

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FGL

Support person present: Yes.

1. My name is FGL [REDACTED] FGL [REDACTED] has been my married name for the last fifty four years and the name I was known as when I was a foster parent. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1941. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I left Boroughmuir High School, in Edinburgh at fifteen and worked as a grocer for five years. I then worked in Rowntree's Chocolate Factory and got married when I was twenty six to FGK [REDACTED]

Becoming a Foster Carer

3. We had been married a few years when we decided we wanted to become foster parents. We already had one son, who was one year old. I always loved children. My best friend at school had been in Redhall Children's home, Craiglockhart. When I visited there I always wanted to take all the children home. It was then that I thought I wanted to have a lot of children. FGK [REDACTED] was keen as well. He had not had a very nice childhood.
4. We applied to social services to start the process and it took quite a few months. We were back and forward with social workers. There were all sorts of procedures with references and things. It was a long drawn out process. I can't remember who provided our references. We did get frustrated with the process. We expected it to happen a lot

quicker. I think it was mainly one social worker we dealt with for this part of the process, but I can't remember a name.

Training

5. We did not require any qualifications or experience for the role and we were not given any training. On reflection, now I know what I know, that was not adequate. Personally I had lots of experience with children, as my brother had six kids. I had taken lots to do with them. People that perhaps hadn't been used to children should have been offered some training and help. I didn't think I needed any at the time.
6. No child protection training was discussed. We had no experience of looking after kids who had suffered abuse, but we knew the type of kids we were liable to be looking after.

Foster Care Arrangements

7. We did not specify what age or sex we could foster, we were just happy to have any child. It was short term fostering we applied to do. We understood that to be a few weeks at a time and we did not give a maximum number of children we could take. I understood the social worker to have a list of short term foster carers. They could then look at that to place a child and ring to see if anyone had space.
8. They did warn us, with short term fostering, you could take these children, love and care for them, but you had to be prepared at a moment's notice to part with them. That was quite difficult. FGK found that particularly difficult.
9. Our son was still in a cot bed in our room when we started fostering, so we had two bedrooms we could offer. We had a very big settee bed in one of the rooms and a single bed. We also had a fold up settee that made into a single bed. The most we ever fostered at the one time was five. Each child had a different social worker. You never dealt with just one social worker and we did not have our own like in England.

10. We didn't really think about whether we were employed or self-employed. We didn't see it as a profession or a vocation, it was just a family thing. I don't know if it should be a profession. Does that not turn it in to some sort of business?

Financial Support

11. We were given an allowance, but I can't remember how much or when we got it. We were not given any guidance as to what it should be used for. I think it was adequate. We weren't looking to make any money from fostering. I think you are in the wrong business if you think you are going to make money from it.

Foster Home Household

12. We lived at [REDACTED] It was a spacious flat on the top floor of the club house. The locker room at the golf club was underneath us. FGK [REDACTED] was the head greenkeeper. I was not working.
13. It had three bedrooms. It did not require any adaptations to foster children and social work did not provide for that. My father did put in a sliding gate at the top of the stairs to keep the children safe. I believe our home was adequate.
14. When you came in the downstairs door there was a big coal cellar. Upstairs facing you was the kitchen. On the left was the bathroom and the linen room. On the right there was a long hallway with windows that looked out over the grass. There was then the livingroom, our bedroom and a second bedroom. At the end there was the third bedroom and a big walk in cloakroom.

Children Fostered

15. We fostered from 1970 until 1973/74 when we moved to England. I think we got a single child first and then two siblings after that. We would get calls at ten o'clock at night and social work would say we are desperate can you take these children. You can't turn a child away that needs a bed for the night. I suppose we could have refused

if we wanted to, but we didn't. We loved it. We fostered seventeen children in Edinburgh in total over those three or four years. We applied to foster in England when we moved down there and they told us that we had fostered that many children, that is how I remember.

