

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Angela HARKINS

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is Angela Kathleen Harkins. I've always been known as Angie. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1967. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Edinburgh and my family lived [REDACTED] in Leith. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] My mumma and father were married when I was born. My mumma was called [REDACTED] and my father was called [REDACTED]
3. There was a lot of violence between mumma and my father and a big fight in our house. Mumma was often drunk and later, my mumma's alcoholism and drug taking became a massive part of my life. I was with my nana [REDACTED] a lot and she came to live with us. She was my mother's mother. There was furniture in the house and then we had no furniture. [REDACTED]
4. [REDACTED] naked in the house and then I was in the stair. I was two or three years old. [REDACTED] screaming and it was dark. I have a terror about that. I was taken away from the house in a blanket and [REDACTED] taken to my father. Then I was in a nice dress and was going on holiday. The holiday was going to St Helen's Nursery

and I was taken into care [REDACTED] When I was an adult, my father told [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had been abandoned in the house [REDACTED] for two days. My mumma and father divorced and my father remarried. [REDACTED]

St Helen's Nursery, 7 Wester Coates, Edinburgh

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving St Helen's Nursery

22. [REDACTED] met ^{EQC} [REDACTED], the foster woman, in St Helen's. I was about six years old. [REDACTED] went for weekends to stay with ^{EQC} [REDACTED] at her house. I don't know who organised that. The first time I went into the house the dog was there. The dog was called Rory. I was screaming the house down and I was terrified of the dog. [REDACTED]

was really upset because I was terrified. I stayed in one room so that I wouldn't have to go near the dog.

**Foster Care – first placement - EQC ██████████ ██████████
Edinburgh**

23. I went to live with EQC ██████████ when I was about six years old. I have no idea how long I stayed there. It felt like a lifetime because so much happened there. EQC ██████████ seemed like an old lady to me and ██████████. ██████████ had to call her Auntie EQC ██████████ I probably didn't understand what aunty meant. You did what you were told and didn't question.
24. When you went into the garden from the street there was a rose growing on an arched trellis. I always remember flowers and they remind me of different things. When you went in the house there was EQC ██████████'s bedroom, a living room looking out onto the big garden and a kitchen. Upstairs there was ██████████ bedroom and ██████████ bedroom ██████████ ██████████ EQC ██████████ son ██████████ lived there as well. He was an adult and he was nice. Later, EQC ██████████ got married to EQD ██████████
25. The experience in foster care at EQC ██████████ changed my life completely. It changed things ██████████ EQC ██████████ was violent ██████████ which was difficult for me to cope with. ██████████ ██████████
26. Foster care was different from St Helen's. ██████████ didn't have all the children around ██████████ and ██████████ didn't have the big rooms to run around in and to scream and shout in. I found it difficult to be silent in foster care. A lot of times I felt I couldn't move in the house. I was terrified of the dog but I was forced to live there. I said to EQC ██████████ I wanted to go back to St Helen's and she reacted aggressively. She was an aggressive person. At EQC ██████████'s it was horror and terror all the time. When I look back on that period it seems cold and long and I had feelings of despair.

Routine in Foster Care – first placement - EQC

First day

27. I was absolutely devastated [REDACTED] because of the fear I had about going to the foster home. I was frightened because EQC [REDACTED] had Rory the dog and I was terrified of dogs. Rory became my best friend. My mum told me later that I was attacked by a dog when I was a baby.

Bed Wetting

28. EQC [REDACTED] would go mad about the bedwetting. She was angry, upset and pulling me about while she hit me. EQC [REDACTED] took the sheets off the bed, put them in my face and flung the wet sheets over me. I had to wash my own sheets. There was a rubber bed and I was the only one that had a rubber bed. A lot of the time I was made to sleep on the rubber bed with no sheets. That was difficult for me. I felt bad all the time because of that. EQC [REDACTED] called me 'pissy'.

General Routine

29. I don't know if I'm mixed up between EQC [REDACTED]'s house and mumma's house but I was always hungry. The food at EQC [REDACTED]'s was horrible and always cold. [REDACTED].
30. [REDACTED] I played shops at the top of the stairs. [REDACTED] allowed to go outside and play with friends outside [REDACTED] [REDACTED] didn't go to Brownies or dancing [REDACTED] didn't go on any trips or holidays with EQC [REDACTED]. I went to the shops which might have been nearby.
31. I went to Drylaw Primary School. I found school difficult and I felt odd at school. Roseburn was enjoyable but Drylaw was awful. I was bullied. I hated being in school and I hated leaving school and going home to EQC [REDACTED]'s.

