

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FFJ

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is ^{FFJ} My date of birth is 1972. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in the Rankin Hospital in Greenock and my mum's name was and my dad's name was My mum's surname before she got married was They already had a son when I was born and his name was was fifteen months older than me and he went into the care system with me. passed away three years ago.
3. I went into care when I was aged ten months old. I don't know how I ended up in care, but I know my mum and dad had a bad relationship. They were very young when they had my brother and I think they were aged just eighteen or nineteen when he was born. My dad was a drinker and he would threaten my mum that he would burn the house down if she left him. I've been told that my mum went out to play bingo one night and never came back to the family home.
4. My dad worked as a spray painter and panel beater and I believe he paid money to the homes we were in for them to keep us. I believe he paid £30 per week to Nazareth House for our keep and my dad told me that himself. I went into care at the same time as who would have been around two years old. I believe there was a social worker involved with us because I remember there was a male social worker at my

aunt and uncle's house when I lived with them later on. I used to sit on the chair with them and everyone was very friendly and the atmosphere was relaxed. Years later my gran told me there was a social worker who wanted to adopt me because he only had sons and didn't want [REDACTED] but my aunt didn't want me and [REDACTED] to be separated. I don't know if this is the case or which social worker she was referring to.

Quarriers Homes, Bridge of Weir

5. The first place I was taken to was Quarriers home. I don't remember any of that experience as I believe I was just a baby. I went to visit Quarriers a couple of weeks ago when I was walking in the area and I went into their office. I was told that as I was a baby I would have been in one of their nursery buildings. There was a white building in the grounds and when I first looked at it I got a feeling I had seen it somewhere before. But, I was also placed in Nazareth House and when I went back there, there was a white building there too. I don't know how long I was placed in Quarriers before I was moved to Nazareth House, Cardonald. No-one has ever explained to me why that happened.

Nazareth House, Cardonald, Glasgow

6. I don't know if I went to Nazareth House on the same day as [REDACTED] but I know he was in there when I was living there. I have no memory of travelling or arriving there and I think I was aged three when I went in the home. I know Nazareth House was run by nuns and I can't remember what Order they came from. I can't recall the names of any of the nuns, but I do remember my grandmother talking about a nun she called Sister zLJS [REDACTED] and how nice she was. That might have been just a front. I don't know how to say her name or how it is spelt. I just remember there was a dumpy-looking nun and a tall nun and one with a walking stick who hit us with it. Something tells me Sister zLJS [REDACTED] was the tall nun. I do remember my grandparents talking about how badly we were treated. My grandparents were called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and they lived in [REDACTED] Greenock.

7. I have just a few memories of the home. I remember there was a girls' bedroom and a boys' bedroom and I used to go and see [REDACTED] in the boys' bedroom. I remember there was a man called [FFQ] who worked there and he was known as the [FFQ]. When I talked to my brother many years later about Nazareth House he told me he thought [FFQ] had tampered with me. I have no memory of that.
8. There was also a member of staff called [LKB] who I met again many years later when I went to visit Nazareth House with my son. That meeting helped me to remember more about my time at Nazareth House.
9. There were both boys and girls living in Nazareth House. I'm not sure of the age range of the children. I thought I was the youngest when I was there and I don't know how old the oldest children were. I don't know how many children there were in total.

Routine at Nazareth House

Mornings and bedtime

10. I slept in a bunk bed and someone slept above me. I shared a bedroom with three other girls and I think they were older than me. I don't remember much of what it was like, but I do remember when I first left care and went to stay at my aunt's house I was feeling warm and sleeping under a duvet and feeling cosy for the first time, so I don't think I had a warm bed in Nazareth House.
11. I know there was a bedroom for the boys that [REDACTED] slept in as I used to go and visit him in there. I used to hide under his bed and hold onto the springs with my fingers so no-one could see me. I used to get caught in his room and he told me afterwards that he got hammered for me being in his room.
12. At night time we'd go to bed at a certain time and once we were in bed we weren't allowed to get out of bed to go to the toilet in the night. One of the older girls showed

me a place behind a chest of drawers where there were rags and I could crouch down to pee at night. I think these girls did the laundry so they could wash the rags.

13. When [REDACTED] and I left Nazareth House we went to live with my aunt and uncle and we shared a bedroom. I remember [REDACTED] telling me I didn't need to sleep with my arms crossed over my body anymore. I never understood why I did that, sleeping like a dead body. I've read someone's story since and they commented that this was the way the nun's made the children lie in bed. I understand now that's why I was lying like that in my bunk bed. I can't remember anyone coming in to the room to check what position I was sleeping in my bed.