16. We were initially surprised when the children would come with no clothes. We would be told the family had been evicted or something. This is what they didn't tell us at the beginning and they should have. We just bought loads of nice clothes from jumble sales, washed them and then we had a stock for emergencies.
17. FGK was devastated with one little boy, leaving us. He was the same age as our son. I can't remember his background, but he was a lovely boy. He played so well with our little boy and when they saw FGK coming home from work they would jump up and down and say 'daddy's coming'. would hold his arms up to FGK and they became very attached. He was very suspicious of FGK at first, but then he gradually let him pick him up and would sit on his knee.
18. was screaming his head off when social work came to pick him up at the end of his placement. He wouldn't go in the car. FGK still gets upset when he talks about it now. That's what happens when you are short term fostering. It is difficult.
19. Most of our placements were short term, however the longest placement we had was three sisters, FGO and . They came to us after we had been fostering for a few months. It was over a year they were with us. I think FGO was ten, was nine and was seven.
20. They went to the local school, which was called Primary School. It was five, ten minutes' walk from our house. They came initially short term like the others, but eventually just merged into the family. I don't know why the placement lasted so long. We just took it day by day. They were just left with us until someone got in touch. We weren't told what was happening or what the relationship was like with their mother.

21. We also had a boy and girl that came to stay with us while the sisters were staying. I think the girl was a little bit older and the boy a bit younger. I can't remember their names. The sisters had been with us quite a while by then and resented other children coming in. The girl was a bit of a show off and liked to tell the sisters what she had and how good her home life was. The boy was a bit of a handful and used to steal sweets from the local shop. He also used to kick all the bins down in the street on bin day, so that didn't make us very popular with the neighbours.
22. Eventually we had to get on to the social worker, as the boy had started to try and get people to take him away in their cars. He would say he had lost his bus fare and wanted to go and see his auntie and uncle. That was a bit dangerous, so social work had to come and get him. I think it had been a problem with other placements as well. I am not sure where they went after that. They were only with us for a few weeks.

Placement Preparation

23. All of our placements were emergency ones, so there was very little notice and preparation beforehand. We weren't given any medical information about the kids and they weren't checked by a doctor when they arrived.
24. In relation to the three girls, they didn't settle in quickly. FGO was the oldest and she had to grow up quickly. She was like a little mother to the other two sisters. She was very protective towards them and her attitude was she didn't need us and they could do it themselves. They kept themselves to themselves for a little while, which was understandable. It must have been difficult for FGO to become a child again after being in charge for so long.

Daily Routine and Sleeping Arrangements

25. The daily routine was all my job. FGK went off to work in the morning and I was a house wife. I can't really remember much of the daily routine.

26. The girls all wanted to sleep together when they arrived, so they had the big second room at the end of the hall. They had this huge bed settee thing in their room. It wasn't just a weekend bed settee. It was one of those old, original full mattress things. They loved that. That was their room. They just wanted to keep that private, to themselves.
27. They were quite good at getting themselves up in the morning. They would have had breakfast, but I have no idea what now. It was fifty years ago. I used to make porridge a lot for FGK. I know the girls liked making toast. I do remember distinctly that they had this way of making toast. They would put it under the grill and then take it out and put thick butter on it. Then they would put it back under the grill and take it out and put more butter on it, so it would be dripping. FGO would probably have done that, but was old enough too. They would then go off to school and have lunch there.
28. We would all eat together when everyone was home in the evening and bedtime wouldn't be late. I have no idea of the exact times. We had no routine around bedtime.

Washing and Bathing

29. We had a bath. The girls would maybe have a bath once a week. I think the bathroom would have had some sort of lock on it for privacy.

Clothes and Shoes

30. The girls did arrive to us with some clothes and things. During the time they were with us they also got clothes. I said to them I had this stock of emergency clothes that was in their bedroom and they could help themselves to anything they needed. That was the first thing they did was pull it all out and take what they needed. They had a mixture of their own clothes and the stock of clothes I had. I don't remember ever buying shoes.

Mealtimes

31. When they came home they had an evening meal. We had quite a big kitchen with a big table under the window. I can't remember if we all ate together, but I presume we

would have. We all ate the same meals. The meals would be cooked by me. I can't remember what would happen if they didn't like it. There would have been some sort of alternative I'm sure. They wouldn't have gone hungry. They always had deserts every night too, I remember that. Some of the food I made they hadn't had before. FGO mentioned pasta in her statement with a weird sauce. I used to make Italian food as some of my friends were Italian and I had picked up some of their recipes.

32. I used to also bake a lot. There was generally plenty of food as I liked to cook and bake, so they would have had access to that.
33. Most people used to congregate in the kitchen because there was such a lovely view over the golf course.

