

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

**Alexander MCLEAN**

Support person present: No

1. My name is Alexander McLean. When I was in care I was usually referred to as Sandy, but as I have got older people started to call me Alex. My date of birth is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 1983. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.















### Life before going into care

2. I was born in Stranraer. My mum's name was [REDACTED] and my dad's name was [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]
3. My dad was a very abusive man, he was an alcoholic. That's why [REDACTED] in and out of the care system from when I was three years old until I was sixteen years old.
4. My first memory of when I went into the care system, when I was three years old, when I was at Windsor Lodge.

## Windsor Lodge Children's home, Near Newton Stewart 1986

- Secondary Institutions - to be published later
5. 
  6. 
  7. 

## and Foster care 1987

8. After being in Windsor House I went to stay with a couple called  and  but I couldn't tell you their surname.  They adopted a girl but I can't remember her name.
9.  had a Christmas at  and  house. They were really lovely people.   
 n't at  and  house long before  moved again. They cried when  left. If they see  down the town they still remember 

**The [EPL-EPM] Family, [REDACTED] 1987**

10. When I went to the [EPL-EPM] I was four years old [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] at the [EPL-EPM] house.
11. I only remember Mr [EPL] s name, which was [EPL]. I can't remember Mrs [EPM] s name.

**Routine at The [EPL-EPM] Foster care**

*First day*

12. [REDACTED] was about twenty miles away from Stranraer. The house looked like a cottage. It had upstairs and downstairs. [REDACTED] only there very briefly before [REDACTED] removed again.
13. The house was weird. I felt the [EPL-EPM] were involved in some kind of cult. I believe they were into witchcraft or something. There were weird feelings in that house. I know that might sound crazy but I am a strong believer in the paranormal.

*Mornings and bedtime*

14. I had my own room at the [EPL-EPM] house. When I went to bed at night the [EPL-EPM] would say goodnight and shut the door. I used to see a black figure in the corner.

*Mealtimes/Food*

15. They used to force us to eat things we didn't like. There were these white beans, I think they were called butterbeans, and I didn't like them. They forced me to eat them. I was told I better eat them or I would get a slapped hand or something like that. I forced them down even though I didn't like them.

*Schooling*

16. I wasn't old enough to go to school when I was at the [EPL-EPM] [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] I was on the farm with [EPL] [REDACTED].

*Religious instruction*

17. I don't remember the [EPL-EPM] being religious or taking us to church.

*Work*

18. They had a pen out the back with geese and chickens. I used to feed them in the morning but I was too young to do any heavy lifting or anything like that.
19. We did have to go out in the morning to milk the cows. I got trapped in a pen with a bull, when I was four years old. I can't remember how I got in the bull's pen. Luckily the bull didn't do anything but I could have been killed.

*Review of care*

20. I remember my social worker at that time. His name was John Small. He used to work as the Reporter to the Children's Panel as well. He was based in Stranraer. He is retired now.
21. [REDACTED] saw him a couple of times at the [EPL-EPM]. He came to the farm. [REDACTED] made allegations of being hit and John Small removed [REDACTED] from there. I remember having red marks that I showed him. On the same day I showed him with teddy bears what the [EPL-EPM] adopted daughter had done to me and [REDACTED] removed straight away.

## Abuse at The [EPL-EPM] Foster care

22. The [EPL-EPM] did lift their hands to me but it was more the wife than [EPL]. She would slap your bum or your hand, but she would do it aggressively. It wasn't a light tap like you would give a child. It happened more than once.
23. I fell in a ditch at the [EPL-EPM] farm. I was four years old and didn't know what a ditch was. I got hit by Mrs [EPM] for that. [EPL] was more of a soft man, he wasn't really physical but she was. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
24. The [EPL-EPM] adopted a girl. She told me to put my hand inside her. I was only four years old, I didn't know it was wrong. Obviously a four year old isn't going to know. I can't remember her name but I remember her face. I can't remember how old she was but she had pubic hair below. She was probably between fourteen and fifteen years old. She was old enough to know that what she was doing was wrong.
25. As I got older, I realised that she shouldn't have told me to do that. I think the social workers thought I would forget about that.
26. The [EPL-EPM] adopted daughter also abused [REDACTED]. She had sex with him, he told me about it years later. He would have been six or seven years old when that happened. She had long hair at the time, and she seemed tall to me.
27. The adopted daughter is now working as a carer in Stranraer, that's what I got told. I don't know if she is in child care, care of the elderly, or what. I told the social workers that years ago but they never did anything about it.

## Leaving The [EPL-EPM] foster placement

28. The social workers removed [REDACTED] from the [EPL-EPM] because of the abuse. I showed them with teddy bears what the adopted daughter had told me to do. The funny thing

is that my files mention [REDACTED] farm briefly but they don't mention that [REDACTED] removed from there because of abuse.

**EPQ-EZB foster placement, [REDACTED], Dumfries and Galloway 1987 to 1988**

29. [REDACTED] got moved to EPQ-EZB from EPL-EPM the same day I told the social workers about the abuse [REDACTED] suffering. [REDACTED] stayed with EPQ-EZB for roughly one year. EPQ-EZB didn't have any other children staying with them when [REDACTED] went to stay there.
30. EPQ-EZB were EZB and EPQ, but he was known as EPQ. I couldn't tell you the age of them but EPQ died a couple of years ago. As far as I know, EZB EZB is still in the Dumfries and Galloway area.
31. EPQ was a very moody man, he was not a nice man. EZB wasn't very nice either. She never hit [REDACTED] but she didn't come across as a nice person either. It was work for them, they were getting paid to look after [REDACTED] I'm not sure if I knew at the time they were getting paid, but it is in my records.
32. The house was like an old fashioned Victorian house. When you went in the front door, the stairs were right in front of you. On the right was where EPQ-EZB slept, [REDACTED] On the left hand side was the living room [REDACTED] The kitchen was at the back, they still cooked on a stove. EPQ-EZB farm was about a mile away from another farm. At that time, the road to the farm only went to the farm. There was nothing else apart from the fields.