Mealtimes / Food

14. I can recall having cornflakes with hot milk and the skin forming on the milk. I don't remember much about the food we got to eat, but I do remember if you didn't eat your breakfast you'd be forced to eat it or get the food later on for tea. I think I was regularly force fed and a nun would put food in my mouth on a spoon and hold my mouth shut until I swallowed the food, and sometimes it came down my nose. It happened to me in front of other children. I saw [REDACTED] being force fed and I remember getting upset. I assume it happened to other children, but I only recall seeing it happen to [REDACTED] because of how upset I was.

Washing / bathing

15. The nuns didn't bath us, instead the older girls did that. We used to line up for the older girls to put us in the bath. They might have scrubbed us. I think they used strong soap as when I left Nazareth House the skin on my heels was badly cracked and the skin on my joints was sore and cracked. I remember this affected my ability to walk as a child and I can't recall how this was dealt with in Nazareth House.

Clothing / uniform

16. My grandmother bought new clothes for me and [REDACTED] to wear and when we went home at the weekend we'd always be wearing clothes that the nuns had given us and looking like tramps.

School

17. I was too young to go to school when I was at Nazareth House. I can only remember being taken to the nursery and me playing with the blue milk float.

Religion

18. We went to the chapel in the morning after breakfast.

Leisure time

19. I was too young to go to school and LKB [REDACTED] used to take me to the nursery. I think she would have been around sixteen at the time. I don't remember it being her who took me and she told me herself many years later when I saw her in Nazareth House. I can remember playing with the wee blue and white milk float in the nursery.
20. I don't remember having access to pencils or colouring pens or comics. The doctor's letter about me that I have mentioned elsewhere in the statement says I could write my own name so I must have had access to writing materials. I think I must have learned to do that with my grandparents.
21. I can remember sitting on the FFQ [REDACTED] s trolley, FFQ [REDACTED] when he was giving out the dinners to the older people who lived in Nazareth House. I remember their budgie getting out and flying around and people throwing cushions at it and it died. I remember it being taken outside and being buried where the statue of Mary was.

22. I have some happy memories of playing in the grounds with my friends. In the grounds there was a fenced off area around a power plant. There was an old homeless man who slept there and we used to torment him. At the time I liked playing those games. I also remember having some fun playing on the witches hat roundabout.

Birthdays and Christmas

23. I assume I went home for Christmas, but don't remember. I don't remember any birthday at Nazareth House. I was aged ten or eleven and on holiday in Butlins when I remember having a birthday cake for the first time.

Visits / Inspections

24. I went home most weekends so my family didn't come to visit me in Nazareth House. I used to go to my grandparents on a Friday afternoon and was back at Nazareth House on a Sunday. I don't have memories of my dad visiting me and he told me he came to visit, but it wasn't recorded. My grandad punched him for not visiting us.
25. There was one time when I remember seeing my grandfather in the hallway at Nazareth House talking to the nuns. I remember I was naked, having got out of bed because I heard his voice, and I thought it was late at night as it was dark. My grandad was then allowed to take us home.
26. My granddad told me years later on that he saw me once in the home and it was about 5 o' clock in winter time. He'd just finished work and gone home and realised no-one had picked us up so he went to Nazareth House himself. I had no clothes on. I assume it must have been the same occasion as it would have been dark outside as it was winter, and to me, as a small child, it felt like it was late at night.
27. I don't remember seeing a social worker in Nazareth House and I have no memory of seeing any official visitors.

Siblings/contact

28. The nuns kept the boys and girls apart at Nazareth House and I was kept apart from [REDACTED] I used to wonder how it was that I knew he was my brother, but it must have been because we had home leave together at the weekends. I used to sneak my way into his bedroom at night to see him.

Healthcare

29. I have a letter that was written by a doctor about me when I was in Nazareth House. I think I was aged around four years. It says I had no friends apart from [REDACTED] and I was really upset when he started school. I could write my first name and tell him what my name was, but not my surname. I didn't know my own address. I had a medical assessment and my skin was broken and cracked. Other than what is written in that letter I have no recollection of medical care, getting jabs or seeing a dentist. The council's name was written on the letter.
30. I have a memory of being upstairs in a room in the home with nuns and people that looked to me to be nurses. I think there were two nurses and two nuns. I thought I may have been in a hospital and they were standing round a bed. The nuns wore black uniforms and the nurses wore blue uniforms that made them look like nurses. I remember there was a girl on the bed screaming and they held her down and suddenly the screaming stopped. The room went quiet.
31. I don't know what happened to her and I've often wondered what was happening in that room. I recognised the girl and she was older than me, but I'm not sure how old she was, but I believe she was not as old as twelve. I don't know her name. I think the girl died. I tried to research children who died in Nazareth House, but I never found anything out about her.

