

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

KJX

Support person present: No.

1. My formal name is KJX but I've always been known as KJX. My date of birth is 1962. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I'm the oldest of six girls and I was born in Hamilton. I lived in a council house with my mum and dad in up until the age of twelve or thirteen. My mum was she's passed sadly, and my dad is .
3. My early memories of my dad are that he did a lot of manual work. In the early days he was in the army, then he worked with , then the factory and then on building sites. He was always in and out of jobs right up until I was about ten.
4. Up until that age I felt my life was quite insignificant. I was brought up on a housing estate on the top floor of a tenement. We weren't very well off, we were quite poor and poverty played quite a big part in all our lives but it was no different from our neighbours and all the people who lived around about us. It was the same for all the people I went to school with. I went to St. Anthony's Primary school in Springhall.
5. Looking back on those informative years there was a lot of really good things. Although we were poor there was a lot of love and nurture and a lot of nice things. We had a very caring and loving mum and a very typical west of Scotland strict dad. We were a

Catholic family that attended chapel. We had two sets of grandparents who were very close to both sides of the family.

6. My mum was quite young when she had me and she was one of six girls so we had a massive extended family on both sides really, but we were probably closer to my mums side.
7. My mum worked all her life and she had four children before her 21st birthday. I was first, then [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], all within four years. In the first four or five years my mum worked in pubs doing catering or cleaning, just jobs that fitted round about school and my dad's work. She then went back to her original job as a presser in a kilt factory after [REDACTED] was born. Four years later [REDACTED] was born, she was known as [REDACTED], and up until that point in our lives there was nothing that stood out.
8. We were poor and sometimes there was no electricity but there was always food and there was always a lot of love. I would say things were all okay. There was nothing extraordinary happening within our family, there were no additional health needs, no social work involvement, no problems at school and everything was fine for all of us. We had family picnics and days out at the beach and I remember I spent a lot of time with my maternal granny who I was very close to.
9. When I was about eight my mum's uncle, [REDACTED], moved in with us. We were in a two bedroom flat so my mum and dad had the livingroom where the settee came down into a bed, my uncle had the front room and me and all my sisters were in two beds in the back room. [REDACTED] became a significant part of my trauma.
10. I would say the first kind of real trauma came not long after [REDACTED] was born. She was less than a year old so I was about eight or nine. I remember I was off school with German measles and my three sisters were all knocked down by a car on their way to school. They all had injuries but [REDACTED] had quite a significant head injury and was in a coma for about three weeks. That was the first real trauma for my mum and dad, nearly losing a daughter. Fortunately, [REDACTED] recovered and she's my best pal today.

11. That was the first time that care became an issue for our family. My uncle was living in the house but my granny or an auntie would always come and oversee things when my mum and dad were at the hospital with [REDACTED]. I suppose that was also the first time I can remember stepping up to take on the big sister caring role. Thankfully, [REDACTED] rehabilitated and came home and everything settled down again.
12. About a year after that, when I was about ten, [REDACTED] took ill and for over a year we didn't know what was wrong with her. I remember seeing my mum in tears not knowing what was wrong with her. After a very long process [REDACTED] was diagnosed with a neuroblastoma, which to this day is a very rare childhood cancer that's very rarely cured. We then knew the outcome was going to be terminal.
13. That became a huge part of our lives over the next two years. It was a horrendous part of our lives and that's when things changed at home. Looking back mum did what she had to, to get by. [REDACTED] spent a lot of time in hospital and my mum stayed with her apart from a Wednesday and Sunday. My mum also became a donor for [REDACTED]. That meant that every twelve weeks mum gave [REDACTED] platelets and when she did that she then had to stay away from home for the next three weeks because of infection. So there was lots of times my mum wasn't around for us. It was really hard for all of us but we did have a big extended family and everyone pulled together. We had a lot of help from the Catholic church at the time as well.
14. I suppose you could say I became the carer for my younger sisters as I did the shopping, cooked meals, stripped the beds, I could do everything a ten year old shouldn't be able to do, but it was okay because that's what you did.
15. The traumatic part for me was that we never saw a lot of [REDACTED]. She was there one day then gone the next and we wouldn't see her sometimes for as long as eight weeks. You weren't allowed to visit at the hospital if you were under the age of twelve so none of her siblings got to visit her. There was no support at all back then so we were dependent on external family coming to take us away for the weekends and things like that.

16. It was around about that time, I can't say exactly when, that the whole trauma started with my uncle [REDACTED] who started to sexually abuse me. I never told anybody about that, I just couldn't. The way sexual abuse was then it was taboo. It was also difficult because his sister was my granny and she was the closest person to me outside my immediate family. At the time I believed it was only me that was being abused but I discovered years and years later, through conversation with one of my sisters, that she had been a victim as well.
17. There was one time when I was about eleven and I was preparing for my confirmation at school. We all had to have an individual meeting with the priest at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and I told the priest, Father [REDACTED], about my uncle. I told him because I thought he could do something about it, he was a person I could trust. He took out a penknife and told me to stick my tongue out. He then told me he'd cut my tongue out if I repeated what I told him to anybody. That was from the priest who visited our family on a regular basis and was probably the most trusted person in the family. He went on to become [REDACTED] and died about three years ago.
18. That was the first time I ever took myself to tell somebody and that's what happened. That was massive for me, that was a big event. I remember I felt really ashamed after telling him. It had taken me weeks and weeks to build up the courage to speak to him. He was the only person I felt I could ever tell and I immediately felt so deflated. I felt that if he didn't believe me no one else was going to believe me. I think that's why I never told anybody else.
19. The sexual abuse from [REDACTED] went on from about the age of ten to about thirteen. I don't want to go into any details but it was quite horrific and it continued throughout all of those years. I had to hold that secret in the middle of all this family trauma, so that was hard for me. I just put up with it and got on with things.
20. I remember how much I looked forward to a Sunday. It was the only day I looked forward to because my mum would come back from the hospital on a Sunday and stay the night with us. There would be no abuse that day and I always got a nice, cooked

Sunday dinner. On a Wednesday mum would only be home for a few hours. Those were my two respite points in the week, they were sacred for me.

21. Sadly in [REDACTED] 1974 my sister [REDACTED] died. I was twelve and it was [REDACTED] before I was to start secondary school so my experience in primary school was definitely not repeated in high school. As a child, in a way, I was kind of relieved when [REDACTED] died because I thought life would go back to the way it was with mum and dad. Sadly that didn't happen, it got worse as I didn't anticipate the change in my mum and dad.
22. My dad started drinking, that was his coping mechanism, which was quite painful for a twelve year old looking for normality back in your life. Arguments started in the house as my mum and dad couldn't cope with each other's emotions. My mum's mental health was really poor as well. Up until that point I could never remember my mum and dad drinking very much, I couldn't remember extreme arguments or domestic violence but there was quite a lot of change after [REDACTED]'s death and the next twelve months were horrific.
23. My mum even tried to take her life on more than one occasion as she just didn't want to be here. She couldn't cope with it and there was no one there to support her. My dad couldn't adjust to my mums changes so they just grew in different directions. My dad stopped working, finances became tighter, my mum was holding down three jobs and he just became a waste of space. I see him now and I love him and hate him at the same time. I'm not sure I forgive him but I understand him.
24. I suppose my mum and dad thought another child might cure all, which it didn't, but in 1976 [REDACTED] arrived.
25. I went to Trinity High School and as I've said my experience was very different to primary school. I became quite destructive and quite anti-authoritarian. I couldn't listen to what anyone was telling me. I didn't understand my emotions and behaviours or anything, but at that time I was changing and there was lots of things about me changing.

26. I no longer welcomed any days of the week at home because they were all miserable, no days were protected anymore, it was all of the same crap every day and life kind of changed at that point.
27. My mum started drinking a bit as well and people then started coming to the house for parties at the weekends. It wasn't anything wild, it was family and all nice people so there was music and there were some nice times but the abuse didn't stop completely. My uncle continued to live with us until I was thirteen, the abuse didn't happen as often or as extensively as he didn't have the same opportunity but it still happened.
28. Domestic violence then became quite a big part of my mum and dad's life. More verbal than physical but I probably never really understood the context of domestic violence until I was much older.
29. The physical abuse didn't happen until I was about fourteen but there was a lot of mental abuse from my dad towards my mum and he became quite vile. There was always physical chastisements. We were brought up with that and even in my first twelve informative years when things weren't too bad I can remember that, but my dad then upped the ante a bit. I can remember one particular incident when I was about thirteen and got in the middle of the two of them when they were arguing and he took his belt and battered me with it. That drew blood and I went to my granny's who had it out with my dad and my mum.
30. There was never any police or social work involvement though, no external agencies were ever involved at that stage. Even when mum was in hospital, we had family, and we were just seen as a family getting on with it, that's just the way things were. The social work were known as '*the cruelty*' at that time and it was seen as shame for them to be at a house, no one could imagine them being at your house, that would have been horrific. I had a lot of mixed up feelings and emotions at that time.
31. My mums answer was then to move house, as if that was going to leave all the problems behind. We had to stay with my grandad in Blantyre before getting our next house and although he was a lovely man he was a drinker and he and my dad were

quite similar, they were both quite aggressive with a drink in them. The good thing that came from that was that my uncle [REDACTED] couldn't come with us. He moved to Ayrshire so the abuse stopped. I thought this might be a nice new start, and my mum sold it to us as a nice new start but it never was.

