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### ADDENDUM TO SECTION 21 RESPONSE IN THE FOSTER CARE STUDY

The following is an addendum to the response submitted by Glasgow City Council on 24 January 2020 and requires to be read alongside that response. It follows work undertaken both in preparation for the Foster Care case-study of the Inquiry and following the initial evidence session of Susanne Millar, Chief Officer of GHSCP.

Although GHSCP has also had Social Work officers sitting through the ongoing evidence heard during Phase 2, that is largely not addressed in this response. Instead, it will be dealt with at the conclusion of the evidence sessions.

#### PART A

##### 1.6 (i)(a)

###### **(a) How many children did the local authority accommodate at a time in foster care and in how many placements?**

In our original response we provided a number of appendices covering the period 1930 to 1990. Whilst accepting the information is limited, Glasgow City Archives has analysed further what those appendices show.

Glasgow Corporation produced statistics for children in foster care in the annual reports of the Children's Department, 1949-1968. The statistics for 1950/1-1968/9 record the number accommodated at year end, and the numbers admitted over the year. These statistics can be viewed in full in Appendix O.

A synopsis of functions and duties of the Social Work Department for 1968-1970, notes that foster-care/boarding were placed with non-related persons or with relatives. Over 1000 homes in Scotland were in use.

Statistics were produced in 1974 for areas forming Strathclyde Regional Council ("Strathclyde") of children in residential care, including those in foster care. As at 31 December 1974, there were 2525 children noted to be in foster care in the Glasgow district alone. A total of 1461 children were fostered through the remainder of the region. These full statistics can be viewed in Appendix L.

Strathclyde Regional Council produced statistics for foster care, broken down into the 5 sub-regions, including Glasgow, for 1975-1977. The statistics include type of placement.

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In these statistics, Glasgow district is broken down into North and South, but the figures show a slight increase from 1974.

For example, the figure in August 1975 is 2591, although the category of "Parent/Guardian/Foster Parent/Relative/Friend" is perhaps wider than the category listed in the statistics for 1974. Unfortunately, we are not aware of the reason for the potential inconsistency, though we note this was the period of transition from the Glasgow Corporation to SRC. The full statistics can be viewed in Appendix K.

The Social Needs and Social Work Resources Report in Strathclyde, 1982 Overview Report- See Appendix P (table 15) gives numbers of children in foster care in the Region for the 6 areas in Glasgow. The table provides detail of placements. Appendix P also provides details for all of Strathclyde.

The proposals for revised structure of the social work department in 1985 records that the four Glasgow Districts have 1867 children in residential homes/foster care.

Strathclyde Regional Council Annual Reports, 1978-1996, give region-wide statistics for children in care, including foster care. The figures show a fluctuating, but broadly consistent number of children in foster care of above 2,000 until around 1986. Thereafter, the figures show a decline in number until, by 1994/5, the number is just over 1,000. These statistics can be viewed in full in Appendix M.

Strathclyde Regional Council, Analysis of Children in Care, 1986-1990 is produced in full at Appendix D. It shows that, in March 1990 the SW Committee examined of trends in the reception of children into care between January 1986 and December 1989. It sought to explain the reasons for decline in the number of children in foster care. As can be seen from conclusion 8.1, it found that the strategy to "support children in their own families and communities is being effective."

In our original response, we omitted the period from 1996 onwards, after transfer of the SW functions from SRC to GCC.

To address that omission, we have included information on numbers of children accommodated in foster care from 1998 and every 5 years until 2022 in Appendix FC4. This illustrates a number of trends.

- From 2008 – 2022 the numbers of children in foster care almost halved. In 2022, 75% of these children are in foster care placements provided directly by the local authority as opposed to outside agencies.
- From 1998 – 2022 our use of residential schools out with Glasgow has fallen dramatically.

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- In 2022 we are twice as likely to support children into kinship placements than foster care placements, illustrating a planned shift to support families in recognition that children's outcomes are improved when supported within their own families.

### 1.6(b)

**b) How many foster carers were approved/registered by the local authority at any given time? How many placements for children did this represent? How many placements were in use at any given time?**

In relation to the number of foster carers registered, the information available from the City's Archives is detailed below.

The Annual Reports of the Children's Department, provide statistics about the numbers of foster carers. Details of the numbers are listed for the 1950s. are listed below.

- 1951-1952: 1079
- 1952-1953: 1079
- 1953-1954: 972
- 1955-1956: 1054
- 1956-1957: 967

A synopsis of functions and duties of the Social Work Department for 1968-1970, notes that foster-care/boarded-out children can be placed with non-related persons or with relatives in over 1,000 homes across Scotland, but no further specification is given.

Statistics were produced in 1974 for areas forming Strathclyde of children in residential care, including those in foster care. These statistics can be viewed in Appendix L, which is discussed above regarding the numbers of children. Again, this does not break down the numbers of carers and/or placements.

The report by the Director of Social Work, 'Child Care Strategies and Priorities', to the Social Work (Child Care) Sub-Committee, 15 April 1993, noted that there were 690 foster carers caring for 1200 children in the Council's care. The report also noted that the local authority sought an additional 250 foster parents to care for children of all age groups but particularly children in family groups, children who require care for a short period of time, and older children.

