

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FZM

Support person present: Yes.

1. My name is FZM and I'm known as FZM. My date of birth is 1946. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Background

2. I'm not sure when I became a foster carer. I don't know the year, but I think probably the late 1980s, but it could be early 1990s. I fostered alongside my late wife, FZK.
3. I'm not sure how long we fostered for. We did it for a few years and we had a few kids. We had one girl called for years and she was with us the longest.
4. When we started to foster kids we had our own two children called and . My son had a partner at the time and he was back and forward from our house. He might have left the house when we first started fostering. My daughter still lived at home with us. I think my daughter was high school age when we started fostering.

### *Becoming a Foster Carer*

5. My wife worked at a knitwear factory and she was made redundant. There was a couple of carers locally that we knew and they said to us why not try fostering? So that's what we did. I was working full-time in what was called light engineering in gear cutting and making pulleys. When my wife lost her job, I was working full time, Monday

to Friday and I worked late on a Tuesday and Thursday night to half past seven, a Saturday morning for a half-day and six hours on a Sunday afternoon. I was busy. I did that over-time so we could go on a holiday now and again, but not abroad as we couldn't afford that. We went to stay in caravans in caravan parks.

6. Later on I was made redundant from that and then I got a job with Securicor making deliveries. It didn't suit me as I preferred factory work. I had to give it up as I was too hyper and if I didn't get to a place on time to make a delivery it got to me. After that job I retired through ill health.

### *Training*

7. We got in contact with the people that the local carers told us to contact in social work in Haddington. We did our training in Haddington. There was a group of four couples and we would sit and discuss different things. When we passed our training we had a meeting every month or so in Haddington to discuss our situations in our own houses. Every couple told a story about the kids they had and what was happening. That was how it was done, sharing each other's stories about what the kids were up to and things like that.
8. Our own social worker was called Liz Coleridge. The couples all had social workers and maybe Liz had more than one couple. I don't think there was a lot of social workers there at the training, maybe just a couple of them.
9. The meetings might have been for an hour or a couple of hours. We just sat and chatted about different things and what you could do and what you couldn't do. I don't remember them telling us what we could and couldn't do in the training. I think a lot of it was common sense. When we had the kids in the house, it was a learning process and you learned something all the time about looking after them. You learned not to shout at them all the time.
10. When I was at school myself, your parents or their friends would say if you didn't behave yourself you're going to go the jaggy jersey club or the jaggy jersey home.

That was St Joseph's near where I lived. I had that in my mind when I was growing up that the kids that go there are bad, but they're not it's the upbringing they've had really. I've come to realise that through doing the fostering. It wasn't the kids to blame, it was the way they were brought up. That was something I learned. Now St Joseph's is called Pathways, I think.

11. I'm not quite sure if we were well prepared and trained before we started fostering. I think there were more things we could have been informed about, but you take more in as you go along and do the job. I said to my wife, [FZK] we'll treat this as a job, but it didn't work out like that. It was more than a job.
12. We had police checks on us before we started, but other than that we didn't need to have any qualifications. I think they did get references. I'm sure I did have two or three references. I can't remember how long the process took from making the application and having the first child placed with us. My wife did most of that side of things. She was the full-time carer and I gave her a hand when I came home.
13. After we started fostering we had a meeting every month or every two months in Haddington. I think Liz Coleridge was always at our meetings. She was very experienced and a good social worker. The meetings were mainly for us to share stories and get ideas from each other. I found them helpful and it was a good way of meeting other carers and we made friends with them.
14. I don't think there was any specific guidance on dealing with children who came from abusive backgrounds or had additional needs. If there was any guidance on child protection issues and having two parents present for certain things, I think it would be along the lines of keeping us safe and not being on our own and having two people there all the time.
15. There wasn't any special guidance on disciplining children. We did our own. If they misbehaved we'd ground them. At the start, when we got them, we didn't have a computer and then we all got them for the kids from the social work. We got training for that as well at a school on a Saturday morning to learn the basics. I liked it, but all

I could do really was send an email to my sister in Australia. The kids would use it for different things, but if they misbehaved they got banned from the computer. I can't remember social workers giving us any specific training on disciplining children. You just used common sense. Like my own kids, if they'd misbehaved they got grounded or they couldn't use the computer. When we stopped fostering the first thing social work asked for was the computer back.

