had was a wooden bench and a window that was high up. I remember I was freaking out because he was a man and I didn't know what was going to happen. ^{EWA} [REDACTED] then beat the living daylights out of me. He punched me, slapped me, kicked me and grabbed me by my face and throat. As he was doing that he was calling me an "arsonist", "a little bastard" and every name you could think of. I remember him going on about the fire. I didn't understand why he was going on about that because it had nothing to do with him.
257. I'd had kickings before but nothing like that in my life at that point. I've never had a kicking like that since. I've never seen anyone as angry as he was in my whole entire life. The physical assaults that had happened to me in care by that point were nothing in comparison. He used every ounce of force in his being when he was hitting me.
258. The assault must have lasted half an hour in total. It could have been longer or shorter but that was how long it felt like it lasted. It all finished with ^{EWA} [REDACTED] telling me that I needed to be taught more than one lesson and that I was to stay in the room. He then stepped outside, locked the door and told me that I wasn't getting out. I remember thinking that I was never going to get out. I went in there about 1:00 pm and didn't get out until 5:00 pm. It was only four hours but, to me, it felt like four years. I was absolutely terrified when I was in that room.

259. It was one of the female staff members who let me out. I was black and blue from head to toe when I came out that room. I remember that the woman said that I deserved a lot more than what I had received. Not one person gave a shit about me even though it was clear what had happened. The only people that cared were the other boys there who knew me. I was terrified after the assault in Howdenhall by EWA [REDACTED]. I tried not to speak. I never even said grace. I just mumbled under my breath. I remember that he was always behind me watching. I remember him telling me that I was the class clown.

EVA [REDACTED]

260. EVU [REDACTED] came to visit me once whilst I was in Howdenhall. The reason he visited me was to see when I would be getting back to Midfield. That's what he said. I don't know whether he meant that or not. At that time I didn't care whether I would be going back or not. I was left with him in the visiting room and the door was locked. Nobody else was in the room. Whilst we were in the room EVU [REDACTED] sexually assaulted me.

The court appearance / leaving Howdenhall

261. I pleaded guilty during the court hearing because I knew I had done something which was wrong. I remember that during the early part of the hearing they rabbit on and did all their bits and pieces. Not one person asked me why I had done what I had. The judge then turned round to me and said that I was "a nuisance to society." He then said that I had to stay in local authority care until I was either eighteen or twenty years old. He said that I would have no choice in the matter. I think the order that was made was called a supervision order.

262. When I was told I would be placed under that order it was the first time that I realised that I could have walked out of care at any point up until the court case. Nobody had ever told me that that was the case. I was told that if I wanted to get out of care

before the age of twenty I would have to go in front of a judge and put a case forward. I never really understood everything they told me because I was too young.

263. I was told at the end of the hearing that I would be going back to Midfield. I remember that [REDACTED] EVU was in the courtroom watching the hearing. When the judge said that [REDACTED] EVU looked like the Cheshire Cat. He looked as if he thought it was funny. I didn't think it was funny because the reason I had set the fire in the first place was to get out of Midfield. I was then taken from the court back to Midfield by the police. I wasn't taken in handcuffs. I was told by the police that I wouldn't be placed in them unless I misbehaved.

Midfield (the third time)

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Midfield (the third time)

272. Towards the end of my time I was at Midfield I briefly went out to stay somewhere that was like foster care. As far as I remember the reason that I was sent there from Midfield was to allow the staff at Midfield to have a break from me. Dennis Wilson took me to where the foster carer, Mrs ^{EWB} [REDACTED], lived in Penicuik. I remember that he stayed in Mrs ^{EWB} [REDACTED] house with me for about two days until I felt settled.

Foster care placement with Mrs ^{EWB} [REDACTED] in Penicuik

273. I think I only stayed with Mrs ^{EWB} [REDACTED] for about two weeks. Mrs ^{EWB} [REDACTED] would have been a foster carer. She lived in a little house with two young children in Penicuik. One was a baby and the other one was maybe about three years old. Those children weren't her own. They were also foster children. I think they were brothers. She didn't have a partner or a husband.