32. I stayed at Trinity High School to finish first year then I went to John Ogilvie's in Hamilton.
33. My dad wasn't really working and his drinking actually escalated because he had a drinking partner in my grandad so mum continued doing her three jobs. Mum was always working and she was never available. That was through financial need, not choice.
34. I fought against it all and I was always the one that would argue with my dad. My dad resented that so our relationship became really difficult. Then I started to run away and that was the first time we had social work involvement. Social work were involved with me and me only, none of my sisters had a social worker and none of them were in the care system, it was just me.
35. It was just me so when that happens and you're told, as I was by my dad with a drink in him, that the wrong person died, the wrong person was buried, you have to live with that, it's a lot to be going on in your head.
36. I was thirteen when I started to run away, school was a bit disrupted and I stopped going, so I was running away from my grandad's in Blantyre, where we were staying, and I was going to my best pals in [REDACTED]. She would hide me in her house for two or three nights. It was always after a row or something happening in our house.
37. It would have been police referrals that resulted in the social work getting involved. My mum and dad would report me missing, the police would find me and the social work got involved. The first social workers I was allocated were all duty social workers from Blantyre Social Work Office. When I ran away I would get a visit at home the next day

from the duty social workers but I don't remember any regular visits or meetings or follow ups, there was no action getting taken.

38. I was away for about a week on one occasion, I was staying with other friends I'd made in Blantyre and I was just going between them all. My mum always welcomed me back and she would be in tears. I never really realised the pain that I caused her but I was constantly reminded of the pain I caused her because my dad would always tell me that everything that was going on in our house was my fault.
39. No one ever mentioned what had happened before in the family or asked why I was behaving the way I was behaving. I don't ever remember getting assisted I just remember getting picked up from where I was located to, getting taken home and the police giving me a row. I ran away three or four times over the period of six months then we got a house. It was in the worst part of Blantyre and was a horrible place to live and I made up my mind that I wasn't living there.
40. I spent a lot of time at my granny's in [REDACTED] and I was going to school and doing well but my dad would always insist I had to go back home. It was usually on the back end of a Saturday night drinking, my mum and dad arguing and me trying to shut them up but it escalated to physical violence and smashing up the house. I always remember and believe that my role in all of that was just to let it happen, clear up afterwards and protect my wee sisters from it. That's kind of what I did and it became part and parcel of our life. We didn't stick out either because that was how people lived their lives. If you worked you stood out.
41. There were a couple of police attendances around that time for domestic violence and there were social work visits on the Mondays after those incidents but no one was joining the dots. There was a local police officer who walked the beat that I did confide in and tell about what was happening at home. He would sometimes take me home when I'd run away and he was always kind and sympathetic but looking back now, he never did anything. I told him what was going on and he never did a thing.

42. Life in the house never got any better, it only ever got worse and my mums mental health never got better either. To the day she died 25 years ago her mental health never recovered. I know now that she became addicted to the prescription medication she was given when [REDACTED] died, that was her coping mechanism but something died in my mum the day my sister died.
43. I did rebel a lot about that time and when I went on to John Ogilvie secondary school it became a bit more challenging. I remember I would go, get registered and then just sit in the bathroom all day. It was really quite sad. I don't remember struggling academically but I did struggle socially and emotionally. I was embarrassed of the family we became and the person I became. The people there weren't the people I would have fitted in with at [REDACTED]. I had lost my peer group and where I was to fit and by the nature of that some of the friendships I made probably weren't the healthiest relationships, so that didn't help me get back on track.
44. I did go and stay with my dad's sister once, my auntie [REDACTED], after my dad assaulted me when I intervened in a domestic violence incident. It was quite serious and I did tell her what was going on. She didn't know but I only told her half the story because of the shame that came with that. I stayed with her for about eight weeks and I remember feeling dead safe there. That was put down to a fall out between me and my dad and no one did anything else about it, there was no social work or external involvement.
45. In second and third year at school I started running away not to my friends but on the street and I was running further and further away. I once hitched a lift to Manchester because a boyfriend I was seeing, who was seventeen, was working there. I was in the Manchester area for about three months when I was fourteen. I became a shoplifter at that point in my life, but never again after that. I ended up walking into a police station in Manchester and handing myself in. A social worker and a female police officer came along and that was the first real intervention that I feel happened in my life.
46. I remember on the journey back to Glasgow I couldn't stop thinking about what my mum and dad were going to say and do and what was going to happen to me. I ended

up running off from the social worker and police officer at a service station. I did get picked up by the police later that day and I was eventually taken back home the next day. That was horrible because I had to wear handcuffs the second time and that just reinforced the badness and the shame.

47. I should say I did spend the odd night in other Children's Homes before going to Calder House. They were Maxwell House in Blantyre and Bellshill Childrens Home. They were very short stays, really just stopping places I was taken to after I'd been running away. I was always returned home after them. I can't remember anything significant happening in any of them, there's nothing in my mind, nothing that I can remember.
48. When I ran away I would be taken to a meeting the next day. My dad would be brought in and at that time children weren't included in the meetings so my dad would sit in but I would be taken out. The adults would talk about and decide what was happening with me then I would go back in and be told what was happening.
49. When I was brought back from Manchester I was taken straight to Calder House under a place of safety order. I remember the social worker telling me I had no choice in the matter and I was going straight to Calder House, I wasn't going home. That was the first legal intervention in my life. I was fourteen or fifteen at the time.
50. I was also allocated my first social worker, Cameron Rollo, around that time. He was quite a hippy type and I did think he would help me but he never did. He was actually very ineffective. He was my social worker for about two years.

Calder House, Blantyre

General

51. Calder House was on Stoney Meadow Road in Blantyre. It was knocked down and has now been rebuilt as a nursing home. I pass it every time I go to [REDACTED] which is quite odd.

52. It was boys and girls at Calder House, everyone was between twelve and eighteen and I'd say a high proportion were there on court mandates. They were all youth offenders and that wasn't dealt with under Children's Hearings back then. That meant there were a lot of people who had either been sentenced or were awaiting sentence for offending who were in Calder House waiting for a place at either Polmont, for the boys, or other units for the girls. A lot of them started their journey there and there I was in there alongside them. It was a scary horrible place to be, it was another world, another life and not one I wanted to be part of.
53. The couple ^{SNR} Calder House were Mr ^{BHN} and his wife Mrs ^{HLP}, I forget her first name. They were an English couple, they had a daughter who was a horrible lassie, she wasn't much older than me. their daughter would walk about freely, bringing her pals to the back door, eating food in the kitchen and making comments all the time. I can't remember her name. The mum just shouted at everyone all the time.
54. Two staff that stick out as being nice are Mr Henry and a teacher Mrs Vernon. She recognised potential in me for education and encouraged me. She might have been my key worker but I can't remember, she does stand out in my head but there's lots of gaps with what I remember about her. I do remember her very kindly from when I was leaving as she gave me a lovely big bag of toiletries. Mr Henry was quite young, he was kind although he did follow some of the regimes and practices that weren't very good.
55. I also remember Mr ^{KJY} who was a big man. He played the guitar and while there was a nice bit about him but when you were in trouble he wasn't nice there were two sides to him.

Routine at Calder House

First day

56. I remember the very first time I went to Calder House, it was [REDACTED] 1977. When the front door opened, I felt like I was in prison. I knew about Calder House, it was always known to me as the place where bad people went.
57. I was told when I got there that I was there because I was an absconder and I couldn't go to a Children's Home or to family and I wasn't going home. Calder House was an assessment centre and I just had to accept that.
58. With my knowledge of the care system today I would say it was higher than an assessment centre because you lost your liberty. You couldn't walk out the front door, there were bars on some of the windows and a cell within the place, so to me that's secure. My liberty was gone and you had to earn any time that you could get outside.
59. I do remember being quite stressed and tearful on that first day. I was in handcuffs, I was distressed, and I had to go through this process of filling out forms and stuff. I was then told I was spending my first night in a cell to help me calm down. I was just upset I wasn't angry or aggressive, I didn't need to calm down.
60. I really expected my mum to be there and she wasn't. I didn't know what she had been told, if she'd been told she couldn't be there or what.
61. I remember coming through this side door and there was a kitchen and this small room, I would actually call it a cell, with no windows at all. There was a bed with bedding and that was all that was in it, nothing else.
62. There were two members of staff with me, a female and a male, I don't remember her name but he was Mr [REDACTED]. They told me to strip and I refused. They gave me jeans, a Fair Isle jumper and black gutties and told me to strip off and dress in the clothes they gave me, in front of them. I asked them to leave but they wouldn't so I refused. This went on for a bit and then they told me that if I didn't strip and change they would do it for me. That's what ended up happening and that was my first experience of a

strip search. It wasn't my last either and I can now differentiate between what was poor practice or systems and what was abuse.

