

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

ABK

Support person present: Yes

1. My full name is ABK but I prefer to be called ABK. My name at birth was ABK. I changed my name when I was sixteen years old. My date of birth is 1959. I am 58 years old. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.
2. I was born in Glasgow. My mother's name was and my father's name was . I had an older sister called who was born in 1955, and an older brother, JAA who was born in 1957.

Life before going into care

3. My mother was Scottish and my father was Indian, which is where the name came from. What I have learned from papers is that my mum and dad were together for about four or five years, and that they had us three in that time.
4. This was the late 1950s and early 1960s and they didn't have the same multi-cultural society that we have now. It was not a diverse society and my mum and dad had to live at different addresses even while they were together. It would have been unheard of for them to be seen as being together, especially as they had children out of wedlock. There were huge barriers for that relationship to work.
5. My understanding is that my mother's side of the family had racist tendencies. They didn't want my mum to be with a coloured person, and worse words were probably used at that time. This caused added difficulties. My mother used to take my sister

out and put talcum powder on her face to make her look more white. My brother and sister were darker than me.

6. My mother got a lot of abuse and had a mental breakdown. She was taken into a hospital or some kind of institution. Her mother was the matriarch of the family, and I think she and the rest of the family convinced my mother to give us up. They told her it was on a temporary basis until she got better, but that was never going to happen. As soon as my mum agreed to put us into care, that was it really.
7. I think my mum's family put lots of barriers up to make sure that there was never going to be any positive outcome after we went into care. I was ten months old when I first into care.

Bellevue House, Rutherglen, Glasgow

8. The three of us went into care into Bellevue House. I was ten months old, my brother was two years old and my sister was four years old.
9. I left Bellevue when I was about two years old. I don't have any memories of the place at all. My brother doesn't have much, but my sister has some memories. My understanding was that Bellevue was closing and that's why we were moved on.
10. In 1961, the three of us moved to Smyllum.

Smyllum Orphanage , Lanark

11. All I knew about the place at that age was that there were nuns, priests and workers and handymen. My experience in Smyllum was from age two until age six, so I only remember some incidents.

12. The first thing I remember is a huge, imposing building. It was like a big castle to me. There were lots of fields all around it. It gave me a fear but I don't know why.
13. I was taken up the stairs and into a big hall, getting introduced to people. The nuns wore the big black outfits and rosary beads.
14. I think I went into the nursery when we first went in. My brother and sister were older so we weren't kept together.
15. I don't remember anything about a daily routine. This is one of the things I find strange and disconcerting. I don't remember any structure about getting up for breakfast, having lunch or dinner. I don't remember sitting in the dining hall or eating.
16. I vaguely remember attending school. I remember going into a classroom, but that is all. I don't remember doing any work. It is not a vivid memory.
17. My main memory is either being inside and going to bed, or being outside. When I was outside, it was in the fields and climbing trees. I remember eating grass because I was starving. It was hard because there were cowpats all over the place. There was a place called the Top Lodge and you weren't allowed past there. I would go out that way a lot, and sit in a tree eating bits of leaves.
18. I slept in a dormitory with other boys. I remember it was cold, dark and basic. I know there were quite a few beds but I don't know how many boys were in there. I don't know the age group of the boys but I remember Sammy Carr was in my dormitory, and he was about the same age as me.
19. There was another boy in there called [REDACTED] who was a persistent bed-wetter. His sister, [REDACTED], was also in the home. I remember the name [REDACTED] but I couldn't say why I knew him.

20. I remember being allowed to go to a sweetie shop called 'the rock shop.' I think you got a penny or something to go to the shop. It only happened once or twice. It was not a routine thing.

Staff

21. I remember a staff member called ACF [REDACTED] who I didn't like. There was a [REDACTED] called BAC [REDACTED] who I kept away from, but I don't know why. I can't remember him doing anything specific to me, but I know people around me didn't like him.
22. There was a nun called Sister BAE [REDACTED]. She was quite small and motherly. She was quite nice I think, and she used to play the piano. I remember she was the only member of staff who I thought was nice. There was also a nun called Sister EAC [REDACTED] who I always thought was evil. She was always shouting and screaming. She was a horrible person.