Abuse during foster care placement in Penicuik

Mrs ^{EWB} [REDACTED]

274. Mrs ^{EWB} [REDACTED] wasn't right in the head. I remember that she was ok when Dennis Wilson was there but as soon as he left things changed. After he left everything in terms of looking after the children was left to me. I was only really a child myself. I was still at school and didn't know anything about looking after children. I didn't even like children.
275. During my time at Mrs ^{EWB} [REDACTED] I once went to my friend [REDACTED] house without telling the school or Mrs ^{EWB} [REDACTED]. The reason I had gone to [REDACTED] house was that I was getting fed by her mother. When I got back to Mrs ^{EWB} [REDACTED] I was given a battering because I hadn't told her that I was staying out. She hit me repeatedly with the heel

of a hard slipper anywhere she could get me. She hit me on my arm, shoulders, my back and my legs.

Leaving foster care placement with Mrs ^{EWB}

276. I don't really know how my time came to an end with Mrs ^{EWB}. I don't know whether she had had enough or whether I was due to go back to Midfield anyway. All I remember happening is that I came back from school one day and I was told that I would be going back to Midfield. Someone then came and got me and took me back to Midfield. That probably would have been ^{EVX}.

Returning back to Midfield (the fourth and last time)

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Penicuik Family Group Home, Windsor Square, Penicuik