16. I'm not sure about getting any written guidance from social work on do's and don'ts of fostering. I've got documents in the house saying we'd passed certain things for the fostering, but I don't know about anything else. We had contact numbers for the emergency duty team, so if something happened and the kids disappeared for a night or whatever we had emergency numbers to phone them. I think if we needed extra support we would phone Liz. She was our main contact. I didn't look at myself as being self employed as a carer or an employee of the council as I was still in a full-time job. My wife looked at herself as being in a full-time job doing the fostering.
17. You didn't know how long you were going to get the kids for, unless it was a specific thing. There was one time we got two toddlers, two wee boys, aged around two, and they were just getting ready for being adopted. We only had them for a fortnight. They were an absolute pleasure, but they were tiring as we had to take them to the swing parks and the rest of it. We had a wide range of children placed with us. That was a one-off thing with the two wee ones.
18. It was mostly kids of high school age that we had. I think that's just the way it worked out rather than us asking for older children. Later on, my wife preferred to get girls because she was better with the lasses as she understood more about them. They all had their challenges and we were happy with what we did for the kids and we did alright. I've seen a few of them since we looked after them.
19. When my wife took ill with cancer, that was when we decided to pack it in because she was ill. I think she first found out she was ill in 2002 and then started to have treatment. I'm not sure if that is when we stopped doing it.

### *Foster Care Arrangements*

20. We never had any more than two children at one time. The sleeping arrangement was that they would be in the room with the bunkbeds. My daughter says she shared her bedroom at the very start of the fostering and it was when my son [REDACTED] moved out that his room became available.
  
21. When it came to deciding what kind of children we would foster my wife took the lead. I felt that we had the support we needed from our social worker as Liz Coleridge was good. She was our social worker all the way through. I can't think of anything that could have been done better to prepare us for being foster carers. I think there's only so much you can prepare people for. In my opinion it's a learning process. I think they have to keep some information about the kids private, but I don't know if I'm right or wrong.

### *Financial Support*

22. I can't remember what financial support we were given for the children. My wife handled all of that. She did the accounts herself. Some carers got accountants to do them, but my wife did ours herself. I don't know if we were paid per child or if we got a monthly allowance as a carer. I think if you took two children you would end up with more money. I don't think we were given any guidance on how to spend that money. My wife will have dealt with all the financial side of things. When I got paid I handed her my wages and I just kept my pocket money back and she paid all the bills.
  
23. We probably got an extra allowance at Christmas for the kids, but I'm not sure on that as [REDACTED] dealt with it. I think the financial support we got was enough as it was a big help to us after she was made redundant. That's why I said to her we should treat it like a job, but it turned out to be more than a job. We got more delight from the bairns than the standard job and it wasn't like a normal everyday job, it was a part of life keeping them safe and on the right lines.

24. The longest placement we had was [REDACTED] She was just at the high school, Preston Lodge, when she came to us. I think she was with us for years.

*Foster Home Household*

25. We lived at [REDACTED] Prestonpans. There were three bedrooms. There was upstairs and downstairs. The downstairs was the kitchen, toilet, living room. Upstairs was three bedrooms and a landing. Me and my wife had one bedroom, the back bedroom had one set of bunk beds in it for the kids. Most of the time we didn't have two kids at one time in the same room. My daughter [REDACTED] says she had to share her room for a while, but then they moved into the other bedroom when [REDACTED] had left home.
26. I think someone from social work came out to check the house to see if it was suitable and if we needed anything additional. They probably supplied the bunk beds we used but I'm not sure. There wasn't any changes done to the house in preparation for children coming to stay with us. Later on we ended up getting locks placed on our bedroom door for obvious reasons and you find out kids have been in your room. My son [REDACTED] got one of his tops stolen by one of the laddies. After that we got locks put on the bedroom doors. Then the children would know that something had happened. You could say to them that they'd been in our room, but we couldn't really prove that they had been in our room.