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The Children's Services Plan 1998-2001 Consultation Draft, prepared in June 1997 records the following:

- that at any given time there were 400 Glasgow children looked after by the local authority in foster care placements
- approximately 300 foster care households were supported directly by Glasgow's social work department, providing a range of different types of placement.
- specialist fostering schemes were in place which offered placements for older children, large sibling groups, or children with disabilities
- half of Glasgow's foster carers lived outside the city

Beyond these figures, we have not located numbers of approved/registered foster carers and placements.

In relation to more recent information we have included the annual reports completed for the Glasgow City fostering service for the period 2007/2013, 2018/2022 as they include information on the number of registered carers to provide a sense of the trends over time in terms of numbers of carers. The following information has been drawn from these reports:

- In 2007 there were 353 foster carers; 6 registered as emergency; 22 foster carers and adopters; 17 foster carers and shared carers and 2 are foster carers and respite carers.
- In 2013 there were 476 foster carers; 89 were both short- and long-term carers; 195 were short term carers; 146 were long term carers; 7 were pre-adoptive carers; 37 were respite carers; 2 were supported carers.
- In 2018 there were 490 foster carer households; 167 were providing long term placements; 323 were providing interim placements; 94 were providing short breaks (these placements descriptors are defined in the Annual Return for 2018 and some foster carer households are "dual" registered).
- In 2021 we had 462 foster carer households; 153 provided long term placements; 240 providing interim placements; 69 providing short breaks (the Annual Return for 2021 includes national descriptors of placement types).

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### 1.6 (c)

**If foster carers were approved/registered by the local authority as providing only specific types of care – e.g., respite care, short-term foster care, long-term foster care please provide details of the categories and the numbers of placements in each.**

We have included further information on these numbers in our answers to 1.6(b) above. No further breakdown of the numbers appears possible, based on the available information.

In summary, the categories which are reflected in the information available include:

- In Strathclyde temporary placements: emergency placement; pre-adoptive placement; respite holiday placement; task-centred placement.
- In Strathclyde permanent placements: fostering with family contact; fostering without family contact; fostering with a view to adoption; and fostering by relatives.
- In Glasgow City Council, both short- and long-term care. The categories include pre-adoptive carers, respite carers and supported carers. Latterly (post-2014) short-term care is referred to as interim care.

### 1.6 (d)

**Please provide details of any material changes in numbers of children, placements or foster carers, and the reasons for these changes?**

We have included information in relation to this in our answers to 1.6(b) from 2007 onwards. Trends in differences in placement types are difficult to track or be certain about as until c.2013 there has not been a clearly defined categorisation of placement types. The changes in number of registered carers from 2007 are detailed in 1.6(b) with the Annual Returns for the fostering services detailing the numbers recruited, registered, and deregistered. The numbers of carers have remained relatively stable since 2013.

Considering the number of foster carers registered against the numbers of children placed in foster care, the available information shows a pattern where capacity to look after children improves over time.

In terms of the reasons for those changes, a significant change occurred in the mid-1980s, when the strategy within (then) Strathclyde emphasised the support of children within their own homes.

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The Home and Away Strategy established a value base for Child Care, which included:

- 1 The right of children to live at home in their own family, in their own community – the Prevention Strategy
- 2 The right of all children received into care to be returned home to their own families as soon as possible consistent with their welfare – the Rehabilitation Strategy
- 3 The right of all children to family life – if not in their own family, then with another – the Homefinding Strategy .
- 4 The right of all children to the best possible quality of life while in residential care – The Residential Care Strategy
- 5 The right of children in care to be respected as individuals - the Children's Rights Strategy .
- 6 The recognition of the crucial role of poverty, deprivation and disadvantage in child care – the Deprivation Strategy.

The overall strategy appears to have directly reduced the numbers of children in care, as shown in 1.6(a).

More recently in Glasgow, along with a reduction in numbers of children requiring to be looked after, there has been an increase in the number of foster carers.

Broadly, in 2008 there were 353 foster carers looking after 837 children; in 2013 476 foster carers were looking after 823 children; in 2017 there were 490 foster carers looking after 634 children and in 2022 462 foster carers looking after 443 children. During this period there were new national regulations implemented limiting numbers of children in foster care placements to 3.

### 1.6(e)

**How many children in total were accommodated by the local authority (whether in foster care or otherwise)?**

Appendices K-O give numbers of children in foster care each year, available from our Archivists, and the period 1998-2022 is set out in Appendix FC4.

### 1.6(f)

**In general terms, was the main service provided by the local authority the provision of residential care for children in establishments, or was it the provision of foster care?**

We have identified the main trends from 1998 in Appendix FC4.

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Historically, there has been a high level of the use of boarding out and foster carers in Glasgow (see Abrams and Fleming report.) There appears to have been a period in around the 1970s and 80s when more use was made of residential care than previously. Since then, however, the use of foster or kinship placements has continued to increase. It represents, by far, the primary placement for children looked after by the local authority, with currently 90% of children looked after in foster or kinship care placements.

### 1.6(g)

**With reference to the present position, are the answers to any of the above questions different?**

Yes.