## Routine at EPQ-EZB foster placement

### *First day*

33. EPQ and EZB forced [REDACTED] to call them mum and dad. [REDACTED] couldn't understand why but [REDACTED] did it because [REDACTED] told to. It's in my files that they were trying to adopt [REDACTED]. Luckily, that never happened.

### *Mornings and bedtime*

34. [REDACTED] up early in the mornings, about 5.00 a.m. Sometimes it was EZB [REDACTED] who would wake [REDACTED] up, sometimes it was EPQ [REDACTED]. It varied with them.
35. I would go up to the where the chickens were and feed them. The cows would just be lying there doing their own thing. [REDACTED] mostly on the farm helping at that time.

### *Mealtimes/Food*

36. We ate our meals in the kitchen. The food was the stuff you would see on a farm, they grew their own vegetables. They had their own potatoes and carrots. I remember eating sweet potatoes for the first time at EPQ-EZB [REDACTED].
37. I couldn't really say there was anything wrong with the food at EPQ-EZB [REDACTED]. I remember [REDACTED] got fed [REDACTED] breakfast, lunch, and tea. [REDACTED] maybe got a bit of toast at night.

### *Clothing/uniform*

38. [REDACTED] wore wellies and cords around the farm. [REDACTED] had a school uniform.

### *Leisure time*

39. [REDACTED] always working on the farm, EPQ-EZB [REDACTED] never took [REDACTED] anywhere like swimming, or things like that. It was always the same thing every morning, [REDACTED] had to feed the chickens, and do things like that. [REDACTED] never got to play, [REDACTED] just had to do what EPQ [REDACTED] told [REDACTED] to do.
40. The only interaction I had with children of my own age was either at school or at the Beavers or Cubs, I can't remember which one I was in. The only other leisure time I remember was if [REDACTED] went out with [REDACTED] mother or father when they visited. I can recall a toy chest with a couple of toy cars but I don't recall playing with them. When [REDACTED] got back from school [REDACTED] were either doing homework or chores on the farm.
41. I don't remember watching TV much. I remember watching E.T. but the only other time I remember being in the living room was when the police interviewed [REDACTED]

*Trips and holidays*

42. I know through my files that they did take [REDACTED] on holiday once, to Weymouth. They took [REDACTED] to stay with EPQ [REDACTED] family down there. They had children and EPQ [REDACTED] told us they were [REDACTED] cousins.

*Schooling*

43. [REDACTED] went to school in Moffat, just [REDACTED] miles away from the farm. I think it was called Moffat High School. It was a big building, it was for primary and secondary school children. I think it was from the age of five up to sixteen years old. I remember the lollipop lady would make [REDACTED] paper aeroplanes. EPQ-EZB [REDACTED] took [REDACTED] to school in their car, a red Panda.
44. I would say that I had learning difficulties at that time. I think it was from both the abuse at home and in care. I've got it in my records that I was fully dyslexic, even though I like to read a good book. I got mixed up with letters and numbers and I couldn't count



properly. I would have to use my fingers. People would come and they used to do tests on me as a child.

45. I had friends at school and I used to go and visit the janitor. At that time school was O.K. but I couldn't go and play with other children after school or have them round to play with me at the farm. I was told by both EPQ and EZB that [REDACTED] couldn't do that. [REDACTED] had to do farm work when [REDACTED] got home from school.

*Healthcare*

46. I was under the care of a psychiatrist later on as a child. I trusted her and told her about the abuse from EPQ-EZB. She told them that and I got a beating that night. I don't know if she is still a psychiatrist but she should have been fired for that. I trusted her as a child and I got a beating as a result.

*Religious instruction*

47. I don't remember EPQ-EZB being religious. I don't remember ever going to a church with them.

*Work*

48. [REDACTED] had to feed the chickens. It wasn't done as some kind of enjoyable thing [REDACTED] just had to do it and I didn't like being around the chickens.

*Birthdays and Christmas*

49. Although [REDACTED] at EPQ-EZB for about a year, I don't remember celebrating my birthday or Christmas there.

*Personal possessions*

50. I don't really recall getting any toys or things from EPQ-EZB .

*Visitors*

51. My mum used to come up and visit [REDACTED] So did my father, even though [REDACTED] didn't want that at the time. [REDACTED] would see [REDACTED] mum and dad on different days, although my mum was back and forward with my dad and the abuse. My mum was terrified of my dad. That's what people don't understand about domestic violence and people going back to it. For my mum it was because of fear.
52. Sometimes [REDACTED] would just see mum or dad in the farmhouse, sometimes they would take [REDACTED] in to Dumfries. They used to take [REDACTED] to the Wimpy in Dumfries for a burger and a blether but they never took [REDACTED] to a park, or swimming, or stuff like that. John Small the social worker was with us but he just observed.

*Review of care*

53. [REDACTED] would see the social workers when my mum or dad were coming up for access to [REDACTED] The social workers would bring [REDACTED] mum or dad to EPQ-EZB farm and take them back again. I feel that they were there to supervise the access with [REDACTED] mum or dad.