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

The Richmond Fellowship, Coventry

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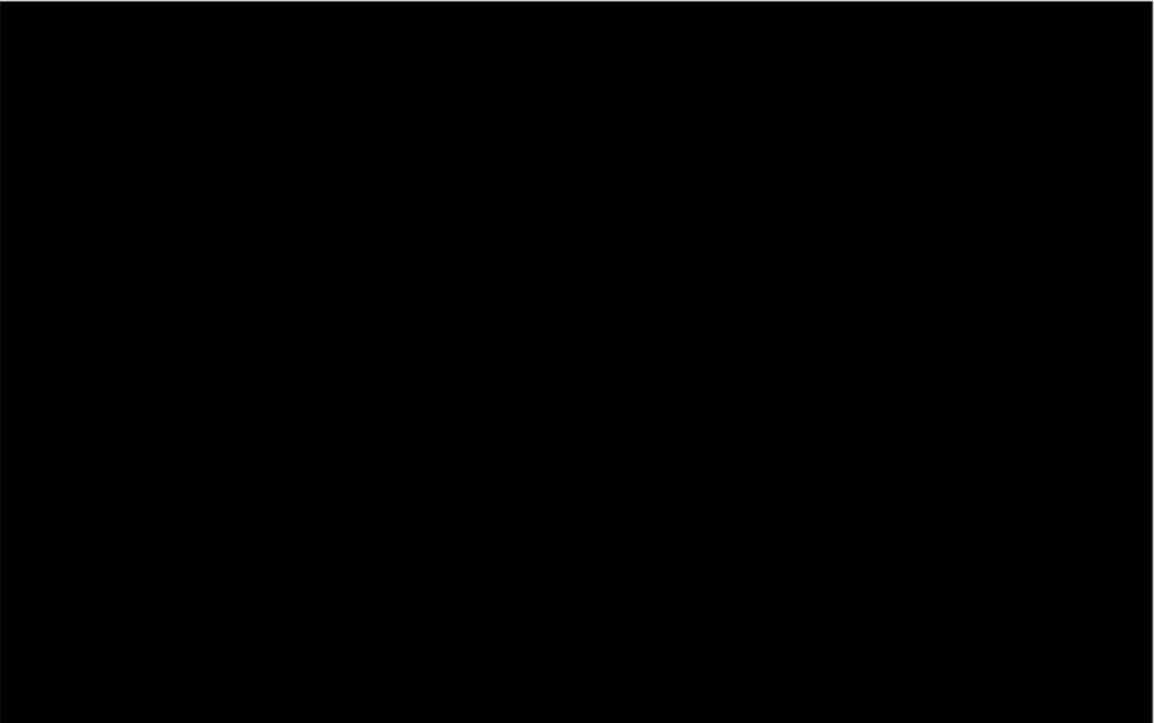
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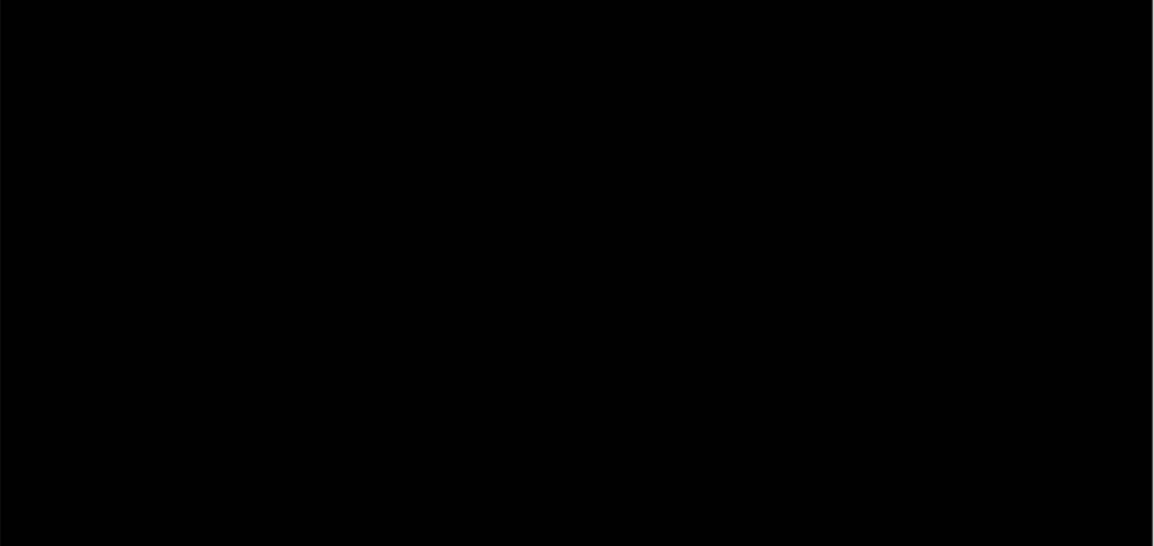