Memories of Sammy Carr

23. I remember being with Sammy a couple of times when we were playing outside. The reason I remember Sammy is that he was really blonde and I was quite dark. Maybe it was because opposites attract and that's why he was my friend.
24. My other memory of Sammy Carr is trying to wake him up one morning. We were all told to get up and I was shouting on him to get up. I was telling him he'd get in trouble if he didn't get up. Then I think the nuns came in and tried to get him up. I asked them why he wasn't getting up, and they told us all to leave.
25. The next thing I heard about it was when I was told that he had been bitten by a rat. I didn't know what that meant. I remember following a wee white coffin, and probably going to his funeral. I didn't have any understanding of what had happened. Nobody spoke to me about it. He was a friend and it was a horrible thing.

26. When you are between the age of three and five, your parents would usually explain things to you, but I didn't have that. I always wondered what happened and why he wasn't there.

Visits and Inspections

27. I didn't see my sister very much when I was in Smyllum. I can't remember seeing her in all the years I was in there unless we were going out somewhere.
28. I got no visitors. I wasn't told anything about my family. As far as we were concerned, we were orphans. I remember the nuns telling us we were orphans and we were dirty because we were of mixed race. I don't think we were respected and they just seen us like a piece of dirt.
29. I don't remember anyone visiting to ask me about how I was getting on or if I was enjoying the place. That doesn't necessarily mean that nobody did come in to check the place; I just don't remember anyone speaking to me.
30. Later in life, my mother told us that she went to Bellevue to see us and she was told quite categorically that we had all been adopted out. The nuns at Bellevue told her this and said they couldn't give her any more information. My mum had no idea that we were in Smyllum.

Trip with potential foster carers

31. My brother, my sister and I were taken out by potential foster carers. We had to go and meet the nuns in the hallway one day, and then these people took us away for the weekend. They were strangers and we hadn't met them before. We didn't know why we were going away with them.
32. They were a couple called AGP-AGQ It was a horrific weekend. All I remember is being in a house and they were all drinking. There was violence and we

were hiding. It was not a happy time. I told my brother I never wanted to go back there.

33. When AGP-AGQ dropped us back at Smyllum, the place was all in darkness. They just dropped us off and we were left standing outside the building. I was getting really badly upset because it was pitch black and nobody was around. We didn't know how long we would have to stand there.
34. Eventually we saw a light coming towards us and it was a bus. Everybody from the home had been out for the day, and had just come back. I got a dressing down for being hysterical and was told to behave myself. There was no sympathy or anything. I was only about four years old maybe.
35. I wasn't asked about the weekend with AGP-AGQ I don't remember seeing them again.

Abuse at Smyllum Orphanage

36. I was a bed- wetter. I remember wetting the bed and always trying to hide it. I don't specifically remember ever getting caught or punished for it. I may have been slapped over the head but I don't know. I remember being hit but I don't remember the specifics of why I was hit.
37. I was pulled out of bed one night by ACF or Sister EAC. They are the only two workers I remember, and I think it was probably ACF. She dragged me to the toilets. It may have been for bed- wetting but I don't know that for sure. The toilets were very bare and there were no toilet seats. She sat me on the toilet, grabbed my shoulders and started pushing me down into the toilet. I started screaming because I thought I was going to disappear down the toilet. She kept flushing the toilet while pushing me into it.

38. I remember being in the dormitory one night, and we were all having a pillow fight. We were jumping around then we heard somebody coming. Everybody ran to their beds but I didn't make it to my bed in time. I am sure it was ACF who came in, but it might have been EAC. She started hitting me with a coat hanger, or something like that. She dragged me to the fire escape at the end of the dormitory and through me out, then shut the door. I was just wearing a wee gown or something.
39. There was a big staircase that ran up the side of the building and I was there on my own. I was screaming and crying, and banging the door trying to get back in. It was just awful. It was pitch black and I kept imagining some bad man coming up the stairs to get me. I remember being left there and it was horrific, but I don't know how it ended.
40. I had a lot of nightmares about those two incidents.
41. When I learn about all the cruelty that went on in Smyllum, I think in some ways I was lucky. I think I was maybe too young to experience some of the real cruelty. If I did experience something then maybe I have blocked it out.
42. My brother and sister both had bad experiences in Smyllum. But I don't think it is for me to talk about their experiences.