### 1.6(h)

**If so, please give details**

The current availability of foster carers and small number of children allow us to plan and match children to foster carers, considering much more closely the needs of children, the location and skills of foster carers, other children in those placements. This capacity and ability to plan and match enhances children's experience in foster care, improves outcomes and lessens the risk of placement disruption or breakdown – as evidenced in our reports.

#### Supporting Families in Glasgow

Since 2014/15, senior leaders in Glasgow's children's services have been working with CELCIS (Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection) to develop approaches to supporting children and families in the city. A family support strategy has been co-produced with children and their families and the practice to support families at the earliest possible stage of identified need is becoming embedded in practice. Glasgow has developed an Intensive Family Support Service in conjunction with third sector partners to support families whose children are 'on the edge of care.' The approach to supporting families has involved taking a strength-based approach to the work and recognising families as experts in their own lives.

In addition, Family Group Decision Making has been introduced in the city since 2019 and where a decision is made or is likely to be made to place children and young people away from their families the FDGM team become involved to discuss alternative options with the family and to ensure the child or young person can maintain supportive family relationships.

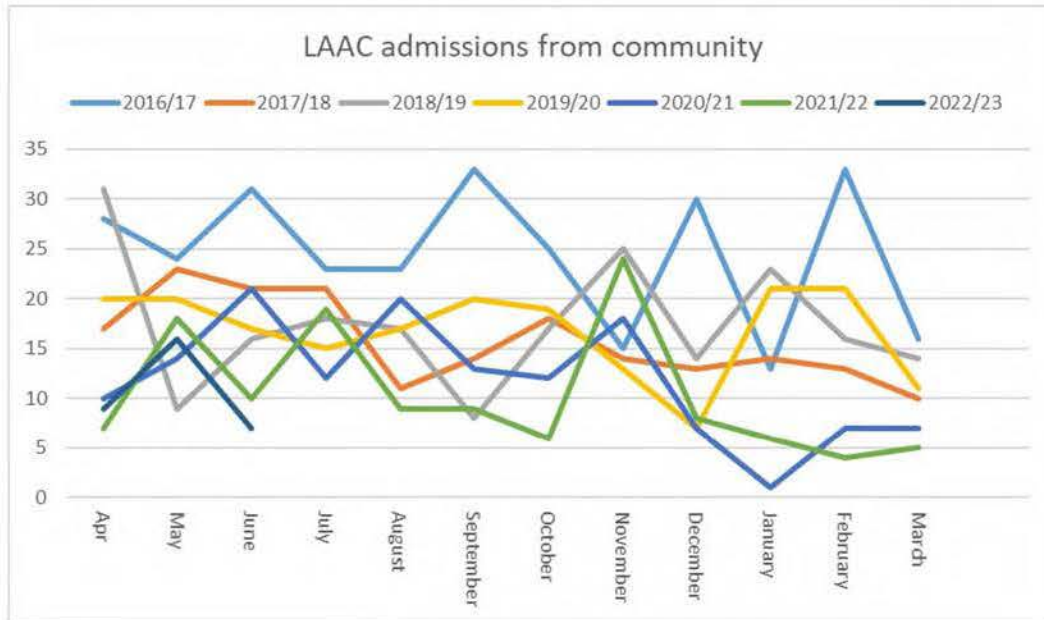
As a result, the number of children in Glasgow's provided foster care placements has reduced from 835 children and young people in June 2016 to 504; a reduction of 331 in June 2022.

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At the same time children and young people in third-party foster placements has reduced from 322 to 203; a reduction of 119. This downward trend had seen a total reduction of children living away from their families in foster care of 450.

The following graph tracks the reduction of children and young people entering all care placement types over time.



