

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FDS [REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My full name is FDS [REDACTED] which is my married name. My name at birth was FDS [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1983. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was born in Glasgow, and lived in a Shettleston flat with my mum, dad and older sister, [REDACTED], who was four years older than me. My mum was [REDACTED] and my dad was [REDACTED].
3. My home life wasn't very stable, and my dad was in and out of prison all the time so it was mainly my mum that looked after us. I found out later that he was in for petty thefts and robberies. When he was home, there was a lot of domestic abuse between them.
4. I also remember me and my sister going with my mum to stay in a homeless shelter in Stirling. It was probably to get away from my dad. We moved around when my dad was out of prison. When he was in prison, we could stay at home.
5. That moving around pattern lasted from the age of three to five. I was in and out of care placements, I also went to stay with my aunty and then my nana for a while.
6. My little sister, [REDACTED], was born when I was four years old.

7. I remember social workers always being involved with us when we were younger. It was Parkhead Social work who were based at Burger Street at the time. I can only remember seeing them when they were coming to take me away, but I know from reading my files that they were coming to support my mum on a weekly basis.
8. One night when we were home, my mum set the house on fire. She was on drugs and asleep. I was about four years old, and my wee sister was just a baby. I remember the fire brigade came and the social work were called to take us away for the night.
9. After that, it was assessed that being with our mum wasn't the best place for me and my sisters. We went into care for a while, and then they tried to have us stay with my nana but that never worked. I was fully accommodated when I was five years old, and my parents lost parental rights and responsibilities over me and my sisters.
10. I wanted to stay with my mum. Although she couldn't look after us, she was always fun. She was always singing and dancing with me and my sisters, and made us laugh.

### **Early life in care**

11. Altogether, I was in seventeen foster homes and three children's homes. I think the majority of placements happened between the ages of three and six and they were all short placements. Between the ages of three and four, they would be short foster placements and we would go back to my mum. I was also in a children's home, which was maybe in Bridgeton, for a couple of nights, but I don't remember the name of it.
12. The first placement we had after the fire was a lady who was a foster carer. I remember being taken in a car with my sisters during the night. A social worker took us. I don't remember having any of our things with us. I was four years old at the time.
13. I went back to stay with my mum for a short period after that. I remember starting primary one at Thorntree Primar School when I was back with my mum. I remember

not being able to sit in class for the full day and my desk would be placed outside the classroom door because my behaviour was too bad to sit in class.

14. Thing didn't work out at home with my mum and social workers decided to remove me from my mum. I went to stay with my aunt and uncle for a short time and then was permanently placed into care.
15. The social workers I remember are Claire Allen and Jim Rooney who were there right at the beginning. I remember Peter Allen. I remember Norman Sinclair was one of the seniors.
16. Me and my sisters had about five different placements in a short space of time, then my wee sister went to stay with my aunty, and me and [REDACTED] went to another placement.
17. I remember there being two wee boys in one of the placements and they were nasty. We had a little window above our bedroom, and the boys used to climb up and look at us through the window at night. I don't remember the names of the people we were with or where it was.
18. I was a hyperactive and angry child. I used to get moved a lot because nobody wanted me because of my behaviour. I remember my mum used to tell me that I would get to go home if I made trouble because they would run out of places to put me, so she told me to terrorise them.
19. I was very defensive and protective of my sisters so if I felt a foster carer was saying anything to them, I would kick off and wreck their house.
20. Me and [REDACTED] were split up too and she was put in a home, and my younger sister was still with my aunty in Shettleston. It was probably thought that I was a bad influence on my sisters.

21. I then had a few placements on my own. Peter Allen was my social worker at the time. I stayed with a woman called [REDACTED] and then with another lady on [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I started school when I was at [REDACTED] and the lady would walk me to school. It was winter time. I don't remember the name of the school.

22. I remember having a blue book with a figure on the front that the social work had given me. Every time I went to a new placement, social workers would take me to the doctor or hospital, to get stripped and checked by the nurse. They would mark in the book if I had a mark or a scar anywhere.

**Foster care –** [REDACTED] [REDACTED] **Glasgow**

23. I went to stay with a couple called [REDACTED] in Baillieston, who were in their forties. I was about five or six years old when I went to stay with them, and I was back together with my sisters again in that placement. Me and [REDACTED] stayed with them for about a year, and [REDACTED] was just there for a little while.