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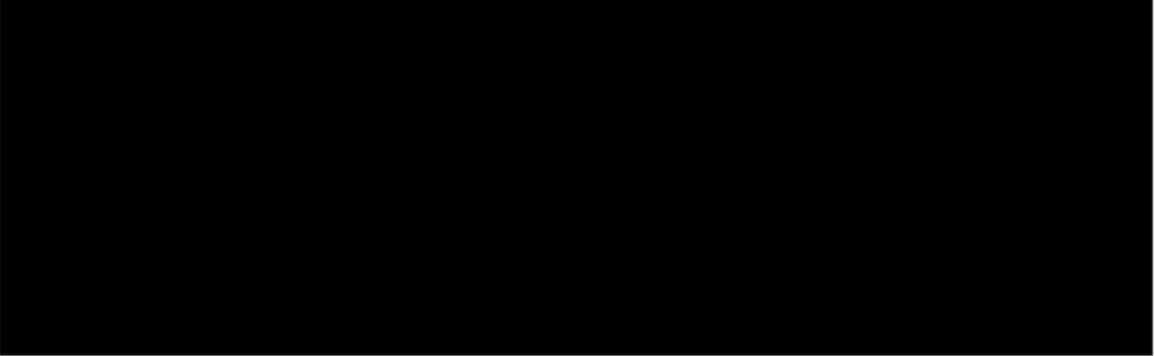
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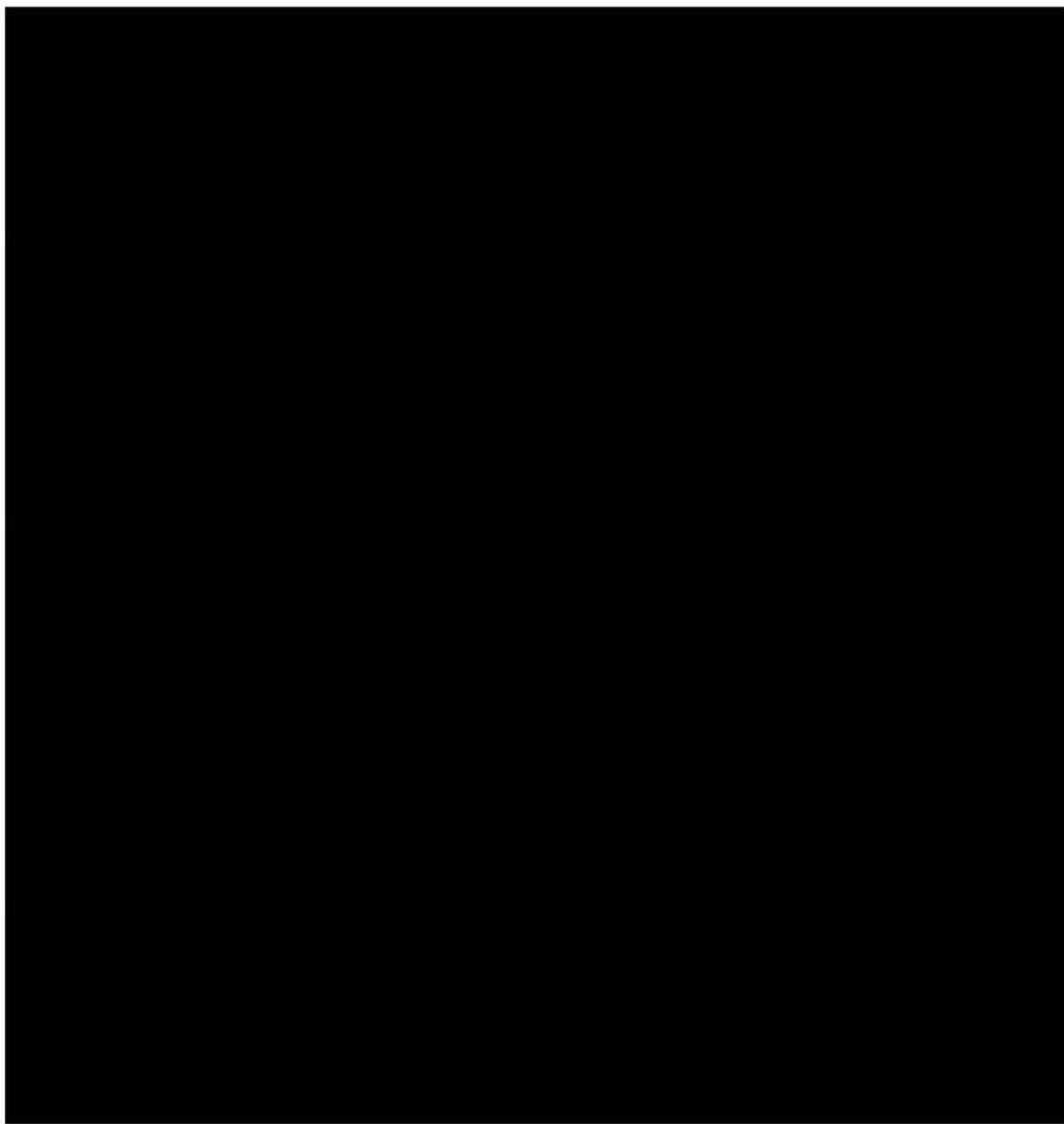
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Red House Home Trust, Red House Musselburgh

