

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FYT

Support person present: No

1. My name is FYT however, I was previously known as FYT and that was my name when I was in care. My date of birth is 1955. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. Before I went into care I was living with my mum and dad in Granton, Edinburgh. My father was and my mum was They were never married but she kept his surname, for the rest of her life, after she had children. I have a twin brother, and a younger sister, who was about a year and a half younger than us. I have a sister, who is eleven years older than me but she wasn't in care with us.
3. We were put into care in Edinburgh when I was about four years old and I don't remember much about life before then. I have a vague memory of one Christmas at home when I was given a doll and a pram. At that time all the kids were out in the street playing with their new toys and I do remember that. I don't remember much of my dad because he was away at sea.
4. When we were put into care, my father had my mother sectioned and he gave up the house. My mum was in the Royal Edinburgh Hospital for a while and then she had nowhere to take us when she came out of hospital.

- I was placed in a children's home on Canaan Lane in Edinburgh and I think it was called the Priory. My twin brother, [REDACTED], my sister, [REDACTED] and I were all there together and we were quite happy there.

The Priory, Cannan Lane, Edinburgh

- Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Lagarie House, Rhu

- Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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80. I don't know if there was a legal requirement keeping us at Lagarie but my mum had to fight to get us home and she had to get a house because she had stayed with my grandparents after she came out of the Royal Edinburgh Hospital. I remember someone who I think was called Miss Coutts and I think she might have been a children's welfare officer for the council. She was the one who helped my mum get us home but I don't know when she became involved. [REDACTED] and I were in Lagarie until we were twelve and we were due to start secondary school. [REDACTED] was ten and a half and still at primary school.
81. We went home to my mum's house in Granton, Edinburgh and I think it was the sailor who first brought us to Lagarie who also brought us home. The Sailors' Society didn't have any involvement with us after we had left and I didn't see my dad very often. It wasn't all a bed of roses going home. I had thought naively that it was going to be wonderful but we weren't even home a year when we were placed in foster care in Aberdeenshire.

82. It was pretty awful being at home. My mum started a new relationship and I was furious because we had just come out of the children's home after all these years and she should have been looking after us. She was a drinker and she was always trying to kill herself. There were a number of times when we were left at home while she was carted off to the hospital but not one social care person came.
83. When I went home [REDACTED] and my mum shared a double bed and I slept in a single bed in the same room as them. During the night I would have night terrors so I would be shouting and screaming. I don't know what I was saying but I quite often would be crying. They would wake me up and my mum must have heard that but she would just tell me to go back to sleep and she never asked me about them or sought any help for me.
84. I went to Ainslie Park secondary school but I didn't get on well at school. My brother did really well but I think my problem was that I was so worried about keeping the family together that I would be cleaning the house or cooking the tea and trying to make things right for my mum. It wasn't my place to do that and nothing that I did made a difference. I was consumed by anger and upset.
85. I don't remember exactly what led to us being taken into foster care but I think that my mum probably tried to kill herself. I would often come home from school and see that she had hurt herself in various ways.

Foster Care, Aberdeenshire

86. We went into foster care not long after we had gone home and it was Miss Coutts that took us there. I think that I was twelve or thirteen when I went into foster care. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] went as well and it was a long car journey from Edinburgh to Aberdeenshire. The foster home was on a farm and we lived there with a couple, two other foster children and the couple's own son. The couple were farmers and I think they were maybe in their thirties. Their son was eight or nine and the other two foster

children were a boy and girl at about eleven and twelve years old. I think that they were siblings. I don't know why we were sent to Aberdeenshire. My grandparents came from Aberdeen but we didn't have much to do with them and they lived in Edinburgh at that time.

87. The woman never beat us or anything but she was very careful with the food and the meals were quite small. Her own son would be given boiled eggs and toast for breakfast and all of the foster children were given porridge. My mum used to send us pocket money and the three of us used to go down to the village and buy sweets and stuff our faces.
88. One day they took all of the foster children to a park and dropped us off in the morning without food, drink or money and they didn't come back for us until later on in the afternoon.
89. The woman went to the fish market and bought all these fish that she then made me stand and gut for the freezer. I remember it was a long job and I was there forever.
90. [REDACTED] and I shared a bed and the blankets weren't big enough so we were fighting all night and it was cold. It was just us in that bedroom. [REDACTED] had a different room but I can't remember if he was sharing. One day she shut [REDACTED] in the room and [REDACTED] hung out the window and screamed for the duration of the afternoon but there was no one there to hear her.
91. It was the school holidays while we were there. We had a bit of freedom to go walking through the hills and the fields. Sometimes she would get us to do gardening but generally we did have freedom to wander. I think we were a bit horrible to the other two foster children. I remember I didn't want anything to do with them so I spent my time with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]
92. We didn't keep in touch with my mum while we were there and I think she must have been in hospital. We never saw anyone else while we were there and I think Miss

Coutts came back for us and took us home. We were probably in the foster home for six to eight weeks.