Leaving Smyllum

43. I was in Smyllum for four years and left in 1965, when I was six years old. I hated the place. I just felt in fear all the time. The only fun time I remember was being outside and playing hide and seek, and climbing trees.
44. I found it a sad place. I never experienced any joy in there. I didn't know why I was there and I was ostracised. I was made to feel like a bad smell getting under peoples' feet. I just remember being told to go away all the time.

45. One day, when I was six years old, a couple from Rutherglen came to the home. Me, my brother and sister were introduced to them. We were told that we were going to go and stay with them for a weekend. I didn't know who they were.
46. I remember going for the weekend and meeting their family. It was strange because I had never experienced being in a house. It was a normal council house and these were prospective foster parents. They had grown up children of their own who we met. I remember it as being a good experience.
47. We went back to the home after the weekend with these people. We then knew the three of us were being taken away to live with that couple permanently. I don't know who organised it. We didn't have the opportunity to say if we didn't want to go.
48. The prospect of leaving Smyllum and staying with a family sounded really good.

Foster care – Mr and Mrs [REDACTED]

49. Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] were older and lived in Rutherglen. They were more like the age of grandparents. They had two children who were older and had moved out.
50. I stayed with my foster parents from the age of six until I was fourteen. I always felt like we didn't really fit in there because they were so much older.
51. I think my foster mother grandstanded the fact that she had fostered us, as if to show everyone how great she was for taking on these three mixed race children. I felt like we were on show all the time. Every time we went out anywhere, she would tell people about how we were the three mixed race children she had fostered, and tell people everything about us.
52. I have a cutting of a newspaper of the three of us with Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] There was a competition for people who were doing good things, which Mr and Mrs

EHH-EHJ won. They won a cruise for just the two of them. It didn't work out and they got the money instead.

Religion

53. I was a choir boy, a cub, an altar boy and a boy scout. I was in everything religious you could think of. Our foster parents were very dictatorial when it came to religion. We said the rosary every night. It was not something we were into and it was a chore. If we didn't want to say the rosary, we were confined to our room.

Discipline and abuse

54. It wasn't an abusive place. I got the odd slap from my foster father if I did something wrong, and he would shout at us. I wouldn't call it physical abuse. More of it was emotional, and it was an archaic regime.
55. When we did something wrong, we would be threatened with being sent back to the children's home. It was a constant threat. My brother used to get really upset over that.
56. I don't have a lot of great memories of the foster home but it was my first time being part of a family.

Visits

57. There were visits made by social workers, but that was usually when we had done something wrong. They would only come as a result of our foster parents calling them because they weren't happy about something we had done. A social worker would then come round and get us into trouble.
58. I don't remember a social worker ever coming to speak to me alone or asking me how I was.

Schooling and social life

59. I was the only coloured person at school. I remember getting called a “paki”, “black man” and darkie” every day at school. There was a programme that came out called Roots, and there was a character in it called “Kunta Kinte” who was black, so I got called that for a while. I would get into fights and that kind of stuff.
60. I played football at school and even the dads of other boys would be shouting racist things about me during the game. They would be shouting things like “Get that darkie” or “Get that paki” and things like that. I got it everywhere I went.
61. One of the reasons I was getting racial abuse was because my name was ABK and I had a Scottish accent. I got questions all the time about how I had white parents. I was always having to explain and justify things. It was constant through school.
62. I would go home upset and tell my foster parents I was being bullied and didn’t want to go to school. They didn’t understand. They would tell me about how they had gone to all the trouble to take me in and look after me.
63. I had a couple of quite good pals. I always felt that I didn’t fit in with my foster parents because they were so much older. My friend’s parents at school were younger and so they were younger minded. My foster parents were more strict because of their age and values. This meant that I wasn’t allowed to go out and do a lot of things that my friends were allowed to do.

Leaving foster care

64. My sister got moved on when she was sixteen years old. I don’t think she had actually done anything wrong. She had maybe taken some alcohol when out with her friends. The worst part is that she was sent to a convent.