*Running away*

54. [REDACTED] too young to run away from EPQ-EZB house. Also, because the abuse started [REDACTED] at such a young age, [REDACTED] just thought it was normal. [REDACTED] didn't know any different. It was only as I got older that I questioned it.

*Discipline*

55. EPQ [REDACTED] had two dogs. He had a boxer called Bonnie that stayed in the house. He had another dog that stayed in the barn to protect the barn. I can remember EPQ [REDACTED] taking me down to feed the dog in the barn and I put my hand out to pet it. EPQ [REDACTED] slapped me right round the face. I started crying, I couldn't understand why he had hit me for going to clap the dog. He tried to explain that the dog was there to protect the barn, but he shouldn't have slapped my face.

**Abuse at** EPQ-EZB [REDACTED]

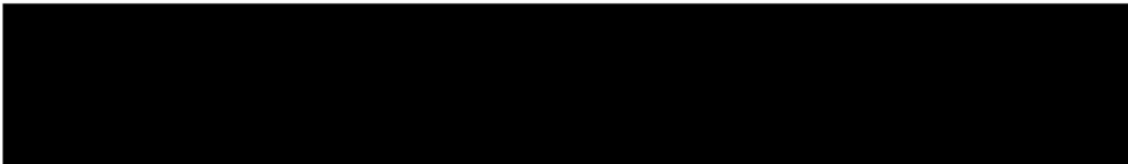
56. EPQ [REDACTED] was always hitting [REDACTED] EZB [REDACTED] never lifted a hand to [REDACTED] but EPQ [REDACTED] did. The last time EPQ [REDACTED] hit [REDACTED] they had visitors over. Because [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had to go to bed. [REDACTED] jumping up and down on the bed, [REDACTED] EPQ [REDACTED] came up the stairs in a rage and hit [REDACTED] with a slipper to a degree where the back of my legs, my backside, and my back, were all bruised. [REDACTED] It wasn't over [REDACTED] clothes, he hit [REDACTED] bare skin. I can prove that because it is mentioned in my files.
57. EPQ [REDACTED] was a very aggressive man, he was very moody. He trapped my fingers in the tractor door. [REDACTED] He was always frustrated about something and I think he just took it out on me. I don't think he should have fostered children. I heard through the grapevine that he abused other children.
58. I had a nightmare one night and I went through to EPQ [REDACTED] and EZB [REDACTED]'s room. I told EPQ [REDACTED] I had a nightmare and he told me to put my hand out. Then he hit my hand twice with a slipper and told me to get back to my bed.
59. The thing that makes me angry is EPQ-EZB [REDACTED] response to why [REDACTED] hit with a slipper. They said it was because [REDACTED] deserved it. I have got it in black and white in my records.

**Reporting of abuse at** [REDACTED]

60. Back in the 1980's kids might have got a pat on the bum or whatever but they didn't get battered, and [REDACTED] got battered black and blue. My mum saw it when she came up to visit the next day. [REDACTED] getting changed in the kitchen and she saw the marks. She swore, asking what that was. She said that she didn't hit [REDACTED], and she didn't expect them to hit [REDACTED].
61. John Small was still [REDACTED] social worker and he came up the same day. The police were involved as well. One was called P.C. Nish but I can't remember the names of the other ones. There were definitely Polaroid pictures taken of the bruises on me, [REDACTED] had to take [REDACTED] clothes off for [REDACTED] injuries to be photographed. [REDACTED] got removed from [REDACTED] the very next day.
62. [REDACTED] got examined by a doctor in Stranraer after that. I can remember a few medical examinations after leaving [REDACTED].
63. My mum had seen bruises on [REDACTED] before that. She had come to see [REDACTED] one day and took [REDACTED] to the toilet in [REDACTED] farmhouse. She reported that to the social workers as well but nothing was done about it.

**Leaving** [REDACTED]

64. Although I was happy about getting removed from [REDACTED] house, I was forced back to my father's house. He was a very abusive man. [REDACTED]
65. I was back at my dad's house from the age of about five until I was about seven years old. [REDACTED]



66. My dad was abusive. My dad choked me one time and I was bruised from one side of my neck to the other. I had to wear a polo neck jumper.
67. My dad got away with a lot of the abuse that he did. He was a smart man and when he would leave a bruise, he would keep [redacted] off school. He would tell [redacted] to tell the school that [redacted] unwell. [redacted] I spoke out about the abuse by my father and got removed to foster care. [redacted] [redacted] went to stay with [redacted].

**[redacted] foster care 1990**

68. [redacted] was a very caring woman. I am still in touch with her through social media. [redacted] only with [redacted] for about three weeks. When [redacted] stayed with [redacted], [redacted] went to Kirkcudbright Primary School. Then [redacted] lost a close friend and she couldn't cope. She didn't feel it would be fair [redacted] to stay when she couldn't cope so then [redacted] went to stay with another woman called [redacted].

**[redacted] (Surname unknown) foster care 1990**

69. [redacted] was a foster carer in Stranraer. I can't remember her surname, or her husband's name. She had a son too but I can't remember his name either. [redacted] [redacted] forced to go back to my dad's. [redacted] told the social workers [redacted] didn't want to go but the social workers forced [redacted].