*Children Fostered*

27. We had [REDACTED], [REDACTED] the two young boys for a fortnight, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and FZO [REDACTED] There was another lassie called [REDACTED] I wasn't related to any of the children we fostered.
28. I didn't have a lot of involvement in the day to day fostering as I was at my work.
29. It was East Lothian Council who placed the children and it was in Haddington we did our training. We never changed any child's name that came to stay with us.

*Placement Preparation*

30. The notice we got before a child was placed with us would depend. Sometimes it happened very quickly, depending on the situation. If something happened and the kid was in danger they would need to get into safety as quick as possible. We would get emergency placements. The notice we would get could be a day or less. We were allowed to say no if they wanted to place a child with us, it wasn't compulsory. It was up to us to make the decision. We weren't told to take them, we were asked to. I think there was specific criteria to match a child to. I think Liz Coleridge dealt with that. They would have meetings to say if a particular child was suitable for us or if the child wasn't suitable for us.
  
31. The children we fostered didn't come round to the house to meet us for a visit before they were placed with us. I don't remember meeting or chatting with any of their previous carers and we went on the information that Liz told us. The children we fostered were brought to the house and that was it. I don't remember any issues with a child settling in with us when they first arrived. It would have to be arranged for their arrival and they wouldn't just be dumped on us. I would be working when a child was brought to our house.
  
32. I'm not sure if we would get to see any of the child's records before they came to us or if we went on what Liz told us. My wife would have dealt with those things. I didn't do any paperwork. Liz would come and have a chat with us before a child came to us and she'd fill us in as much as she could. Liz always came to see us first and they weren't just dropped at your door. The child would have a certain amount of stuff with them. If they needed stuff later on the social work would have provided us with the funds to get them.
  
33. With our first placement, Liz didn't want the laddie to come to us because she didn't think we were experienced enough for him. They had a meeting and they all voted and we got him anyway. We had him a year and that was a boy called [REDACTED]. We weren't at the meeting, it was a meeting between the powers-that-be and the social work that

Liz was at. The children probably had their own social worker, but I don't know to be sure. It was Liz who told us she wasn't in favour of the placement.

34. █████ used to go to a special school in a taxi. I'm not sure what age he would be, but probably a teenager. I can't think what information we had about him before he was placed with us. We just got him and we did our best for a year. I think, generally we were told why a child was being placed with us and if there were problems in the family. I think they told us certain things, but they didn't tell us everything, but that's just my judgement. I think they would tell us if the child had been in care before. In an emergency situation we would be told why it was an emergency.
35. I think Liz would come to see us if I remember rightly. She was good and would keep us informed. I think we got enough information about a child. You get told certain things and used common sense to try to be as normal as possible like a normal family and treat them like their own kids. With █████ I never gave it a thought how long we would have him, but we knew when it was coming time for him to go as things were not working out right. It would have suited him better to go to another couple. I think the decision that it wasn't working out would be between us and Liz, the social worker. Then she would get back to the people she works for that to say that we had come to a decision.
36. We had a choice to say things were not working out as we weren't forced to keep a bairn if things weren't working. Liz dealt with that. We didn't need to ask for any additional help or support with █████ but if we did need anything Liz would sort it out. I don't remember why things were not working out with █████ other than we'd just come to the end of our shift with him and it was time for him to move on and he'd be better off with another couple.
37. In relation to the girl I am being asked about in this statement, FZO █████ she wasn't with us at the start of our fostering career. I can't remember when it was she came to stay with us, but we had a few kids before FZO █████ To me she wasn't with us for long at all because I can't remember anything about her or what she looked like. I can only



remember taking her to school one day. The rest of the children I can remember. I don't remember what year she came to us.