65. I feel that my foster mother was looking for an excuse to move us on at this point. Foster carers stopped getting money when children turned sixteen so it seems coincidental that [REDACTED] was moved on when she was sixteen.
66. My brother was fifteen years old and was doing really well at school. He went to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in Hamilton, which you had to be really good to get into. I was fourteen and was a run of the mill delinquent. I was running around smoking and drinking with boys I shouldn't have been hanging around with.
67. One night I stayed out all night with my pals, which was really bad back then. I think it was just a release from all the racial abuse I was getting. Maybe I thought that it would get me moved away. That incident did put an end to my foster care. After that incident, JAA [REDACTED] and I were both moved on. I think JAA [REDACTED] didn't forgive me for a while for that.
68. We were sent to a children's home in a place called Cullen, just outside Buckie in the north of Scotland.

Campbell House Children's Home, Cullen

69.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

70.

71.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

72.

73.

74.

75.

Glengowan Boys' Hostel, Pollokshields

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

76.

77.

78.

79.

80. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

81.

82.

83.

84.

Reporting of abuse at Smyllum

85. I gave a statement to the police in the 1990s about Smyllum and Sammy Carr. They contacted me and came out to see me. They told me that they may not contact me again and they didn't, and that was fine. I gave the police JAA and [REDACTED] details to contact them.

86. I saw an ad in the paper in the 1990s, about contacting Ross Harper Murphy Solicitors if you had been abused in Smyllum. I contacted them and Cameron Fyfe was my solicitor.

87. I didn't see much of my brother and sister as an adult. They were in different parts of the country. I wrote to them to ask if they would also write a report about their time in Smyllum, separately from me, and they did. They sent their reports to me and I forwarded them on to my solicitor.
88. I have also contacted criminal injuries.
89. The police then came to see me again this year, in 2017, and took a statement again. They said they've opened up a new investigation specifically about care, and they were trying to see everybody from Smyllum first.

Life after being in care

90. I got a job in the office of an engineering works in the town. It was very low paid. My social worker got me digs to stay in. I lived with a woman and a son in [REDACTED] in Glasgow.
91. My digs were fifteen pounds a week and I only earned about £9-10 a week. Social work paid half the money for digs. It still didn't leave me much but I didn't have a choice. I only had about £2.50 left for the week.
92. The woman I lived with provided breakfast and dinner. She was lovely to begin with but that changed when I moved in. Sometimes I would have to walk home from town to [REDACTED] because I had no money. I'd be knackered. She would make me a rubbish tea, while they had much nicer food than me.
93. After a while, she would tell me to go and sit in my room after eating dinner so I couldn't even sit and watch television with them. I would just be in my room on my own.

94. I left that place after six months and managed to get a bedsit-type thing in Pollokshields. I had another job by this time. I was working in an accounts office for a whisky firm on ██████████ Street. I got quite a decent wage increase because I told them my previous salary was higher than it was.
95. I was living on the top floor of a tenement building. It was ran by an older man and his grandson. There were a few other lads in the flat. My room was in the attic. The springs in the single bed were broken and sticking through, and there was no glass in half the window.
96. I also wasn't allowed to use the bath in the flat. I had to hand wash my clothes and stick them out the window. I would be freezing at night. In the mornings, I would sometimes have to wear wet clothes to go to work. Every so often I would have to go to Calder Street Baths and pay to have a bath.
97. That was one of my lowest points in life. I didn't know how I was going to get out of my situation. I was eighteen at this time and social work had moved on so I was totally on my own.
98. I felt the bedsit was not a good place to be. I felt like there were things going on there that were not right between the old man running it and the younger boy who lived there. I felt it was time to get out of there.
99. One of the guys I knew from the hostel had his own flat so I moved in with him for a while. I then moved to a bedsit in Queens Park for a while. It was more of an independent bedsit. That is where I met ██████████ my wife. She stayed next door to me.
100. My life changed from then on. I had met somebody I wanted to be with. I asked her to marry me after two weeks and she told me to "away and behave yourself." We then moved in together for just over a year and then got married. We have been together for 37 years now and married for 34.