Life after being in care

93. I spent the rest of my childhood at home with my mum but she continued to make attempts on her own life and was often taken away to hospital. I don't think the local authority were involved after I returned home. I went back to school but I failed all of my exams. ██████ did well but he was the blue eyed boy. I found out that my mum was giving him steak and me and ██████ were getting egg and chips. I felt I didn't deserve steak.
94. ██████ tried to take her own life when she was about fourteen and when she was fifteen she ended up in Bangor Hospital which was a Children's Adolescent Unit, West of Edinburgh. She had an accident and was at the hospital. My mum should have been with her but she wasn't and when a doctor came to see her ██████ became frightened and was crying. The next thing my mother had signed the papers for ██████ to go into hospital and ██████ was there for about a year. I don't think ██████ had the help that she needed in Bangor Hospital.
95. I was at home when ██████ was taken to the hospital but I left shortly afterwards to go and work down South as a nanny. My mum was furious with me and she wasn't even at home when I left, she was at her boyfriend's. No one said goodbye to me. However, my wages were five pounds a week so when it was ██████'s birthday I spent my whole five pounds on a pair of shoes for her and she always says that she was delighted when she received the parcel.
96. I married when I was twenty and he abused me both physically and emotionally. I was frightened of him and I still don't know where I found the courage to leave him. However, I did leave him and I went to America and didn't come back for six years. I was twenty six when I left and it was good for me because I learnt to speak up for myself there. ██████ had also split up from her husband and had already moved to

America so we lived together. She had a son, [REDACTED] who lived with us and he had two mums.

97. A few years ago my friend, [REDACTED] phoned me and asked me to make a sleeve for a patient who was constantly pulling out his IV drip. I looked on the internet and couldn't see anything but I managed to make something anyway and that was quite successful. [REDACTED] then asked me to look at making something for dementia patients so I looked that up online and now I spend most of my time making fidget mats for dementia patients. Fidget mats are quilts that have different textures and things attached to them for the person to feel. It's not a job but I get some funding which is coming to an end soon. I spend a lot of my own money buying fabric, zippers and things like that. I always make sure I put a plastic badge holder on them so the patients' relatives can put their favourite photos in it for them or they can write their name on it. I have made about two hundred fidget mats and I now make sleeves in all different colours.

Impact

98. I never felt good enough [REDACTED] at home and I never had any encouragement. When I was at home my mum never asked if I had done my homework. I was skipping school to clean the house and one day I broke a bone in my foot and when my mum came home I was sitting with a plaster cast on. I hadn't been able to phone her and ask her to take me to the hospital.
99. I visited my dad a few times when I was working down South and he was living in Southampton. I really didn't know my dad that well and in a lot of ways he was like a stranger but I did tell him [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later [REDACTED]
100. When I arrived home there was a letter for my mum from my dad's then wife. [REDACTED] and I steamed the letter open and read it. My dad's wife had written that only my mum knew who [REDACTED] s real dad was and she called my mum whore. With

hindsight we should have destroyed the letter but we didn't. When my mum read the letter she went mad and she was going to kill me because it was all my fault. I was seventeen at the time.

101. I tried to speak to my gran about the situation at home with my mum and she called me a liar and didn't want to deal with it. My gran never liked me and when she was coming to the end of her life I visited her in hospital because my mum insisted on it. When I visited her my gran said to me that she had never like me, she told me that I had sleekit eyes and that it was no wonder that I didn't have a man. I had no one.

102. When my dad died I never went to his funeral. My cousin always says how much of a wonderful man my dad was and how much they loved him. I told her that I don't want to hear it but she still goes on about it so I have practically given up all ties with her. He could have given up his job and looked after us but he didn't.

103. I was still very angry with my mother who was still drinking. I was told by a counsellor that just because she is my mother, doesn't mean that I have to love her. She told me that I had a choice as to whether I had my mother in my life or not and, at that time, I decided that I didn't need her in my life because it was far too upsetting. However, my mum was diagnosed with breast cancer so I went to see her in the hospital and she knew things weren't right with me. It took me a long time to reconcile myself to the fact that she was my mum and she was the only one that I had. My mother often said in later life that she didn't deserve me. I'm glad that we reconciled because it would have been awful if she had died and I had still been angry and upset with her. I've learnt that thoughts are not facts. You can think things but it doesn't make them true.