63. That strip search and many others that followed were abusive. I remember Mr ^{KJY} being party to several strip searches of me, that actually happened, it wasn't always females searching females. Mrs ^{HLP}, a female member of staff was sometimes present when he was searching me. I was pinned face down on the stone floor, everything was taken off me and I was searched. I became quite hysterical and I had one hand up my back. They took all my clothes away, threw in the clothes they had for me and shut the door. I was then left in that cell for hours and hours and no one came to see me. Searches like that happened to me at least eight or nine times and most of the time I spent the night in that cell. Only sometimes would it be for a few hours.
64. That was my first experience on my first day at Calder House. I think I then spent two or three nights in that cell and I just sat crying all the time. I was really upset and confused and I was angry. I had this prior knowledge that Calder House was where all the bad boys and lassies went and I knew people who'd been there that had committed serious crime. I just didn't understand why I was there.
65. People came with food and things for me but that was it. I don't remember what happened when I needed the toilet, I don't remember there being one in the cell but there was a buzzer, maybe I used that when I needed the toilet.
66. I do understand now that there wasn't anywhere else to safely contain me and as an absconder there was a high possibility that I would have run away again so they had to contain me but the process and experience could have been different.

Mornings and bedtime

67. We were to be up in the morning about eight. The expectation was that you would be ready and your bed would be made. If you weren't out your bed, the staff would come into the room banging pot lids and spraying water all over you from a plant sprayer

thing. Sometimes they would even tip you out your bed, I can remember that happening to people but it never happened to me. We then all met downstairs in the main area and went for breakfast. After breakfast we had school, which wasn't a productive activity.

Mealtimes/Food

68. There were two cooks at Calder House who were really nice. One would tell you as it was and the other, Mrs Leich, would let you get cakes and things like that. It was an open kitchen so you could go in and out the kitchens through the day but there was always a cook there so you could get a snack or something if you wanted.
69. The food was fine, there was never any kind of deprivation with the food. One punishment, if you misbehaved, was to not allow you to sit in the dining room with other people. You would then get your food in your room or in the cell if you were in there.
70. There were good routines with the meals, we had breakfast, lunch, an evening meal and a supper, and I can't remember any trauma around any of that at.
71. Looking back the only thing that wasn't right was Mr BHN and Mrs HLP's daughter being allowed in the kitchen area when we were there. It's obvious to me now that she knew about everybody, she knew about me. She could make comments about things that she could only have got from a member of staff.

Washing/bathing

72. There was a big open shower area and there were baths. I don't remember taking a shower or bath in front of anybody but there was no privacy, there were no locks on any doors. We never got any deodorant or anything like that because some people were sniffing that.

Clothing/possessions

73. We had to wear the clothes we were provided with at Calder House. We had different coloured Fair Isle jumpers, elasticated jeans and black gutties or sand shoes. We weren't allowed to wear our own clothes. We only got them to wear whenever we got to go home.
74. We did have bedside cabinets to put our belongings in. We couldn't lock it and things went missing all the time. Back in the seventies we didn't have valuable possessions anyway.
75. I don't remember ever getting any pocket money, but I remember we could order toiletries. We had to go and ask a member of staff for sanitary towels, I hated that if it was men, that was quite impersonal.

Leisure time

76. I loved going on the outdoor activities. We went to Strathclyde Park and did courses on sailing and hillwalking and things like that. Things that were outside were attractive to me. We did always stand out a mile though. We had these stand out orange jackets, we were never allowed to wear our own clothes.
77. On a Sunday afternoon we could go out for two hours so lots of people did that. You could only do that if a family member was there to sign you in and out and take responsibility for you. Getting out was also behaviour dependant. On a Sunday night we tended to do lots of different activities. We used to play games, we had TV and the recreation was fine. I remember Mr KJY used to play all the chart music, I remember Dr Hook getting played. Mr KJY would get his guitar out as well, that was good, but he wasn't always nice like that.

Schooling

78. We were all educated within Calder House. It was very limited and very generic, a wee bit of English and a wee bit of maths, no separate subjects. Some teachers came in

from outside to provide that and a lot of the staff were involved in the classes as well. Some of that was to contain the behaviour.

79. We had a couple of classes in the morning and a couple in the afternoon. It was very disruptive with banging and shouting in classrooms, people running in and out of classrooms and just dead disruptive. I remember making a stool in a woodwork class.
80. It sounds awful but the schooling was a big part to me and I was probably more affected by that than by the physical part. I just cannot forgive the local authority, I don't think I ever will. As I've said Mrs Vernon, who was either my teacher or link worker, came to the education and took classes and she quickly assessed that I had potential.
81. I always had an aspiration to become a nurse and those dreams were always with me, I never lost them, they kept me going through everything I was going through. I told Mrs Vernon I wanted to be a nurse and she told me it was going to be difficult to recover my lost education but she said we would try our best.
82. There were no formal exams ever sat within Calder House and no one ever went to an outside school. Everyone in Calder House was provided with the same, extremely limited, education.
83. Going to the classrooms in that building was the one time and place I wasn't disruptive. I wanted to be there and I wanted to learn. I know it doesn't marry up with all the rest of my behaviour when I was in Calder House but I wanted to be in that classroom setting. I don't ever remember understanding why that was but I know now that it was because I knew I had potential and I wanted to do something.
84. Mrs Vernon definitely saw something in me, she brought me books and different things in for me. I remember her making an argument for me, at a meeting one day, when she wanted to register me at a school for English, biology and arithmetic. She wanted to see how I would fare and to sit mock exams in all three subjects. Her argument was

that if I could prove myself in exams on those subjects I should be allowed to go to mainstream school.

85. I was then registered to do the exams at John Ogilvie secondary school. I was so excited about it because they were the three exams I needed to do a pre-nursing course. She got all the information and set that all up for me. I put all my energy into that and I remember the exams came round at [REDACTED] 1978. It was very near the end of my time at Calder House, I'd been there for months and months by then.
86. I remember I had no uniform and saying to my mum that I couldn't go to John Ogilvie to sit an exam without the uniform. My mum went and bought me the uniform and Mrs Vernon set everything up for me so that I didn't stand out when I went to this big school to sit the exams.
87. The night before I was all excited, I went and had a shower and I was all ready to go and sit the first exam, which was English. I had my uniform hanging up inside a cupboard in this room with my shoes and everything all laid out.
88. I went to get my breakfast in the morning and when I then went to get my uniform they couldn't find the keys for the cupboard. That was such a big day in my life and they just had to get the keys and open that cupboard, that whole day sticks out in my memory. Mrs Vernon had come in on her day off to take me to the exam and I remember she was really irate about the keys as well.
89. I remember Mr ^{BHN} [REDACTED] coming down and saying to just go in my basic clothes but they didn't seem to understand that I couldn't go in those clothes as I would stand out in the basic clothes. That was the whole point, the basic clothes we wore were aimed to make us stand out in the community. The only time I ever wore my own clothes was when I went home at the weekend.
90. There was a right kerfuffle with staff trying to unpick the lock and trying to get in but they couldn't get it open, and it was a big heavy door. I was eventually told to go the

way I was and I remember I got really upset. Mrs Vernon tried to calm me down, she was encouraging me to go and sit the exam and I remember crying all the way to the school in her car.

91. So I went into this big room at John Ogilvie school and I remember people looking at me and sniggering at me. I was the only one not in uniform. I put my name on the exam sheet and wrote something down, I must have as I did get a result for that exam, which was a fail, but I only sat there for about five minutes before I got up and walked out. I never went back to any classroom, I never studied, I did nothing. I basically told them to stuff it at Calder House.
92. That robbed me of years of my life and in some ways upsets me more than being forcibly strip searched. I don't know why it does that. My mum did kick up a fuss about it but I never sat the next two exams and that was the end of what I saw as my education.
93. I remember going back to the unit the night of the exam and Mr **BHN**'s daughter was there. She asked why I was upset because I would have failed the exams anyway, so she knew my business and was able to make these comments. There I was supposedly in a nurturing safe place to progress, and by that time I must have been showing progress, but yet again I was kept down with really horrible oppression.
94. I can remember just becoming a belligerent disruptive person in classrooms after that. If you're told you're bad or useless often enough you start to fit in to that stereotypical view of yourself. Nobody thinks any better of me so why should I. Getting told you had ideas above your station was a common thing to hear from staff and teachers, I definitely remember Mrs **HLP** saying that to me.
95. I do know now that if I had the potential to sit standard grades after almost three years out of education I could have achieved a lot more, earlier in my life, than I did. That really upsets me because it kind of mapped out everything for me.

Healthcare

96. I remember Cameron Rollo taking me in to the Douglas Inch Centre, a psychological services place in the east end of Glasgow to get me assessed. I was told that the purpose was to find out what was wrong with me. I did think there was something wrong with me but nobody ever linked it to trauma or looked at my background, not that I'm aware of anyway. It was always about my behaviour and trying to find out why I was behaving the way I was behaving.
97. I saw a psychologist at this place and both Cameron Rollo and my mum came in with me. He asked a lot of questions and said words asking me to say the first word that came into my head after he said them. It was all words that might trigger a reaction from me. Then he asked me to peel a plastic orange that was in a bowl of plastic fruit on the table. I remember looking at my mum and the social worker and saying to him "I'll peel it if you eat it". I then told him to "fuck off" and stormed out after that and just refused to be assessed. I remember that so clearly and I remember my mum crying and saying we needed to get to the bottom of what was wrong with me. If they had only asked me what was wrong with me I would have told them what was wrong with me.

