

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

ETO

Support person present: No.

1. My name is ETO [REDACTED] though I prefer to be called ETO [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1973. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was born in the Queen Mother's Hospital in Glasgow and grew up in Knightswood. My dad's name is [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] and he is still alive. My mum's name was [REDACTED] and she died three years ago. I have one brother called [REDACTED] who is eighteen months older than me. I no longer speak to either my father or my brother.
3. What I remember most from my early childhood was my mum and dad fighting all the time. On one occasion each had a hold of one of my arms until my mum pulled a knife and tried to stab my dad. My parents were deemed as unfit to look after me and [REDACTED] and social workers got further involved. According to my records social workers had been involved with me since I was a week old. I only really became aware of social work involvement as I was growing up.
4. The first foster care myself and [REDACTED] were in was with ETP-ETR [REDACTED] in Erskine when I was in Primary one or two. I had initially been in Corpus Christi Primary School in Knightswood. I remember the various institutions and foster care I was in but don't really recall the day to day things and it is specific incidents in some places that I

remember. My social workers at the time were either Mrs Neville or Joyce Smith or Joyce Kearney, I can't remember which name she was using at the time.

5. Although I remember the places I was in I'm not sure of the dates. However, I have some of my records and from them I can say that I was in the following on the dates given:- Foster Care with [ETP-ETR] Erskine from [REDACTED] 1981, Nazareth House, Cardonald, [REDACTED] 1983 – [REDACTED] 1984, Blairvadach Children's Home, by Helensburgh, [REDACTED] 1984 – [REDACTED] 1986 (discharged to care of Dad), Ailsa Children Home – date unknown, Alva Children's Home - [REDACTED] 1987, Foster Care, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Drumchapel 1987 – 1989.
6. Also, while in these various places and just before I went into care, I was at several primary and secondary schools. The primary schools I was at were Corpus Christi in Knightswood, Thomas Aquinas in Jordanhill, Lourdes Primary in Cardonald, St Peter's in Partick, St Joseph's in Helensburgh and St Brendan's Primary in Yoker. The secondary schools were Notre Dame in Glasgow, Notre Dame in Dumbarton and St Pious in Drumchapel. I was at least one other secondary school but I can't recall the name. I didn't know if I was coming or going and what was happening to me.

Foster Care – [ETP-ETR] Erskine

7. In foster care with [ETP-ETR] I was neglected, verbally abused, made to eat food I didn't like and forced to wear nappies at the age of six or seven. I was always scared. Living with [ETP-ETR] was a nightmare, a disgrace and I remember feeling strange that my mum and dad weren't there. I feel that I can't put it in to words. The nappies they made [REDACTED] and I wear was because we wet the bed nearly every night.
8. [ETP-ETR] would give us porridge for breakfast and would put the same bowl of food in front of us for lunch, dinner and supper if we didn't eat it. I have a vague memory of them hitting us but my main memory is that bowl of porridge. I don't remember why we were moved from [ETP-ETR] but, from there, we went to Nazareth House, Cardonald.

## Nazareth House, Cardonald, Glasgow

9. Nazareth House was run by nuns and the abusive one to me was Sister LHW I hated her then and I hate her now. I don't recall when we got up or how they woke us but we would get up, get washed and dressed then went to school at Lourdes Primary but I don't recall a lot else about Nazareth House. I've always tried to blank Nazareth House out of my head.
10. The nuns would give us our food but Sister LHW always thought she was the boss and would over-rule the other nuns and tell them what to do. She would shout and bawl at the kids and was verbally aggressive towards them. I can't remember the words she would use but the kids were terrified of the way she spoke.
11. If we wet the bed Sister LHW would make us lie in it and be verbally aggressive to us afterwards. One of the girls, used to keep asking me "Did you wet the bed again? Did she make you lie in it?". One time I wet the bed and tried to hide the fact I had done so but I didn't understand the stain it had left.
12. I recall that we each had single beds and a wee three-drawer cabinet in our dorm but I don't remember the washing routine or where we got our clothes from and the only thing I recall about leisure time was being out on my roller skates on one occasion. I don't remember anything about the food.
13. My mum got barred from visiting us and that was possibly because of her mental health. Every Friday she would wait at the gate for me and my brother. We would then all walk through the Clyde Tunnel and come back the same way on the Sunday. I hated going back but was even more worried about my mum going back through the tunnel on her own. She came for us most weekends but then it stopped suddenly and I don't know why.



14. There was an incident in Nazareth House when I was nine or ten years old. There was a boy called [REDACTED] who was about sixteen and, in a wee toilet that had a sink, he asked me if he could touch me and asked if I would touch him.
15. I reported this, to Sister LHW [REDACTED] and other nuns, but they didn't believe me nor did my father. I can't remember if my mum believed me or not. I later reported this to the police in 1998 but I can't remember if they got involved at the time. The police contacted me out of the blue two years ago about it and again a couple of months ago but I'm still waiting to see what is happening about it. The police contacted me again only a few weeks ago and the female officer who was investigating has now moved onto another job. I feel the authorities are letting down all the time because this keeps happening. I believe the police are still waiting to get him in for questioning, but they have said that if he denies it there probably isn't anything they can do.
16. There was also an incident about a note. I didn't write it and I don't recall seeing it but it caused a big argument with the nuns and other children asking me where the note was but I had never seen it. I wish I could say more about this note but I really don't remember.
17. I think it was shortly after that incident that me and [REDACTED] got moved from Nazareth House and sent to Blairvadach Children's Home near Helensburgh by the social workers who were Joyce Smith and Harvey Ruben.

