

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FQC

Support person present: No

1. My name is FQC however I prefer to be called FQC My date of birth is 1965. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Glasgow and I would describe my life at home as one of turmoil. There were ten of us in the family. My mum was and my dad was My mum died in 2009 and my dad in 2014. I had older brothers and sisters called and The two who were closest to me were who was slightly younger than me and who was older by about ten years.
3. My father was drinking all the time. Mum was a drinker but not like him, he was always in the pub. Although I have no real memories of life with my family, I am aware from my records that the reason and and I were put into care was due to neglect, domestic abuse and how the house was run. I cannot remember where my older siblings would be living. They tended to stick together and not bother about us younger ones except for she was caring and understanding. She was a loving sister compared to the rest of them.

Unnamed Children's Homes - Glasgow

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Foster Care – FQE-SPO

11. I was adopted by a family who lived in Glasgow when I was five years old. It was a big house and it was near the last children's home I was in. I think the address was ■ or ■ Pollockshields. They were educated people, well to do and had money. They were FQE-SPO and they were in their early fifties. She had a top job in ■ Company and he worked in a motor factory in Glasgow. They had a son FQF who was 18-19 years old. I stayed with them until I was either ten or eleven years old. They also had a daughter who lived in Holland.
12. The house was a big Edwardian type place which was up a close. It had shiny green tiles with a nice pattern on them and they lived upstairs on the top floor. There was a neighbour on the same landing.
13. I wasn't happy there at all and I didn't feel I could tell anyone. They had a different mind-set towards children then.

Routine at FQE-SPO

First day

14. It was the social work who took me there from the home. Everything was okay for a while but my first impression was I didn't like FQF as he was a bully and behaved like a spoiled brat.

Mornings and bedtime

15. I don't remember much about getting up or going to bed. I had my own bedroom but it wasn't much of a room.

Mealtimes/Food

16. It was [FQE] who cooked and I think she cooked the things I liked or what she thought I would like. I couldn't help myself to food as it was quite strict.

Washing/bathing

17. She bathed me when I was younger but not as I got older. I don't really remember. I just remember all the horrible stuff.

Clothing/uniform

18. She chose my clothes and sometimes I liked them and sometimes I didn't.

Leisure time

19. I did have toys and games to play with.

Trips and holidays

20. I went with the [FQE-SPO] to visit their daughter. She was okay, she was fine but we didn't see much of her.

Schooling

21. My first memory of school is when I was in foster care. I was sent to a private school which I went to as a day pupil. I don't remember the name of it. I had to wear a uniform, hat and shorts and I hated it. I wasn't cut out for that way of living.

Healthcare

22. I was in the hospital once but although I remember going in I cannot remember anything else about it. I think it might have been to get my tonsils out. I don't think I was ever in a hospital again as a child.

Religion

23. I had to go to the local church every Sunday with the [FQE-SPO] I hated it, it was a lot of nonsense. I wasn't from a religious family but we probably had a Protestant background. They were Protestant. I knew they were because of a flag of the red hand of Ulster and other military paraphernalia.

Work

24. I don't think I had to do housework.

Birthdays and Christmas

25. Christmas was celebrated just like everyone did and I got presents.

Personal possessions

26. I did have some toys and games but nothing else as I hadn't brought anything with me.

Visitors

27. Social work would visit them and would speak to Mrs [FQE] on her own. I think they would speak to me but I don't think I was alone. I don't know if social work told them to hit me. The social worker might have been called Alistair and his visits were fairly regular. I didn't trust or like social work.

28. I don't recall ever taking anyone to the house even though I did have a couple of friends when I was living there.

Review of care

29. I got visits from my social worker but that's all.

Family contact

30. I had no contact with my family other than [REDACTED] came down one day but they didn't want her coming into the house. I had to see her outside. The [FQE-SPO] were trying to put a stop to the family contact. I think [REDACTED] came down another couple of times and I did take her into the house when they were out. I remember trying to teach her to read because she wasn't able to. I just thought it was abominable that a girl in a children's home couldn't read.