32. I had temper tantrums that I couldn't control, I didn't sleep and was up all the time. I saw a doctor and I was called 'manic'. After that, EQC called me manic a lot.
33. I don't remember seeing any social workers when [REDACTED] at EQC s. I don't have any memories of washing, birthdays or Christmas. I can't remember the clothes I had at EQC s.

Weekends with birth family

34. I wrote letters to Nana [REDACTED] and got letters from her. [REDACTED] I started staying weekends with my mum who stayed with Nana [REDACTED]. They moved from the [REDACTED] to [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]. Nana smelt and the house smelt [REDACTED]. I had temper tantrums about going back to EQC s. EQC would be angry when [REDACTED] went back because of the smell. I was always hungry at nana's and the house was cold. There was always confusion. I started stealing food [REDACTED]. That was when things started getting really bad at EQC s. EQC was always mad at me.
35. As I got older, I started understanding things about my mumma such as thinking she was always drunk. Later on in life I realised it was drugs. I didn't really want to go on the weekend visits but I worried about my mumma all the time and wanted to go and look after her. I thought my mumma was going to die. I also wanted to see my nana because we were allowed sweeties. A man called [REDACTED] came into my mumma's life and I saw him being violent towards her every weekend. I was terrified going to [REDACTED] because I was terrified of dogs and all the dogs were running about the streets there.
36. [REDACTED] I started going out with my father. I don't know how often [REDACTED] off at the ice-skating at Murrayfield and go off. My father smelled of alcohol.

Abuse in Foster Care – first placement – EQC

37. There was always aggression in EQC and I was always frightened of her. EQC beat me but I can't remember why I was frightened of her. I don't know if she used anything other than her hands. She hit me all over and pulled my hair. EQC always grabbed you by the hair when she started. The beatings were part of day to day living. I always wanted to please her which I never seemed to do. As I got older, I didn't want to stay with EQC
38. EQC beat me up badly EQC you could see the injuries. My face and my ear were bleeding. EQC kicked me in the leg a lot and I always had a sore leg. She beat me and kept me in the bedroom for my temper tantrums. Rory the dog came into the bedroom once and that's where we made friends. Rory and I became attached to each other.
39. I was forced to eat food by not being allowed to leave the table until I ate my food. If you didn't eat the food then you got the same food the next day.
40. EQC also beat up EQC EQC set fire to the room and I thought he was going to die, not because of the fire but because of EQC EQC put food in EQC mouth and he was choking.
41. I went from the violence in mumma's house back to the madness of EQC's house every weekend. I couldn't tell EQC that EQC was beating mumma up because EQC hated mumma. EQC I felt angry all the time.
42. EQD arrived when I was about six or seven years old. I don't know his second name. He was old. He had white hair and wore glasses. The lens of the glasses was always brown and you couldn't see his eyes. All of a sudden he was at the house all the time. He lived around the corner in EQC in a ground floor flat. I hated EQD You didn't know what was going to happen when you got in from school. One day EQD was in the house but EQC wasn't. EQD told me to change out of my school

uniform and he stood and watched me. That's where it all started. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

43. [EQD] had a dog called Sandy and when Sandy came to [EQC]'s house, I was terrified of him. [EQD] was going to help me and started taking me to his house so that I would not be scared of Sandy. I was excited going to the house because it was me on my own. [EQD] sexually abused me in his house with Sandy there. The abuse always happened in [EQD]'s house. He smoked cigars and the smell of cigars in the house was pungent. I said I didn't want to go to [EQD]'s house but this went on for a long time and happened every other day. I would be at his house for a long time. I was frightened and I knew he would tell me to take my clothes off. [EQD] hurt me and I was terrified of him. That is all I want to say about the sexual abuse.
44. [EQD] made me walk home with Sandy after I'd been at his house, even though I was terrified of Sandy. Once we left his house, he would never talk to me. It was just silence. [EQD] threatened to kill me, [REDACTED] if I ever told anybody what happened.
45. I became not scared of Sandy and had an odd relationship with Rory and Sandy. Once, Sandy and Rory were fighting and that brought fear to me. I got a big beating from [EQC] because the dogs were fighting.
46. [EQC] told us that she was getting married to [EQD] [REDACTED] n't at the wedding. The fear that he was going to come and live in that house made me feel terrified. [EQD] moved in and the abuse continued at his house. [EQD] took over [EQC]'s house when he came to live there.
47. [EQD] was angry, aggressive and violent [REDACTED]. [EQD] would slap [REDACTED]. There was no warning but it was always sudden and frightening. It could easily become very volatile. I never saw him be aggressive to [REDACTED]. I would have temper tantrums and try to fight back, especially around [REDACTED]. [EQC] saw [EQD] being violent towards [REDACTED].