**Return to parental care 1990**

70. Before [REDACTED] went back to stay with my dad, when I was seven years old, [REDACTED] went to stay with my mother for a couple of months. Then [REDACTED] forced back to my dad again. He said that my mum couldn't handle [REDACTED] My mum suffered from depression. Anyone who met my mother would know that she had been through the wars.
71. My dad stayed in a village called [REDACTED], about three miles outside Stranraer. They had a primary school in the village.
72. There were various Children's Panels that [REDACTED] had to go to. I have done some research and it says that a child should have a voice at a Children's Panel from the age of eight or nine years but [REDACTED] n't allowed to express [REDACTED] opinion. [REDACTED] sitting there, but [REDACTED] n't given any options about where [REDACTED] going. The adults decided where [REDACTED] went. My dad was a very intelligent man, he knew how to manipulate people.
73. My teacher Mrs Clanachan sat at Children's Panels and lied. She said I was doing well at school and I knew that I wasn't. I was very destructive at primary school. I couldn't focus on one thing long enough. They were doing these tests on me, getting me to move shapes and make cubes. It was Mr Higgins who used to do different tests with me. Mr Higgins was a teacher in the school. It is in my records that I was diagnosed as dyslexic at that time. They could see that I had behavioural problems. It is one of the contradictions that my lawyer has picked up on, that they were saying I was disruptive and at the same time saying that I was well behaved. I was no angel as a child, believe me.
74. When [REDACTED] forced back to [REDACTED] dad's house, when I was about eight or nine years old, before Gifford House, I was assigned a psychiatrist called Elaine Powell. I trusted her and told her what my dad had done to me. My dad was sitting outside in the waiting area and she called him in to speak to him. She told him everything I had said. I had to go back in and deny it but I got a hiding when I got home.
75. My dad threw me against a door when I was nine years old. He broke my arm in two places. I went to a hospital called the Garrick Hospital in Stranraer, which is no longer there. My doctor, Dr Balmer, examined my arm and said it was done with either a

punch or stick but the social work never did anything about it and I was still stuck at my dad's house. The social workers never really came out that often. I find it strange now. Things have changed since then.

76. Then when I was nine and a half years old, [REDACTED] removed from my dad's and [REDACTED] sent to Gifford House.

**Gifford House Children's Home, Castle Douglas, 1992 to 1993**

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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**Milton House, Stranraer 1993**

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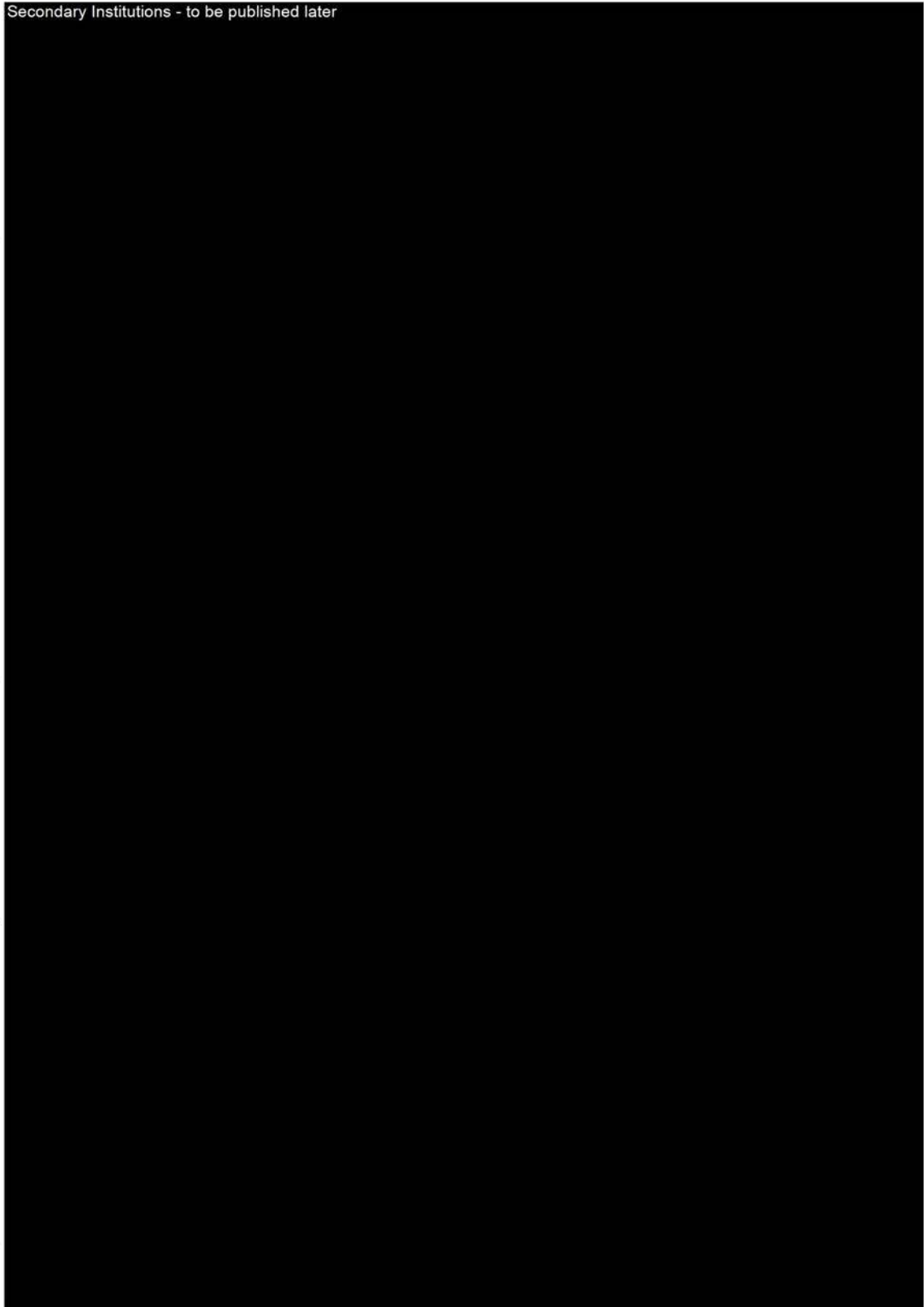
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**Hillside Residential School, Fife 1994 to 1998**