Discipline

31. They called all the slapping discipline but that's not discipline to me that's abuse.

Abuse at [FQE-SPO]

32. It was okay for a few years but as I got older I started being naughty and she started being physical. She lifted her hand and was slapping me. I would get beaten by her for not getting my maths right. How do you learn through fear? It was always Mrs [FQE] who hit me, Mr [REDACTED] never hit me. She would slap me across the face or ear and whip the back of my legs or backside with a shower hose. This sort of thing happened between one and three times a week and Mr [REDACTED] was never there when it happened but I never liked him.
33. [FQF] was not really physical he was verbally abusive, criticising and belittling me.

34. Mrs FQE's mum was Irish and we visited her in Northern Ireland on holiday when I was young. I remember she stayed in a bungalow. Mrs FQE beat me with the stick of a privet hedge after pulling the leaves off it. She whipped me with it over the back of the legs.
35. I couldn't eat mince burger as it made me sick. I would get beaten if I didn't eat. I feel I lived in fear throughout the years I was there.
36. When I lived there they had an ongoing thing about children's behaviour. They blamed me for my bad behaviour but if they hadn't hit me and made me scared I wouldn't have been like that. I felt it was their fault but I didn't have any say it was just do as they said.
37. There was a shop across the road run by a Muslim family and a guy in there was abusing weans. The shop was across the main road and up towards the [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. He often did it to me when I was eight or nine. He was quite old maybe in his fifties or sixties, he was quite big weight wise and I never knew his name. I never told the FQE-SPO [REDACTED]. I never really understood about sexual abuse. I heard other weans talking about what was he was doing in that shop. It was just horrific to go through that and then go home to people you didn't like and they would wonder why my behaviour was so abhorrent that they want to get rid of me. They did do that in the end.

Leaving the FQE-SPO [REDACTED]

38. I think of my time with FQE and [REDACTED] as horrific as they abused me and I was going home to people I didn't like. They just wanted to get rid of me. They were going to Canada to live so I had to go back to the children's home.
39. I know I went to a children's home in Glasgow but I do not remember anything about it or how long I was there before I was sent to Blairvadach. I think the social work probably explained to me why I was leaving the FQE-SPO [REDACTED]. I don't think I got to take my

stuff when I left them. In a way I felt relieved. I don't remember ever saying goodbye to the FQE-SPO

Blairvadach, Helensburgh

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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St Andrews List D School

68. I was not going to school so I was sent to St Andrews. It was run by Catholics. It was for people who were committing crimes and I wasn't one of them. I never had a criminal record. I don't understand what right they had to send me there only because I didn't go to school. I would describe it as a boot camp. It was boys aged fourteen to sixteen who stayed there. It was a place where you got sent to lose your liberty. If you left the grounds without permission they would phone the police.
69. I was here for one or one and a half years until I was sixteen. I started going for educational reasons. At first it was just during the day but then I ended up staying there possibly for the last year I was in care. I had no choice. I wouldn't have chosen to go there and would have preferred to stay at Blairvadach. Some of the boys stayed there during the week and went home for the weekend. I got to go back to Blairvadach at the weekends and travelled there on the local bus. Life was just the exact same routine at St Andrews as it was at Blairvadach.

70. It was a big old building with workshops, football pitch, garden and you could learn a trade to help you get a job. You could learn to be a painter, mechanic, engineer or joiner but there was also other trades to learn. I did a bit of painting and gardening. The workshops were all on one level. The main accommodation was different. It was living quarters downstairs and upstairs was the sleeping quarters.
71. Boys lived in different living quarters in separate buildings that had upstairs and downstairs. There was a pool table, TV and boot room. I was like being in a jail without the bars and having not been convicted of anything. Some of the boys I liked and some I didn't.
72. There was a cell block for boys who were runaways or got in trouble with the police. They could be put in there for as long as a weekend. I never got put in there.
73. I cannot remember any of the staff other than Mr FQH who was SNR and a guy called FQG which was his nickname. FQG worked in the education department and was a bit of a bully. He was late forties with a beard, short hair and stout. They were all male except a few females who did all the domestic type jobs like cooking and cleaning.