48. I felt [REDACTED] going to get killed because of what [EQD] said to me and because of [EQC] I said that [REDACTED] a lot. I didn't worry about [REDACTED].

Reporting of abuse in foster care – first placement – [EQC]

49. [EQC] knew [EQD] was abusing me because I told her. I don't know when I told [EQC] but I was slapped for it. The sexual abuse did not stop. I told my nana about [EQD] abusing me. I can't remember how she reacted. I don't know what [EQC] or nana did when I told them but [REDACTED] I got moved out. That happened quickly.

Leaving Foster Care – first placement – [EQC]

50. I've always felt [REDACTED] being moved out of [EQC] s because [REDACTED] moved back to children's homes. I blamed myself and I blamed nana because I had told her about [EQD]. I was about eight years old. One day [REDACTED] told [REDACTED] leaving and then [REDACTED] away. I don't know if [REDACTED] moved because I had told [EQC] and nana about the abuse [REDACTED] never saw [EQC] or [EQD] again. No-one ever spoke of them or said anything but they never left me. I was always scared I would go back there.

Templedean Hall, Florabank Road, Haddington

51. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Wallhouse Children's Home – Colinton and Torphichen, Edinburgh – first stay

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Clerwood Children's Home, Corstorphine, Edinburgh

84.	Secondary Institutions - to be published later
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Wallhouse Children's Home – second stay

87.	Secondary Institutions - to be published later
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Bangour Village Hospital, West Lothian

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Returning to Wallhouse Children's Home – third stay

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Doctor Guthrie's School for Girls, Edinburgh

98. I was in Doctor Guthrie's from the age of fourteen to almost sixteen years old. I didn't know how long I was going there for or what kind of place it was. I didn't know I wouldn't be allowed out or that I wouldn't go to school. I found out later that Doctor Guthrie's was a school for absconders.
99. You were in different houses. I think there were four altogether. I was in Brechin House. Doctor Guthrie's was all girls and there were about ten in each house. The scary thing was that people just disappeared. You lose your concept of time because there is no structure of going to school and there is a lot of confusion.
100. You couldn't get out of Doctor Guthrie's because you were locked up wherever you went. You always had staff with you, especially me because I was an absconder and I tried to hurt myself. I pulled my hair and banged my head off walls. I wasn't allowed to be anywhere on my own except in my room. There were a few other girls treated that way too because they were classed as badly behaved. I felt like I was in prison and there was no care.
101. Mr ^{MTA} was ^{SNR}. The staff were Mrs ^{EQE} and ^{EQL}, a man who wore glasses. They were terrifying. The house staff were better. A woman called Monty was nice.
102. I was frightened of the other girls in there, not because I was bullied by the girls but I was just frightened. The girls spoke differently to me and were aggressive. There were girls from all over the central belt and I was the only girl from Edinburgh in there.

Routine at Doctor Guthrie's School for Girls

General Routine

103. Doctor Guthrie's wasn't a place for a child to be. Most of the girls were troubled girls. There was lots of crying at night. I didn't cry because I'd gone past that by then. I was forced to wear Jesus sandals because I was an absconder.
104. There were single rooms but I shared a room with another girl who wet the bed. We were put together because of that. The girl wasn't there for long and she just disappeared. You couldn't see out of your window onto Gilmerton Road because the glass wasn't clear.
105. I was still wetting the bed. Mrs EQE grabbed me by the hair and physically dragged me to the laundry to wash my sheets. She rubbed the wet sheets in my face and called me names about my bedwetting, in front of others. I started wetting my pants as well. I was punished for wetting the bed right up until I left Doctor Guthrie's.
106. There was no education in Doctor Guthrie's. If I wasn't locked up there were classes where you baked cakes and did laundry. I had stopped reading and couldn't read at all. Nothing was done about my eyesight but the staff knew I was blind. I learned to stop talking because I was frightened.
107. I had a constant feeling of wanting to kill myself. It was overwhelming and was sucking the life out me, especially near the end of my time in Doctor Guthrie's. I tried to commit suicide in there.
108. Most of the girls got out on home leave at the weekends. You had to be well-behaved and earn the right points. I never got out on home leave because I didn't have a home. Doctor Guthrie's was my home. I never had any visitors at Doctor Guthrie's and I was never allowed out.