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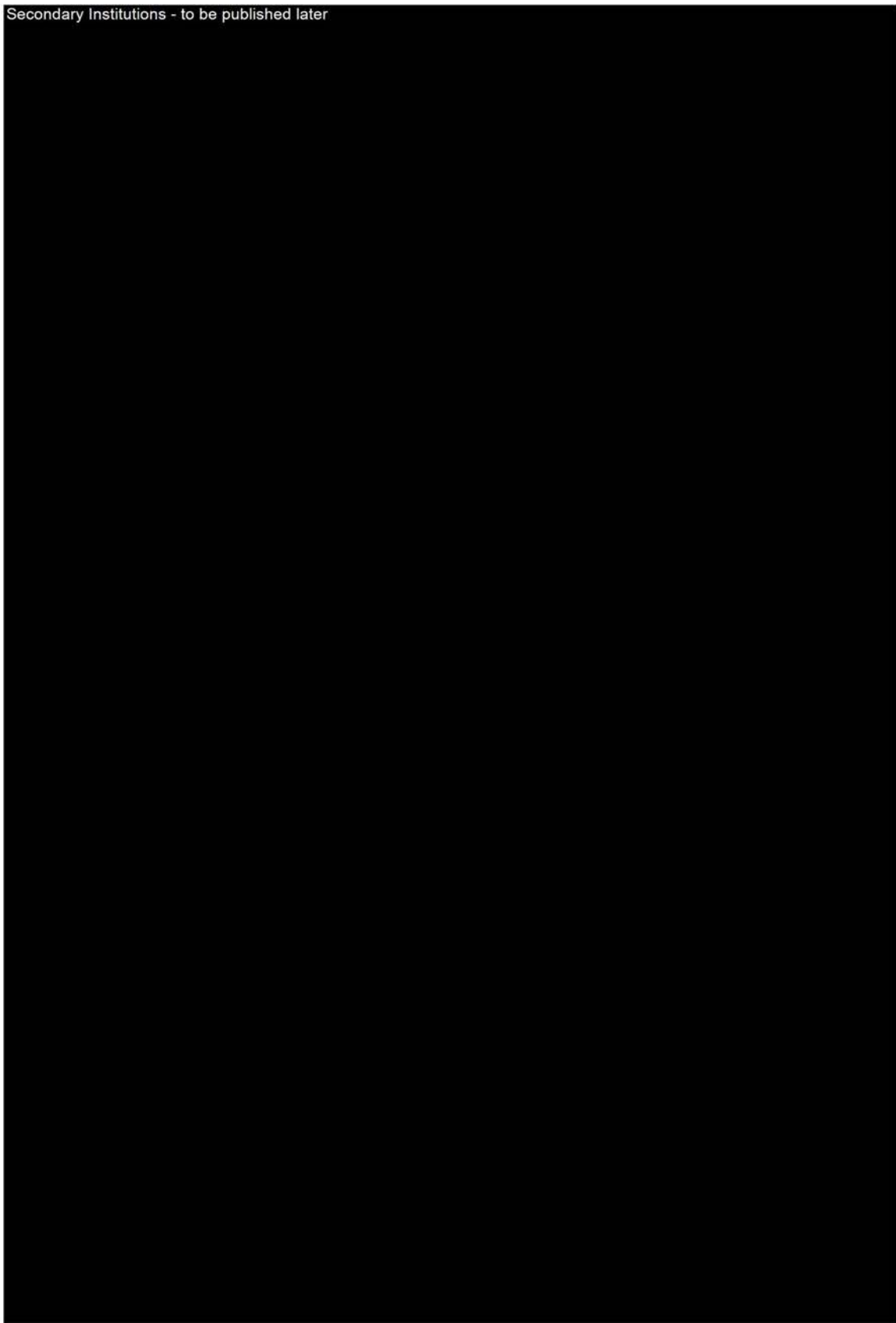
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**St Mary's Kenmure Boys' School, Bishopbriggs 1998**