Religion

98. Although I was from a Catholic family I don't ever remember practicing it or having the opportunity to practice it, at Calder House. I did when I went home at weekends but I don't recall ever seeing a priest or going to church when I was at Calder House, I don't think anything like that ever happened.
99. All I can think of was us practicing singing the song 'Rivers of Babylon' for a Christmas event that all the parents were coming to. I don't remember any formal religious events at all.

Culture

100. While I was in Calder House I didn't feel any different from any of the other people there because I still had this belief that I was the problem, I was the bad person. There were a few other people like me that had been absconding and had family issues but it was predominantly people who were boasting about the things they had done. A lot of that was bravado but they did talk about knife crime and drugs and sneaking drugs into the unit.
101. I was aware of all of those things going on round about me and to fit into a peer group that's not your choice, is quite hard, it's hard to find your place and you have to then develop a bit of falseness about you. I didn't feel the person on the inside was the person that people seen.
102. I started smoking at Calder House and there were frequently people getting caught with cannabis on them out in the yard. There were pills but nothing hard like heroin, and solvent abuse became a big thing. That escalated and became part of the culture as well. The staff all knew what was going on.
103. There were occasions when males got into the female rooms and a couple of inappropriate things happened. I am talking about sexual contact between boys and girl in the unit but members of staff wouldn't have been around when those things happened. The boys rooms were in a corridor upstairs and the girls in a corridor down the stairs.

Family Contact

104. I did get to see my parents within the first couple of days, that was before I went to any Children's Hearing. It was at Calder House and Cameron Rollo was there as well. My mum was in tears and really upset and my dad was angry, swearing at me and telling me it was all my fault. He did that in front of staff and they never intervened at all. That's when I was told I would be going to a hearing and decisions would be made for me there.

105. My mum and dad then visited me on a Sunday afternoon and a Wednesday night. After a while once things had settled down, when I suppose the risk was seen to be reduced, I would get to go home on a Sunday afternoon for two hours between 12 o'clock and 2 o'clock. That was every Sunday but was behaviour dependent.
106. If I had been part of any misbehaviour the day or night before then they would pull your home leave. That was always last minute, at the drop of a hat, and it happened to me all the time. It was a regular thing. Sometimes, if the behaviour wasn't too bad, they would revert it to my mum having to come and visit me, rather than me getting to go home. I had spent the whole week looking forward to these two hours at home and I was getting to see my sisters. My sisters never got to come to Calder House to see me so if my home leave was cancelled I wasn't getting to see any of my family.
107. I'm not sure of time scales but it felt like I'd been at Calder House for months when I got my home leave extended to overnight. I was still seeing my same fella so I got to see him when I was home. There were rules I had to abide by. Things really hadn't changed at home, I could be back from a Friday to a Sunday and there would still be domestic violence and drinking. I went back to Calder House and told people about that but it felt as if nothing was ever done about it. I also told social work about that and they never did a thing either. My sister [REDACTED] was only about two then and she was in that domestic setting. I was so worried for her, for all my sisters, and nobody ever intervened or did anything about that.

Running away

108. I didn't ever run away from Calder House, once you were in there you couldn't run away. I think there was a couple of times I was late getting back from home leave and they probably had consequences but I didn't ever not go back from any home leave. There was nothing big like going off to Manchester, my running away was just from home, it was my family I was running away from.

Review of detention/hearings

109. I was at a Children's Hearing within a couple of days and then there were further meetings and talks, lots of activity about me. Cameron Rollo was my social worker and I remember saying to him just to let me out of Calder House and I would never run away again. I was making lots of promises but no one was listening to me.
110. Calder House was an assessment centre and I was never told what the assessment of me was. What I don't ever recall happening was anyone ever explaining the process to me, or what the exit plan was. I was on an order but the terminology back then is different to what it is now.
111. Back then the terminology was that my mum and dad sent me into care but what I know now is that it was actually voluntary. It was voluntary as opposed to compulsory because my mum and dad were in agreement with the plan. They signed in agreement with the plan. All I ever remember is Section 15, outwith parental control. That's all I ever remember being labelled and I was referred to that at meetings.
112. I remember going from Calder House to Children's Hearings at the county buildings in Hamilton. I was taken in the back of a van with two members of staff. I was never handcuffed but they always had their hands tight on both my wrists. I was walked into the building like that.
113. Children's Hearings hadn't been running long and I remember sitting in a corridor with my mum and dad and the two members of staff from Calder House. My name would be shouted out and we would go in. One member of staff went with me and one stayed outside. I would go in, confirm my name and date of birth and then I was always asked to leave. I never participated in any hearings or meetings. I sat outside and was called in at the end and told what the decision was.
114. What was explained to me was that I couldn't go home right now but they were going to try and work with me and I'm going back to Calder House. I remember each time I was told that saying to please not send me back to Calder House and that I would never run away again. I did know that I would be back at another hearing every twenty

one days and I feel that was the case, I don't remember ever being on a substantive order and being away for any longer than that.

115. I do understand that whole process now, and the need for them to keep me safe and in a secure place because I was running away and hitching lifts to England.
116. I always went to those hearings knowing what the recommendation was going to be. I never went with any hope that I was going to get back home. I just hoped that one day somebody would listen to me.
117. There were meetings within Calder House as well. My mum was always there and my dad sometimes came. My mum was always tearful, she didn't want me to be in care, but my dad did. There would be social work and staff from Calder House at those meetings.
118. I can remember, several times, being at home on leave and my social worker would be there visiting and would just sit there and listen to my dad being abusive to me. My dad would be shouting and bawling at me, swearing at me and the social worker would just sit there. They were probably overwhelmed by my dad and didn't know how to deal with conflict.
119. Cameron Rollo was my social worker for a couple of years and I did see him every couple of weeks at Calder House. Later on he would sometimes take me home on a Friday night when I had overnight home leave. Cameron would check in with me, he would come to meetings about me and he would read out reports when he was preparing me for hearings. He would tell me what the recommendation was going to be, which was always to remain at Calder House. I don't know if he was seeking my views or not, it certainly wasn't explicit to me if that's what he was doing.

Bedwetting

120. I was a bedwetter and wet the bed before I was in Calder House. I tried to disguise taking my wet sheets to the laundry in the morning but eventually it was discovered I

wet the bed. I can't remember how that came about. After that I was given plastic sheets and I have a memory from then of the nightwatchmen checking my bed at night. It could have been one of any of the nightwatchmen and I remember Mr [REDACTED] checked the beds as well. They would come in to my room and place a hand under the cover of the mattress to check if the bed was wet. If it was wet they would wake me up to change the sheets.

121. I have a memory of one specific nightwatchmen, an older man with a grey beard, who I feel wasn't just looking for the wet sheets. He would put his hands on my body and on my private parts. It made me think of [REDACTED] and what he did to me and I remember shouting out at the man. I called him a "a dirty old bastard" but that didn't stop him. I don't know for sure but something makes me think his name was [REDACTED]. He did that on a regular basis. He was the nightwatchman that regularly got us to clean boots. He was the only one that ever touched me. He was known as an old perv so I would think he was doing that to other bedwetter's, it was a well-known thing between the girls.

Abuse at Calder House

122. I've told you about my first day when I was forcibly searched and left alone in that cell. I was strip searched several times but that first time was the only time I was asked to take my clothes off first.
123. After that, the staff physically imposed themselves on you and dragged you from wherever you were to the cell to be strip searched. It was to see if you had any aerosols or anything on you like that. I was dragged by the arms by two staff from the bathroom to the cell, to be searched several times. That was a fair distance and was witnessed by all my peers. I saw that happen to others as well. If you were caught sniffing glue and didn't get up right away the staff would often give you a cold shower before dragging you off to the cell.

124. When I came out of the cell that first time I was taken to a room that had four beds. I shared that room with one other lassie. She was really tall with the most ginger hair you've ever seen. She was a very street wise girl and she was nice, I felt safe around her. I can't remember her name but her uncle was a [REDACTED] footballer, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
125. She was having an affair with a member of staff at Calder House. She was a child, she was only about fifteen and was being abused by him. I remember her getting up in the middle of the night and going away. I can't remember if it was the nightwatchman or another member of staff but she told me she was having an affair with whoever it was. That staff member would have been in his thirties or forties. She used to get cigarettes from him, I remember that, it was when I first started smoking.
126. I've spoken about home leave being stopped but there was another part of the punishment regime within the unit that I found abusive. We had recreational time and if anyone kicked off they would be sent to their room. Given the nature of the people I was living with a lot of them would refuse, become obnoxious or give back chat and if you did that you would be put on a warning. If you carried on with the behaviour you would be put on a punishment.
127. That punishment was, regularly and frequently, waiting until you were asleep then getting you out your bed and either making you sit at the bottom of the stairs, where the nightwatchman was, and making you clean all the boots or making you stand in the corner of a corridor facing a wall for most of the night. That was a punishment and what sticks out in my head is I initially laughed about it until I realised that it wasn't actually funny. Sometimes staff would throw the boots back at you and tell you they weren't clean enough, and that there was still dirt on them.
128. Another punishment was to get you up in the middle of the night, often with another person who was on a punishment, and the staff would take you to this outside barn. It was where we played indoor football, netball and games, things like that. In that barn we would each be given a bucket of water and a toothbrush and we would be told to scrub the floor. We would start at different ends, scrub the whole floor of the barn, and

meet in the middle. If you stopped or spoke to the other person, sometimes the staff would kick the bucket of water over and make you start again. Sometimes daylight was coming up before we got back to our beds.