109. [REDACTED] I didn't know where mumma was or if she was dead or alive. That was a constant worry for me because mumma had deteriorated by then. I didn't know where my father was.
110. I tried to abscond whenever I could, to get away from Doctor Guthrie's but I didn't abscond as much as before. I was trusted to go swimming and I absconded. Getting to go swimming was a big thing. When I went back to Doctor Guthrie's I was put in a cell and I was back at the bottom of the list.

Discipline

111. Once a week everyone had to go to Mr [REDACTED] MTA's office. You were given your points for the week. He wanted to talk to you about why you wanted to abscond and my bedwetting, which he said was laziness. I was always getting into trouble for not sleeping.
112. You were put in the cells as a punishment. I was put in the cells for attempting suicide, absconding, intending to abscond and talking back. When you'd been in the cells then you had to see Mr [REDACTED] MTA. That was awful. He put the fear of God into me. Mr [REDACTED] MTA gave you a punishment, for example you weren't allowed out on home leave but I didn't have anywhere to go anyway. Everything was taken from you and you had to stay in your Jesus sandals. That isn't a big thing but back then, the sandals were horrendous for me. It felt like they were chains.

Abuse at Doctor Guthrie's School for Girls, Edinburgh

113. Doctor Guthrie's was hell. There was always noise and a constant fear of violence from the staff. Violence erupted when one of the girls did something wrong. There were fights between the girls although I never got involved in a fight. I felt the madness and the fear of the place.

114. I was always being punished. There was a lot of violence towards me. I was so gone that I thought the violence didn't bother me but it obviously did. I never understood what I'd done wrong. I was beaten up by [EQL] and he threatened to kill me. [EQL] punched me in the face, flat on and I had a massive nose bleed. I had black eyes afterwards. Nothing was ever done about that. The staff knew but they didn't care.
115. I would be dragged up to the cells. The cells were at the top of the school building and nowhere near the houses. You knew you were on your own and no-one could hear you if you shouted. There was nothing in the cells except a mattress on a cement bed built into the cell. You couldn't see out of the window because it was high up and not clear glass. There was no toilet and you were taken to the toilet by the staff. I can't remember how you got the staff to take you.
116. I was constantly locked in the cells by [EQL] for what felt like long periods of time. I wasn't aware of time or what was going on. I slept for days. I was terrified at night time because I didn't know if [EQL] was coming up or what was going to happen. You didn't know when you were getting your meals. Sometimes you didn't get food and you'd be starving. You were desperate to go back to the house and promised anything to get back. The staff all knew about the cells and everyone knew when you were in them.

Leaving Doctor Guthrie's School for Girls, Edinburgh

117. Ann, my social worker, spoke to me a lot about getting out of Doctor Guthrie's because things were so bad in there. I started going to an old people's home in Eskbank and she organised that. I helped with cleaning and chatted to the old people. I enjoyed that and it was a changing point for me. I went back to Doctor Guthrie's after the visits and built trust so that I could get out. I knew I had to get out. I didn't have any family to go back to so I was put back in foster care. The name had changed to community care.
118. I started having day trips to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]'s house. Then I stayed for tea, then an overnight stay and then a weekend stay. The hope was that I could leave Doctor

Guthrie's and go to live with them. I thought that was amazing before I'd even met [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. The visits took place over a long period of time.

119. There was a meeting in Doctor Guthrie's for me leaving. There were lots of people at the meeting. Mr ^{MTA} [REDACTED] was there and I was frightened to go in the room. I thought he would keep me in Doctor Guthrie's but he was different in the meeting. I didn't say anything because I could barely speak to anyone. Ann spoke on my behalf. A decision was made that I could leave and I had to wait for everything to come through. That felt like a long time. I left when I was almost sixteen years old.