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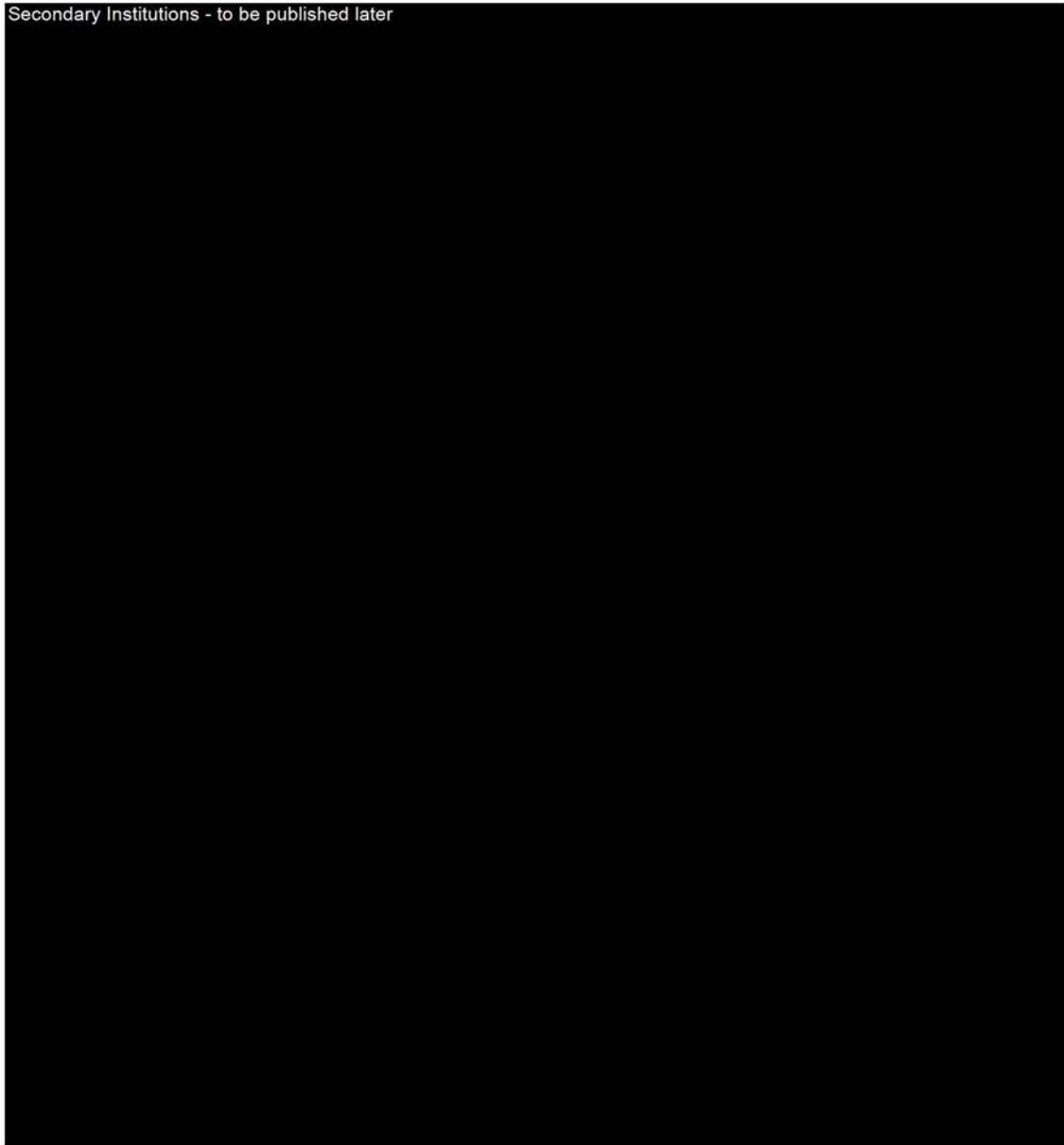
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**Moore House School, Bathgate 1998**

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**Geilsland School, Beith, Ayrshire 1998 to 1999**