38. FZO has said in her statement at paragraph 59 that her records were passed to East Lothian social work before she came to us. She referred to information relating to her diagnosis and being a troubled kid. She goes on to mention she was depressed. I don't know if this was information given to us by social work before she came to us. Maybe my wife got it.

*Daily Routine and Sleeping Arrangements*

39. My wife dealt with the daily routine in the house as she was there and I was away at my work. I'd be out of the door early for my work and before the kids were up. I'd be home about tea time and we'd have our tea. At bed time, they'd just go to their bed whenever, and not too late. My wife got the younger children, such as the two toddler boys, ready for bed.

*Bed wetting.*

40. I don't remember any child having issues with bed wetting.

*Washing and Bathing*

41. We had a bathroom with a bath and that's where the kids washed themselves. I think there were specific times for baths. If they wanted to go in there to get themselves ready for bed then that's what they did. The bathroom had a lock on it.

*Clothes and Shoes*

42. I don't have any memory of buying toys or clothes for the children we cared for or whether they came with them. I think my wife would take them out to get things they needed. I'm not sure on that.

### *Mealtimes*

43. On the days I worked late, they would have all had their meals before I came home. My wife prepared all the meals. I think we all sat together for our tea on the days I didn't work late. It was easier to make tea for us to eat at the same time. We all had our meals in the kitchen at a dining table. The foster children could access food in the kitchen if they wanted to eat. They could help themselves to a snack.

### *Leisure Time*

44. In the evenings after tea time we might have sat and watched the telly with the kids or they might have gone to their room to do their own thing. I think we had a telly in our bedroom and there was one in the living room and my daughter had her own. The foster children could watch the telly in the living room and we were all watching the same thing. I can't really remember what else we did for leisure.
45. The older kids might go out with their pals. The older ones were allowed to go out. They had a certain time to be back in at. They got pocket money. I don't remember the kids being in any particular group activities like swimming or Brownies.
46. At weekends in the summer, social work would have barbeques down at Yellowcraigs. All the carers would go there with the kids. It wasn't every weekend, it was just now and again. The carers would have a blether and the bairns would play together. It was a good day.

### *Chores*

47. I imagine my wife would get the children to help with washing the dishes, but I don't know.

### *Trips and Holidays*

48. We went on caravan holidays. At holiday time the kids would go to another carer. We would go on holiday to get a break. That's what happened. One time we tried to take a foster boy called [REDACTED]. We were going to take him to Butlins in Ayr. On the morning we were leaving he decided he wasn't going. That created an emergency and he had to go to other foster parents while we went on holiday. We had the holiday all booked and we had to go.
49. [REDACTED] came to us from Pathways. He was at secondary school. He was a clever lad. I don't think he was with us for long. He had grandparents in Musselburgh and he used to go and stay with them at weekends or his sister in Fife. Other than that example, holiday times were for me and my wife to get a break.
50. I don't know if we got an allowance to take the foster children on holiday for breaks. My wife would have handled all that.

### *Schooling*

51. I can't remember if me and my wife went to parent's evenings at the foster children's schools. I can't remember sitting with the foster kids to help with their homework. I can't remember telling them to get their homework done, it was so long ago. I probably did tell them to get their homework done, but I can't be specific about it.
52. I think when foster children came to us that they continued to go the same school that they were already at. If they needed to get transport to get to school then that's what happened and they got a taxi to get to school and home. Social work paid for those taxis and made the arrangements.
53. I read in her statement that [REDACTED]<sup>FZO</sup> went to Dunbar Grammar School. That's one of the few things I remembered about her was taking her to school that one day when her taxi didn't show up. Maybe I was off work that day or I was on night shift. I thought she was going into school and she went through the gate and in. Seemingly, she was

going out of another gate or waiting until I was away. I wasn't aware of that at the time. I read in her statement that she was being bullied at school. I can't remember her saying anything about being bullied at school at the time. Maybe she said something to FZK

54. I didn't know FZO was skipping school and I don't remember she was being bullied. I thought she was going into school and it was later on when the powers that be let us know she wasn't at the school that's how we found out. The school would let the social work know and Liz Coleridge would tell my wife. Then my wife would let me know.