Running away

32. I didn't try running away from Nazareth House.

Bed Wetting

33. I used to wet the bed and I remember being hammered by the nuns and then locked in the cupboard because they had discovered I had wet the bed. I remember I was often naked when I was in the cupboard. I think it was the nuns who put me in the cupboard. We weren't allowed to leave our bedrooms to use the toilet at night and the older girls in my room put rags down on the floor to use. When I left Nazareth House I went to live with my aunt and uncle and I remember I used to wet the bed there almost every night.

Abuse at Nazareth House

34. The nuns locked me in the cupboard as punishment. I don't remember what times of day this would happen, if it was at night or just in the morning, and I can't always remember why I was put in the cupboard. One time I was locked in the cupboard and I was watching a nun and a priest walking together on the path outside. There was snow on the ground and I saw the priest falling over in the snow and I laughed. I was also put in the cupboard after the nuns found out I'd wet the bed and I was in there naked. When I was locked in the cupboard I got battered with what I remember as a walking stick.
35. I only remember being battered in the cupboard by myself and not with other children witnessing it. I don't know if I was battered when I was in the bedroom with the other girls. I don't recall seeing other children being hit with the stick like I was.
36. I can't say how many times I was hit with the stick, or if it was just one strike or several. I can't say if I was hit with the stick every time I was put in the cupboard. Often when I was hit, it was over my clothes and not on any particular part of my body. I don't believe the nuns removed my clothes to hit me. Sometimes I was naked when they found I had wet the bed overnight and I would have been hit at times when I was naked. The

nun who used the walking stick was the cruel one and I think she carried out the beatings.

37. I remember there was a roundabout outside in the grounds and it swung round a large metal cone that we called the witches hat, as that was what it looked like to us. I was playing on it one time and fell off and cut my head. There was no medical attention given and I was just locked in the same cupboard where the nuns had put me when I wet the bed. I think the cupboard was always locked behind me when I went in there. I don't know what else the cupboard was used for. It was on the ground floor, it had two windows and there were shelves in there for shoes and it seemed big to me.
38. I know that [REDACTED] got beat up by the nuns because of me. I used to sneak into his bedroom to see him and I would be caught in there and he'd get punished for it.

Leaving Nazareth House

39. When I was aged five my aunt and uncle got married and they could foster me and [REDACTED]. Their names were FFP-SPO [REDACTED]. They stayed in [REDACTED] Greenock. [REDACTED] was my dad's sister. She was aged twenty-five and my uncle was twenty-one when they married. Neither of them are alive now. They took both me and [REDACTED]. I think social work were involved in this decision as I remember seeing a social worker in my aunt's house. I lived with my aunt and uncle until I was around twelve.

Foster care with FFP-SPO [REDACTED]

40. My aunt and uncle lived in a ground floor flat with two bedrooms. The property was kept spotlessly clean by my aunt. I called her aunt [REDACTED]. Their own son [REDACTED] was born not long after they were married and then their son [REDACTED] came along. My uncle was a functioning alcoholic who worked as a welder and went away from home to work sometimes. My aunt was also a drinker, but she was more secretive about it.

41. My aunt never lifted her hand to me, but uncle FFP beat us constantly. He used to refer to us as 'that pair of bastards'. He hammered us with a belt when we wet the bed. He also leathered his own son, [REDACTED] who had ADHD, with a belt when he was hyperactive as he didn't know any other way to get him to stop.

Routine

First memories

42. My first memory of being out of the care system was sharing a single bed with [REDACTED] in my aunt's house and the feeling of a warm bed for the first time.

Mealtimes/food

43. We were well cared for and had plenty of food to eat. There were no issues with food and being forced to eat anything. Me and [REDACTED] used to get Ready Break at breakfast and we used to write our first initial in our breakfast and we would be giggling. If FFP came into the room and saw us he would punch us both on the back of the head for making a noise. I remember getting up and getting dressed for school, eating breakfast in the morning and if FFP wasn't in the flat we were happy. Then we were out of the house to go to school.
44. When we came out of school we came home to get changed out of uniform and we spent a lot of time with our grandparents as their home was on the next street. I remember my grandmother coming to the door to threaten my uncle as [REDACTED] told her my uncle had beaten me up. He wouldn't open the door to her.