Routine at St Andrews List D School

First Day

74. I don't remember my first day.

Mornings/Bedtime

75. I had a room with another guy, it was like a dorm with two beds and that was the room I had all the time I was there. I think the other guy had trouble at home and was committing crime.

76. We woke up as staff made lots of noise from the landing and we knew we had to get up. Then it was shower and get dressed before breakfast.

77. At night there was an old guy who was working and looking after everyone on the landing. He always worked a nightshift and stayed overnight. I only remember he had grey hair and used to crack tins of beer when he was meant to be working on the landing.

Mealtimes/Food

78. .Some of the food was ok and some not. I didn't have to eat it if I didn't want to.

Washing/Bathing

79. The showers were communal with four or six showers and also sinks and toilets.

Clothing/uniform

80. The clothes reminded me of prison uniform. It was jeans, t-shirt, sweatshirt, and tackety boots. You had to wear them.

Leisure Time

81. We did have a TV and a radio. You could be watching something on the TV and someone would just change the channel. The radio came through the speakers attached to the wall so you were unable to change the station as that could only be done in the office.

Trips/Holidays

82. There wasn't any holidays at St Andrews.

Schooling

83. We went to school after prayer. The teachers all lived nearby and they should have been people who would look after you but they were just as bad as the staff. We got taught maths and English.

Healthcare

84. I cannot remember anything about doctors or a dentist.

Religious Instruction

85. We had to go to church every morning before school. It had wooden pews which were very uncomfortable and they did all the religious carry on. There was a minister with a collar on. It was here they would read out a report of the boys who had disappeared because they had failed to return or those who got charged. I don't know the purpose of this, it was just a regime.

Work

86. There was a choice of the work you had to do as part of learning a trade.

Christmas/Birthdays

87. I never spent Christmas here, I always returned to Blairvadach.

Visitors/Inspections/Review of detention

88. I never got any visits from social work when I was at St Andrews.

Family Contact

89. I had no family contact.

Personal Possessions

90. I had nothing of my own in St Andrews.

Running Away

91. I never ran away.

Good Memories

92. I have no good memories, I should never have been there.

Abuse

93. There was a guy called FQH who was probably SNR or . I think SNR He was really old and had grey hair. He would bend you over a big table in his office and beat you with a leather belt. It was across my backside above my clothing. The belt was kept in his office and looked like a school belt with three or four prongs. It was flexible and quite thin. He did explain why he was belting me but I cannot remember what he said to me. I was belted twice by him.
94. The staff were verbal and shouting, that was just part of it. I didn't like or trust any of the staff or teachers.
95. FQG would try and intimidate you, he would put you up against a wall and use threatening language. He would also flick your ear with his finger.

96. The teachers did things like pick up and throw objects. I have been hit by the things they threw.
97. Another boy put me in a strangle hold and nearly strangled me, I was unable to breath and it was frightening. This sort of thing could happen often, not just with me. I saw other boys getting picked on. Sometimes this was done in front of the staff and sometimes they would say something but not always. If you didn't stick up for yourself you were in trouble.
98. Sometimes the old boy who did a nightshift there would wake me up and make me stand in the landing wearing my pyjamas. It would be for any excuse. I would have to stand with my pyjama bottoms down, sometimes as long as an hour. It wasn't just me, it happened to other boys although I didn't see it. The old boy would let guys into the school overnight to abuse me and other boys. It would be two or three guys he would let in and they were paedophiles. Some of them would touch you sexually and say all sorts of things. I also heard comments they made to the old boy calling him an old paedo and a rapist. He was part of it, he was as guilty as them.

