

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

E~~K~~X

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is E~~K~~X but I prefer to be called E~~K~~X. My maiden name was E~~K~~X and I was known as E~~K~~X during my childhood and time in care. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1953. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I lived with my mother and siblings at [REDACTED] Douglas, Dundee. I had six brothers in total, four older and two younger than me. Our names in chronological order were [REDACTED] (eldest), [REDACTED] [REDACTED], me, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]
3. My mother was called [REDACTED] Her maiden name was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] My father was in the merchant navy so he was not at home very much. His name was [REDACTED] I was much closer to my father than my mother. He had always wanted a girl. I think that is why my mother hated me.
4. Whilst I was living at home with my mum I went to Douglas Primary School. Some of us including me then went to Powney Primary school. I had been to two primary schools by the age of six.
5. At home we were left to our own devices a lot. My mother and father fought a lot. My father drank. When we didn't have enough money to pay the bills, the electricity was switched off. In the winter we would bring the bed down to the living room. We would

all sleep in the bed with our coats on. We were not fed regularly. Meals were not guaranteed. Sometimes we would just get a piece and jam for dinner. To me that was just childhood. A lot of people lived like that. I remember my mother going away quite a lot.

6. I remember a "black maria" coming to the door. A "black maria" was what we used to call the police vans back then. I was taken to a children's shelter along with my siblings. It was late at night and dark outside. I can't remember if it was "winter dark" or "summer dark". I was six years old. I didn't know what was going on. There was no explanation from anyone. I don't remember there being any social workers there but I would imagine they would have been. I only remember the black maria and the police. It was quite scary
7. We didn't all go together to the same place. [REDACTED] went to somewhere in Aberdeen. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] me and my younger brothers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] all went to Laurel Bank Children's shelter.

Laurel Bank Children's shelter

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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34. We were driven for what seemed like ages in a car. It felt like we were going to the other side of the planet but it was only to Cupar in Fife. It was me and my two brothers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

First foster placement, Cupar, Fife

35. There were no issues whilst we were at our first foster placement. The family were all good to us. The foster parents had two grown-up sons and a grandfather living with them. I had never had a lot of dealings with my grandparents so it was like having my own granddad. He was a nice old man and the couple were good people.
36. When we came home from school we always felt welcome in their home. We never felt different. We were treated as part of the family. I remember when the first episode of Coronation Street was aired on television. We were allowed to stay up and watch it with them.

Siblings

37. My brother [REDACTED] didn't stay long. I think he became of an age where he had to leave care. He went somewhere else. I don't know why. I just assumed it was because he was older. He might have been about fourteen or fifteen years old when he left.

School

38. I can't remember which school we went to at the first foster parents. It could have been the same school "Castlehill Primary" that we went to at the second foster placement but I don't know.

Visits and inspections

39. We did have visits from the social work department during our first foster placement. They came to see how we were doing and to check that everything was ok. I can't remember a lot about what happened during the social work visits.

Leaving the first foster placement

40. The first foster family were so nice but we didn't stay there long. We were with them for perhaps six months to a year. Someone in the family had Tuberculosis (TB). I used to think it was our fault that they got TB because we used to play at the rubbish dumps. We weren't checked so we had to go back to Dundee to get tested and inoculated. Nobody explained what TB was. I was upset to be leaving them. I never saw them again after leaving.
41. It was just [REDACTED] and I that moved to the second foster placement. We were taken directly from one foster placement to the second foster placement. The second foster carers lived in Cupar in Fife as well.

Second foster placement, Cupar, Fife

42. The second foster placement was totally different. They had their own young family that were at the same school as us. The parents were in their thirties. They were a younger couple than the first foster parents. They had a daughter and a son. We did not stay with them that long, maybe four or five months. I can't remember their names.
43. We were made to feel different from the outset. We did not feel part of the family. Nothing physical ever happened to us but we did not feel welcome. We were always getting into trouble for things when the other children wouldn't. It was scary. Looking

back as an adult, I think the foster parents must have done fostering for the money. It felt like they didn't want us kids around.