24. The house was an upstairs, downstairs in a row of houses. They had a punk rocker son called [REDACTED] who didn't live there, and a daughter called [REDACTED] who lived with them. [REDACTED] was about nineteen years old.

25. [REDACTED] had her own room in the house. Me and [REDACTED] were in a room with a bunk bed. When [REDACTED] came to stay with us, she went into the room with [REDACTED] and I had to go into the room with [REDACTED] I slept on a single bed in her room and [REDACTED] had a double bed, but I only remember her being there sometimes.

26. I don't remember much about the routine there. I don't remember doing any chores there. I don't remember a birthday or Christmas while I was there.

27. At mealtimes, [REDACTED] and me would sit at the table. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] would be there too.

28. I don't remember there being games or toys or anything. Me and [REDACTED] used to collect bluebottles and keep them in a matchbox. There may have been toys but I just don't remember any.
29. EUY [REDACTED] had little ornaments in her living room, and she would shout at me if I accidentally bumped into one.

### *Schooling*

30. I went to Caledonia Primary School when I was staying there. I used to walk down the lane at the back of the house to school with [REDACTED] so it couldn't have been that far. I remember walking along on the road by myself as well.
31. I had been to several schools by then so I wasn't really interested in school. I was a bit chaotic so I would be playing up and wanted to get my own way. I would be made to sit at a desk outside on my own, and wasn't really incorporated into the class.

### *Trips and visits*

32. We didn't go on any holidays. They used to take us to Glasgow Zoo. We used to walk there, and it was a bit of a trek. I remember moaning to my sister about having to walk more than I remember the actual zoo.
33. My mum came to visit us twice. I was only able to see her once. I wasn't allowed to see her on one occasion as a punishment.
34. We had arranged contact with my mum every eight weeks, which was at the social work office in Parkhead. The social worker escort who was called Isobel Rennie, used to take us for contact in her big, fancy, black car.
35. I know I would have told the social workers that my mum had come to see me and I hadn't been allowed to see her. I don't remember having the conversation, but it is



something that I would have told them. I would have told the whole world that had happened.

*Discipline and punishment*

36. EUX-EUY liked [REDACTED] but they didn't like me and weren't very nice to me. they didn't like my behaviour because I wouldn't conform to what they wanted. They tried to keep me away from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]
37. EUX-EUY used to make me sit at the table until I finished my dinner. Sometimes I wouldn't want to eat it and would have to sit for ages on my own. Their daughter, [REDACTED] used to hide my food in her pockets so that I could leave the table. I remember [REDACTED] being quite kind to me.
38. When I was in the room with the bunk beds, EUX-EUY had a purpose built wooden door with a snib, and they would use that to lock us in the room at night. My sister remembers needing the toilet at night and not being able to go.
39. I used to also get locked in the room if I misbehaved. They used that as a form of punishment if I didn't do as I was told, or was shouting at my sisters. [REDACTED]'s room had a lock on the door with a round key, and they used to lock me in there as well.
40. One day my mum came to visit us, and either EUX or EUY locked me in my room. They told me that my mum was there but I wasn't allowed to see her. I was shouting on my mum out of the window. I didn't get to see her.
41. I remember thinking that I just wanted to get back with my mum and dad. I was moved after about a year because of my behaviour. I think [REDACTED] stayed with them for a while longer, so we were separated again.
42. My younger sister ended up getting adopted with a family in Bridgeton. They must have decided to split us up because they said I wasn't a good influence on my sisters.

43. I don't know if I went to another short placement after EUX-EUY or straight to the Children's Home, but I ended up in a home this time.

**Wooddean Children's Home, Blantyre, Glasgow**

44. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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**Foster care – ██████████ Falkirk**

75. I went from Woodeean to a foster carer in Falkirk. I stayed with a single lady called ██████████ and her daughter, ██████████ who was a couple of years younger than me. That was supposed to be my forever home.
76. I wasn't very well behaved in the placement. I wasn't nice to ██████████ and was horrible to the daughter, ██████████, because I was jealous of her.
77. I went to Bantaskin Primary School. I wasn't managing school very well. I went into primary five, but they moved me to primary six because the primary five teacher couldn't handle my behaviour.