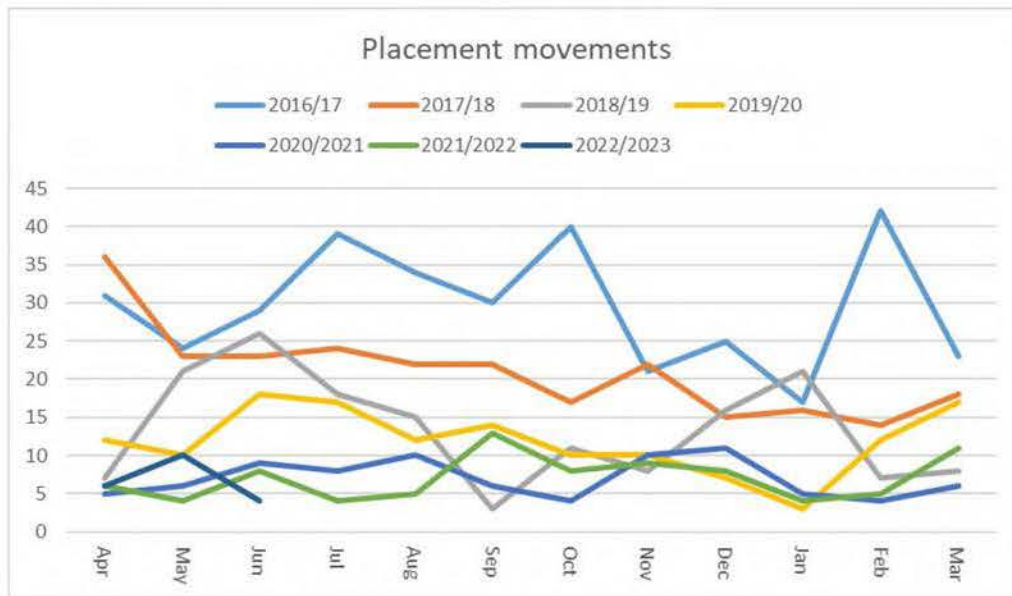
### Supporting Foster Carers

As part of the work with CELCIS an analysis of foster care placement breakdown was undertaken to help to understand the support needs of carers and the children and young people in placement. The analysis led to the conclusion that there was no single characteristic of children, carers or placement that could be identified to help to create a greater understanding of the challenges within foster care. The analysis did highlight that where there are good care planning arrangements in place, i.e., regular reviews, plans being implemented, good relationships between children/ young people and their social worker, good support from supervising social workers, placements were more likely to succeed.

This insight has enabled the promotion of good planning processes for children and young people and as a result placement breakdown has slowed significantly as can be seen in the graph below. The city has invested in a team of 6 Independent Reviewing Officers to help to ensure the plans for our children and young people promote consistency and stability, resulting in two thirds of children and young people in Glasgow's provided fostering services being in their placement for 2 years or more.

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In addition to this the service has been working closely with Dr Helen Minnis and researchers from the University of Glasgow to assess what is the best approach for abused and neglected pre-school children entering foster care.

The study has acknowledged that placing children in nurturing foster placements can help them recover rapidly, but it is not known whether it is better for children’s long-term development to place them with substitute (foster or adoptive) families or return them to birth or extended families who have been helped to address the difficulties they faced at the time their children were placed in foster care. The study commenced in December 2011 and will report in 2023. In the meantime, their qualitative interviews and focus groups with foster carers, birth families, social workers and members of the legal system continue to give us rich information about how services work and how families respond, and progress is reported via a regular feedback session with managers.

Training and Development

The vital importance of trauma-informed practice is now widely accepted as an approach that should be embedded across all groups and professionals working with children and their families and is now included for foster carers in their training. Glasgow has been working to train all care staff within the city’s residential houses in “Nurture” and intends to roll this out to foster carers over the next year. This approach is well established in Education Services and is being co-delivered with the City’s Educational Psychologists. Such work will ensure children and young people get a consistent response from caregivers wherever they are placed.

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### Safeguarding Children in Foster Care

In 2014 an addendum was added to the looked-after procedures for the city. This required that monthly visits should be made to children and young people in care placements rather than the 3 monthly visits required in the regulations. While this was paused due to the pandemic, these safeguarding visits resumed after national lockdown restrictions eased in April 2020 and continued in line with regional restrictions and social distancing measures. Intermittently Team Leaders are asked to audit safeguarding visits to reassure themselves that children and young people are seen and seen away from their carers to discuss any concerns they may have in their placements. A safeguarding supervision tool and a checklist for use when undertaking visits to care placements was developed and includes a minimum of one unannounced visit per year to all carer households. A Safeguarding Policy was developed along with specific Guidance for Responding to Reported Concerns about Children in Foster Care.

### **1.7 Children's Background/Experience**

#### **Past**

- (a) Did the children placed in foster care generally have a shared background and/or shared experiences?**

The available historical records indicate that children were admitted into the care of the organisation and were thereafter assessed individually, although some shared experiences are identifiable in the impact of poverty, neglect, addiction issues, mental health of parents, death of a parent resulting in the need for children to be placed in the care of the local authority.

Once placed in foster care, it is clear from the historical records that children's experiences did vary greatly, ranging from positive successful experiences to those considered by the Inquiry where abuse and neglect have been a feature and which have had a significant impact on children, often into adulthood.

### **1.8 (i)**

#### **(a) and (b)**

- (a) How many people were employed by the local authority who had some responsibility for foster care services for children?**

The City Archivist has provided details of staffing numbers for Glasgow Corporation and Strathclyde Regional Council as detailed below.

The annual reports of the Children's Department, 1949-1968, give numbers and titles of staff. These can be viewed in in Appendix C.

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The Annual Returns of Staff in Glasgow Corporation, records numbers in the Social Work Department at end of November 1969 and 1970. In 1969 staff are listed under the department from which they were absorbed, i.e., Children's/Health/Probation Departments. For 1969, the table includes only those absorbed from the Children's Department. The 1970 return provides an overall list of staffing in Social Work, and the table reflects the whole of the Department.:

	1969	1970
<b>Principal Social Worker</b>	0	1
<b>Area Officers</b>	0	23
<b>Assistant Area Officers</b>		2
<b>Senior Social Workers</b>		23
<b>Social Workers</b>	29	102
<b>Assistant Area Officers</b>		2
<b>Assistant Social Workers / Social Work Assistants</b>	6	59
<b>Trainee Social Workers</b>	2	36
<b>Removal Officer</b>	1	

There is a report in 1968 of meetings between Officials of the Social Work Services Group and Glasgow Children's Department to discuss current and future child care arrangements. The report outlines the role of Child Care Officers in the existing foster care system, proposals for changes to teams and outlines staff responsibilities for foster care. This report can be viewed at Appendix Q.