129. I remember Mr ^{BHN} and Mrs ^{HLP} once being at the barn when we were doing the toothbrush scrubbing thing. I don't know if they were overseeing that or if they just walked in on it, but they were definitely aware of it.
130. Another one I remember was being told to stand in the corridor outside your bedroom for hours at a time in the middle of the night. Sometimes if you didn't get out your bed in the morning they would bang pot lids to get you out your bed or switch hoovers on and leave them at your door. They would even throw water over you to get you out of bed, that was regular, that happened to everyone.
131. Those were punishments that were imposed on you through the day but the person who saw them through was the nightwatchman at night. There was often staff on through the night, they all did shifts, but there was always a nightwatchman on duty as well.
132. That is a time I remember one of the teachers, Mr Henry, being quite kind a couple of times. He would be on duty at night and say to come out of the room, pretend I'd done the punishment then go back in again. He would follow things through in a nicer way but be seen to be following the punishment through. Then there were other people who took great pleasure in ensuring you did all the scrubbing and would even kick the bucket of water over.
133. Solvent abuse was pretty high in Calder House and they would go to the open shower area in the bathroom to do that. I remember being encouraged to do it and saying no, I knew it was wrong and I didn't want to do it, the same as I was when I first smoked but somewhere along the line it happened and I did it. It actually became quite a pattern and I remember being found in the bathroom several times after doing it. I would then be taken to the cell and strip searched.

134. It did reach a stage where I actually pretended to sniff deodorant, or sometimes butane gas. I would then react to what the staff were asking but if I had been under the influence that's when I would end up in the showers and in the cell. That's because my reaction to the staff was slower.
135. Nobody ever sat anyone down and spoke to you about why we were taking solvents and aerosols. I don't feel anyone was interested in helping us.
136. I don't know if there was any recording of any of the punishments that were imposed.

Reporting of abuse at Calder House

137. I didn't formally complain about anything that happened at Calder House but I did tell my social worker, Cameron Rollo, about the punishment regimen. I remember telling him about people putting their hands in my bed at night as well. I don't think I labelled it as abuse but I definitely told him about that and about the barn and standing in the corridor, all of those things.

Leaving Calder House

138. I think I was in Calder House for about nine or ten months although it did feel longer. After about a month I kind of accepted that was where I was going to be. There were some good bits about it and some nice people.
139. I don't remember the dates but I know I went into Calder House [REDACTED] one year and then I moved on [REDACTED] the next year. I'm sure that was 1977 and 1978 as I must have been sixteen when I moved on to Edinburgh.
140. Moving on was a planned move and I was going to a place in Colinton in Edinburgh. It was at the stage where I was getting discharged and had to move on. It was deemed that I couldn't go home and I didn't want to go home. I think it was concluded that

whatever was going on at home wasn't safe for me. I could never really marry up why that was and why I couldn't be sent home if my sisters were all allowed to be there.

141. My thinking now is that if I was classed as being outwith parental control maybe they thought I was never going to comply, so what was the point in sending me home. In actual fact, my sisters were being exposed to what was going on in that household. I had been telling people about it, my social worker had seen what it was like and nothing was ever done. None of my sisters ever remember having a social worker or ever talking to a social worker.
142. Cameron Rollo was still my social worker at that time but I remember a female social worker as well. It was the two of them and my mum that took me to Edinburgh.
143. I remember having new clothes bought for me and Mrs Vernon coming out and giving me a card and presents and wishing me luck. She was quite tearful and that stands out in my mind. She was someone that actually cared for me and was probably the only person in Calder House that did care.

Unknown Institution in Colinton, Edinburgh

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Homeless period in Glasgow and Edinburgh

160. I went home after that and within a week I was homeless. Things broke very badly at home and I ended up back in that circle spending a night here and a night there for a couple of months.
161. It got to [REDACTED] 1978 and I was regretting that I'd left The Neuk but there was no way back there for me by then. [REDACTED] I had a big fall out with my family and my boyfriend and I then did a runner to Edinburgh. I did have a friend in Edinburgh so I went there.
162. I had a bit of money so I got the train to Waverley. I remember arriving and thinking what am I going to do now. I might have had some intention of going back to The Neuk but I don't know what was going on in my head at that time.
163. I did have enough for a bed and breakfast so I booked into one in Leith. The woman there must have realised I was homeless and she sent me to the YMCA where I could get free accommodation. I met my friend there and then I got myself a job in Asda and a job in a sweetie shop. For the next six months or so I was resourceful. I know now

that my younger childhood experiences gave me the resilience I needed to survive on the streets.

164. I didn't realise it for a long time but my friend was prostituting herself in Edinburgh. I was in the periphery of all that for a long time but I must have had a guardian angel, maybe my sister, because I was never ever drawn into the centre of all that. That's something I'm so grateful for because I believe I would have taken a completely different path had I been drawn into it.
165. I ended up losing my job in Asda and stopping the job in the sweet shop and I was then street homeless for about four or five months with my friend in Edinburgh.
166. Music was a big attraction for me, it always has been and always will be, and it was that interest that became life changing for me. I was, and still am, a huge fan of Frankie Miller, and he was playing at the Playhouse in Edinburgh when I was there.
167. I got a ticket given to me by my friend, and I went to the concert. When I was there I got chatting to a woman in the toilet who turned out to be Frankie's sister. She even knew my auntie, so one thing led to another and she invited me to the after party. I then met Frankie so I was in my element. I had a conversation with him and he asked what brought me to Edinburgh. I ended up telling him my story and, I'll never forget this, he went into his pocket, took his wallet out and gave me a £50 note. I hadn't seen anything more than a tenner in my life. He told me to get the last train back to Cambuslang and get myself out of Edinburgh and home to my family.
168. I paid for a hotel for me and my pal that night but I did get the train home the next day. That was the last I saw of my pal, I went back to Edinburgh about a month later and she was dead. I was very lucky and that was a huge turning point in my life.
169. When I went home I wasn't welcomed by my dad and life wasn't very good. I thought I had burnt my bridges with the social work and I didn't know what to do with myself. I was still sixteen and I didn't have any benefits or anything at that point but I did get myself a wee job in an office.

170. I thought there was nothing for me through the social work because as I was on a voluntary order at The Neuk and I walked out of there off my own accord. I don't remember seeing a social worker from the moment I walked out of the Neuk until much later, at least a couple of months after I got back from Edinburgh after I'd run away from home. I didn't know it then but I did come back into the care system after that.
171. I did want to be home with my family. I didn't fit anywhere else and the people I should have been fitting in with were my family. My sisters were then all beginning to move on. They were leaving school, getting jobs and all doing different things. They seemed to be holding it together and getting on all right despite what I viewed as a dysfunctional family.
172. People were always saying to me that my problem was my mouth and to stop answering my dad back and my life would be good. The problem was I couldn't stop answering him back because every time I did, it was about defending the way he was treating people, particularly my mum. It wasn't in me to just sit back and watch that. That's just the way my life was.
173. I stayed at home for the next few months, I got a new boyfriend and I just kept going, staying at home or with his family but always living a life that was morally right, despite everything I had been exposed to on the street. That kept me going because I always thought there would be something at the other end for me.
174. I still wanted to become a nurse and I even tried to join the army because, although I didn't have any qualifications, I found out you could train to join the medical corps. I failed the exam for that though, which I thank God for now.
175. So I was back home I was in and out the house and I was working in an office. There was then an incident when I was at my lowest and I took another overdose and tried to take my life. I was sitting in a shop doorway feeling all fuzzy [REDACTED] when this guy came up and started talking to me. I told him I'd taken an overdose and instead of getting me an ambulance he took me to his house and sexually assaulted me.