Life after being in care

99. When I was sixteen I was told I could do what I wanted. I could have got a job or gone to do further education. I never got a job and felt in limbo. I had nowhere to live. The social work got me a shared house in Helensburgh which I moved in straight from leaving St Andrews. I signed on to get money. I did get a job as a milkman and later as a painter and decorator. I would say life was pretty bad. I had nothing. The halfway house was closed down and I stayed in Helensburgh until I was eighteen or nineteen still managing to work.
100. I ended up moving about and staying in England. I wasn't working I was just trying to get away. I came back to Scotland in my early thirties. I had to come back as it was all I knew. I have stayed in Scotland ever since.

101. I became a dad when I was about twenty seven. My son was born in Wales where I stayed when I was in a relationship with his mum. I found fatherhood alright, I was always around up until he was sixteen then he left and went to his grannies house. I still get on fine with his mum. We have a good relationship although we live separately.

Impact

102. Every aspect of my life has been affected by being a child in care. At sixteen I was free from them but not mentally. I try not to think about my childhood. I have thoughts that life is futile and a waste of time. I feel I had a waste of a life. I was ripped away from my family for people to abuse me.

103. Being in care had an incredible impact on my education and I suffered severely. FQE FQE made me fear getting anything wrong and I carried those feelings and fears throughout every educational experience I had. I feel I was left to fester in all aspects of my time in care including the educational system.

104. My health has been impacted both physically and mentally. Nothing ever felt right. I was lethargic and suffered depression, anxiety and stress. I have spoken to my GP but they just want to give you tablets. I didn't take anti-depressants as I have read about them and you can get addicted. I have never been referred for any form of counselling or psychological support. I told my GP when I moved to Stow about the abuse I have suffered but he wasn't interested, it was like it was nothing. It just keeps festering away. I have had no help and I am constantly asking myself why things happened but I have no answers. I feel like no-one wants to know and that I have been fobbed off.

105. These are horrendous crimes that impact. Even being raped or abused leaves you feeling that you cannot have a safe and normal sexual relationship. How do you separate it from the dirty seedy crimes? These people knew it was safe to pick on children like me. I know that I don't remember all that happened to me, my memory is very vague, and when I think of it maybe it's good not to remember. I have struggled with relationships and interacting with other people. It is a constant uphill battle.

106. I would never hand my child to any social worker but I had no choice my childhood was enforced on me. If it wasn't for my time in care I would have had such a different life.

Treatment/support

107. I have had no treatment or support. I have not had any counselling.

Reporting of Abuse Secondary Institutions - to be published

108. I never reported any of the abuse to anyone during my time in care.

109. I have never consulted a lawyer as I couldn't afford one. I have no money.

Reporting to Police Secondary Institutions - to be published

110. I have made a report to the police and they have some of my statements but I have not told them everything as I don't remember everything. I spoke to the police in Galashiels in February or March 2020. I believe it was someone who deals with historic child abuse cases I spoke to. I have spoken to the police a few times over the phone since June. They are having difficulty tracking down any of my records and no-one has been spoken to or charged yet. During my conversations with them they have told me that they are aware of the crimes that happened to me as a child. They have said they realised I cannot remember it all as when I was young I couldn't work out what the abuse was.

Records

111. I have a file which I got through Freedom of Information from Glasgow City Council three years ago. It contains my entire records from social work, foster care and GPs,

as part of my care. I cannot remember some of the places listed on my records. Some of the information has been blacked out. It is not easy for me to read these records and because of that I haven't read them to help give my statement. It takes its toll on you.

Lessons to be Learned

- 112. Don't leave children in a room with a loan adult. Don't give staff opportunities to abuse, in any way. It doesn't matter about social work as they are not there all the time.
- 113. They split my family up and I never got to see them, some of them I have never seen again since going into care. I was always getting moved about. I think they went out of their way to split up my family and this is wrong. They need to keep the family bonds.
- 114. I don't know how to stop children in care being abused. In my time abusers just got to do what they wanted and get away with it. Children never got a say. The older I got I started to realise I was not in the wrong.

Other information

- 115. After all of this I'd like if someone could say to me that they were in the wrong and I was in the right. Like an apology. I have never had that and I doubt I ever will.
- 116. 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..... *7 12 20 20*