In 1985 Strathclyde Regional Council underwent a major restructure, and various reports include details of current (Region-wide), proposed staff structure and numbers, and the caseloads for each District of the Region. A summary of the proposals for the revised professional staff structure of the Social Work Department shows the following:

<b>Glasgow</b>	<b>Area Office No of Fieldwork teams</b>	<b>District Office Child-Care Team - Group size</b>	<b>Qualified Social Workers</b>
North West	4	7	52.6
North East	7	14	103
South West	4	15	69.8
South East	6	9	487

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The Information Pack on Restructuring of the Social Work Department for Applicants, 1985, provides tables of population and caseloads, across the full range of social work.

The table below relates to foster care placements.

<b>Glasgow</b>	<b>Children in related foster homes</b>	<b>Children in non-related foster homes</b>
North West	80	150
North East	99	245
South West	74	169
South East	73	158
<b>Totals</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>722</b>

The District Child Care teams comprising 45 'social workers' who would have been responsible for the care of foster children.

There was no further major restructure of staffing by Strathclyde Region. And in January 1996 it was agreed that most staff would transfer to the new authority intact and were part of operational units in residential units, day centres or area teams transferred without change in their current work. The report issued by the Director of Social Work, included 6 Appendices (1-6) which are attached for information as Appendix S.

At a meeting in November 2003, the Social Care Services Committee agreed a report of a proposed organisational model of Social Work services delivery. This was designed to impact significantly on the availability and quality of local services in the city, by enabling the Council to recruit and retain appropriate fieldwork staff. (See Appendix T)

The report highlights the interim measures agreed in April 2003 to assist in the retention and recruitment of qualified fieldwork staff. These interim measures were intended as a minimum, holding position pending the completion of a wider, and longer terms, grading review which would

- take a 5 year forward view of Glasgow's likely recruitment/retention position and the planned introduction of a 4-year Honours social work qualification with its first intake in Autumn 2004
- taking into account the emerging requirements of the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) as it determines the future continuing professional development requirements of SSSC registered (qualified) Social Workers
- reflect the pressures of SWD fieldwork management grades

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The success of the measures recorded as:

- attracting 37 newly qualified social workers
- guaranteeing that 95 new and existing staff remained with Council for 2 years through assistance with the repayment of student loans.

The report also highlights training, recruitment, and retention issues.

The November 2003 report describes the existing organisational model and its proposals to change existing roles and responsibilities by the creation of Practice Teams. Appendix 1 within the report shows a typical Area Team Structure. Appendix 2 shows the proposed establishment changes. The expected impact of the proposals was that case holding capacity of area teams would increase by 30-40%.

A meeting of the Social Care Services Committee on 9 March 2004 (See Appendix U) seeks the approval of the new organisational model of Social Work fieldwork service delivery (as approved by Committee in November 2003 (Appendix T)). This includes details of structures around Child and Families Management, including staffing levels and grades.

In addition to the above the Annual Returns for the Fostering Service 2007/2013/2018 the 2007 report shows 25 WTE staff within our fostering service; 2013 shows 49.2 WTE and in 2018 there were 35.3 WTE staff although over that period there were several restructures, and the service was separated into a fostering and adoption service with distinct roles and responsibilities in recruitment and training.

**(c) What roles and responsibilities did such staff have? Please specify in which roles staff met with children and foster carers.**

Appendix C sets out the details of staff titles. There is further information about their roles and responsibilities in the three Organisation and Method Reviews of the Children's/Social Work department, 1960s-1970s. These have been previously supplied to the Inquiry

As a result of the reviews, the Social Work Department advertised a number of posts, including 50 social workers. A draft of these adverts, with comments, provides detail of the roles and the qualifications and experience required. See Appendix R

The above-mentioned documents provide some information to help the identification of which staff members would have met with children and foster carers.

Since 1996, in general terms, there has been a demarcation as between the fostering service and area social workers.

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The fostering service has the primary responsibility for managing foster parents and placements. The area social workers have the primary responsibility for meeting and supporting children under the care of the local authority.

Staff within the fostering service have recruited, assessed, and supervised foster carers.

Since around the early 2000's, policy and practice become clearer that staff in the fostering service have a clear safeguarding role for children in foster care, and that the primary purpose of foster care is to meet the needs of children.

**(d) In relation to each role, what experience/qualifications did such staff have?**

The experience/qualifications of staff would have varied over the period in line with the contemporaneous existence of recognised social work qualifications required to undertake statutory duties. This has changed over the period of the Inquiry with different pieces of legislation setting out requirements for qualifications, and the nature of those qualifications also changing over the course of the Inquiry timeline. See, however, the answer to (c) above.

Since 1996, staff within GCC's fostering service have required to be qualified social workers before they can undertake assessments and make recommendations. Similarly, in area team social work services, most children and family workers would be qualified social workers, particularly in undertaking statutory functions including assessment and report writing.

In both foster care services and in area team social work services there will have been social care workers undertaking support functions but not able to undertake statutory functions.

**1.8(h) If so, please give details**

**Fostering Services in Glasgow – Current Structure**

The service comprises of a Service Manager who is the registered manager, one Assistant Service Manager and 5 Team Leaders. There are 24 social workers, 2 Social Care Workers and 2 Senior Learning and Development Officers. The team has a Head of Children's Services who is part of the Senior Management Team. Details are provided in Appendix FC7.