Washing and bathing

45. I had a bath most nights. I had eczema quite badly and my aunt used all the creams and lotions she could on me, and I had special cotton socks to wear at night too. She was the most amazing woman in my view, it was her husband who was the problem.

School

46. I started to go to a local primary school, St Lawrence's in Greenock, and my time in P1 and P2 was a nightmare for me because of how my teacher Miss Briseland behaved. I understand she went onto become a nun. After that, in P3 I got a better teacher Mrs Buchanan and she was lovely so my education was fine after that and my attitude changed.
47. There was [REDACTED] at the school called Mr FFM [REDACTED] and he had an office in the school. I remember when I was aged about eight and I was wearing a ra-ra skirt and a top that was elasticated and he pulled that down to look down it. He made a personal comment about me. I somehow knew to avoid him in future, although other girls still hung around his room. He was known to be weird and there were rumours about him and his behaviour. I didn't think about him for many years until one of my neighbours told me he had abused her daughter when she was a pupil at the school.

Healthcare

48. We went to see doctors and dentists. I remember I had to have six teeth out at the same time. It meant when I got home I'd get treats from my aunt and be put to bed. I was well taken care of by her anytime I was ill.

Leisure time

49. I had access to toys, books and games. I remember I got pocket money of up to £5 per week and I got £1.50 every day for going to school. My uncle FFP [REDACTED] worked, but he didn't put his hand in his pocket for us and instead our pocket money and money for clothes came from what social work paid them for looking after us.
50. [REDACTED] wasn't living in the house as much as me and he spent more time with my dad and grandparents. He'd often go to school from my dad's house in the mornings.

51. We didn't want for anything like new clothes at my aunt's house. I don't remember any birthdays. There were plenty of gifts at Christmas and trips to Butlins and to see the Blackpool lights. We were given a lot of pocket money on holiday to keep us out of the way.

Running away

52. Me and [REDACTED] hated living with my uncle and we planned to run away together. [REDACTED] shared a bedroom with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and I had my room. We'd agreed he would come in to wake me. It was my birthday, and I think I was turning ten, [REDACTED] came into my bedroom really early at 4 or 5 o' clock to wake me up. I remember getting up and getting dressed and leaving the house and hiding from our neighbour who was a postman. We walked through Greenock to my dad's house and his blinds were still down as he wasn't up. We waited around until we saw he was up for work. We were waited in his hut in the back garden and by the time we left the hut his blinds were up and his car was away.
53. We went to a phone box in Branchton and phoned him at his work and he came to get us. He took us to his house and put us in his car and drove us to my aunt and uncle's house and this was at [REDACTED] by that time. After he'd gone I remember getting beaten by my uncle [FFP] with his belt. I assume he also hit [REDACTED] with the belt, but I didn't witness it. I spent the rest of my birthday in my bedroom.

Visits

54. I saw my dad at weekends and summer holidays, and I don't remember him at Christmas and birthdays. He came to visit me at my aunt and uncle's house. [REDACTED] spent more time with him.
55. My aunt and uncle drank a lot of alcohol and uncle [FFP] would batter his wife. At my dad's house he would be fighting with his wife and drinking from the same glass for days. We'd go up to my gran's, sometimes for several days. My grandparents were the most amazing people. My gran would ask me if they were drunk and I didn't know

what to say. I'd be in trouble with my aunt and uncle if I said they were, and in trouble with my gran if I didn't tell her they'd been drinking. I could never give the right answer. If I told my gran they'd been drinking she'd come to the house herself to see what was going on.

56. Social workers came to the house to see us, I don't know how often, and the china cups would come out for them. There was the male social worker that I remembered at first who wanted to adopt me and then in my teens there was a female social worker. She used to meet me out of school by myself. I was told beforehand not to tell them about the fighting and drinking going on at home. I was too scared to tell her what life was really like.

Reporting

57. I never reported what was going on in the foster home to any teacher at school. I was just angry and messed up at secondary school. No one at school spoke to me about my behaviour or tried to find out why I was acting in that way. When my uncle was at home we weren't allowed to have friends round. The neighbours would have heard him shouting and bawling at her, so people would have known some of what was going on. The police were never called to the flat that I was aware of.
58. One night I went back to my aunt's house and she was lying on the floor and I thought she'd died. I put the two boys to bed and went to the neighbour's house and she came in and told me my aunt was very drunk. I was told to go to my bed and sometime after that my uncle came in and was pulling her by the hair and fighting with her and shouting.

Leaving foster care

59. Sometime after that, I think I was aged eleven, I went to live with another aunt and uncle, he was called [REDACTED] and she was called [REDACTED] who lived in England and that was just for the summer. I don't know how it was arranged. He was my dad's brother. I heard auntie [REDACTED] on the phone saying 'they're here because no-one wants them.