Leisure Time

34. We would have had toys, games and bits and pieces in the house, but I can't remember exactly what. I don't really remember what we did in the evenings. We did used to walk to [REDACTED] if the weather was nice. It was quite a long walk along the promenade. The kids would play along the way and we would get some chips or an ice cream at the other end. This was a regular walk, it wasn't just a once a month thing. It would have been after our evening meal. We would have our meal early as FGK finished work around four thirty. He started early and finished early, so we had time after our meal.
35. The golf course was on one side of the house and there was a big playing field on the other side. It was an enormous thing that Sunday football teams would play on. It was a big space. They also would have had pocket money if they wanted to go to the shops.
36. There weren't any youth clubs or anything like that back then. I don't think they were the type of girls that would have liked the discipline of something like the brownies.

Trips and Holidays

37. We just spent a lot of time in [REDACTED] as that was within walking distance and there was always something on.
38. I was involved with the Dog Aid Society and we did a bit of fundraising for that. We collected jumble and did jumble sales. We had dog shows in Braidburn Valley in Edinburgh and we would run the tea stalls. The girls helped with that.
39. We did not go anywhere overnight for a holiday when the girls were with us.

Schooling

40. The girls were taken to school a few times and then once they knew where they were going they would find their own way there. It was quite safe. There were no busy roads to cross.
41. [REDACTED] struggled at school. I remember she said that she was being bullied, so I went into the school and it turned out that she was the one causing trouble. She was winding the other children up and telling lies. The headmaster wasn't very helpful. He said I was banging my head against a wall with the girls and losing sleep when they were just going back to the same environment. I said to him if the children leave us even a fraction better off than when they came to us, we have done our job.
42. I am sure we talked it over with [REDACTED] and tried to make her see sense. She did have some problems with schooling. She was quite slow with learning. Nowadays she would probably be in special education. Fifty years ago these kids were just classed as slow. The school were aware, but there wasn't much help available back then. We did try to help her.
43. FGO [REDACTED] liked to do the homework. If I wanted to help, FGO [REDACTED] would say she could do it. I don't recall a specific time being put aside for homework. We would make sure they had done it, but we would not specifically say they had to do it at a certain time.

They would normally do their homework in their bedroom. They didn't have a desk in there.

Healthcare

44. I would have dealt with health problems if they arose. I can't remember regular health checks, but they would have been registered with our doctor. They had a school dentist back then I think.
45. I had to take [REDACTED] to the doctor once as she had something wrong with her mouth and had ulcers in it. They thought she may have been in contact with someone who had tuberculosis and we all had to go for x-rays. It turned out not to be tuberculosis.

Christmas and Birthdays

46. We weren't given any extra allowance for Christmas and birthdays. You were in England, but it wasn't much. We would have had all the family around as we had more room at our house than anyone else. We would have had a big party and I presume a Christmas tree. Definitely Christmas dinner. I don't remember what happened around birthdays.

Discipline

47. We didn't really have discipline as such. Most kids you could reason with. We would explain that their behaviour was unacceptable and that they had to make changes. The majority of the children we had were lovely, there were no problems at all. We never withheld food, that's just something you don't do. They were never physically punished.

Relationship with Foster Children

48. My relationship with the foster children was lovely. Most of them were really nice, loving children. Some needed a bit more support than others. No support was offered

from social work. We had one little boy who could hardly talk and was quite traumatised. He just grunted. His sister had to translate what he was trying to say. He did eventually begin to trust us and open up.

49. The little ones would need hugs, but the older ones didn't want them. FGO and her sisters were quite distant to begin with, but after a while I became really fond of FGO in particular. To begin with FGO was very suspicious of me. She was very determined that they didn't need to be in foster care and didn't need anyone to look after them, as they could look after themselves.
50. We thought our relationship with FGO, and was lovely. Gradually I thought we had become friends. We've always had happy memories of them until now. It is very, very hurtful. This is just unbelievable the way that FGO has turned against us.

Relationship with Foster Siblings

51. Our son loved the girls and they were very good with him. FGO and he used to call them.

Contact with Family (other than siblings)

52. My family treated the girls as family. The girls would call my parents granny and grandad. Granny and Granny They called us Auntie FGL and Uncle FGK They were fond of my younger brother too, as he was good fun. He was still single then. They could have fun with him.

Visitors

53. The mother of the girls came periodically to see them. She didn't always turn up when she said she would. That was normal with a lot of the parents. It was just a casual thing and social work were not involved. She would just ring up and ask if she could take them out for the day. She was a perfectly nice woman, so there was no reason

to object at all. She would maybe come every three weeks or so and take them out. She was an approachable, nice woman. We didn't stipulate any time period she could have them. She was their mother, it wasn't really up to us.