Foster Care – second placement - [REDACTED] - [REDACTED] Edinburgh

120. I did move in with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] when I was almost sixteen years old. I didn't stay there for long. I can't remember their second name or the full address but it was [REDACTED] something. The house was beautiful. I felt overwhelmed by it and didn't want to go because of that. I'd never been in a house since foster care at [REDACTED] and it was difficult for me. The house felt small and I felt enormous. I felt like I took up too much space even though I was an underweight teenager.
121. Downstairs was a kitchen, living room, dining room and bathroom. There were three bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had children called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who shared a room. At first it was great. They asked me what colour to paint my bedroom. I got out of Doctor Guthrie's and went to live with them. It wasn't great living with them but it was okay. They didn't abuse me.

Routine in Foster Care – second placement - [REDACTED]

General Routine

122. I had my own room that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] decorated for me. I stayed in my room all the time except when it wasn't family time. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] would tell me it was

family time and I had to go up to my room. That was hard and sometimes lasted all day. I wouldn't have gone into the living room and put the TV on or helped myself from the kitchen. I can't remember if I was told that but I just knew I wasn't allowed to do that. At the time, I thought it was incredible that there was a bathroom downstairs. I was only allowed to use the bathroom upstairs.

123. The bed wetting continued. It wasn't every night but it carried on into my twenties. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] told me to put my sheets outside the room in the morning and to have a shower. My bedwetting wasn't mentioned and I was grateful about that.
124. I started working full time in the [REDACTED] Hotel. I went to work and came home. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] took all my wages because I lived with them. That was hard. I got to keep my bus fares to work and got my food at the hotel. Ann was upset about that and tried to sort things out so that I could have some money.
125. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] liked to eat in the dining room and that was their family time as well. I ate in the kitchen at the same time, on my own. I knew I wasn't part of their family but I longed to be. I loved [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I wasn't allowed to take them out on my own for walks. I found that difficult at the time.
126. I got on better with [REDACTED] than [REDACTED]. He liked me and he was nice. [REDACTED] did the cooking and taught me how to cook spaghetti carbonara and garlic bread. That was food I'd never tasted before. I ate everything I was given. I wouldn't have done anything to upset [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] let me help in the garden and talked to me. I didn't think [REDACTED] liked me. I didn't know why because I had never done anything. She didn't want me around and I felt that soon after I moved there. [REDACTED] was always saying it was family time and requesting I go up to my room.
127. I didn't have a social life but I did meet a boyfriend through work. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] let me bring him back to the house to meet them. It was horrendous because the boy robbed the house. Everything changed from there. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] knew I had no involvement in the robbery but they wanted me out. I wasn't allowed to bring anyone back to house after that. I could understand because they had two small children.

128. The way I was treated sounds strange but I didn't care. I was so grateful to get out of Doctor Guthrie's that I would have done anything. I loved my work and it was amazing to go on a bus to work and to go home. I tried to please [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and do good things, especially after the robbery. I played with their children whenever I could. I wanted to stay there forever. I thought I could be sent back to Doctor Guthrie's because I didn't realise that couldn't happen after a certain age. I didn't run away from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]'s because I had freedom and went to work. I never had any friends and it was a lonely existence.

Respite Care - family member – Aunty [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Edinburgh

129. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were going on holiday and I wasn't allowed to go with them. I had to go and stay with my Aunty [REDACTED] for two weeks. That was awful. I didn't really know Aunty [REDACTED] but Ann couldn't find anywhere for me to go. By now, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] my mum was an alcoholic and I didn't know my father.

130. I had become obsessive about bathing and keeping clean. I was wetting the bed and I wanted to look after myself. I couldn't have a bath at Aunty [REDACTED]'s because the house was dirty. I had to sleep on the sofa. Aunty [REDACTED] flung me out on the second night because I wet the sofa. I slept on the street and in their shed. I went to work. I don't know how I managed. I went back to stay at [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]'s but they didn't want me there.

Leaving Foster Care – second placement - [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

131. I became sixteen years old and I was told I had to leave [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]'s. They wanted me out anyway. I was heartbroken when I had to leave. Ann got me shared accommodation in a flat. That was the end of my time in care.