#### *Healthcare*

55. I don't know if the foster children got a health check before they were placed with us or after they were placed with us. I don't remember them getting a health check at all. My wife dealt with all that. I don't remember any child having a particular health issue that meant we had to take them to hospital.

#### *Christmas and Birthdays*

56. We got allowances for the children on their birthdays and at Christmas time too, I think. I don't know how much. My wife handled all of that. They did well on their birthdays and at Christmas time. They weren't forgotten about. We got them something too of course, not just the allowance from the social work. I can't say if they got a birthday cake as I don't know.
57. Christmas was good at home. I liked Christmas and I've always liked it at home with the family. My wife did most of the shopping and the decorations, but I helped her and with the cooking. Some of the foster kids would go to their own families or relatives at Christmas but if they wanted to have Christmas with us then that's what they did. It was up to them. They sat and had Christmas dinner with us if they stayed.

### *Discipline*

58. If a child did need disciplining it involved being grounded. They had to be back in the house by a certain time, but they would be out or they would come back home with the police. The police would come to the door with the kid and that's why they got grounded because of things like that. We were worried about their safety. They didn't realise if they were out late at night, what could happen. Or if they came in late or if they'd been in a pub and they shouldn't have been in a pub. I was always glad when I could hear their feet coming in the lobby and I knew they were fine. I found out lots of things like that and that's how the grounding came in.
59. Sometimes we would stop them using the computer for a wee while. The computer was in the living room. We didn't want it to be in the bedroom as we wouldn't know if they got on-line. We had a shot on it too when the kids were off it. It was my wife who was in charge of deciding if a child should be disciplined. It's impossible to say how often a child would be grounded as it depended on how often they did some mischief. How long they were grounded for depended on what they'd done and how serious it was.
60. We would sometimes lock the front door so they couldn't get out and we had the key. We were making sure they were grounded and they weren't going to sneak out. Its only natural the kids would have reacted to that. They might have a strop when we did things like that, but that's part of life.
61. Children were never physically punished. Not by us anyway.
62. If a child was punished by being grounded we weren't required to keep a record of it.

*Running away.*

63. I don't think they were grounded for running away. If they ran away for a while we'd sit and have a chat with them and let them know they were in danger. That's what we were worried about, something happening to them when they were away longer than necessary. If they were away for a night they shouldn't have been away, we would contact the police. We were anxious about them. We would phone social work first and if they couldn't find the child they would contact the police. If the child did stay out for a day or two longer than they should have, it was usually the police who brought them back.
64. At paragraph 84 of FZO's statement she says when she was with us *'I was running away a lot again ... we were staying in our boyfriends' parents' caravan in a garden and we were there over three or four days until Christmas morning when there was a knock on the door and it was the police. They picked me up and took me back.'* I don't remember that incident. I read about it in the statement, but I don't recall it. I don't recall her disappearing for a few days and having to call the police.
65. She goes on to say in her statement that she turned up at our house, with the police on Christmas Day and myself and FZK gave FZO her Christmas presents. *'I was given a bike, a Walkman with a cd and batteries and a mobile phone with a SIM and credit.'* I don't remember all that. FZO goes on to say *'I phoned my boyfriend and said I was on my way. I hopped on my bike with my music and I cycled all the way from the top of Prestonpans to Mayfield in Dalkeith. There was a blizzard, but I was determined. I turned up at my boyfriend's house and his dad put my bike straight in the boot of the car and drove me back.'* I don't remember any of that happening or having to speak to her.

*Relationship with Foster Children*

66. I got on well with all of the foster children. They used to call me FZM After she left us, one of the foster kids, said that we were like her real mum and dad. We

used to go and see her after she'd left us and take her out for lunch. Then she had a baby of her own. I had a good relationship with them all.