I don't know where they're going to go'. When I came back to Scotland after the summer I went to live with my grandparents and stayed there until I was sixteen or seventeen. That was fine. [REDACTED] was still staying with my dad, but both of us were with my grandparents a lot. My grandad died when I was aged sixteen or seventeen. I moved out not long afterwards.

60. I think social work was still involved with me until I was sixteen, but I'm not sure. I don't know if they paid money to my grandparents for looking after us. I don't remember seeing a social worker when I was at my gran's, but I'm not sure. I don't recall seeing a social worker for the last time and there was no help from them with starting adult life.

Life after being in care

61. I worked every day I could since I was aged twelve. I went from job to job doing whatever I could to earn money, in the drawing offices in [REDACTED] shipyards, doing admin for a coach company, being a receptionist, factory work for IBM and now I'm a dog walker. I went from my grandmother's house to live with an abusive alcoholic for a number of years and he knew I would always have money as I worked so many hours and he didn't. I left him when my son was two years old as the situation was not healthy for him and he continued to be abusive to both myself and my son for a number of years afterwards.
62. When my son was young I went to visit Nazareth House at Cardonald to look at the buildings and the grounds to see if anything matched my memory. Someone came out to ask me what I was doing walking around. I told her I had lived there as a child and she introduced me to a woman who used to work there in the time period I was there. The second women recognised me straight away and knew my name and asked me about [REDACTED] This woman's name was [REDACTED] LKB
63. She took me and my son into a new building on the side of Nazareth House and into the main buildings. There was a corridor that had been modernised and used to look

massive when I was a child and now looked much smaller. I pointed out the cupboard that I used to get locked in and I pointed out the girls' bedroom and the boys' bedroom. I remembered the corridor along the side of the chapel. I told her I used to spend a lot of time with a man who worked there called FFQ and he was the FFQ and I used to get called FFJ. LKB told me FFQ was still there and she would get him for me so I could speak to him, but I didn't want to see him.

Impact

64. I have a lack of trust in anyone and any little thing will cause me to distrust someone. I try to stay positive. My son has a disability and he was incontinent until he was aged sixteen. I hit him once for wetting himself and I burst into tears and apologised immediately and he hugged me. I swore I would never hit him again. I indulged him and took the best care of him and gave him everything he wanted and when he wanted it. My past experiences in care made me into a better and more understanding parent to him.
65. I've always worked and gone from job to job as I always use work to get on with things. It may be a pride thing. There have been times when I've been on benefits and it's been for a very short time as I've always found a job of some sort. If I stayed in the house during the day I'd go mad.
66. Sometimes something will happen that drags the past back to me. Then I worry that my aunt and uncle might have been better people if they'd not had us to take care of, and my grandparents would have been better off without having to care for us. I've not sought counselling to help me understand and deal with these feelings, but I'm aware there are organisations that can help me.
67. I find it difficult when I have to have dental treatment as I have a strong gagging reflex from having been force fed at Nazareth House. I'm often sick when I brush my teeth myself, if I don't do it slowly. I also had my nose straightened surgically as I had breathing problems and my doctor told me I had been punched at some stage, but I

have no memory of when that might have happened or why. The doctor said my nose was shattered inside. It must have happened when I was in care at a very young age.

68. I want children in care today not to suffer what I did in care. I would like to foster children myself, so I can offer them good care, but feel I have to deal with my own demons before I take on a child myself.

Reporting of Abuse

69. I have not made any report as an adult to the police about abuse at Nazareth House or in the foster home when I was a child.

Records

70. My GP has told me there are no medical records for me until I was fostered, apart from the assessment carried out before I left Nazareth House to live with my aunt and uncle. I spoke to Barnardo's with a view to getting my records of my time in care. I also went to the office at Quarrier's village recently to ask for access to my records from my time there and I sent an email to another office and I am currently waiting for a response. I spoke to someone from Future Pathways and they explained the process can take three months.

Lessons to be learned

71. No-one asked me why I was angry as a teenager and I don't know why myself I had so much anger built up in me. I didn't go to school when I should. No-one asked me why that was. When my son was growing up I could see from his behaviour when he was upset or angry and I was able to pick up on the signs based on what I witnessed in my brother's behaviour.

72. There has to be proper training and supervision for care staff who are taking care of children without experience, and not just a six week training course. I see jobs advertised in the care sector and the advert states no experience is necessary as training will be give, and that's not right.

Other information

73. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed..... .....

Dated..... 20-01-20.....