104. I have been depressed for most of my life Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

105. I think I was first prescribed antidepressants a year or two after I came back from America. I was on anti-depressants for a long time and then in my thirties I was referred

to counselling by my GP [Secondary Institutions - to be published later]

[Secondary Institutions - to be published later]

[Secondary Institutions - to be published later] I wasn't getting enough sessions from the NHS so I paid for counselling. She was a registered counsellor that I saw privately for about a year. However, when I asked her to do a statement for me she refused because she wasn't a psychiatrist. All I wanted was a statement about my general health. I did find my time with her helpful. [Secondary Institutions - to be published later]

[Secondary Institutions - to be published later]

106. In my early fifties I went to university and obtained my nursing degree. I started working as a staff nurse but I wasn't given any support and I was getting bullied. I wasn't sleeping because I was working twelve and a half hour shifts and I was up at three in the morning. After working as a nurse for six months, I had a breakdown and I ended up in the Royal Edinburgh Hospital. I was there for a few months and then I was discharged but I wasn't home for very long before going back into hospital. I was there for a long time, almost two years. I was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder and I was given electric shock treatment.
107. My friend, [redacted] was a rock when I was in the Royal Edinburgh Hospital and when I told her that I was giving a statement to the inquiry she said that she couldn't come with me because she couldn't bear it. [Secondary Institutions - to be published later]
[Secondary Institutions - to be published later]
108. There were a lot of times when I was in hospital in the Royal Edinburgh and [redacted] was working in another hospital but she would come off a nightshift and come up to the ward to sit with me for ten or fifteen minutes and that would calm me down and help me get through the rest of the day. She would phone the nurse in charge of the hospital to get permission to come because it wasn't a visiting hour. I didn't want my mum to come and see me at that time. She knew that and never visited.
109. I tried to take my own life a few times. [redacted] whilst I was in hospital, that's how much care they take of you. I could not eat for days and no one cared or noticed. If I was upset and wanted some diazepam then they wouldn't give it to me. [redacted] is a

senior staff nurse so I would phone her and she would get on the phone to the ward and eventually they would give me the diazepam but only because she had phoned. I was there on a voluntary basis but I didn't feel that I had a choice really. I was there for psychiatric treatment but there wasn't really a program. You would have a meeting every day with your named nurse and they had some activities that you could do if you signed up for them. I started painting when I was in there.

110. I used to see a psychologist and a Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) but then you reach a point when they think there's nothing else that they can do and you're discharged and left on your own but I'm a lot more stable now because of my medication. It has taken me a very long time but I finally feel like I'm on the right medication. I would never come off my medication now because I would be frightened that if I did then I would go back to the way that I was. They had me on lithium for a while but not for very long and I think that it a bit of a nasty drug. The last four or five years I have felt like I have been on the right medication.
111. I'm on antidepressants and antipsychotics. I'm just plodding along and doing my bit but I never returned to nursing. When I look back I think that if I had a different home life then I probably would have been better at school and gone into nursing then. The happiest time of my childhood was when I was in hospital and I think that was behind my decision to go into nursing but I should have done it a lot sooner.
112. I found forming relationships difficult and I've not really had a relationship. I did have one relationship but I knew it wasn't going anywhere. I've never had a relationship where I have thought that it was what I wanted. I've had to care myself and I just get on with it. It's like when you are abused as a child and you just get on with it. I just put my face on for the world.
113. For years I had panic attacks at night and it was because I had been in bed at night and had been hearing children crying and screaming. I had a flashbacks that I was walking about without a skirt on. It's better now.

114. I think people who have suffered abuse go on to suffer even more abuse. The guy that worked in the chip shop that we went to after school sexually assaulted me. He used to take me in his car to the beach and he once took me to a house. I think I didn't know how to say no. The chip shop was called [REDACTED] and it was in Granton. His finance worked in the chip shop with him so I don't think that he was that old. I was fifteen years old.
115. When I was working down South I was still having stomach problems so I went to the hospital in Slough and the doctor had a good feel of me all over. He was a consultant and I didn't say no. He touched me everywhere including my private parts. I was only seventeen years old. I've never told anyone about those incidents.
116. My mum said to me once that she was really proud of us all and I pointed out to her that [REDACTED] was on his third wife, I couldn't get a relationship and [REDACTED] had been seeing a psychologist for thirty years. It definitely has an impact on your life.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Records

124. I have been given photos of us at Lagarie from the Welfare Officer at the Sailors' Society. I have a photo of us that was taken during the summer with an actress. I remember the day that she came and I remember that we had a sandwich and an apple for lunch instead of a hot lunch. I had fallen and chipped my tooth the night before and it was so painful that I couldn't eat the apple.
125. I think that Lothian and Borders police would have asked for a copy of my records. They gave me copies of newsletters with photographs that they obtained.

Lessons to be Learned

126. I think it should be possible to go into a home and observe children and see how they behave. Are they happy and playing or are they silent and frightened? I completely understand why children don't tell anyone what is happening to them, it's because they are too frightened.

127. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Other information

129. 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..... 24/01/20.....