67. The children got affection and emotional support from us. One girl, [REDACTED] the day she came to us, her mum phoned. The phone was in the lobby and [REDACTED] went to answer the phone and came back through to us in tears. Her mum had just told her that she was going to Majorca that day for a holiday and her daughter had just gone into care. I said to her it's alright hen. I didn't think she should have phoned the lassie to tell her that. [REDACTED] needed some re-assurance. With things like that I'd try to do my best for them.

*Contact with Family (other than siblings)*

68. With my own children, I think my daughter's nose was out of joint a bit and so was [REDACTED]s. They got some of their stuff stolen. That annoyed them. [REDACTED] had his good top stolen by [REDACTED] who we were fostering. He ran out the door and [REDACTED] chased him and he climbed a tree and [REDACTED] was shouting at him to give him his top back. [REDACTED] had to throw the top to him. My daughter wasn't happy all the time as she didn't have her own space, but she didn't resent them in any way and got on well with them. There wasn't any bad feelings or animosity between my own kids and the children we had in care. There were some challenging times and there were some really good times too. It was definitely rewarding.
69. My own children didn't play a role in the care of the foster kids.
70. The foster children weren't treated differently from my own children. They were treated the same. If any of them did anything wrong they got grounded, and my own as well.
71. Most of the foster children had contact with their own parents or family members. Sometimes parents would come to the house to see their children. They were welcome. That would probably be pre-arranged and they couldn't just show up. The foster children's family could phone the house to speak to their kids when they wanted to. The kids were allowed to phone their parents if they wanted to. A lot of the foster

kids would go out at the weekend to their parents or a sister or brother's house. We wouldn't necessarily take them and some of them were old enough to make their own way there.

72. The kids' social workers would come to the house to do their job and see the kids themselves. That's the only time I would see those social workers. I would be in the same room when they came to see the kids, but if they wanted privacy and wanted to talk somewhere else they could. That wasn't a barrier. Sometimes their social workers would take them out to talk to them. Sometimes those social workers would speak to me to ask how the kids were getting on. I think they would also let me know how things were going in the foster child's family. I'm not sure if they said how long the kids would be with us for.

#### *Siblings*

73. We had the two wee boys who were brothers and they were the only siblings placed together with us.

#### *Visitors*

74. I can't say how often the children's social workers came to visit us. Our social worker, Liz Coleridge, came to visit us but I can't remember how often she came. She was in quite often. To me she was good at her job and experienced. I could just tell she was good, from the way I got on with her. I'm not sure if Liz would speak with the kids or if that was left to their own social worker. I don't think there were any unannounced social work visits. There weren't any inspections of the property.

#### *Review of Care/placement*

75. The whole time we were fostering we had meetings in Haddington with other carers to discuss our situations. I'm not sure if it was every month or every two months. They were helpful. I learned different things about other family situations and they learned from our experiences. I don't recall the social workers interrupting us to give us advice



on how to deal with a situation. We were learning from each other in those meeting and we learned more as we went along from our own experiences.

76. I can't remember going to any children's panels in relation to a child we fostered. When a child was removed from the placement with us we could give our opinion on what should happen to them, but we didn't have a say in what happened to them after they left us.
77. After they left us we often kept up to date with the kids themselves. Like with [REDACTED] we kept up to date with her and met her and her bairn and went to see her in her own house. I used to run into another foster girl, [REDACTED] at the place where she worked. If one of my friends would ask me who she was I would pretend she was my niece as I didn't want them to know her business. Two or three of the lasses we fostered came to my wife's funeral.
78. I don't think the children's views were always taken into account by social workers. The kids could express their feelings quite well themselves if they weren't happy with what the social worker did. Sometimes they felt they weren't being listened to. During a meeting in our house I could hear it. Maybe one of their parents would be there with the kid's social worker, our social worker, Liz Coleridge and us would sit in the living room. The kid would speak up and say if they weren't happy about something and make their feelings plain. I thought that was the right way and the right thing to do.
79. They weren't always being listened to. There was one girl, [REDACTED] who ran out of the house a couple of times because she felt she wasn't getting listened to. It's a difficult situation for a kid to be in, staying in a house with strangers, it must be difficult for them. I think it was the role of their own social worker to be listening more to them in those sorts of meetings. That's the feeling I got when [REDACTED] ran out upset. I think it was something to do with her own family or her dad. She used to fall out with her dad a lot. Her mum and dad had split up and that's why she was in care. I couldn't swear to that. She ended up with her own wee flat too.