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later



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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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The Barony Hostel, Broughton Street, Edinburgh

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving The Barony Hostel

444. I remember that the boss of The Barony Hostel sat me down and asked me what I wanted to do. He asked me what I saw myself doing in the future. He asked me where I wanted to go from here. I told him that I wanted out and away from The Barony Hostel. I also said that I wanted to go to college to become a vet. I didn't say I wanted anything else. That was all that I wanted. Looking back, I wasn't asking for a lot.

445. Within three or four months I had to go in front of a judge to discuss the supervision order that was still over me. I attended that hearing with an advocate. I can't remember who he was but he was instructed to talk on my behalf. I remember that during the hearing all I could hear the judge saying was that I was "a nuisance", "a waste of space", "you'll stay on in care" and so on. I realise looking back that that wasn't what the judge was saying. I was hearing what I expected he would be saying rather than what he was actually saying.
446. I remember that I spoke to the judge and swore at him because I thought he was saying the things that were in my brain. The judge was taken aback when I did that. The advocate that was with me spoke to me and asked me why I had sworn. I told him the things that I thought the judge was saying. The advocate then told me that the judge hadn't said any of those things. The advocate then spoke to the judge about what had happened during my time in care and what was happening in the future.
447. The judge then told me that I was free. He told me that after six weeks I could apply for a house, go to college and all the rest of it. He basically told me that after those six weeks I could do whatever the hell I wanted. I remember that when I heard that I was happy. I couldn't quite believe what was happening. I thought that they were in some way tricking me. I still thought that I was never going to get out. That was just the way my brain worked at that time.
448. After the hearing I went back to The Barony Hostel for a further six weeks. As soon as I got back the staff at The Barony Hostel applied for me to go to college. I remember that they had already filled in all the applications and stuff ready to go as soon as I got back. They also applied for a house for me.
449. I ended up starting college whilst I was still at The Barony Hostel. I initially went to Stevenson College but later on I went to The Royal Dick Veterinary School two days a week. I remember that, because I was doing that whilst I was at The Barony Hostel, I was allowed an extra £70 on top of the money left over after I had paid The Barony Hostel their £100.

450. Later on one of the staff members at The Barony Hostel came to me and said that they had found me a flat in Muirhouse. Looking back at my time in The Barony Hostel, the staff basically did everything for me. In a way they sort of wanted rid of me. However, I didn't care about that because I felt at that time that I wanted rid of everybody else anyway.

Life after leaving care

451. I moved into my first flat when I was about eighteen. That would have been in about 1981. My first flat was at [REDACTED] in Muirhouse in Edinburgh. I remember that when I moved into that flat all I had was one stinky mattress and one sheet. The first day I was there I went out and bought a puppy. Looking back, I found the experience horrible to begin with because I was out on my own with nobody there to do anything for me. I found it very hard.

452. In the end I was lucky because there were good people in the other flats around me. I ended up making my own flat better than all of theirs because I took anything that people were chucking away to furnish my flat. I lived there for a few years before moving up to Niddrie. I've lived in a few places since.

453. I ended up studying for four and a half years to become a vet. The reason I stopped my studies was because I got to the point where I had to be taught how to put a dog down. I remember that they brought in a dog from the cat and dog home that had been there for more than seven days. I got everything ready but I couldn't ultimately do it. I just couldn't put an animal down. I turned round to the tutor and said to him that I wasn't God and I wasn't going to kill the dog. That was really the end of my studies to become a vet. I made the call that I would rather be the person I am than a murderer. When I look back at that decision there are some days that I regret it because I think I would have made a good vet. Other days I think that I made the right decision because I stuck by what I believed in.

454. After I left college I got a job in the local [REDACTED]. I then suffered an accident on a bus going to work which resulted in an injury to my back. That was just before I turned twenty one. The way the bus stopped resulted in my back going round a railing. I ended up in hospital for quite a long time. I couldn't move. I was initially told by those treating me that they actually thought I was going to be paralysed. In the end I was ok.
455. After I left the hospital I had to sign on again. I then met my future husband [REDACTED]. He too had spent time in the care system. We then had our first daughter, [REDACTED]. I remember that after [REDACTED] was born I struggled to have both [REDACTED] and her in my life. A social worker then became involved. The social worker became involved because, during a check-up scan, I asked the person scanning me to mind a scar that I had. The scar was from a time when I was self-harming.
456. I remember that when the social worker spoke to me she said that two people who had been in the care system shouldn't have children. She said that [REDACTED] and I would fall at every hurdle and [REDACTED] would end up in care herself. That was her attitude and that was it. Her saying that left me in fear throughout my life that my children would end up in care. It left me thinking that I needed to prove her wrong. I couldn't let them win.
457. In the end, I couldn't fathom looking after myself and two other people at the same time. It just felt that three people being together was too much for me. I just couldn't cope. It was because of that that I split up with [REDACTED]. I then went "off the rails." In a way, it took me all that time to get out of care and it was like I couldn't cope with the freedom when I eventually did get out. I remember that I couldn't sleep or eat and was having nightmares. I was still thinking about my time in care and having flashbacks. It was just horrible. I ended up going to the doctors and telling him how I was feeling. I never went into anything about what had happened during the time I was in care but I told him how I was feeling.
458. After I saw my doctor [REDACTED], my childhood friend, became my Community Practitioner Nurse. I don't really know how that all happened but she became

involved. I remember that I basically threatened [REDACTED] from the minute she first walked into my door. In my head I had both [REDACTED] and myself to protect and I didn't want [REDACTED] there. I saw [REDACTED] as being part of authority and I couldn't deal with that. In the end she won me round and she has helped me get back on track.