54. We knew they also had an older brother who was in a wheelchair, but he never had any contact with the girls when they were with us. I only met him once when we went to see the girls off at the train station when they left us for good. Social work didn't really encourage any contact between siblings.
55. Their social worker was very nice. I have no idea what her name was, but she was very pretty and always wore lovely flowery clothes. They did not see her a lot, maybe every couple of months. Not too frequently. She would just ring up and say she wanted to see them. She saw them on her own, which was fair enough. I don't think she ever took them out. I think it was just in their bedroom or the livingroom.
56. I think the only time we had to contact the social worker was when we all had to be checked over, as the doctor thought [REDACTED] had been in touch with someone who had tuberculosis. We would have had to get permission for the x-rays. Anything like that would have to be reported.
57. No one else of authority visited the girls. Looking back I think we should have had a social worker for [REDACTED] and I or even just someone who checked in on us. That's the system down in England. The Scottish system was flawed that way. One social worker didn't know what another one was doing.

Review of Care/placement

58. Often you could not get the social worker belonging to the child when you called for help. It was always the duty social worker you got. I don't think there was any urgency on their part when you called. One point of contact, dealing with us and all of the children, instead of all those different socials workers you'd never seen before would have been better. Getting a hold of them was so difficult.

59. There was never any children's panels for the girls. There was nothing formal happened to extend their placement. We had panels in England as foster parents, but not in Edinburgh. We did not have to fill out any paperwork for the girls to stay longer. We had no idea how long they were going to be with us. It was just a day by day, week by week thing. It would have been nice if we knew how long as we could have looked at things with more of a long term view. It would have been nice to be kept in the loop. We weren't given any update or asked for any input. Looking back it was very lax.

Records

60. No one asked us to keep any records and we didn't. On reflection I wish I had. I think all social services should make foster parents aware and advise them to keep diaries, letters, communication and things like that. Some sort of record should be kept. It should be a requirement.

Leaving foster care

61. We weren't in a big hurry to have the girls moved on. We were enjoying having them, they had become part of the family. We occasionally got a little notice when kids were leaving us, but most of the time we didn't. Social work would normally just ring up the day before and say we will come and get them tomorrow morning. We would then tell them that mummy and daddy were coming and they could take away anything they had brought with them or clothes and toys they had acquired with us. I don't think the social workers had much notice either, so it's a difficult one. Ideally it would have been good to have a little while to explain to the child that we wouldn't forget them and send them off with lots of love.
62. I can't remember how much notice we were given when the girls left, but we were told they were going back to stay near the mother's family, in Yorkshire, where she would get some support. She seemed like a nice woman who just needed more support. We didn't know about the drinking problems until FGO mentioned it in her statement. We had no indication of that. The girls were excited to see their family and we were happy for them, but sad to see them leave.

63. It was an emotional day when they left. We dropped them off at the train station to their mother. She was having an argument with the guard because he wouldn't let the brother's wheelchair go on the coach. He said it had to travel in the guard's van. The girls were pretty upset about it and crying. Their mother was very emotional too. I don't remember the social work being there or involved when they left.

Complaints

64. We weren't aware of any complaints from the girls when they were with us. We never had anything to speak to the social worker about. There were no problems at all. Anything like school concerns we could sort out ourselves. To be honest if we did try and speak to the social work, I don't think they would have been interested. They were overworked and I think just glad to have the kids somewhere.
65. If we had any complaints with the social work we weren't aware of any complaints procedure. We didn't know a lot about the system back then. We just thought it was all normal.

Contact after foster care

66. FGO was in contact with us after she left. She used to write to me and I wrote back to her for quite a while. We did miss them after they left. We then went to see them when we moved down to England. They were staying in Knaresborough at first and then someone told us they were in a children's home in Skipton. It was nice to see them, but they thought we were coming to take them home. We said we'd keep in touch and go back and see them again, but when we tried we were told they had been moved on.

Convictions

67. I do not have any criminal convictions, in particular in relation to my time as a foster carer.

Allegations of Abuse

Awareness of Abuse

68. I have no awareness of any abuse of foster children who were in my care and I was never the subject of any complaints during my time as a foster carer.