Routine at second foster placement

Chores

44. We did the dishes after everyone had finished eating. It was like we had rules but their own children didn't. It felt like we were dogs-bodies half the time. It did not feel good.

Food

45. When we had meals the foster family and children would eat in the living room. We would have to eat our meals separately in the kitchen with the door closed. It was like "This is where we eat, this is where you eat".

Clothes

46. The second foster parents did take us for clothes. I'm not really one for shopping for clothes. Even now I hate it.
47. The only thing that I remember about clothes at the second placement was an undershirt of netting. I got up in the middle of the night to try it on and I put my foot right through it. I was terrified of telling the foster mother what had happened. I ripped out the bit of netting and stuffed it down the back of the wardrobe. I remember being terrified of her.

Bedroom

48. I shared a room with the foster parent's daughter. [REDACTED] shared a room with the foster parents son. The daughter was the same sort of age as me. She was maybe a

bit older. She was at the same primary school with me. I remember not being allowed to touch her toys. I had to have my own toys and not play with hers. It felt as though we were different. I remember going to bed crying.

Baths

49. The foster mother would run me a bath and that was it. She did not help me wash or anything. I was able to lock the door so that was good.

Schooling

50. We went to Castlehill Primary School in Cupar. I didn't play with the foster parents daughter at school.

Visits and inspections

51. We did have social work visits. When we saw the social worker the foster parents were always there. I think we did see the social worker once or twice without the foster parents being present. I was too scared to say anything to anyone. It was just the norm.
52. I never had any contact from my mother or father when we were in foster care.

Birthdays and Christmas

53. I can't remember if I had a birthday at the second foster placement.

Abuse at the second foster placement

54. There was no physical chastisement that I remember. It was just verbal. It was such a vicious type of abuse. I remember being made to feel different and not welcome. I used to get into trouble a lot. It was always for stupid things. I used to wonder why

the foster parent's daughter never got into trouble. She used to do naughty things but I would get the blame for it. I was never able to explain. The foster parents didn't want to know. I would get a row or denied pocket money. Sometimes I would be called a name like "little bitch".

55. My brother [REDACTED] was a wee bit older than me. [REDACTED] just got on with people and behaved himself as he didn't want to get into trouble.

Leaving foster care

56. I was glad when we left. We were just moved from our second foster placement. I don't know why. I can't remember anyone telling us. One day we came home from school and our bags were packed. We were told that the social worker was coming to pick us up. That is all I remember. I was eight or maybe nine years old. I think I was nine when I arrived at Roineach Mhor.

Roineach Mhor, Dundee and Strathcarron Children's Home, Maryhill

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Strathcarron Place, Maryhill

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Life after being in care

108. I left the home when I was fourteen. I went to live with my mum. She still didn't have room for me so my brother had to move into a room with my other brothers. My mother slept in the living room with my stepfather. I had a room to myself.
109. I did not stay with my mother long. I was living in a bedsit on my own when I was fifteen. It was on the Perth road. It was student accommodation and just a room. I had started working at that time but I was short of money. If I didn't have enough money to put in the gas meter I just went to bed.
110. I don't remember any social work visits to check I was ok at my mums or when I was at the bedsit.
111. I left school in 2nd year of high school because my mother wanted me to go out to work and earn money. My first job was working in a nursery. I used to wash my clothes every night because I didn't have anything to change into. I would wear the same clothes every day and people at the nursery started speaking about it. It upset me so I left that job and went into hairdressing. That didn't last long. I then worked in a shop.
112. I went through so many jobs, I can't even remember how many. I always enjoyed my jobs until something happened and then I couldn't cope. Someone would just speak to me the wrong way or speak down to me. It really used to make me feel worthless. It felt as if I wasn't as good as them.
113. I met my second husband [REDACTED] in 1972 or 1973. I was twenty. I was working in [REDACTED] with [REDACTED] sister [REDACTED] at the time. I became friendly with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and we went on a night out together in Kirkcaldy. [REDACTED] was about to go to London for a year. There was a group of us including a girl called [REDACTED]. After the night out I was at work and [REDACTED] said "[REDACTED] hates you". I remember asking [REDACTED] what I had done to upset [REDACTED] I remember worrying about it for a whole year. It was the first time I had been out and enjoyed something and it had ended in someone "hating me". I remember sitting in my car crying. It played on my mind all year. I felt unlovable and worthless. It really knocked my confidence and self-esteem.

114. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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116. I am still married to my second husband [REDACTED]. We have three grown up children. I have a daughter called [REDACTED] who lives just around the corner from us. My other daughter [REDACTED] lives in Dundee as well and my eldest son [REDACTED] lives in Aberdeen. I have nine grandchildren. We have full-time care of one of our grandchildren called [REDACTED]. We obtained a Kinship Order to look after him five years ago.

Impact

Relationships

117. My time in care and the abuse I experienced has affected my adult relationships. I got married to a man called [REDACTED] when I was sixteen. I left him because he used to beat me up. He really beat me up. It was for things like having coffee instead of tea. He liked his drink. I used to think that that was all I was worth. Anyone could do anything they wanted to me because I was worthless. I really felt that I deserved it. I just felt dirty all the time. I walked out on him. I told my mother what was happening and she said "You've made your bed. Lie in it". That was her attitude. I went to the police but they wouldn't do anything because it was a domestic. I divorced him.
118. It took me a long time being married to my second husband [REDACTED] to believe that he loved me. I used to say some really nasty things to him to try to make him hate me. I just thought that he would leave me. I thought he would just walk out on me. I believed that for a good few years. I found it hard to believe that he loved me. That he could love me. I believed that I was un-lovable. I used to question "How could anyone love me when my mother didn't love me? How could anyone love someone who has had these things done to them? How could anyone even look at me?". I just felt worthless.
119. My experiences in care have had an effect on my relationship with my husband [REDACTED]. As much as I love [REDACTED] our sex life is zero. I just find it hard for anyone to touch me. Finally I feel like I have reached a place where I can control things. In my mind if anyone touches me that control is gone. I am scared.

Physical health and body issues

120. I have problems "downstairs". I am supposed to examine myself but I don't because I hate my body. I am supposed to use creams but I don't. I just forget. I remember other people's things but when it comes to me I don't remember. I just feel like I don't matter.

121. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
122. I learnt to cope with traumatic situations by taking myself away somewhere else in my mind. Even now when I go to the dentist for a tooth out or root canal I do it without injection. I can control myself and I don't feel the pain. I thought that I just had a high pain threshold but it is a deliberate act. When things get too bad I just disappear. I can disappear into myself. That's what I have done all my life when things have got hard.

123. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Career

124. I've had so many jobs because things would just get too much. I would have to leave because I wasn't coping. I remember one incident when I was working at [REDACTED]. We used to have meetings and if you had any questions or complaints that was when to raise them. I had been off work quite a bit for a cough. I just couldn't get rid of this cough. Every time I went off sick I had to go to a meeting when I got back to work. It made me feel like I was being reprimanded for being sick. One day I went to one of these meetings and I mentioned that my arms hurt from lifting boxes. I worked in [REDACTED] and my arms were getting really sore from lifting big boxes of [REDACTED] onto the shelves. One of the staff said "EKX [REDACTED] you would be as well not being here".
125. That comment was the start of it. I noticed the staff stopped asking me things and ignoring me. I was being side-lined. It started to build up and build up. I couldn't

control how I felt. I had begun working and crying all the time. I couldn't control the crying. I would be serving customers and the tears would be running down my face.

126. One night I was due to be working the night shift. I was dreading it. On the drive on the way into work I got to the bottom of a hill and all I wanted to do was drive into the brick wall. I just put on the brakes and stopped. I turned around and went home. I just thought "I can't go in, I can't go in".
127. When I did go back to work I had to face another back-to-work meeting. I remember walking up the aisle and two of the managers shouting on me. I just kept walking and walked straight out of the shop. I left everything in my locker and never went back. I couldn't go back. I drove straight to my doctors. I can't remember the journey. I was shaking. When I saw my doctor she referred me to see a psychiatrist.
128. After that I couldn't leave the house. My work were phoning me and I couldn't answer the phone. Any meetings at my work my husband [REDACTED] had to go on my behalf. My work eventually paid me off. It didn't bother me. I just didn't want to leave my house.
129. The [REDACTED] incident happened eight years ago. Everything from my past just all of a sudden came to a head. Even now when I can't cope with something I just have to leave. Not take time off. I have to leave. I've done it all my life. That's why I have had so many jobs.