80. We had a meeting in the house every so often to discuss things and the kids to say their piece. If a parent wanted to come along, or both of them, they could come along. Everyone would sit together and give their point of view.

*Records*

81. We weren't required to keep any written notes or records.

*Moving Placement*

82. When it came time for a child to leave us we were given notice. I couldn't give a time scale of the notice we were given. It's all decided before they leave. When you come to the end of the time with a child a procedure gets put in place. When it came to them leaving I would have a chat with them and when it came to packing up their clothes FZK would do that.
83. With regard to the two young boys we had, it was just for a fortnight when they were being prepared for adoption. They were a handful and had us tired, but they were good.
84. With some children we felt we'd gone as far as we could and sometimes things were not plain sailing. Another couple might suit them better. The decision on that would be a combination of our views and what the social worker thought. It wouldn't just be us. I don't know what other foster parents the child would be matched with as that was left to the social worker.
85. Some of them would be going into their own place, like [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] did and getting their own job. Their own social worker would be helping them with that. I don't know what choice they had with where they went to live. They came out of foster care altogether. I think that would be around the age of sixteen. I can't remember the exact age they were when they were with us.

### *Leaving the Care System*

86. The decision for the child to move on I think is made between foster parents and the social worker, maybe two social workers. I'm not sure. Also, I'm not sure about the child's view being taken into consideration when it came to them moving on from care.
87. I don't know if any of the children in our care had external emotional support like counselling. I can't remember any of them getting counselling. When it came to leaving the care system I don't know what support they got with going into further education or training. I think they got some financial support to get started. They didn't have the option of staying on with us when they were leaving care. Normally when they left us another kid would take their place. We maintained contact with some of them when they left care.
88. I don't think there is anything that could have been changed about my experience. Maybe they could have helped with more, but we learned a lot as we went along. That's the way it was for me. If a child, like FZO had a diagnosis that would probably have helped us if we'd been told about it. With her I can't remember anything about her, but it probably would have been a help to us. In general we would have benefitted if we'd been told the foster children had any educational or emotional needs.
89. If me or my wife had issues with our role as foster carers we could have spoken to Liz Coleridge about it.

### **Convictions**

90. I have not been convicted of any criminal offence.

### **Allegations of Abuse**

#### *Awareness of Abuse*

91. I was not aware of any behaviour that I would consider as abuse of foster children whilst in foster care with us.

*Reporting of Abuse*

92. If a child felt they had something to report they had access to their own social worker. They had the ability to contact them from the telephone in our house. There was no barrier to stop them speaking to their own social worker. They also had pocket money they could use to contact social work.

*Reporting to Police/Criminal Proceedings*

93. No report was made to police apart from a kid who had run away from the house. I've never had to take part in a police interview.
94. I have not been subject to any complaint dealt with by police or social work.

*Specific allegations that have been made to the Inquiry*

95. The only thing I remember about FZO came from something the Inquiry had said to me that made me think back. I remember taking her down to Dunbar Grammar because her taxi couldn't pick her up for some reason and she normally went to school by taxi. What I found out later, and we all found out, was I was letting her off at the gate and going away and she was coming back out of the school again. She was saying she was getting bullied at school. That's the only thing I remember. I can't really remember her staying with me. I can't remember what she looked like. She was at the high school so she was maybe thirteen or fourteen, but I'm not sure.
96. FZO has said in her statement at paragraph 80, '*Angela McKay was my social worker at that time. She was hideous.*' I vaguely remember Angela McKay. She was quite flamboyant, with colourful clothes that she wore. I didn't have a lot of interaction with her. Maybe FZK did, but I didn't. I don't know if I came across Angela McKay when FZO was placed with her as I can't remember FZO's time with us or if I

came across her with the other foster kids. A lot of the social workers would have a do now and again in a hotel and the carers and social workers would all be there to meet up and talk about things. I may have met her at a couple of them and that would be it.