Reporting of Abuse

69. FGO was very street wise and knew what was right and wrong. If she thought anything untoward was going on she would have been right on the phone to the social worker. She would have had their number and there were public phones at that time. I remember she rang a previous foster parent when she first came to stay with us as she had left something there. She did that off her own back. She knew how to use the phone and would have had her pocket money to do it. There is no way she would have kept it to herself if something was wrong.

Reporting to Police/Criminal Proceedings

70. Before this I was not aware of any police or criminal proceedings against me. I was interviewed by the police in relation to the girls last August. I got a phone call from a police officer in Edinburgh. She said there had been allegations made against us and she wanted to speak to us. She didn't say who had made the allegations at the time and we thought it was maybe the little boy we had reported. We didn't think for a minute it was going to be the girls.
71. It was quite a few weeks later a DC Rachel Robertson came down to speak with us. I think she was from Edinburgh. We had to go to Cheadle Heath Police Station for the interview. After the interview we weren't charged, but we were told a report would be sent to the Procurator Fiscal. We have not heard anything further and do not know what is happening.

Specific Allegations that have been made to the Inquiry

72. FGO said in her statement, *'We got the tiniest amount of food and we were literally starving all the time. It was so hard for me to see my little sisters so hungry. We got a bit of toast in the morning and then we'd get a little bit of pasta with some weird, little sauce for dinner. I'm surprised we didn't get rickets or anything like that because we never got any fresh fruit.'*
73. That is absolute rubbish. I would do custard and bananas and apple crumble for pudding. We had lots of vegetables, as I would make stew and soup, which you can sneak all sorts of vegetables in to.
74. FGO also said *'We weren't allowed to take anything out of the pantry or cupboards...it was classed as stealing and you would be hammered. We were never given any treats...I remember I was so hungry one night I sneaked into the kitchen and took a slice of bread and put vinegar on it to make it taste of something.'* FGL caught me and slapped me so hard on the face that I literally went flying across the kitchen. She shouted and bawled at me, calling me a thieving, little bitch and screeching how dare I steal food from them.'
75. That's absolute rubbish. There was no need for anyone to go hungry in our house. There was always food there. They just had to say. If they were hungry they could get something to eat. No one went hungry. Putting vinegar on a sliced bread is farcical. A child would not think to do that. I'm sorry but is FGO schizophrenic or something?
76. FGO then goes on to say *'I couldn't say exactly how far the school was from the flat, but it was quite a bit away. The walk felt like a real trudge...I don't remember the FGK-FGL ever encouraging us to do our homework or looking at books or anything with us.'*
77. The school wasn't far at all. It was ten minutes at the most. FGO didn't really want us to help her with homework. That was her responsibility. If I ever said do you want me to look at your homework, I was told no. I don't even think the younger ones had homework. Fifty years ago you had very little homework in primary school.

78. FGO says *'I don't remember there being a particular routine around bedtime. We probably just decided ourselves when to go to bed at night. We would already be in our room anyway...if we were making any noise in our room, the FGK-FGL would come in and tell us to go to sleep.'*
79. I don't remember any particular incident, but I can imagine that happening with any of the children we looked after. The girls liked to be on their own. It was like they were shutting the world out. It was a cosy little room they had with a coal fire. I can't remember what they had in their room, but I am sure there would have been things in there for them. We didn't watch a lot of television, but we did have one if they wanted to watch it.
80. FGO then says *'I don't remember us having any toys...we basically had to just sit in our bedroom in the evenings...we were never allowed in the lounge and we weren't allowed to watch television.'*
81. They must have had toys, they would have had dolls. They liked those skinny dolls, like Barbie dolls or something as I remember knitting clothes for them. I don't know if they brought things with them or if we had bought them. We went to a lot of jumble sales and the girls loved that. They got bits and pieces there.
82. It is just silly saying that they weren't allowed to watch the television. We didn't often watch television. If it was nice we would be out. They weren't shut in. They could walk around the house and play outside if they wanted to.
83. FGO said *'there was a green bit in front of the golf course, where you could play, but we never got the chance to play there very often.'*
84. Of course they did. They did go out. They went out to play and wandered around. They wandered up to the shops. FGO had a friend who lived up near the local shop. Her friend was allowed to visit us too.