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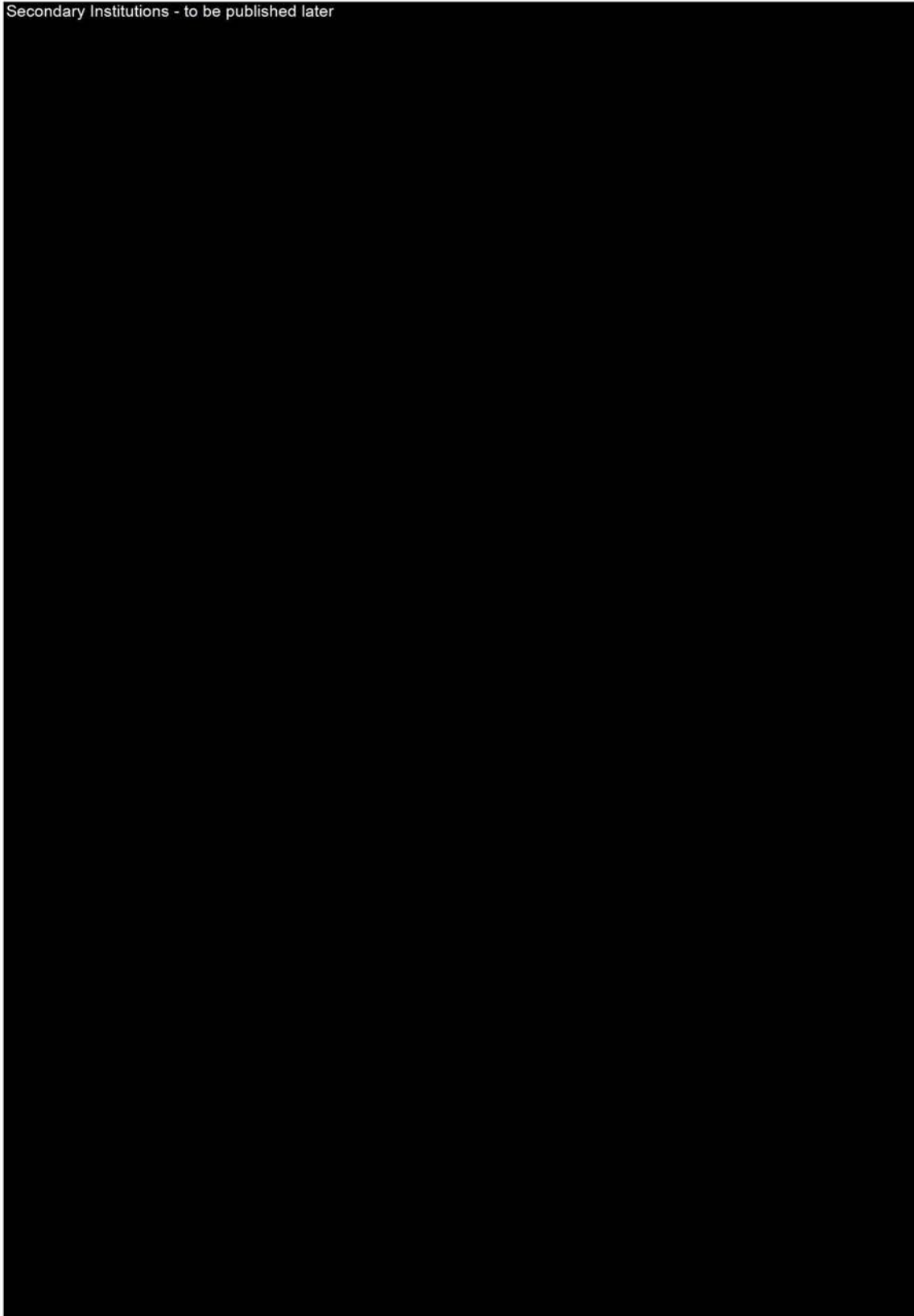
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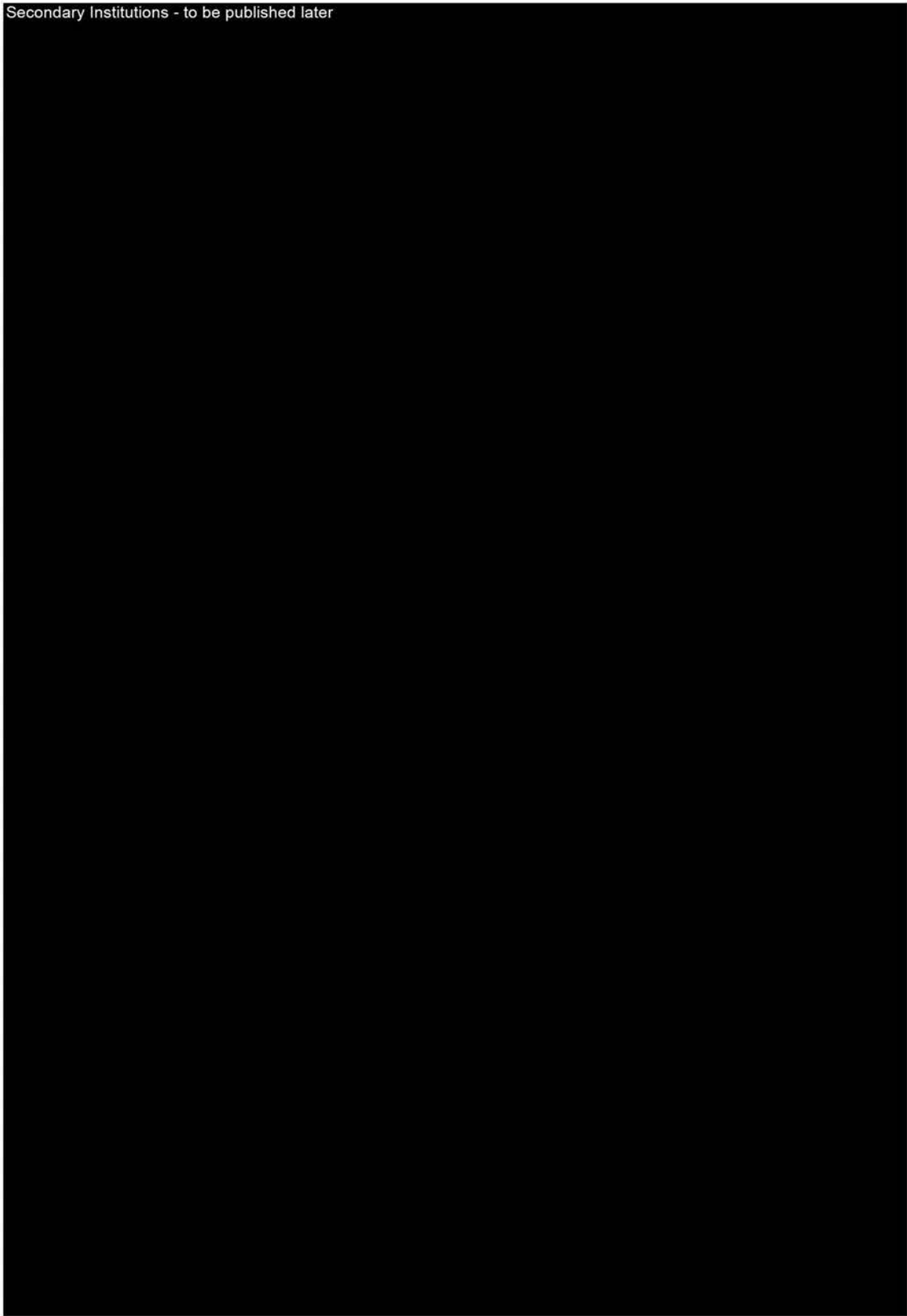
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**Life after being in care**

215. I got my first house when I was 17 years old but I wasn't ready for it. I didn't last because I wasn't taught how to cook and things like that. I was in and out of homeless units until I was 21 years old.