Mental health and breakdowns

130. I have had many breakdowns because I have not been able to cope. If it wasn't for my husband [REDACTED] I wouldn't still be here. It has been very hard for him. He had to give up work to care for me. I received disability benefits and [REDACTED] got a carers allowance. It was tough for [REDACTED] because he has always worked.
131. We were very short of cash for two or three years. We had been wrongly advised by the social work department that we were not entitled to any further benefits. We were

receiving approximately £80 a week in total. We had to look after each other and also [REDACTED] who is our daughter's son who we look after. We really struggled financially. We took on a lot of debt. [REDACTED] took out a private pension. We had to sell our house as we couldn't pay the mortgage. We had to move into rented accommodation. It made me feel like I had let the side down. I felt like I had let [REDACTED] down. It is only in the last six months that I have stopped blaming myself for everything.

132. I can't cope with change and I can't cope with crowds. I had been to see my GP quite a few times prior to the [REDACTED] incident. I had been prescribed anti-depressants and referred to see a psychiatrist. I only attended once. At that time I just wasn't ready. I couldn't speak about my experiences. I just sat and cried. I never went back after that first visit. It took what happened in [REDACTED] for me to finally admit that there was something wrong. Up until then I had just coped with it as best I could.
133. I now see an NHS psychiatrist called Dr Mackie. I have been seeing her for seven years. When I first went to see her I could not speak to her openly about my experiences. I couldn't go out. I couldn't answer the phone. I just couldn't cope. I suffered from terrible migraines. Since seeing Dr Mackie I have only had two migraines in seven years. The only thing I can put it down to is the things that were in my head. I have now got to the stage where instead of blaming myself I have become more angry. I am angry at the fact that they got away with it. I think that was a turning point. Where before I had this big blackness in my head, it wasn't as black anymore. Even though the black hole is still there I am able to control it now.

Friendships

134. I don't have any friends. I don't think I can connect with people. I cannot go into a room and speak to people on my own. [REDACTED] always has to be there. If there is a gap in conversation I don't know how to fill it. I have people I know. All through my life whenever I have worked I have made friends. When I leave that job I leave the friends behind as well. When I have friends I don't keep in touch with them. I think of them as part of my past and I need to move on. That's the way I live my life.

135. I am moving house and I am going to try to keep in touch with a few of the neighbours. We were quite friendly. I don't want to lose touch but I find it difficult. All my life that is what I have done.

Relationship with siblings

136. I haven't seen my brother [REDACTED] in years. When he got married his one stipulation to his wife was that he would only get married if they never had kids. They never did. I've only seen them once since they got married many years ago. I think I was fifteen at the time. [REDACTED] doesn't want to have anything to do with his family, his brothers, me, anybody. It's like [REDACTED]'s past doesn't exist.
137. I am still in touch with my eldest brother [REDACTED]. We go for a coffee once a month. He has Parkinson's. He is the only one I keep in touch with. My siblings are all splintered all over the place. My brother [REDACTED] is in prison just now for [REDACTED]. It is the second time.

Relationship with mother

138. When I went into care I was six and I was fourteen when I left. Any relationship I had with my mother was gone because she didn't visit often. I think I can count on one hand the number of times that she came to see me. It wasn't a regular thing.
139. When I was going from job to job I got a job with my mother at the Mecca hall. My mother was a supervisor and I was one of the cleaners. We were sitting having a tea break one day. We were with some of the other women cleaners. They were talking about their pasts. I opened my mouth and started "I was.." and my mother just looked at me as if to say "Say nothing". I wasn't allowed to say anything about my past or where I was brought up. It was as though my past didn't exist. What happened to me didn't exist. I just wish it really didn't exist because the amount of times it has affected me after I left the home.