Life after being in care

132. When I was sixteen years old I moved into shared accommodation owned by Links Housing Association in [REDACTED] Leith. The flat was crazy on a level that I had never experienced before. I was an institutional person because I'd always been in care. There were five other people in the flat who were all kids coming out of care.
133. There was a punk rocker who smashed the place up every night and kicked my door in. I made a friend called [REDACTED] who was later murdered. [REDACTED] was my friend and there was another guy living there. There was no-one at the accommodation to monitor what was happening. I was frightened of the punk rocker.
134. I was out of the care system and there was no-one around to help me. I didn't know to look after myself, how to shop or how to cook, apart from spaghetti carbonara. I had all my wages but I don't know where they went. I had to get out of the flat and I started becoming homeless and living on the streets. They were terrifying years and I don't know how I'm still alive. I lost my job because I wasn't going to work. My life was chaotic and it's all a blur.
135. I started working for [REDACTED] Hairdressing when I was seventeen years old and that's when my life changed for the better. They helped me find a flat and I trained to be a hairdresser. At that time, [REDACTED] came back into my life and helped me. My mum came back into my life and I tried to look after her. I moved to Cheyne's Hairdressing and [REDACTED] helped me a lot.
136. I'm a qualified hairdresser. I lived abroad for a few years and all around the United Kingdom. I've been a nomad my whole life. I would just get up and go and leave everything behind. I reconnected with my mumma [REDACTED] and eventually moved back to Edinburgh.
137. I've always taken photographs and I held an exhibition of my work in 2019, with the help of Crisis, a charity for homeless people. The exhibition was successful and a lot

of people wanted to buy my work. That was good and I didn't expect that. It was a great boost for me. Crisis are now helping me to start my own beverage business.

Impact

138. I've lived in fear all my life and that has held me back so much. I've always felt I was going to be murdered and something bad was going to happen. I'm frightened of men and women and never feel comfortable. I have to find something about an individual that makes me feel comfortable before I can allow them into my life. I feel safe in my car or when I'm with my animals. I have never reported any of my abuse to the police because I felt that something bad would happen if I did.
139. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
Secondary Institutions - to be published later At EQC's it felt like being in a waiting room you were never getting out of and it was fear all the time. I was always feeling upset and not sleeping.
140. One of the difficult things about being in children's homes is that people leave and you miss them. You worry about them. I still do. You attach yourself to the other children and they become like family. I was moved around a lot in care so that I found it difficult to put down roots as an adult. That's changed now.
141. I never had an education from the age of eleven or twelve. That has impacted every part of my life. My eyesight was never checked during my years in care and I was never given glasses, even though I told everyone I was blind. I always felt blind and unable to go to school. ██████████ took me to the opticians and I got glasses when I was seventeen years old. My life changed and I taught myself how to spell and read properly. I became a bookworm.
142. You can't have physical health without having your mental health. I haven't had my mental health and so haven't been able to look after my physical health. My mental health wasn't good in care and I wasn't looked after properly. I now have a diagnosis

of Bipolar Disorder. Having a sore leg started in EQC s and I was always told there was nothing wrong with me. Doctor Patience, my psychiatrist, told me that people who have bi-polar can have those feelings. The pain is psychosomatic but it is painful. He helped me to understand it better. The pain only comes when I'm manic or stressed.

143. I have a lot of flashbacks and tremors. The tremors are upsetting. Men and any violence or aggression are a trigger. I get frightened very quickly. I don't like being around drunk people and I don't like raised voices. I'm terrified of drunk men and that can set me off. I don't go to bars.

144.

145.

146.

147.

I have a relationship with mumma because I've forgiven her. I understand and I know she had no help to deal with her addictions. My father died and I didn't know what I was mourning for, the father I never had or the father I could

have had. I moved around a lot after that. I was reported as a missing person for twelve years because I ceased contact with my family.

148. I've been unable to have relationships of any substance. That's always been down to me. I don't trust people. I've never been able to have children or get married. I've lived on the rougher side of life and I've not enjoyed that because it's not me. I feel that I don't fit into what society classes as normal and so I don't fit in anywhere.
149. I tend to keep myself to myself and I don't have confidence. I think I can't do things but I can. For example, I thought there was no way I could do a business plan but I have done a business plan. All through my life I've self-sabotaged. I've never done what I wanted to do because I've always felt that I'm not good enough.
150. I try to please people because I have a fear of being rejected. I can't cope with rejection so I withdraw. I've ruined my life because I've withdrawn from so much. I can see how role models work and how imperative they are in your life but I have never had one. I don't know how to find a role model.
151. I'm attracted to men who are not settled and relationships I've had with men who are settled don't last. I was going to get married when I was 25 years old but I couldn't cope and left the relationship. I feel claustrophobic if people are in my space for any length of time. I spent many years living with a lovely man who was a drug addict. Later, I was in an abusive relationship with another man. I'm terrified of sexual relationships. I feel dirty. I don't see sex as it is, a loving, emotional, spiritual connection to another person.
152. I don't have friends and I feel lonely. I've felt lonely all my life so that's normal now. I would like to break that and learn how to trust people. I make friends quickly and easily but the friendships don't last. I drift away. I don't pick good friends either. I love helping underdogs and I'm attracted to people who I want to give to all the time. People don't want that. They just want to be your friend.