459. About eight or nine months after leaving [REDACTED] I got back together with him. We have been together ever since. We now have five children. I surprised myself that I could have that many children but it was actually the best thing that ever happened to me. I think that if I had never met [REDACTED] or had my children I would have ended up in prison.

Impact

460. It is true to say that my past experiences in care have negatively influenced every part of my life. When I first came out of care I was a wreck. I was scared of everything and everybody. If somebody sneezed I would have a heart attack. Now I am blessed with a loving family and good friends. Even though I have that, most days I struggle to stay alive.

461. I don't tell people my business. I haven't really spoken to my own family about what happened. [REDACTED] knows a little about what happened, and he knows I'm speaking to the Inquiry, but he doesn't know everything. The only people I tell about my time in care are the people that I have to speak to.

462. All my life I have loved and trusted animals more than people. With animals I feel safe, accepted and never judged. There are many days when I feel anxious, paranoid and fearful. On those days I visualise people around me as animals. That allows me to feel comfortable around them.

463. I suffer from anxiety, flashbacks, nightmares and fear. I have a diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. During my time in care, and since, I regularly [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I have used this as a way of focusing the

pain and escaping from the terror. Over the years I have received treatment for my depression and anxiety. Even with that I have [REDACTED]

464. My time in care has definitely affected my relationships. In the past I trusted nobody. Nobody could sit near to me. Up until I met [REDACTED] I was aggressive towards people. I would use my height against people to keep them away. I would try to make myself look bigger than I actually was every time I walked into a room. I couldn't have people near me. I still don't really trust anybody. I'm better at it but I still have to choose who it is that I can trust. I test people in relationships as I believe that people will always leave me. I find it hard to keep relationships.
465. I don't like people taking notes because it reminds me of speaking to people whilst I was in care. I just have no trust in authority figures whether they be attached to the police, social services or medical staff. This has stemmed from experiences I had as a child. Whenever I told people in authority what was happening to me they didn't believe me and it only made things worse.
466. I am terrified of dentists because I never saw one until I was a teenager. I am frightened of, and avoid, any physical examinations by medical staff. I find any kind of physical relationship threatening and stressful. I hate to be touched by loved ones and friends.
467. I was very protective of my children whilst they were growing up. I was scared to let them out of my sight. Because of that I never went out on my own and only trusted a few people to be alone with my children. I am afraid of the dark because I suffer such terrifying flashbacks. This was mainly during the periods when my children were small. I remember that I couldn't read them bedtime stories in their own bedroom because of my fear. We all had to be in the living room.
468. I regret that I lost out on having a relationship with my extended family. During my time in care the local authority made no attempt to trace family members. I only reconnected with my aunt and uncle in later life. Sadly, my aunt passed away recently.

469. I have always had a bad relationship with food. I always overbuy for my family. I am scared of anyone going hungry. As for myself, some days I don't eat at all. On those days I feel as if I don't deserve it. If I do eat the range of what I eat is very limited. Even then I often need the food to be separated onto different plates. When I am eating I'm eating all the wrong stuff and that is affecting my diabetes.
470. My physical health has always been poor and has worsened over the years. Many of my physical illnesses are related to my mental health. These include gastric problems, bowel problems and diabetes. Whenever I talk about these things it affects my physical health. Since talking to the Inquiry I have had twelve hypos and lost two stone in weight.
471. I have never abused drugs or alcohol. However, I have always smoked heavily. I use smoking to deal with my anxiety and to help me cope. Unfortunately, because of my smoking I now suffer from asthma, COPD and have numerous chest infections. My respiratory problems often lead to me needing to be admitted to hospital.
472. I have always struggled to believe in myself and find it hard to accept any praise. My self-confidence has always been poor. My lack of self-belief, combined with my physical and mental health problems, has stopped me seeking any meaningful employment. I struggle when meeting new people, going to unfamiliar places and learning new routines. In new situations I often feel as if I am a "useless child."
473. Although I have lived in a few different places since leaving care I don't like moving. I like to be within my own four walls. I like to be grounded and know where I am staying. There have been times when I am in a room sitting talking to people and all of a sudden I just disappear. I will go off and sit on my own in another room by myself for hours on end because I just don't want people around me.
474. I grew up being told I was bad, evil, stupid and worthless. I still believe these things despite all the years that people have told me that I am a good person. I have no self-confidence. In some ways I think my time in care has made me stronger. I now