140. When I worked for my mother as a cleaner I had carpal tunnel procedures done on my wrists. I had both wrists done at the same time. My mother kept saying "When are you coming back to work?". I had only been off a week but because I was her daughter she thought it didn't look good in front of the other cleaners. So I went back to work after a week. I couldn't lift things because of my wrists. When I went back to the doctor he said that I shouldn't have gone back to work for at least three months for it to heal. It was just the pressure from my mother that had made me go back to work so soon.
141. My mother was the type of person who cared what the neighbours thought more than what her family thought. My mother's feeling towards her children was that if she had her time again she wouldn't have had any of us.
142. I just wanted my mother to love me. I remember even back when I was only fourteen I was always trying to please her. I had the doll that I got from my dad when I was seven. That doll went everywhere with me. I used to sleep with that doll every night. My mother said to me "You are too old for it. I know a girl who would play with it". I wanted to please my mother so I gave her the doll to give to the girl that she knew. The girl had it five minutes and broke it. It sounds stupid but to me that doll represented my dad. My mother knew my father had given it to me but she just didn't care.
143. If my mother asked me to do something I would do it. Although I was always trying to get her to love me it never happened. My half-brother [REDACTED] walked on water. He was everything to my mother. I remember her babysitting for me once. We were an hour late getting back and my mother was in tears. She was crying because she was going to be late for [REDACTED]'s tea. [REDACTED] was 21 at that time. Us other kids could never do anything. We were never good enough.
144. When I was pregnant for the first time my mother said "Well I hope it's a girl". When I had my first born and realised that it was a boy, my son [REDACTED], I thought "God I've let her down". I actually felt as though I had let my mother down rather than feeling

happy that I had had my first child. It took me a wee while to accept that I hadn't done something wrong. I was always feeling that I had done something wrong.

145. When I recognised and accepted that my mum would never love me it was like a big weight was lifted from my shoulders. It felt like finally I am free. Finally I don't have to try to get her to love me because I know she doesn't. Finally I have given up. I know she will never love me so I am not going to keep trying.

Sleep

146. Sometimes I can't sleep at night. It is the memories. They flood in at night time. Sometimes I can't go to sleep at all. I am prescribed Quetiopene tablets. They are supposed to be fast acting sleeping pills but three or four hours after I take them I can still be awake. Even now I can still wake up crying. I hate it when that happens.

Records

147. About five years ago a social worker gave me a phone number. It was when we took on my grandson [REDACTED] under the Kinship Order. I think it was to look into my records. I never called [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later [REDACTED] I have been advised about Future Pathways and may look into contacting them.
148. [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later [REDACTED] I have not been in touch with any survivors groups. I have spoken to another survivor from Glasgow who I think is called Helen Holland. She went to a nun school. I spoke to her on the telephone for about an hour about our respective experiences. I remember thinking about what happened to her and wondering "Why is it that I cannot cope when she can?".

Other information

149. When I was married to [REDACTED] and living in [REDACTED] I heard that wee [REDACTED] had committed suicide by [REDACTED] I don't think he had a good life because he and [REDACTED] had been classed as "stupid" in the home. I think [REDACTED] got involved in drugs and things like that.

150. I would say we need to listen to kids. Kids are not lying. It doesn't matter how excessive it sounds you can guarantee it will be true. A lot of people don't ask what is upsetting them they just think "oh they are just crying, they can't mix with people, there's something wrong with them". If a child can't mix or they don't want to be near someone, there's a reason. There's a reason they don't want to be near the person.

151. When I was in care we didn't have any choice. We had to be there. We didn't have anyone to take us out of the situation or tell what was going on. It wasn't until I got to the age of fourteen that I thought "No. I can't live with this on my own any longer".

152. I would make sure that the people who are looking after kids are well, well vetted. Abuse is still going on. You see it on the TV. Things don't change. These people are still out there. They are still doing it. They are still getting away with it. When the Jimmy Saville scandal came out I couldn't watch it. It didn't surprise me. Half the time the "do-gooders" are the ones that you really need to be looking at.

153. People go through a lot worse than what happened to me. It's the way it has affected me that I want to highlight. I just want people to realise that it did go on.

154. 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..... ^{EKX} [REDACTED]

Dated..... 31 - 1 - 2018