85. FGO said *'We were never taken to any clubs or anything like that after school...we were left to our own devices most weekend. The FGK-FGL used to take their son out for a nice day somewhere, or go off and do whatever else they did and we were just put outside to roam the streets. We never got any pocket money, so we never had any money to spend when we were out.'*
86. There wasn't any clubs. That is absolute rubbish. They were never left on their own. Ever. Not even for five minutes. We wouldn't have dreamt of going off anywhere and leaving them. On Saturdays FGK always went into town alone, which he has done all his life. He still does it. I would be at home baking or something. Sometimes my brother in law would come around for cooking lessons. He was a frustrated chef. Sometimes we had other family around. My mother only lived five minutes away and was around every other day. My mother in law would come down too and my little brother was around a lot.
87. FGO went on to say *'At weekends, they used to give us a couple of sandwiches and put us out the door, usually at ten o'clock in the morning and tell us to go down to beach front. They'd take their son out for a nice days somewhere and we were left to literally roam the streets on our own. We would wander around crying...we weren't allowed to go back into the house until about five o'clock.'*
88. That's rubbish they were never left on their own. Never. They weren't allowed to go to the beach on their own. There was that busy beach coast road and at the end there was no one. Occasionally I walked to myself and even I felt scared. You know the silly things that go through your head when you are on your own. There's no way they would have been allowed to go to the beach on their own. No way they would have been left. Not on their own. Never.
89. The passage of time would not have affected my memory of events like that. Definitely not. I don't know why FGO is saying this. Something has happened to her over the years that has changed her. I can't believe she is saying these things or thinks them. I don't know if she is looking for some sort of pay out at the end of this. I know that happens. If a child was treated in the way FGO is describing that definitely would be

abuse. I would lock them up and throw away the key. There was no way this could have gone undetected though. We had family there all the time. They visited frequently and all thought the girls were nice.

90. FGO also said FGL *used to buy us clothes and shoes from jumble sales...she'd get us shoes that were hanging off us.'*
91. I don't remember buying second hand shoes for anybody. I didn't like second hand shoes. When were at jumble sales if they wanted something that fitted them they would get it. Jumbles sales were everywhere back then. That was something we used to do a lot at the weekends. If they needed something new they would have got it, but it wouldn't have been posh or anything like that. We didn't get an allowance for that from social work. If it had been long term we maybe could have asked, but we didn't know how long they were going to be with us. It was very difficult.
92. FGO says *'...we could only have a bath when the FGK-FGL said we could...we had to use really old, worn towels. The FGK-FGL had separate towels and face cloths and we weren't allowed to touch them.'*
93. Everyone had their own towels. We've always done that. Perhaps they used the same towels at home and weren't used to that. There was no difference in the quality. Not in the slightest.
94. FGO says *'The school doctor identified that we were all very underweight. He seemed quite concerned about this, however, it was never followed up.'*
95. That's rubbish. I don't actually remember them having checks at school. I definitely wasn't present. My own doctor never said anything like that. They weren't in the slightest bit underweight.
96. FGO then said *'We were there at Christmas and I seem to remember my mother visiting us around that time because she said that social services had given money to*

the FGK-FGL to buy Christmas presents. I think we got some second hand toys, just a load of rubbish basically.'

97. Social services did not give us money around Christmas time. I remember them having dolls as I did a lot of knitting for the dolls and gloves for the girls. I couldn't say what they got for Christmas. I am sure the gran's and the granny's would have provided stuff for them as well.
98. FGO says 'A female social worker came to speak with us, but she spoke with us in the house when the FGK-FGL were there.'
99. Never. You weren't allowed to be near while the social worker was talking to the kids. They did have that point of contact on their own. That was the one thing the social worker insisted on. The girls social worker was perfectly happy with how things were. She didn't have a lot to say to FGK and I.
100. FGO goes on to say 'We were basically used as unpaid slaves. FGL was always finding chores for us to do when we came home from school...We had to do whatever she decided we should do. Basically all the general household chores.'
101. If I had asked them to do anything, they would say 'That's what you get paid for'. That was the attitude. Why should we do anything. If they did anything it would be helping with the washing up or tidying up their bedroom. The normal things that children helped with. Never, ever anything else.
102. FGO also said 'One of the worst things she did was to make us go for the shopping...she would send all three of us on our own to Leith. She would give us a shopping list and make us walk all the way into Leith and get everything on the shopping list. The bags were so heavy and we were just little girls...our wrist and hands were always bleeding when we got back...we'd get hammered if we didn't get something or we got something wrong.'