78. When I went into primary seven, I was in class 7a in the morning and 7b in the afternoon because the teachers couldn't manage me.
79. I then started Falkirk High School, but I ended up getting expelled because of my behaviour. Soon after that, [REDACTED] terminated the placement because she just couldn't handle me.

**Foster care – [REDACTED] Glasgow**

80. I went to Stay with [REDACTED] in Crookston, Glasgow, when I was ten years old. I stayed with them until I was fifteen or sixteen years old. They were an older couple, who must have been in their late fifties.
81. There was an older foster boy called [REDACTED] who stayed there. There was another girl called [REDACTED] who had profound learning difficulties. She was about fifteen years old, but functioned at a lower age. She had lived with them before I arrived.
82. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]'s daughter, [REDACTED] lived there for a wee while, then left. Then a girl called [REDACTED] came to live there after I had been there for a couple of years, and stayed for a wee while. She was a little bit younger than me and had foetal alcohol syndrome. [REDACTED] also had about five Yorkie dogs.
83. I slept in a little box room on my own, and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] slept in separate rooms. When [REDACTED] came to live there, she got a room, and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] shared one. Then when [REDACTED] left, they went into separate rooms again.
84. I would have strawberries and cream for breakfast. I had enough to eat while I was there. [REDACTED] was Italian and used to cook homemade Italian food which was good.
85. [REDACTED] wasn't a nice or kind person. She never sat and did my homework with me or spoke to me about things. She didn't take me shopping or to the hairdressers.

86. I started my period, and nothing about that was explained to me. Luckily, I was a tidy person who always looked after myself, and kept myself and my room clean, but I wasn't given any direction by JAR

### *Schooling*

87. I went to Govan High School for a wee while but my behaviour was really bad and I was always getting sent out of class. My dad ended up going to the school and choked the headmaster by his tie for sending me out of class. I ended up getting expelled from Govan High School.
88. Then I attended at the Good Shepherd Centre as a day pupil. I was in a class with four people. I was already caught up in other things so didn't make the most of it.
89. My best friend who was in Good Shepherd used the schooling to her advantage and ended up becoming an educational psychologist.

### *Clothes and possessions*

90. JAR used to dress me out of charity shops and she never gave me money for make up or anything. I wasn't given any choice about what to wear. Things were just given to me by JAR I know she had the money to buy me nicer things from proper shops.
91. I spoke to a neighbour who was older than me and she said that I used to wear these mohair cardigans and dresses down to my ankles, and look like a riot.
92. It was the same with Christmas presents, JAR would just buy things for me. She never asked me what I wanted or got me anything I would like.

*Contact with family*

93. I used to see my mum and dad, and nana. They used to buy me the only nice things I had. They would buy me things when they saw me, so they would get me jewellery, Nike Air Max trainers and clothes. It was important for me to have these things when I was at The Good Shepherd School.
94. I didn't have a telly in my room. My mum and dad gave me a black and white telly to put in my room at JAR's house because I didn't have one.
95. My mum had started taking me to the pub with her when I was about thirteen. She saw me as a pal. She would give me drink and Valium. I had started smoking cannabis around then as well.

*Social work involvement*

96. Susan Cuthbert was my social worker for a while.
97. I had a review of my placement every six months. It happened in JAR's living room. The school and social workers would come. JAR and JAS would be there and they would have the whole table full of food and snacks. JAR would pretend that she was really caring and nurturing.
98. I was quite an open speaker as a child. I would always make jokes about everyone there being like mums and dads because they had parental rights and responsibilities over me.
99. I didn't say anything about being unhappy at the reviews. I knew I wasn't getting nice things and clothes and felt a bit low about that, but I didn't think it was a bad placement at the time. I was getting to go out and do what I wanted. It was better than some of the placements I had been in so I didn't realise what was wrong with it. You don't know what you haven't got.

100. I also used to go to a panel every so often.

*Healthcare*

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

102. I remember going to see the psychologist and playing with dolls and Barbies, and little kitchens. There would be somebody behind the screen noting my interactions. I remember thinking I was too old to play with them, but the psychologist said it was because I didn't get to play with them when I was younger.