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### **Foster Care Recruitment Practice in Glasgow**

Historically and due to the dissolution of Strathclyde Regional Council Glasgow City has had foster carers in all parts of Scotland.

Over the years however the numbers of placements out with the city have reduced significantly. This is due to the retiral of carers form outwith Glasgow and natural move on of young people from care placements. Recruitment of new carers is focussed within a 20-mile travel distance of the city to ensure children remain connected to their families, schools, and communities. Currently 67% of children and young people in foster placements live in Glasgow or its neighbouring local authorities.

### **Family Connections Assessments**

In response to our learning and understanding of the importance of family relationships, emphasised in the Promise and in the Children (Scotland) Act 2020, which placed a new duty on local authorities to take steps to promote, on a regular basis, personal relations, and direct contact between a child in their care and their brother and sisters, a Family Connections Assessment has been developed. This assessment commences at the point of the child or young person moving to a care placement to ensure that important family relationships are explored and maintained.

#### **1.8 (ii)**

##### **(n) If so, please give details.**

The Fostering Procedures (2020) set out in detail the focus of the fostering service, including expectations of recruitment and assessment. In addition to the checks undertaken in the past, checks on prospective carers now include reference requests from the current/previous employer and reference requests from previous significant partners.

If applicants have child(ren) under 5 or of school age, references are requested from health visitor and/or relevant educational establishments. The Guidelines also set out the need for foster parents to take various steps in caring for children. Those include:

- Let Social Work Department know immediately of any serious incident affecting the child
- Permit any person authorised by SRC to see the child
- Notify Social Work Department of any change of address before actual move.

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- (k) **Did children work manually in the placement or externally (e.g. farming work or other labour), or both? If so, did that change at any point? If so, why?**

In addition to the information given in our full response, we add the following. We know that it was a further several years after the Clyde report before this practice ended in Glasgow, as is set out in the report by Abrams and Fleming. The reasons for the approach taken and why it stopped are not known to the current management of GCC, beyond the knowledge it has attained from reading and considering the Abrams report and the evidence given to this inquiry.

- n) **If so, please give details**

In addition to the checks undertaken in the past, checks on prospective foster carers now include reference requests from their current/previous employer, and reference requests from previous significant partners.

If applicants have a child or children under the age of 5 years, a reference is requested from their child's Health Visitor.

If applicants have a child or children of school-age, references are requested from all relevant educational establishments.

Checks are carried out on all adult members of the household of prospective foster carers. These include Disclosure checks, family GP enquiry and local authority record checks for their current and previous addresses.

Health and Safety Checklists are completed for all prospective foster homes, using a template devised by Coram BAAF Adoption & Fostering Academy.

The Health & Safety Checklist is updated regularly for approved fostering households at the point of the Foster Carer Review, which occurs within regulatory timescales.

A Pet and Dog Questionnaire is also completed during the assessment and updated for each Foster Carer Review.

A Foster Carer Agreement is signed by Foster Carers following their approval by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM). This covers general expectations of the foster carer.

More information on our service's current approach can also be found on our website which includes information on recruitment, assessment and support for foster carers including training.

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### 2.1 (i) and (j)

**(i) If so, when did they occur and how did they manifest themselves?**

**(j) Were any changes in culture driven by any external influences or factors and if so what were those influences or factors?**

We have chosen to respond to questions (i)-(j) as a consolidated response.

Glasgow City Council and its predecessors has a long legacy of providing foster care for the children of the city. From the 16<sup>th</sup> century until 1845 the church of Scotland parishes was responsible for the poor children of the city. In Glasgow the parishes asked the Town Council for help and in 1733 it built the Town's Hospital, which was partly an orphanage. Many children were boarded out/fostered to country areas or housed in the Town's Hospital during this time

In 1930 Glasgow inherited the care of children who were deprived of a normal home life from the poor law authorities who had boarded them out to country areas, or less usually, in a poor house. The establishment of the Children's Committee in 1948 was a major change, with childcare issues being at the centre. Its Annual Reports, 1950-1968 suggest a more child-centric approach.

Strathclyde Region's stated prime objective in 1975 was to tackle the problems of multiple deprivation in its area and central to its vision was child-care. A major and immediate challenge was bringing together Children's Services across what was the largest local authority of its kind in Europe. Its priority was Foster Care.

In 1975 the Director of Social Work set out his report on Fostering Care and laid down priorities for achieving a good fostering service.

In 1976 the Director issued to Officers dealing with fostering and children in care a 'package' aimed at raising the standard of practice and meeting the Martin Committee requirements.

As a first step a regional child-care Resources Team was established, with a focus on children in residential care or boarded out. There were close links between this venture and the Member/Officer report on childcare preceded by a 'Member/Officer' report on Child Care (1978) which considered the methods by which children in care are assessed as eligible for substitute family care; examine arrangements for the recruitment, assessment, support, and deployment of foster parents.

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Strathclyde Region's vision of tackling the problems of multiple deprivation in its area and in particular its stance on childcare was articulated in a policy document - 'Social Strategy for the Eighties'. Central to the review was childcare and the recognition that some young people would require to be helped and supported in a residential setting.