97. With regard to her relationship with her foster parents, FZO has said in her statement at paragraph 81 FZK and FZM were very short-fused, especially FZK. My wife had a wee bit of a short fuse, but it was for their own good I think. Now and again you would shout at a bairn and then a wee while later you would regret it, because maybe they got scared when you shouted at them. FZO stated that we were both short-fused. I could have shouted at them a couple of times. Later on, after it, I would think I shouldn't have shouted, because the bairn would have got a bit feared. I wouldn't say I was short-fused, the opposite actually. I might have shouted at them if they'd stayed out all night or a couple of nights. I would be annoyed at that and tried to let them know they'd been in danger. That's probably what I've done. I can't remember but that would be the kind of thing, if I shouted. I wouldn't swear at them, no way.
98. FZO goes on to say in her statement at paragraph 81 *'I don't think they knew about my diagnosis, because I would have been treated a bit differently.'* I can't remember anything about her. I certainly can't think if she had a certain diagnosis or if I knew about it. I don't think so. She goes on to say *'there were sweets that went missing and although I'd stolen things in the past I hadn't taken them. I remember FZK accusing me, but it was actually the girl who I shared a room with.'* I can't remember her sharing a room with anybody. The only thing I know about the sweets is what I've read in the statement. I can only think if there was a fall-out over sweets I wasn't there and I was at my work. I can't recall it at all. I think there would be sweets in the kitchen. It was around Christmas time and we used to buy the big tins of sweets.
99. FZO goes on to say in her statement at paragraph 82 *'I started to kick about with another girl in Dunbar who was also in foster care. We hung around in Haddington and the other girl would go to visit her mum and take me with her. There were drug users and addicts in the house. I wasn't given anything though, there was no heroin given to me or anything like that. I was not wise to drugs, but I was being introduced*

*to them by this girl taking me to the house. Her foster parents said that I was a bad influence and I wasn't to go near her, when actually she was the one taking me to the house and she taught me to shoplift. When I went back to my foster parents they were having a go at me because I was a bad influence. FZK had spoken to the other girl's foster parents who were saying that I was to blame. ...they were saying I was a bad influence and I was sensing that bad energy again that I was a bad influence and a bad kid.' I don't remember any of that at all. I don't remember the other girl who was staying with us in the house at the same time as FZO*

100. FZO goes on to talk about leaving foster care in her statement at paragraph 87 '*I think I was only there for a matter of weeks after Christmas and then I ended up at Pathways Resource Centre. I don't know why I was moved, but the social work placed me. Angela McKay took me there. I think they just needed me to go somewhere that was better equipped for me.*' I don't remember anything about the reasons for FZO leaving us. It makes me think that she wasn't with us for long, because the other girls and boys we had I can remember somethings that happened with them, but FZO is a blank.

101. I don't remember anything about FZO's demeanour or her personality when she was with us.

### **Helping the Inquiry**

102. I think they should listen more to what they're saying. Give them a voice. A lot of adults get together and maybe there's a couple of kids. I remember one of our foster girls, ran out of the room saying 'they're not listening to me'. I feel they're not getting listened to all of the time. It could be better that way. If something could be done about that and have a better procedure to give them a voice.

103. Matching certain children to specific foster parents is a hard one. I'm not sure what can be done to make it better. When a kid comes to your house and you don't know each other, the only way you're going to get to know each other is to wait awhile and

you'll find out. You learn something all the time. You'll be told certain things about them, but you've got to find out for yourself. It's a learning process. You've got to listen to people more.

**Other information**

- 104. I'm proud of what we did as foster parents and we did a pretty good job. We did our best and I'm quite happy with what we did to help kids in any way we could. It started out as a job for us, but it was more than a job and we got enjoyment out of it.
  
- 105. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed.....  .....

Dated..... 13/5/22 .....