176. I did find the ability to get out his house. I remember feeling unwell and vomiting but I managed to run to the police station where I told them I'd taken an overdose. They just told me to go to the hospital. I left the police station and I ended up sitting back in the shop doorway. I remember two police officers walking towards me, they looked me up and down and just kept walking without saying a word to me. I remember thinking then that I was absolutely invisible.
177. I remember thinking I needed help and I don't know how I got there, but I found a phone box and I phoned the social work office. I got through to someone who told me to stay where I was and a guy called Neil Kelly came and got me. Neil Kelly then became my social worker for the next two years. He was a straight talking Glaswegian guy who just told it as it was. He told me I was going to Flemington House for the night. I did tell people I'd taken an overdose but I didn't go for any medical treatment. I had been quite sick but I was conscious and walking and I don't know why but I wasn't taken for any medical attention.
178. I just made that one call and I was back in care so it does make me think that they must have been expecting me to come back into care. I was never aware of that, I had been told by the social work that if I gave up the place I had in Edinburgh I would never have another opportunity like that again and they would cut all ties with me. To this day I cannot accept that it was luck that someone responded to me. I was sixteen and a half so I was outside the care system then.
179. So Neil Kelly drove me to Flemington House in Uddingston and I was there for the next year.

Flemington House, Uddingston

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Flemington House

207. So I was taken home, my dad started ranting and raving and the pattern just started repeating itself. My dad was quite horrible and was swearing and shouting at me and Neil Kelly just sat through it all. I'll never forget looking at Neil during that and asking him if he was happy to leave me there because if he did my dad would either kill me or I would kill him.
208. My dad even told Neil to get me the fuck out of his house and all Neil did was tell my dad to rein it in. Neil knew of the tensions and the potential and he knew by predictability what was going to happen and that it wouldn't last.
209. I was back home then but I was between home and pals houses and all different things for about eight weeks or so. I did get a place to start nursing at the Royal Infirmary in Glasgow but you couldn't start until you were seventeen and half. I was just seventeen so my plan was to work for a few months and then do the nursing.
210. I had a pal who worked in a hotel in Arran and said I could work there. I went to Neil Kelly and asked for some help and he gave me a travel warrant to get me to Arran and £15. That was the last contact I had with the social work, that was me leaving care with my black bags.

Life after being in care

211. I never went on to do nursing, I went away to work in hotels. I went to Arran aged seventeen and I started off as a waitress.

212. I had a relationship with the married owner of the hotel which I now know was abuse by him. I thought it was a relationship and I was an adult but he groomed me as a vulnerable adult. Years later he was convicted and went to jail for sex offences. I can't remember his name.
213. I was in Arran for about three or four months, the nursing course starting date came and went during that time but I needed support to do that. I didn't know how to and Neil Kelly and the social work knew I had that place but I never received any contact or support.
214. I went on to work in a hotel in Crieff and then another hotel in Aberfoyle. Back then more or less all the boys who left care went into the army and all the girls went on to work in hotels. You got your food and you got your accommodation.
215. I was searching for something else because everything had broken down. My relationships at home had broken down and the social work had abandoned me. I knew I couldn't live at home and I didn't live at home again after that.
216. I suppose I just went along with the accommodation and the wages and the life that came with working in the hotels. It kept me going for a bit.
217. I met my husband, [REDACTED], at the hotel in Aberfoyle. I wasn't quite nineteen when I met him and we got married within the space of one year, that was 1982. My husband was the opposite of any man I had ever met in terms of his lived experience. He was the polar opposite to me in terms of coming from a very small family unit and not a lot of traumas. He was a very kind soul. My husband died eleven years ago.
218. [REDACTED] was one of the most unconditional non-judgemental people that came into my life and for the first time in my life, somebody that wasn't looking for something. I felt safe with [REDACTED] and he gave me the opposite of what I'd had.
219. I had my first daughter in our first year of married life and for the first three or four years I was on cloud nine. I wasn't looking back and I didn't have any connections with

the social work beyond that. I was building relationships in a different level with my family. I had my own home, I had my first child and I had this lovely man in my life. My mum and everyone was happy for me. I had my daughters in 1982 and 1985.

220. We lived in Dumbarton for the first couple of years before moving to Hamilton. I had a lot of miscarriages and my first daughter was a twin so I had a bit trauma around pregnancies. Before we moved I took post-natal depression and that was my first real experience of recognising mental health. Things were quite difficult for about seven or eight months but what I didn't realise was that I hadn't grieved for [REDACTED]'s twin, who I lost when I was four months pregnant. That was my first period of poor mental health.
221. My sisters, one by one, all left home and went on to do their own things. That was a testimony to the fact that they couldn't live at home with what was going on. My relationships with my mum and dad, so long as I wasn't living with them, were good.
222. My mum died 25 years ago and my dad is now eighty-three. He's an old man, he is who he is and still needs to reconcile with his maker, with his life. I can't be responsible for him, he's not the nicest person in the world but he's still my dad. It is what it is.
223. After the birth of my second daughter life was pretty good for a few years. When my daughters were about eight and six, we were still in Hamilton, and I started some voluntary youth work with Who Cares Scotland and some voluntary work with [REDACTED]. I was now in my mid-twenties though, and financially, I needed to work and I needed to earn.
224. I did some courses with [REDACTED]. I started producing written material and I started to recognise that I wasn't thick. I then got work in a Children's Home and the ironic bit about all this was that I got a job as a house parent in two of the homes I was a resident in.
225. That was me working in the residential setting and I started getting the training. I was watching practices that weren't too distant from the practices I'd experienced and I hated that. I would challenge every manager. I was your worst nightmare if you were

a manager because if you were a manager and you were shit at it, I was going to challenge you on everything. The bit about the black bin bags was the biggest thing and that still happens today.

226. Travel warrants is another thing that horrifies me. You can't give the weans money nowadays because they might go off and buy beer with it. So what, that's their choice and they'll not get to where they want to be getting.
227. I was working in the care system and looking at people that were above me that were better educated than me, came from better backgrounds than me and proclaimed to be the experts in the field they were doing. I'm looking at them from the other side of the fence, and I can't tell them how I know this, but so many were just shit at their jobs. I had to do something about that, I had to go and get myself educated and get myself in a better position to change the system. That became my life challenge and I would say to this day it's still part of who I am.
228. I released something within me that no one else had ever done. Things didn't come easy for me and they didn't come quick and I was about thirty when I did my HNC in social care. I did my HNC course with two women who were house parents at Flemington House when I was there as a resident. They couldn't believe I was on that course. I actually did my placement in the Children's Unit at Flemington House, so I went back there, that was odd. After my HNC I went on to Jordanhill and completed a one year diploma in Person Centred Counselling.
229. Through those two women I reconnected with Neil Kelly my old social worker who I hadn't seen since I was eighteen. He was still a practicing social worker in Blantyre. I contacted him and we then accessed my records. Neil has since died.
230. I then had choices to make in my life. I either let things eat me up for the rest of my life and become that mentally unwell woman my mum became or I look at the good bits I've got and I work on them. I took that choice but it took me ten years of being a mum and a lot of pain to do that.

231. There's some resilience in me and I believe in the theories that they come from early childhood attachments. I had good secure attachments and a good moral compass in my early years and then people I met along the way were my scaffolding, they helped me rebuild that whole thing. I shouldn't have needed to spend ten years rebuilding my life though because my life was sitting there for me on a plate when I was seventeen. The system robbed me of that and they robbed me of my education. All because of an insignificant event.
232. However, I wouldn't have been working in the care system, I wouldn't have met my husband and I certainly wouldn't have my two girls and my granddaughters. So I do have to be grateful for lots of things that happened.
233. I did more training in my thirties and I ended up training to be a social worker. I've had a successful social work career and I'm very proud and grateful for that and proud of the person I've become. I have flaws and faults like anyone but on the whole I'm a good solid human being.

Impact

234. One of the other big things that my sister and I have reflected on was the lack of sibling contact. I remember asking to go to my sister's grave on her birthday and being denied because there wasn't any staff to take me.
235. I know it may be hard to believe but we all lived in the same house and we all have different lived experiences from different perceptions. I spent a lot of time between the ages of thirteen and sixteen, and beyond that, out of the house and I wasn't part of the family for huge chunks of time. My mum was traumatised by my absconding and being in care and I know now that my sisters had the belief then that I was that out of control teenager. They had no knowledge of trauma or abuse, and why would they, they were getting on with their lives around about the trauma, in a very dysfunctional but nonetheless family unit.

236. I do remember going home at the weekends and seeing my sisters getting on with their lives. It was as if I didn't exist, I just dotted in and out.
237. I can't remember exactly when it was but I was on home leave from Calder House on one occasion, I think in [REDACTED] 1978, and my uncle, [REDACTED], was visiting. I hadn't really been in his company and I didn't know he was coming but he was staying for the weekend. I remember having this real anger within me and I shared everything that happened to me with my boyfriend. He wanted me to go to the police and tell my mum and dad but I wouldn't. I didn't go into any detail, but he was the only person I had told anything to at that point other than the priest.
238. I was just so angry and I remember going into the bathroom cupboard and finding [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]'s name was on them [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. I put the [REDACTED] on my mums bedside cabinet thinking she would then know what I'd died with and there would be a message in that for her, that's how my head was working. I then collapsed and passed out in front of my boyfriend and I can remember my mum trying to make me sick but all my family did was phone Calder House and take me back there. I did end up in hospital for a couple of days.
239. Staff at Calder House did ask me then why I had taken an overdose and they asked if I'd fallen out with my boyfriend and if he'd done something to me. I did tell them my uncle was home and it was [REDACTED] I took so they could join the dots, something to that effect, but I don't recall having a conversation with another person about it after that. I cannot imagine, even in my inexperienced career as a residential worker before I qualified as a social worker, ever, not being able to join those dots. I don't know what happened with that information.
240. I think there was a psychiatrist involved in my treatment at the hospital. I do see that now looking back as an opportunity to recognise that I needed help. It is in my file so I know now that questions were asked about that but no follow up ever took place. All that happened was my home leave was cancelled so I didn't get to see my sisters for a few weeks because it traumatised them. It was always home leave that was removed

from me, there was never any work done on my sibling relationship and nobody ever talked to me about my sister that died.