say to people that if they don't like me then it is "tough shit." If someone doesn't like me then they don't have to speak to me. That is my attitude. You either sink or you swim and I'm not letting anybody make me sink. At other times I feel like I have an invisible tattoo that people who wanted to abuse me could see. Even to this day it still feels as if the abuse I suffered was my fault. It's easier said than done to not think like that.

Treatment and support

475. I was put in the Royal Edinburgh not long after I had [REDACTED]. I think that the way I was after having [REDACTED] was just as a result of the shock of suddenly having all that responsibility. I think I was there for about a month. During that time my sister in law looked after [REDACTED]. Over the years I have ended up in hospital quite a lot [REDACTED] through self-harm. There was a period when I was just constantly [REDACTED] all of the time.
476. [REDACTED] becoming involved taught me that I could trust people. She helped me understand that I could talk to people and that I didn't need to be aggressive. I later became involved with a local health project. You could get reflexology, acupuncture, massage and stuff like that. Another part of the health project was that they provided counselling if you wanted.
477. Counselling doesn't work for me. I could go for counselling six months of the year and I wouldn't say anything. I'll talk about the weather or anything else but I won't talk about my time in care. I think I am like that because I don't want everybody knowing. Even though they say everything is confidential I don't believe them. I don't trust them.

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later



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Records

491. I remember that throughout my time in care people took notes and records. I was never allowed to see what any of the people taking notes were writing. As far as I was concerned they could have been writing anything about me.

492.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later



493. I tried for about twenty years to get hold of my records. I managed to get the ones from Barnardo's. Those records cover my time at Ravelrig. I discovered from those records that I had an auntie, an uncle and a granny who stayed in Croydon. I never knew they existed until I read those records. There were three people that I never even knew I had during my time in care. Nobody ever told me that they existed.
494. I also discovered that there had been letters sent to me by my granny. I never saw or heard of anything like that during my time in care. There were also apparently pictures of my mother and books about animals sent to me. I never saw anything like that when I was in care. I never got anything like that.
495. I am working with Future Pathways to try and get hold of all of my records. I've provided them with all my details but haven't heard anything back. I wish somebody could find the records that they kept in Midfield. I've been asking for years for them.

Lessons to be learned

496.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later . I am aware that there are PVGs from Disclosure Scotland nowadays. Those need to be checked by anyone looking to employ anyone who is looking after children. Those need to be checked and double checked. They need to be repeatedly checked. I know that they last three years but I think they should be checked more often. There has to be a better way than the way they are doing things now.

497. Training is really important. People who are employed to look after children need to be trained how to listen to people. Children need to be allowed to speak to people without their carers being present. There are ways that you can pick up on what children are trying to say without them actually saying it.

498. Social workers should have been there for me. They should have been having meetings with me, talking with me and listening to what I was saying. None of them did that. I can't even remember half of the social workers who I had contact with, if I had any contact with them at all. For me, social workers were only there when I was moving between homes. That was the only time that I really heard or saw a social worker. Looking back, they were a waste of space. I am still not a lover of social services to this day.

499. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
[Redacted]

500. [Redacted]

Hopes for the Inquiry

501. I have kept what happened with my father Secondary Institutions - inside me for so long. This statement is the first time I have spoken about what happened. I hope I can, in some way, make things right. More importantly, I hope that in speaking about what happened to the Inquiry I can clear my head. The lies that I was forced to tell have been killing me all these years. I feel that I have been living a lie and that the nightmare of what I experienced has never been able to end.

502. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
[Redacted]

503. I hope that the Inquiry can stop what happened to me happening again. I want people to make sure that the things that happened to me never happen again. I don't want, in thirty or forty years' time, for some little child who is in care now to be sitting speaking to an Inquiry like I am now. If that happens then nobody has learnt anything. I don't want the Inquiry to just say things. I want it to make sure that things are done.

504. 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.

EVO

Signed

Dated

3-11-20