101. I have two sons. I was 28 years old when [REDACTED] was born. It was wonderful. When I was eighteen or nineteen, I had nobody, and now I had my own family. Then eleven months later, my son [REDACTED] was born. I have been hands-on with my boys, and always tried to support them and make them feel important.
102. I went to night school for three years and did a diploma in management. I had two wee boys at home and was still working full time. I got a job with Department for Work and Pensions, and worked my way up.
103. I traced my mum when I was thirty years old. She wanted to see us so I went to see her with my brother and my sister. My mum had an Italian boyfriend who she had been with for about twenty or thirty years.
104. JAA [REDACTED] sort of rejected our mother when he met her. He didn't recognise her as his mother. I persevered and I tried to get to know her as much as I could.
105. My mum had cancer and was in quite a bad place. My mum told me that she tried to find us but the nuns at Bellevue had told her that we had been adopted out and they couldn't give her any information. I have no reason to disbelieve my mum.
106. We also found out that the social work department knew that my mum lived five miles from our house in all the time I was growing up in Rutherglen. She lived in Maryhill. The social work department knew my mum was alive the whole time we were in care and we were never told. To me that is the biggest cruelty.
107. I had a huge difficulty with my mum's family. I had four aunts and five uncles. I met two of the aunts. I could tell that they didn't want me around. I think they were still racist.
108. My mum went into Stobhill Hospital and I would go and visit her. The relatives would just barge in when I was in with her. There was one day when my two uncles came up and my mother just told them "My son's here. Go away and come back another time." That was a proud moment . It was lovely that she did that.

109. While she was in hospital, [REDACTED] went to her flat and done it all up for her with a new bed, curtains and wallpaper. At that time we didn't think the cancer was terminal. Sadly she never came home to see it. She died a year after I met her. I got to know her and love her for the person she was. Her partner had died six months before her.
110. My mum asked me to arrange the funeral which I did. All her family came to the funeral. I organised a meal in a hotel afterwards and none of her family came to it. I booked it for about forty people and there were just seven of us. The hotel manager never charged us for it. That was hurtful but I am glad I got to do what my mother wanted.
111. Our understanding about our father is that he possibly didn't have a lot of say when we were put into care. I am not sure that he would have been a single parent at that time. According to my mother, my father was 57 years old when I was born so it is unlikely that he is alive.
112. JAA [REDACTED] has been to India and tried to track the family but it is difficult, especially due to the partition. He has tried to get records and find things out but it has been difficult. [REDACTED] is a very common Sikh name. My brother has found out that my father may have had another family name. JAA [REDACTED] was more drawn to my father.
113. I took early retirement when I was 56. I was a [REDACTED] manager with the Department for Work and Pensions. I went back and did other work. I worked with disabled adults in [REDACTED] for about a year. I then went back into government, as a [REDACTED] consultant [REDACTED] I did it for five months and left. I am now back to early retirement. I have applied to do voluntary work with the Samaritans.
114. My sons are now older and have moved out. We have a good relationship. I also have three foster daughters. Two of them are now sixteen years old. One of them has been with us for three years, and the other has been with us for over a year. The third one has been with us since she was five years old and she is now

eighteen. We also had her sister from the age of eleven, who is now 23 and lives down south.

115. We got into fostering by accident. A few years ago, one of my son's friends was in a foster home and it broke down. My son asked if we could take them. We were doing respite for children with learning disabilities at the time, so we had already been through the fostering panel. When we applied to take our son's friend and we were allowed. We have probably been looking after children for about 22 years.
116. I am still in touch with Father Concannon who has been a great friend to me. I am going to visit him in Ireland.

Impact

117. There was a time I was at a crossroads when I was about seventeen and eighteen. I started hanging around with lads who were a bad influence and dabbling in things. I never got into drugs but I think that was something inherent in me that always pulled me back. Maybe it was my time in foster care or the hostel that helped me do that. There was no support structure at that age for me and that easily could have gone the other way.
118. To me the biggest cruelty was not telling us that our mother was alive all the years we were in care. She only lived about five miles away from us. I am not saying my life would have been any better with our mother, but it would have been really useful knowing that we had some roots as we were growing up. I also think it is a fundamental right to have known this. I had to wait thirty years to get to know my mother.
119. I have never been confident in anything I have ever done. My colleagues have told me that I come across as competent and confident. I have done many presentations in my job, and it would make me ill. I would be in the toilet practically throwing up because I didn't feel confident in myself and my abilities.