241. I did take another overdose a few years after that one.
242. My first child was just a gift to me. I remember holding her in my arms the day she was born and thinking she was never going to experience what I had experienced in my life. As long as I had breath in my body she was never going to experience the same as me and from that day to this I have kept that promise for my two girls.
243. My experiences as a child massively impacted on me when I was in my twenties and early thirties. My mental health wasn't good then. I hadn't shared things with my husband, he knew I'd been in the care system, but he wasn't the kind of man to push and ask questions. He was the kind of man that if I had wanted him to know he would have listened, he would have been there.
244. I've had to do a lot of work in understanding my mum and dad's journey. To understand the trauma that I've suffered I have to understand why they never prevented it. I've now had the training and have the knowledge and skills that we develop, so personally and professionally I've been able to marry it all up. I know my mum and dad's trauma was huge and I would dare anybody that experienced the trauma they experienced in that short piece of their lives to have done anything differently with the skills that they had. For that there is a bit of forgiveness, absolutely for my mum, and in some degree for my dad.
245. I am grateful on one sense for everything that happened to me. All these things have been horrendous but to go back to the religious aspect, I do believe that everything was for a reason. I believe that the people who came into my life were all there for a reason and I then accidentally end up working in residential care. I do believe that was the right path for me.

246. I wanted to foster when my youngest daughter was about six but my husband didn't want that. I was angry at him for that and I recognise now, looking back, that I wanted to save someone from the care system, that's what I was wanting to do.
247. My husband didn't understand the world that I came from and there became quite a difference in our relationship about that time. He didn't see the need that I had and didn't want to bring up someone else's weans and I hated him for that. I wanted him to become the person that I was becoming. I wanted to save, I wanted to prevent and I wanted the system to be better. That was a big ask, I don't know how I thought I was going to do that.
248. Deacon John Lyons then came to our parish and he was the most flamboyant priest I had ever seen. His sermons were really connected. He had the kids singing and learning guitar, he had them playing football in the community and he visited weans at home. I saw that I needed to be part of that and I became part of the youth group. I then started to question things and I told Deacon Lyons about the priest that held the penknife to my tongue. For the first time I started telling my story.
249. Deacon Lyons offered to help me, to counsel me and I accepted his offer. The first starting point was to be honest with myself and speak to my husband. I did that and that was the start of my recovery. I had to break every section of me down to recover and I had to understand who I had become and who I wanted to become. That wasn't easy and I started drinking a lot but I still had the ability to put a face on it and to go to work every day and be a good mammy.
250. I then started to do the diploma in counselling at Jordanhill in Glasgow. Part of that course was to do an internal counselling of your own life and all of my story was put out there. I then had to build it all back up again. That was difficult time for me and I ended up taking another sequence of overdoses and ended up in hospital. My family thought I wasn't right in the head.
251. I just had not understood all the impact that was there and I hadn't processed it, I hadn't worked on it and I certainly hadn't made any repairing of myself.

252. Parallel to all of this I was still doing my courses and training and excelling in everything academically. I'm not a high academic but I always did enough to get by the courses. I think I realised that was denied of me, they stole those years from me.
253. That's the biggest thing that cannot be repaired, those fourteen years of lost education. That really upsets me because that has a massive impact on the rest of your life. Your pension, your ability to provide your weans with better lifestyles, money to do things that I didn't have and better jobs.
254. I've had trauma in my life and I've been able to bounce back. I know trauma comes and trauma goes and the impact is how you respond to that trauma and with the right people, good friends and family around you that helps you get over it. The majority of the people in the care system aren't as lucky as that.
255. I went into the care system to work, not knowing where my career was going to take me. I remember when I got my first managers job I thought there was no way I could be a manager because I was so sick of the poor managers that were managing weans' lives. I then saw that I had to stop moaning and complaining and become one to help change. That was kind of what happened over the next 25 years of my career.
256. In total I worked for 30 years in the care system and I believe I probably wouldn't have worked in the care system had I not been in the care system. I believe I would have become a nurse.
257. I could sit at a table with twenty people around it and chair a child protection case conference. I wouldn't be afraid and you wouldn't know there was a nerve in me but if I walked into a social setting with the same people I would struggle with that. I'd struggle with how people would be thinking I looked. My self-esteem and my confidence in my personal life doesn't match my professional life. The two are very different and still are to this day.

258. In a safe setting with a group of good close friends I could be fine but the older I'm becoming the more insular and reluctant I'm becoming. My husband and I didn't live together for the last seven or eight years. We were still best friends and I still loved him and he loved me. I held him when he died, we just didn't live together. He pushed me in the direction of all the things I've achieved today and he was my safe man.
259. The impact has been huge, particularly in my twenties and early thirties. I had several attempted suicides, I had periods of poor mental health when I couldn't cope. That then impacted on my weans when they were younger. They had no context to my emotional state, they didn't understand. It's only now that they're in their thirties and forties that they understand that I had to deal with my trauma.
260. In my early years as a mum I scrutinised everything and one of the biggest impacts in my life was the impact it had on my weans. They were never allowed to live a normal life, I never allowed them to go to people's houses, I never allowed them to stay over and I never let them go on school trips, without heavy scrutiny. I was just so protective towards them because I knew how much abuse there was out there and how much potential there was for it.

Treatment/support

261. In adult life I did attend a psychiatrist for a while and I spoke a lot about my background and my trauma. The counselling diploma at Jordanhill was also very good for me. It did take about two years' worth of real work and that ended with me and my husband renewing our ten year wedding anniversary.
262. I have done a lot of abuse recovery and I've done a lot of reflecting and being taken back to certain memories, so it's not just me recalling memories I've actually worked on all of this. It's hard to believe I have all these memories but it's because I've been working on it for so many years. Informing my narrative if that makes sense.

Records

263. As I have said I contacted Neil Kelly and he helped me access my records. I wanted him to be there when I got them and my sister also went with me.
264. At that time they didn't give you redacted copies, you had to go into the office and the staff brought the files to you. We could have spent time in the office looking at my files but it was overwhelming for me because there were all these files. I just couldn't go through them all and felt I didn't need to. What we did though was Neil Kelly arranged to bring them to me and he came to my house, met my husband and I was then given the opportunity to talk to him about all the things I wanted him to know.
265. I will give Neil Kelly his dues as he took it on the chin and admitted his wrongs and told me there was no trauma based informed practice at that time, there was no training and he didn't understand how to work with trauma. I did ask him direct questions, I needed to as part of my recovery and I asked him if he knew I was abused and he had thought it was my dad, he didn't know it was my uncle. It then all made sense to him, he had all the bits but just hadn't put them all together. He admitted that and I do have a lot of respect for him for doing that. The thing is, if he knew that, lots of other people knew that they just hadn't asked the questions.
266. I don't care if that was the seventies and that the training was different from what it is now with all the trauma informed practice we do, common sense would have told you that if you have that knowledge about somebody's life then you do something about it. Neil Kelly sat in my house and watched my dad verbally abuse me, then walked out and left me there. That was all wrong and I was assaulted time after time by my dad.
267. In many senses having that opportunity to go over my records with Neil Kelly and to speak with him gave me the freedom to let go of it all.
268. I do intend looking at my records further and I will be accessing them again. I've got a plan for that. I want to do it, but not until I've finished providing my statement for the

Inquiry. I don't want anybody else's perception of my life to tarnish what I'm telling the Inquiry.

Lessons to be Learned

269. I felt Mrs Vernon at Calder House was the only person that cared about me when I was there. I think she was helpless though. I might be wrong but I think a lot of the staff there were ex-prison officers and they ran the place like a prison. I don't know her background but she felt different to that, she was a warmer person.
270. The only part of my family that was dysfunctional was the part that I lived in. The social work didn't ever explore me living with other family members and I know that because I spoke to all my auntie's years later and I discovered three of my aunties had come forward and asked for me to go and live with them. That's when I was at Calder House and I never knew that at the time. I know now that the social work said no because my dad wouldn't give them permission. I don't think he could have accepted me going to live with another family member because he would have seen that as a failure to his manly obligations as a dad. If I'm seen as outwith parental control you'd think that would have made the decision easy for the social work to explain.
271. All my mum's sisters lived a lovely life with none of what we were experiencing so I could have had a completely different outcome had they pursued that. My sibling relationships would have been different as well. I always held a grudge against my auntie's and my granny for not taking me but I never knew all that until I was in my twenties.
272. I don't think the system is too far back to have done something about that. It might have been forty odd years ago but it's not that far back and it could have been very different.
273. One of the most significant points for me was the conversations I had with Neil Kelly when we were looking at my records. The understanding that the social work

department and the care staff knew and did nothing. That was painful for me and I think that still happens today, people miss things. That's not forgivable. I did tell my story, people just didn't listen to it.