216. When I got out of the care system I was wild, I was no angel. I got in with the wrong crowd and did stupid things. I went to prison four times after I came out of the care system. When I hit 20 years old that was my turning point. I decided I wasn't going down the same route as my father, going in and out of prison. I had my first gay relationship when I was 21 years old. That didn't go very well so I moved down to Blackpool where I was playing the piano in restaurants. I met a new partner and moved to Germany.
217. I moved to Germany in 2004. I stayed in Germany for twelve years. I can speak perfect German. I worked in a supermarket and played piano in two different restaurants. After my relationship broke down, I spent time in London and Blackpool where I was again playing the piano in restaurants. When I moved back to Scotland I was playing in piano in a hotel up here. I think if I didn't play the piano, things could have worked out quite differently for me.
218. I don't play piano as well as I used to because I don't practice as much. I stopped working as a piano player because the money wasn't enough. I took on a better job offer. I was getting paid more working in big supermarkets than I was playing piano.
219. I [REDACTED] didn't turn to drugs like heroin and cocaine. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

### **Impact**

220. I have had problems with my emotions since being in care. I think you learn to live with it and deal with it but you never forget it. Some people are lucky because they can block things out but I can't.

221. I suffer from bad anxiety and I do have an alcohol problem but I do get help with it, I have cut my alcohol consumption right down. I used to drink seven days a week. Now, if I do drink, I might drink for two days but then I might leave it for a fortnight. I believe that my alcohol problem is related to my experiences in care. Luckily I never turned to drugs.
222. The social workers lied to me in the past, to cover their own tracks. One of them even said to me that my mum had cancer but she didn't. When my mum challenged it, the person who said that left. That's the thing about the social services, if you challenge them and you have the evidence, they leave. That happened a few times in my case. I look at the social workers as a cult. They don't help children, they do more damage to children.

### **Treatment/support**

223. I spent a lot of time playing the piano, making up my own music. That was my therapy, I never had any other help.
224. I have tried to contact people I was in care with on social media. The only person I have been able to contact is [REDACTED] I always wondered what happened to [REDACTED] and a lot of other boys. Normally everyone has got a Facebook account but I couldn't find them.
225. In certain ways I am glad I don't live where my family live. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Where I live now is nice and quiet and I get on with all my neighbours.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

226. I have not reported the abuse I suffered to the police or anyone. One of the main reasons I didn't make a report to the police is that nobody believed me about the abuse

back then, so no one was going to believe me now. Staff or social services get believed over the child. It should never have been that way but unfortunately that is still the way it is.

## Records

227. I asked to see to see my files when I came out of the care system. The files that Audrey Reid and David Drake showed me contained very little. I said to them that there was stuff missing from my file. They lied to me and told me that's all they had. They never told me I could apply to data protection for a copy of my files.
228. My social worker Audrey Reid and her manager, David Drake, said that was all that they had. When I spoke to Data Protection, they said the social workers had lied to me. The person I spoke to was called Neil Whiting and he told me that they had 1250 pages of records on me, which was more than I had been given by Audrey Reid and David Drake. This is what angers me, because the social workers are trying to cover up their own mistakes. The lawyer who is dealing with my claim against the social workers has said that she has seen a lot of cases like mine.
229. I have got all of my files now. The social work department told me a lot of lies. When I was seventeen years old they presented me with the files they had but I said it didn't add up because there was a lot of information missing. When I got my records and I saw that things like the abuse at the **EPL-EPM** foster care were missing I said to the social workers that they were trying to hide things from me.
230. From what I have read in my files I would say that about twenty per cent of that is the truth and eighty per cent is lies. It says that **██████████** n't well behaved at **EPQ-EZB** but **██████████** terrified of **EPQ** **██████████**. In my files it mentions that **EPQ-EZB** **██████████** admitted to hitting **EPQ** **██████████** is dead now.
231. Audrey Reid and David Drake told me I was too late to put in a claim for compensation. It was one of my support workers in adult life who told me I could apply to get my files.

Helen, my support worker, told me how to get my proper files because the social workers lied to me years ago. The files they presented to me years ago had virtually nothing in them. I challenged that and said there was virtually nothing in it. Helen told me to make the request via data protection and when I did that I got records that were 1250 pages long. My support worker also told me that I could submit a claim for compensation about the abuse that I suffered. I have a lawyer dealing with a claim now.

232. My lawyer is dealing with the historical abuse. She has read through my files and knows that social workers lie to cover their own tracks. She is going to check with Dumfries and Galloway police about [REDACTED] because when I tried two years ago they said they couldn't find any record of [REDACTED]. It's got to be somewhere because there are pictures and the police and John Small wrote things down when they removed me from [REDACTED].

### **Lessons to be learned**

233. I think there will always be someone who will get through the loopholes. Some of the people who abuse children don't have a criminal record and if you get a clear disclosure, nine times out of ten you could get a job working with children. They don't really look into anything else. The man who was sexually abusing children in Woodlands for over twenty years didn't have a criminal record. It took over twenty years to catch him out. There should be better police checks looking into people's backgrounds. I don't think places should be run by churches. A lot of sexual abuse comes from religion. It's not just priests, it's pastors and others.

### **Hope for the Inquiry**

234. I am grateful that the Inquiry is happening. Maybe other kids will come forward and something will happen and maybe the people who abuse children will be brought to

justice. I think if someone was to get a really proper sentence it would scare some of the others and stop them.

235. Secondary Institutions - to be published later  
[Redacted]

236. All I can hope for is for a bit of justice for kids who are in abused in the care system. I believe that kids who have been abused in the care system should get compensation. Regardless of where it may be, it will still be happening somewhere.

**Other information**

237. 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.....  
DocuSigned by:  
[Redacted]  
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Dated..... 09 March 2022 .....