103. Leith is far from [REDACTED] I can't imagine sending children or anyone to go and get shopping in Leith from [REDACTED] I can't actually ever remember taking them shopping to Leith. If we went shopping anywhere, it was [REDACTED]. I think there was a big Asda [REDACTED]. It was more like a bit warehouse and we could get a pile of stuff in there. They may have on occasion brought a loaf of bread in from the shop or a pound of carrots, but never full shopping. Never would they have found their way to Leith. No way. That's absolutely ridiculous. I wouldn't even know what direction to send them in. How long would that even take? My mother was down every other day and we would go shopping together when the girls were at school.
104. FGO [REDACTED] says FGL [REDACTED] *was a really horrible person. She showed us no affection whatsoever. She had the most terrible temper and used to scream at us all the time...The slightest thing would set her off and she would go completely insane and beat us. She would put us over her knee, pull our knickers down and hammer us with her hands. She did this mostly, but FGK [REDACTED] did it as well. It was literally any excuse and they would have us over their knee.'*
105. That is absolutely ridiculous. FGK [REDACTED] would never lay a finger on them. If he saw them in a state of undress he would have been really embarrassed. He would never in a million years do that. If I had tried to do it with FGO [REDACTED] she would probably have thrown me on my back. No way would she allow us to do that.
106. FGO [REDACTED] then goes on to say *'My sister [REDACTED] is convinced that FGK [REDACTED] got a sexual pleasure out of it and maybe FGL [REDACTED] did too because they did it so often.'*
107. That is absolute rubbish. It would be laughable if it wasn't so serious. I just cannot believe that she has said something like that.
108. FGO [REDACTED] says *'I ran away and turned up at my friend [REDACTED]'s house... [REDACTED]'s parents must have called the police because they turned up at [REDACTED]'s house and made me go back...When I got back FGL [REDACTED] pulled my knickers down and slapped the hell*

out of me. I remember her shouting things like, how dare you cause all this trouble and no wonder I don't like you.'

109. For a start there is no way she would have ran away and left her sisters. She didn't run away at all. No way. If the police brought her back they would never have left her if she was making allegations. That's absolutely ridiculous.
110. FGO goes on to say '*...she always told us how much she hated us. We were treated like we were infected. We weren't allowed in the lounge or the kitchen, unless we were eating or cleaning up after them...we had to use the really old worn towels in the bathroom and the nice towels that the family used were kept separate. We weren't allowed to use their plates either. They fed us in tiny, round, plastic margarine tubs. We got the tiniest amounts of food and we were all severely undernourished and underweight.'*
111. Margarine came in blocks back then. No one had margarine tubs. It is just farcical. We were a family. Everyone had the same dishes. The only thing I can think of is this home baker we used to go to in Jock's Lodge. It was the most fantastic stuff and I used to go there for treats. I would stock up with cakes and things. They were so cheap. They did these trifles in little waxed cartons and I would get a pile of them. I was thinking, is that what she imagines was a margarine tub. They would have had those trifles. It was a family treat. They would come with me and chose the kind of cakes they liked. That's the only thing I can imagine she thought was margarine tubs. She would have been right on the phone telling social work to take them away if that happened.
112. You don't tell children you hate them. It is just farcical. It is like some Victorian melodrama. I am expecting her to say that they were sent up chimneys next or down the coal mine. I actually feel sorry for FGO I think something must have happened to her over the years because this is not the sweet little girl that I knew.

Lessons to be learned

113. I carried on fostering when we moved to Cheadle in England. We had a foster son who was two years old. He was such a handful and had terrible behavioural problems. He was in special education all the way through. We were always at the doctors with him as he had cerebral palsy. We adopted him when he was fourteen. We stopped fostering other children in 1976 because our foster son required a lot of care.
114. The social work in England were great. They were always at hospital appointments with us. I had to let them know exactly what was happening with our son, health wise. They were very good, but rushed off their feet. They were always at the end of the phone if you needed help. They encouraged us to adopt our son and eased our worries. They were behind us all the time and the adoption went through ok.
115. I think social work are still overworked and need more staff. More money needs to be spent. There is not enough resources and it is not helping the children or the foster parents. At the moment I would never advise anyone to become foster parents because of the mess social work is in.
116. Foster parents should have dedicated social workers to help them and should be advised to keep records and diaries. They should discuss these diaries with the social worker occasionally and see if anything needs to be changed. Also check if there is anything the foster parents are worried about. This is needed to protect the foster parents and the children.
117. I think foster children should have free access to social workers, on their own, frequently.

Other information

118. 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.

FGL

Signed.

Dated.

27th May 2022