The culture in fostering services, and in wider social work settings, mirrored those views on children, including those impacted with family circumstances resulting in them requiring to be looked after by the state. Abrams lays out some of the impact on the culture within foster care provision, particularly from a perspective pre-1996.

The current senior management within social work services in Glasgow have views and experiences of the culture within fostering services from c.1996. It is reported that in local government reorganisation in 1996, the new Glasgow City Fostering Service inherited the previous Strathclyde Fostering Service, and with pressures on budgets and rising numbers of children requiring care, their view of the culture within the fostering service was that it was detached from the wider children and family social work service; that there was a focus on the foster carers rather than a primary focus on children; and that the pressures on staffing demand coupled with foster carer availability left the service in 'crisis' mode with a lack of structures, processes and planning in relation to placements.

From 2007, following a Best Value Review of the Service (Appendix FC6) there was a concerted effort to invest in staffing, focus on modernising procedures and shift focus to a more child-centred service, improve links to the wider social work service and improve recruitment of carers. We have already highlighted, above, the impact of developments since 2007 in terms of the numbers of foster carers per child in care.

## Part B

### 3.1 Retrospective Acknowledgement/Admission

- a) Does the local authority accept that between 1930 and 17 December 2014 any children cared for in foster care were abused?**

Yes. The local authority accepts that children within foster care placements facilitated and overseen by Glasgow City Council and its predecessors were abused.

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### **b) If so, what is the local authority's assessment of the extent and scale of such abuse?**

Precise assessment is not possible, given both the lack of information and the size of the task to ascertain what might be available (see below). However, even if the abuse were confined to that discussed in the Abrams and Fleming report (which, for the avoidance of doubt, we do not contend to be the case,) our assessment is that abuse was more than rare and isolated.

If the further audit, referred to below, is a true representation of the extent of complaints of abuse, it would tend to suggest that such complaints were made in around 3% of total cases. Within the confines and limitations of such an audit, this would again point to complaints of abuse being more than rare and isolated.

### **c) What is the basis of that assessment?**

The local authority's practice in relation to the reporting, assessment, action, and analysis of complaints has progressed and significantly improved throughout the time period assessed by the inquiry.

In 1977 Strathclyde approved procedures for its five sub-regions, with each area maintaining their own Child Abuse Registers. In 1980 a working party was set up to improve the existing procedures and to standardise these throughout Strathclyde and a new manual was introduced in 1983.

In 1986 the Child Abuse Register was centralised at Social Work Headquarters in Glasgow and a new and specialist post of Assistant Principal Officer (Child Abuse) was established. This led to new procedures and practice notes as well as moves towards a more systematic and accountable link between Social Work HQ, Districts, and the Area Teams.

In 1989 new Child Abuse procedures, the employment of a Senior Resource, and additional administrative support to the Child Abuse Registration System, both in 1990, ensured more in-depth inter-action with Area Teams and a greater emphasis on staff training and inter-agency work.

Prior to 1998, complaints and allegations were dealt with on an individual basis meaning there is little way to assess and compare the extent and scale of reported abuse. Details of complaints are likely to be in children's social work files, maintained by Glasgow City Council archives. However, there are around 35,000,000 boxes within the system, and large numbers of these contain children's /foster carer files. We have conducted an audit of foster carer files which is attached under FC8.

From 1998, there has been a consolidated log of all complaints and allegations. The log, and the nature and extent of the complaints and allegations, is annually reviewed by the Families for Children fostering team and has been so since March 1998. There is an annual safeguarding training event for the team which includes a focus on complaints and allegations.

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The child protection team within the local authority alongside Families for Children staff consider the nature and extent of the complaints and allegations and present this to the Families for Children fostering team. Trends and issues are identified and there is analysis of “lessons learned” which has informed (and continues to inform) policy and practice change. An example is a change to the recruitment material prepared and provided for prospective foster carers. As outlined in the departments fostering procedures we undertake a competency-based assessment and as part of this, we not only seek a minimum of 3 personal references per applicant but in addition to this we would look to obtain any ex-partner references/ or references from applicants’ children/ adult children on their experiences of living with/ being parented by the prospective applicant.

The consolidated log relating to the conduct of foster carers from March 1998 until January 2014 shows 374 complaints. It should be noted that not all these complaints pertain to reports of alleged abuse, but rather detail reports of concern in relation to the conduct of foster carers generally, including concerns in relation to their engagement with the local authority itself.

Following the Inquiry hearing evidence from Susanne Millar, Chief Officer of Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership, the local authority has carried out an audit of files in relation to historical complaints within the Fostering Service. The files were a mix of carer and children’s files. Of the files accessed by the audit team, 3% of the files (9 of 277) contained an identified complaint relating to a foster carer. A copy of the audit report can be viewed in full in Appendix FC8. Whilst this is a necessarily limited sample, providing only an assessment of complaints, it points to more than rare and isolated complaints of abuse.

### 3.2 Acknowledgement of Systemic Failures

- a) Does the local authority accept that its systems failed to protect children in foster care between 1930 and 17 December 2014 from abuse?**

The local authority accepts that failures in its systems have resulted in abuse of children and young people in foster care.