274. From my experiences as a child in residential care and looking back now, I have seen different permutations in different units under different guises. I went to Edinburgh where I had no connections, we need to keep young people in their own communities. I didn't get to see my siblings either, I know there's been legislation changes recently where sibling contact has to be considered through care orders.

275. A lot of weans are on permanent orders and don't regularly go to Children's Hearings so how do we know that those kids are all being encouraged.

276. There's no investment in early intervention services and if you go beyond that to the people on the front line there's no appetite for it because people who have been in the system for a long time, like your social worker for twenty or thirty years, have seen it regurgitated so many times.

Hopes for the Inquiry

277. I have spent the last three or four years thinking about speaking to the Inquiry. I couldn't have done it when I was working because I just couldn't revisit it as a whole when I was working. The job we do means we have to soak up people's emotions and the pain and trauma that goes with it. I wasn't ready to look at it and I knew there could be the chance I'd miss the opportunity as time might run out.

278. To me this is all about righting the wrongs, it's not about money, I don't need the money, it's about making the changes that are required. I can't not hold the authority accountable.

279. I believe the people who strip searched me and held me down were abusive and I've been sexually abused in my life, I know what that feels like. That's not poor practice, it doesn't just equate to not understanding processes or the care system, it's abuse.
280. Making somebody fourteen or fifteen years old scrub a barn floor the size of a football pitch at two in the morning with a toothbrush, isn't good enough. Having people come into your room in the middle of the night and sexually abuse you and watching the lass in the bed across from you have a relationship with staff, which was also abuse, is just wrong.
281. I don't know how many people have told these stories to the police and if there are any Moorov connections with all of this but I hope me telling my story connects any loose threads. I hope it might help another human being.
282. I understand a huge part of this is about the Inquiry understanding what went on but I also think, from the other side of the fence, that the systems are still wrong. 'The Promise' will never happen, it will never embed itself in practice ever. Weans will always experience not being listened to if we continue to do more of the same and more of the same.
283. I do want to be clear that I don't think everything that happened to me was intentional, I think it was circumstantial. I also want to be clear that having been part of the care system for the last thirty odd years of my working life I do things differently today from how I did them thirty years ago.
284. It's important to keep development up and to attend training because there are always new ways of learning we are only in a trauma informed practice arena even though it's been around for a long time. I do think that social workers and other workers in the life of a child, are only now truly beginning to grasp what that means.
285. We can't fix it, there will always be the abuse of weans out there, there will always be people like my dad and my uncle, there will always be horrible people with ulterior motives and weans will always be harmed.

286. We have to fix that or prevent that where we can. I know through making decisions for weans in the 21st century that they are still not being listened to. You can put copies of as many 'Promises' as you like in front of me but I am still so sceptical of anything the government says it's going to do. They will not put their money where their mouth is and put resources into all the lovely, wonderful ideas.
287. I managed budgets and social work services, I saw weans coming through the door, there's no such thing as a child in need plan anymore. Social workers can't manage anymore.
288. I went to Shetland for a year [REDACTED] as part of a development group and we changed a lot of things it was fantastic.
289. Money keeps getting thrown at the wrong people and the wrong things. A basic grade social worker or a residential worker needs to be asked. I spent the last five or six years of my working life working in the front line. I went back consciously to being a practice leader and not a service manager so that I could manage the team and not the strategy because the strategies are not working.
290. I'm a safeguarder now as well and I'm working predominantly with children whose parents came through the care system. When I meet those children I can tell in the first five minutes whether or not that wean's going to remain at home. It's all down to what's been invested in that family, these families are coming to our attention late in the day or not at all until something big happens; the wean's harmed or something big is going on.
291. Those parents are the product of the care system and having left it they are very clearly attracted to self-minded vulnerable people. They will never be able to parent their weans so you can write the script right now that a high percentage of weans leaving the care system today, you will in five or ten years, be removing their children and doing the same all over again. Sadly, I'm into my third generation of watching weans

coming through. That will continue to happen if we don't understand what's required in the front line.

292. I review work my friend does in private foster care and I know from my knowledge and experience of the work they do that if we could give to a family what they give to their foster carers there would be no kids coming into care. The model they use is to identify vulnerability, then target and build resistance, before you know it you then have a family that can cope.
293. If you want to see a reflection of what 'The Promise' should look like you should look at some of the private foster careers, who are better supported than local authority foster carers. They are better informed and trained to the highest level in trauma informed practice. They understand what it is they are working with in young people.
294. We in the front line in local authority don't have the resources to give to foster carers yet the first choice for babies in Scotland is to go to local authority foster carers. It's only as a last choice because of the complexity of the child's needs or because of the lack of placements that a child will go to private foster care.
295. There are very few weans in the local authority foster care system over the age of twelve, most of them are in residential settings. I'm not saying that's the worst scenario for them but for a lot of them it is. We need to put more energy into twelve pluses going into foster care. My life might have been different had somebody found me a foster home, that's what my auntie would have provided me with, and nobody ever considered that. There's no investment in our local authority foster carers and there's no investment in our residential units and skilling them up. These kids need the right care, the right approach and the right skill base to be able to work and the local authorities don't provide that.
296. In the private fostering system carers are still caring for kids under the absolute essence of 'The Promise' of 2022 and 2023 and continuing care. I worked in Highland Council and out of seventy-six children leaving the care system during a five year period only five remained in continuum care. Some couldn't be tracked, some were in

homeless accommodation and some were in prison or mental institutions. I don't need to tell you what that adds up to.

297. All foster carers come into this for the exact same intention, to care for a child who can't be cared for at home, but when they're not getting the resources or support to care for the complex wean, they give up. I've seen six and seven year olds in residential units because the foster carers couldn't care for them.
298. I think that in local authority they need to keep the social work budget totally separate and they need to protect it. They're cutting the budgets rather than increasing them and they know we can't do it with what we've got, so how can we do it with less.
299. I've worked across six or seven local authorities in the last twenty years and they get minimum resources for training. The system is still very broken. I think that because we are now recognising abuse and we are now aware of what weans are being exposed to, it's made the system more complex than it ever was when I was in it.
300. I've just told my life story and I would have liked to have said that I'm satisfied no other child would experience what I did, but sadly almost all of what I've told has the potential to happen to any child that comes into the care system or needs protective services.
301. I needed someone to understand the trauma for my family and the impact of that trauma. I needed my mum and dad to be skilled to be able to understand it and we are not skilling these families with their trauma.
302. There's no equality to services and financial investment, there's no rationale behind the lack of support that goes into families, so much is still wrong about the system. I could go on all day giving live examples of what I still see today that's wrong.
303. Is it any wonder that I'm cynical about glossy 'The Promise' documents? I can remember, four years ago, getting very excited about it because of the newness of it all and I remember going to training sessions with social workers. The year before last, before I retired, half the social workers I met didn't know what 'The Promise' meant.

304. They hadn't had enough training by the local authority. I can walk into a private organisation and all their paperwork has been redone to reflect what 'The Promise' expects, what 'The Promise' should look like. It's a lovely idea and if it comes to fruition in my lifetime then my work really will be done. However, I won't stop singing from my pulpit about how it's not right, the whole system is broken.
305. There's no wean that I know, unless there's been a formal psychological assessment and diagnosis of their behaviour, that is beyond repair with all the right nurturing, the right skills, patience and resources. Every child should be given the right to that.
306. If we are going to learn from this Inquiry we need to learn the basics of the first steps to supporting families in their own community. You can't keep weans at home with no money to pay for electricity and no warm house to bring them up in.
307. I don't see some of the young people today getting any more than I got when I left care. There's no assessment of them and no consistent service provided to them. The local authority will say to them that they can get a service but ask what it is they want. How do young people who have experienced what I experienced know what they want at seventeen or eighteen. They should have someone continually assessing their needs and responding to those needs. They should have a team around them.
308. The mental health services also need to take accountability. The CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) is broken and the whole collectiveness of the people who care for children before their 18th birthday don't exist after their 18th birthday unless you're fortunate enough to have a private service like a foster agency.
309. 'The Promise' will not succeed through care and aftercare. The weans are just going round in circles the way I did so nothing's changed. Offering a young person a continuum care theoretically doesn't marry up to the ability of the local authority to provide that.

- 310. Proactive early intervention, matching to right placement, thinking outside the box, skilling foster carers, I don't think there's any one aspect from the beginning to end with care, that's right. You will find pockets that are right and young people who experienced good care in some local authority placements. On the whole my experience to date is that social workers on the front line are covering the gaps where nobody else is able to.

- 311. There's no holistic approach to a young person, there may be a lovely report saying all the right things under the GIRFEC (Get It Right For Every Child) headings that should be happening but when it's all whittled down, on the whole, we're not doing it.

Other information

- 312. 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  :
KJX
Dated 2/4/2024