#### **Blairvadach Children's Home, Shandon by Helensburgh**

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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23. I was then in Ailsa Children's Home and Alva Children's Home but I have no recollection of them or when I was there. All this time I just wanted to stay with my mum but social workers wouldn't let me. Eventually I was put back in foster care with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who stayed at [REDACTED] in Drumchapel. I'm not sure if I was with them full-time or just at weekends. I was at least twelve years old as I was at secondary school. My brother [REDACTED] had left care by that time.

## Foster Care – [REDACTED] Drumchapel

24. They had twins called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who were slightly older than me and who, I think, may have been adopted and there was also another girl that stayed there called [REDACTED] who might have been slightly older than me. I shared a room with [REDACTED] I told [REDACTED] about my dad touching me and he told his wife who told social workers. This was about two days after it happened.
25. I felt I shouldn't have been with the [REDACTED] as I wanted to be with my mum but social workers wouldn't allow it though the [REDACTED] did try to make me feel comfortable. On one occasion I ran away from there and went to my mum's. We didn't answer the door to anybody for four days but the police and social workers eventually returned me to the [REDACTED] When the police got me they nearly broke my arm because of the way they had it up my back. I used to dog school again to go see my mum but they wouldn't allow it because social workers said she wasn't well enough. That would have been Harvey Ruben.
26. While I was in care I have no recollection of receiving any psychological help from social workers. All I recall about them was the amount of panels they used to send me to and I have no memory of them trying to keep our family together.

## Life after being in care

27. I was seventeen when I left foster care with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] but I can't remember how it was I came to leave. Harvey Ruben was still my social worker. I left school at fifteen without sitting any exams so I have no qualifications. Harvey Ruben got me a voluntary place instead of school at [REDACTED] Old Folk's Home washing hair.
28. I then got a placement on a Youth Training Scheme but after ten days I went home and me and my brother [REDACTED] had to smash a window to get in and found my mum [REDACTED] I haven't worked since and spent most of my life caring for my mum whose mental health started going downwards after that. Her

mental health had started to deteriorate in the early 80s and that was why she probably eventually went in to care in Gartnavel Royal Infirmary.

29. I have two sons but had to put the younger one in care when he was twelve. He has been diagnosed with Asperger's and I'm still fighting with social workers to get him back but they're refusing to allow me to get him and that is because of my own past. He now hangs about with my so-called brother [REDACTED] who is a beast because he sexually abused me when I was younger.

30. I have told the police this but I haven't gone into details with them Secondary Institutions - to be published later  
[REDACTED]

31. My oldest son is 24 and is a policeman but he doesn't understand what I am going through and doesn't want anything to do with me because I put his wee brother in care.

### **Impact**

32. To this day I still ask why my mum and dad were the way they were. Why could they not cope with me? I ask myself why they were always fighting and ask myself if it was my fault. And I do, I blame myself. I dogged school, didn't go to school. I've always been scared to tell people about my time in care because I always think they won't believe me.

33. Throughout my life I think being in care has left me feeling rejected, neglected, not being fed, not being loved, being used, being abused, taken advantage of, being vulnerable. All of that has clashed and has left me feeling the way I am today. For the majority of the time my emotions are such that I can't put them into words. Overwhelmingly for me, emotions are a day to day thing that I have to cope with and



deal with and I have to take medication to keep it on an even keel. On two occasions I've tried to kill myself because it all became too much for me.

34. I have trust issues and know that I trust people too easily. That is because I have gone through life thinking nobody wants me and I just feel the need to be wanted.
35. Growing up I always felt that I had nobody to speak to and had to deal with things myself and I feel it's still like that for me. It affects me to this day and I get scared about opening up to people. Being in care has affected my relationships. Two years ago I was diagnosed with complex PTSD. I always knew that I had problems that couldn't be explained by just depression, anxiety and moving schools. The diagnosis has put some sense to that.
36. Getting moved from school to school had a big impact on my education. Every time I was in a school and was getting my head down, social workers would move me somewhere else so I would end up in a different school. Because of that I could never settle at school. I feel when I look back on my life that I was dragged up. I'm still struggling mentally from it and it's even affecting me physically now.
37. I was once asked "Do you know who you are?" That was a great question and I realised I have never known who I was. I hate conflict and back off whenever someone argues. There are things I regret and often blame myself for what happened in the past. I should have made things easier for my mum like, for instance, going to school.

### **Treatment/support**

38. Through Future Pathways I got in contact with Anchor who deal with people that suffer from trauma and it was them who got me diagnosed with complex PTSD. There was a waiting list and I got diagnosed late in 2020.



**Reporting of Abuse**

- 39. I made a report to police based in Glasgow about abuse at Nazareth House. There is an officer called Elaine Wood who has been dealing with this report and the matter is ongoing. I have given more detail of this earlier in this statement. I gave a statement to the police.

**Records**

- 40. I received a copy of my social work records through Birthlink and they arrived in the post. I had nobody with me to help me go through them and I have found that difficult, so I have not been able to read through them all.

**Lessons to be learned**

- 41. Social workers should have done more to keep our family together instead of shipping me and my brother out to care. They knew my parents needed support and they should have supplied that help. Social work should have been more understanding. They are meant to try and keep families together and not split them up. Social work shouldn't hold my past against me now and this has got in the way of me having the care of my youngest son.

**Other information**

- 42. 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... ETO .....

Dated... 29/03/2022 .....