- b) What is the local authority’s assessment of the extent of any such systemic failures?**

The evidence before the inquiry shows that, historically, there have been failures in systems relating to recruitment, vetting, visiting, supervision of carers, placement of children and competent social work practice have resulted in abuse of children and young people in foster care. If the audit referred to above (3.1(c)) is accurate, it could suggest that 3% of foster carers faced complaints relating to their care.

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By, at the latest, the mid-1980s however, Strathclyde had implemented a more rigorous set of policies and procedures. The views of children were given much higher priority. Further tightening of procedures has been undertaken during the time in which the current senior management of Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership have been in practice, with significant improvement in staff ratios from around 2007, as described above. As procedures have tightened and as children have been listened to, the potential for systemic failures has reduced.

It is also worth noting that (although a small sample size) the audit demonstrates that when complaints have been made, a high proportion of placements were terminated, even prior to substantiation of a complaint. That proportion of termination has increased significantly over the period under investigation so, for example, in the period 1982-91, 67% were terminated, whereas in the period 1992-2002, 100% were terminated.

### **c) What is the basis of that assessment?**

The basis for this assessment is the evidence before the Inquiry (most particularly the Abrams and Fleming study) and the audit undertaken into the nature and extent of complaints of abuse.

The Council notes that the extent of complaints of abuse will not necessarily correlate with instances of systemic failures. Some instances of abuse will likely have been impossible to predict. In this regard, experience shows that effective systems, processes, policies, and procedures in and of themselves will not entirely mitigate the potential risk to children of abuse from mal-motivated and predatory adults. However, effective systems, processes and procedures which are child centred, including rigorous recruitment and vetting, clear expectations and roles and responsibilities, regular announced and unannounced visiting, regular, planned reviews, and competent social work practice will clearly and significantly assist in promoting the protection of children and young people.

Assessment of the above has been based on the local authority's ongoing response to an analysis of complaints, which has significantly developed since a consolidated log of complaints was introduced in 1998, as described above. This ongoing analysis has led to a number of policy changes and developments. The most recent procedures have been implemented since July 2020 and are produced in Appendix FC5. Analysis of failures in procedure was also conducted by Lynne Abrams and Linda Fleming within their detailed report provided to the Inquiry and disclosed to Glasgow City Council. The report contains a number of specific instances and case studies which relate to foster care placements in Glasgow, and which have allowed the local authority to reflect on how such instances have shaped current policy and may inform any future changes.

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**d) What is the local authority's explanation for any such failures?**

Insofar as events pre-dating the combined experience of the current management of Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership is concerned, we cannot offer an explanation. Social work knowledge and practice has increased over many decades and the current practice of social workers bears little or no resemblance to practice in the past. Attitudes towards children and their needs have improved beyond recognition, meaning that children are listened to now in a way that they would not have been in the past. The local authority can only highlight to the Inquiry the findings of Abrams and Fleming and to the information contained in our responses as to the numbers of both children and foster carers involved. Insofar as the size and scale of fostering within this local authority, it has proved challenging in comparison to the resources made available to meet the needs of the communities served.

**3.3 Acknowledgement of Failures/Deficiencies in Response**

**a) Does the local authority accept that there were any failures and/or deficiencies in its response to abuse, and allegations of abuse, of children in foster care between 1930 and 17 December 2014?**

The local authority accepts that for the majority of the relevant time period, it did not have adequate and consistent procedures in place to respond to complaints and allegations of abuse. The audit undertaken by the Council demonstrates that, for example, in a proportion of complaints audited, there is no record of the child having been spoken to. Whether that is because it did not occur, or because of record-keeping issues is unclear. However, from the standpoint of considering deficiencies in systems, the Council would recognise that proper recording is necessary if action is to be taken.

For the reasons given above, this has improved in the period post-the mid-80's and again from the development of the consolidated complaints log, combined with reviews thereof as described above.

**b) What is the local authority's assessment of the extent of any such failures in its response?**

An assessment of extent is extremely difficult and cannot, based on the available information, be proffered, beyond that already given.

**c) What is the basis of that assessment?**

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The local authority's assessment of complaints procedure has been informed by its own record and subsequent analysis of complaints and allegations, the research conducted for the purposes of the Inquiry by expert witnesses and the audit recently conducted by the local authority and submitted with this addendum response at Appendix FC8.

### **d) What is the local authority's explanation for any such failures/deficiencies?**

Evidence from applicants in the Inquiry has highlighted to the local authority that the response to complaints and allegations has historically not been child-centred and has instead focused on caregivers. There have been instances of complaints and allegations being reported but appropriate child protection procedures not being implemented immediately.

Child protection policy and procedure has been subject to significant overhaul in the later part of the time period relevant to the inquiry due to identified failures in the urgency with which children are removed from placements with identified risks. Development of procedure and practice would indicate that historic responses to allegations and complaints was insufficient to properly protect children and young people from harm.

## **PART D**

Susanne Millar gave a general undertaking to consider what further information might be available that could be searched or audited.

Glasgow City Council Social Work Services carried out an audit of foster carer files in relation to historical complaints within the Fostering Service in Glasgow City.

A copy of the audit report can be viewed in full in Appendix FC8.

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