120. I always felt like an outsider and did not feel a part of society as I was growing up. I felt like I was undeserving, so as I got older and started to do thing on my own, I got more and more self-conscious. Other people came across as so much more confident, whereas I questioned everything.
121. When I was doing my diploma, I was in a class with about twenty people. There were guys from IBM and different places. I would be tearing my hair out over the essays. I used to dread handing it in because I would think they would tell me it was rubbish. I won an award for student of the year two years in a row. They said it was for the way I worked and my people skills. I thought they'd made a mistake but they hadn't.
122. I got to quite a high level in the civil service, but I probably could have shot up further in life if I had the self-confidence and self-belief. I always questioned myself and thought I should just consider myself lucky when I got to the stage I did. One of my sons is already at the same level in [REDACTED] as I was when I was retired, and he is only thirty years old. That is the difference that having confidence makes.
123. One of the difficult things for me has been how to move on in life and not look back at my life in care. I think my brother and sister helped teach me that lesson because I didn't want to go down the path that they did.
124. I decided I wasn't going to go and see a psychologist. Their job is to make you look back and explore problems and I don't want to do that. I think there are things in my subconscious that I don't want to dig for. I have never sought any counselling. The thing that has kept me going is my sense of humour. I can adapt to any social circle although I can get nervous, but it has gotten easier with age.
125. I have suffered with anxiety attacks and psoriasis over the years. That could be related to my upbringing.
126. My brother JAA [REDACTED] has found things difficult all his life. He has had depression and seen psychologists. He moved about England when he was younger and had a

difficult time. He lived a nomadic life in his twenties. He later met his wife, got a degree and became an English literature and history lecturer. He is retired now.

127. I was estranged from my brother for about twenty years. I recently decided to just drive to his house in Dunkeld and turn up at his door. He told me to come in and we talked for an hour. He was going to India, and he asked me to meet him and his wife once he got back. We have since met and are building up a relationship up again.
128. My sister [REDACTED] memories of being in care are very powerful. The impact of being in care has been huge on her. She was moved to a convent when she was sixteen and back with nuns again. She was treated like dirt and she hated it
129. My sister got a flat in Edinburgh when she left care. [REDACTED] was a stunning girl when she was in her twenties. She worked in [REDACTED] department store and was fashionable. She also worked in a lawyer's firm. She studied to degree level and did really well. Me and my sister were really close and had a good relationship.
130. She met her husband [REDACTED]. He was the best thing that could have happened to her at the time. They got married and had two children. As the years went by, [REDACTED] husband became emotionally abusive. He moved the family further and further out of the city until she was isolated. She couldn't drive and became like a prisoner. [REDACTED] had mental problems and started to self-harm.
131. Me and my sister were really close and had a good relationship. She would come and visit me and I would visit her. One day she phoned me and said she needed to get out. I drove through the night and moved her out the house. She got away but was a single mother of two children aged eleven and thirteen with no support. It took its toll.
132. [REDACTED] children moved to London when they turned eighteen. She was left alone and went downhill. She started to take mood swings and became a manic depressive. She visited me once and she looked like a lonely wee figure sitting at the

train station. She looked like a bag lady. It made me cry when I saw her. She slept the whole time she visited and didn't want to go out.

133. [REDACTED] has seen psychiatrists and psychologists. She has also done cognitive behaviour therapy. I haven't spoken to my sister for years. She is in a care home in [REDACTED] now. She has been there for quite some time. She is an extreme manic depressive. I have contacted the care home to say that I would be happy to see her, but they tell me she won't see anyone. Her own children live in London and she won't even see them when they visit her.
134. I feel the impact of [REDACTED] childhood, and then a lack of a support during her adolescent years, has had a devastating effect on her life. She is now a shell of her former self. She needs full time care. It's heart breaking.
135. My brother and sister's difficulties have stemmed from their upbringing. It has had an impact on me because it has made it difficult for me to have any kind of relationship with them. I have been denied that, and my sons have missed out on having an uncle and an aunt.