153. In my thirties I became an alcoholic. I spent days locked away binge drinking. I went into rehab. That freaked me out because it reminded me of being in care. Rehab planted a seed in me so that I was able to recover. I don't drink alcohol now. A counsellor in rehab saw me in the Big Issue magazine reported as a missing person. I reconnected with my mumma [REDACTED] after that and rehab supported me to do that.
154. I tried to commit suicide in 2013. I was sectioned in hospital under the Mental Health Act because my mental health was so bad. I was in hospital for over a year in Glasgow. Doctor Patience changed my life. He helped me to understand so much. My life started to turn around after that and had never been stable until now. My life became more settled and I became more in control of myself. I have a better relationship with mumma and it's also more under control.
155. For a long time, I disassociated from my time in care. I never told anyone I was brought up in care. I felt shame about what had happened to me in care because I blamed myself for a lot of things. I feel ashamed of my past. Now, I think about my time in care a lot. Being in care set me up for nothing.
156. What happened to me in foster care destroyed my life and still does. I'm haunted by that and it never leaves you. Life could have been different if that hadn't happened to me, especially with forming loving relationships. Care, and the people who were meant to care for me, destroyed my life. It wasn't until I went into hospital in Glasgow that I was able to take back my life. I can lead my own life now, on my terms and for myself.

Other action taken

Revisits

157. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
[REDACTED]

158.

159.

Treatment / support

160. I was diagnosed with bi-polar when I was sectioned. I was medicated and I still am today. My manic periods where I go off wandering and fall apart are under control. This is the best my mental health has been.
161. I have a mental health support worker who I can go to and speak to. I feel comfortable speaking with her. I feel she understands me. We talk about lots of things and not just mental health. I've never had that kind of relationship with anybody. I have an amazing community psychiatrist now.

Records

162. When I applied for my records, I hoped to get some reminders of my time in care. The only reminder I got was a photocopy of a badge I had in the Brownies. The badge says I am in the Roseburn Brownies. That was nice to get because I had never remembered the Brownies before then. Everyone talks about their childhood and their memories but I never had those until I got that photocopy. I don't associate that little girl with me. I even remembered the woman who was Brown Owl and what she looked like. That was really nice. The badge is important me and I have it in a frame on my bedside

table. I was disappointed that there wasn't anything else in the records but it's better than nothing.

163. I got my records through the post. I opened them and there were lots of receipts for different things, such as clothes. The way the records were written wasn't even as if they were talking about a person's life, let alone my life. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Everything is blanked out about my father, my mother [REDACTED] There's a bit about me which is not very nice. It talks about my temper tantrums.

164. I can barely read the writing in the records and I was disappointed that things were blacked out. My father belongs to me. I don't know anything about him because mumma refuses to speak about him. It would be nice to see something written about him.

Lessons to be Learned

165. Children in care should have an independent third person who travels through care with them. The person should monitor and check social work and foster care. The person and the child should have the sort of relationship where the child knows the person is there to listen to them. No-one listened to me, noticed me or understood me.

166. Society's perception that children in care are bad has to change. If society thinks children in care are bad then the children in care think they are bad and unworthy. When your primary carers reject you then someone has to come in and put you somewhere. How can I be responsible for being in care, as a three year old child?

167. Foster carers need to be monitored. There wasn't enough supervision when we were in [REDACTED]. There weren't enough questions being asked about my behaviour [REDACTED] [REDACTED], and the changes in it. Someone must have seen signs of the violence towards me. [REDACTED] How can a man like

EOD come [REDACTED] without social workers questioning who is this man and why has everything changed?

168. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] It's not okay to move a child around frequently. Learning how to form long and meaningful friendships is important. You don't know how to do that when you're moved from place to place.

169. It's imperative that children have a memory bank with photographs and reminders of their care experience. Children need guidance and love to develop as human beings. We didn't have that. If carers can't give love then they shouldn't be doing the job.

Other information

170. I don't want anyone to go through what I went through and to lose what it rightfully theirs.

171. 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 [REDACTED]

Dated...10/02/22.....