Records

136. All of my records from growing up were in Rutherglen. I contacted Rutherglen social work about a year and a half ago and they said that all my paperwork had been moved to Hamilton.
137. I then wrote to the data protection officer about getting my records. I emailed him what info I had. I got a letter a few weeks later with all the information they could find. All it was, was a piece of paper with my name, my parents' names and the fact that I was in Smyllum.

138. Whenever I met my social workers when I was older, they would have big files on me when they met me. I know there are files on me somewhere, but I am being told that the one piece of paper with three things written on it is all they have.
139. My brother has also been trying to trace his records and he didn't get anywhere either. My sister told me that when she tried to get her records from Rutherglen, the head social worker told her she didn't want to know and to just leave it.

Other information

140. I wouldn't necessarily expect to get love and affection in Smyllum or Bellevue, but fundamentally , there should have been a basic standard of care. There should have been more responsibility and more accountability, as there was none when I was there.
141. When I was young, we weren't well matched to our foster parents. I think it was more a case of finding anybody who was willing to take these three mixed race children. I think we would have been given away to anybody. I think where possible, children nowadays are more matched and linked to their foster carers and adoptive parents.
142. There was no support structure when I left care, just before I was eighteen. I had nobody. It was my lowest point and I thought I was going nowhere and didn't know how to change things. I didn't get into drugs because I was pulled back but it could have gone the other way. There was nobody there for me in my life until I met [REDACTED].
143. There need to be visits and checks to make sure children are ok. Even today that standard falls short. The key messages all look lovely on paper, but it doesn't happen in reality. I am a foster carer and there are supposed to be carers reviews, a certain amount of announced and unannounced visits, and at least two supervisors coming out every year. This doesn't happen all the time. There are shortfalls even in today's world.

144. The unannounced visits are key. People set things up to make things look good when there are announced visits. Me and [REDACTED] encourage unannounced visits but they are still very rare.
145. Social workers also need to make more of an effort to talk to children. When social workers come to see our foster children, me and [REDACTED] immediately walk away and leave them to talk to the girls alone. We encourage them to talk privately. I don't think the social workers are proactive in doing it. A lot of the problem is lack of resources.
146. My understanding of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, as amended in 2014, was that children have the option to stay in care until age 18, 21 and possibly even 25. When our foster daughters turn 17 or 18, Leaving Care Services in Glasgow will probably start contacting us about moving them on. They try to proactively move the children on to independent living and supported care. This is not part of any legislation, as far as I can see. It may well be that it has now been replaced by Continuing Care.
147. One of our foster girls wasn't ready to move out so we became her leaving care. This meant that social work wanted her to make a budget for herself and do her own washing and cooking while she still lived with us. This immediately made her feel like she wasn't wanted in the house. It contextually didn't feel right. I disagree with the way in which this was handled in our situation, as she was already used to being in a family unit with us.
148. When she did move out, she got a flat in a really bad area in Castlemilk and got money to furnish it. She didn't want to move there but had no choice or she would be off the list. She moved in and stayed there for six months. She paid all her rent on time and was a perfect tenant. She was working as a waitress and going home late, and there was a drug den around her. I went to see her one night and could see that it wasn't safe.

- 149. I phoned the council and had to argue with them. They said they'd look into it. We ended up taking her back home with us, and she was taken off the housing list. That whole venture was horrible for her. If she didn't have us, she would have had to stay in that bad environment or be out on the street.

- 150. It is fine to move children on to independent living or supported care if it is appropriate. Our girls say they want to stay with us for as long as they can. I said that is fine but they might feel differently when they go to college when they're a bit older. They might feel differently in a couple of years, which is normal.

- 151. The care process of 16 to 21 year olds really needs to be looked at. Sometimes 18 year olds are just put out. This Leaving Care Service in Glasgow needs to be looked at and reformed. There needs to be some clarity and transparency around the process. There needs to be a consistent approach throughout Scotland, instead of different councils implementing their own processes. There also needs to be more variable options to fit different situations.

- 152. I wanted my experience to be put on record to help, as evidence, other people from Smyllum or Bellevue.

- 153. 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.

ABK


Signed.....

Dated..... 21/11/2017