**Abuse in foster care** - JAR/JAS

103. JAR wasn't a nice person and it was obvious she was just a foster carer for the money. She used to be verbally abusive to me all the time and call me a wee bastard. One time, one of her Yorkie dogs bit me, and I told her it was hanging from my leg, and she just told me that it served me right for being a cheeky wee bastard. That was how she spoke to me regularly.

104. JAR spoke to everyone in an abusive way. JAR was horrible to [redacted] who had foetal alcohol syndrome. They used to call her an "ugly wee bastard" and a "freak," and I used to try and stick up for [redacted] and give her my things. I wasn't aware of JAS doing anything sexual to her. We have never spoken about it.

105. [redacted] had apparently been moved from her last placement for doing something to the kids there. JAR used to call her a "dirty wee bastard" and say that she wouldn't be going near JAR's young grandkids.



106. I shouldn't have even known that [REDACTED] had foetal alcohol syndrome or about her past history. It was JAR [REDACTED] who told me that and it was a breach of confidence.
107. JAR [REDACTED] also used to steal from me. She never bought me anything nice, but my parents did. They had bought me a nice necklace that went missing. I looked in JAR [REDACTED] s bag and found it. I took it back. JAR [REDACTED] never asked me about it.
108. I thought I got on with JAS [REDACTED] but then he started doing things to me as well. He used to take me in his car to get toiletries, then he would kiss me and touch me.
109. JAS [REDACTED] used to kiss me and touch my breasts and rub himself up against me. He used to take me on walks with the dog and drop the lead, then tell me to pick it up. When I bent down to pick it up, he would rub his penis against my bum. This would be over our clothes because it was in the park.
110. JAS [REDACTED] would come and rub himself against my bum when I was in the kitchen as well. He would give me a massage when we were sitting watching TV in the evening. He would sit behind me and give me a shoulder massage, and then his hands would get lower and lower until he was massaging my breasts. JAR [REDACTED] would be in bed.
111. The bad thing is that I knew what he was doing was wrong but he used to give me money after it and buy me things.
112. JAS [REDACTED] started doing these things to me quite early on during my time with them. He started giving me money when I got a bit older because I was getting independent and I suppose he wanted me to keep my mouth shut. It did stop towards the end of my time there. That's because I was getting older and coming nearer to moving out.
113. JAS [REDACTED] is dead now.
114. JAR [REDACTED] used to say that [REDACTED], who had profound learning difficulties, was highly sexualised. I never saw that side of [REDACTED] but JAR [REDACTED] would tell me about it. In later

years I looked back and wondered if that was because JAS was doing things to her and she was re-enacting it.

115. I moved out of JAR and JAS's when I turned sixteen years old. I was then in the Throughcare and Aftercare system.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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### **Throughcare and Aftercare**

122. I went into the Throughcare and aftercare system when I was fifteen. This was still under the care of the social work. They helped me get a flat in Whiteinch in Glasgow after I turned sixteen.
123. When I moved to Whiteinch, I was still getting social work Throughcare support on a weekly basis. They were helping me buy things for my flat.
124. My sister, [REDACTED] had ended up moving with her long term foster family from East Kilbride to Sillloth. My social workers were giving me money to go and see her every week.
125. [REDACTED] begged me to move near her, so I spoke to Throughcare and asked them to help me move, and they did. I managed to get a Throughcare flat in Carlisle. I went to college in Carlisle and got a wee job. It didn't last long because I was quite chaotic. I was still in touch with my parents who were also quite chaotic.
126. I wasn't getting any social work intervention or support when I was in Carlisle, except for money. They were paying for my rent and putting the money straight into my account, so I started keeping the money and not paying my rent. I was only sixteen years old and if you give a young person £350 a month, they are going to keep it.
127. I got flung out of my flat for not paying the rent. I did feel disappointed with myself because I got on with my Throughcare worker. I had a good relationship with her.

### **Life after being in care**

128. I was still in touch with my parents. My mum started to get a bit jealous of me because of the relationship I had with my dad. He favoured me more than my sisters.

129. I talk to my mum now and love her to bits. She was selfish when she was younger, but she didn't have the right role models when she was growing up to show her how to be. I realised she wasn't going to change and just accepted her for who she is.
130. Looking back, I can see that I am quite a resilient person. I did go through a period of taking drugs and drinking because of the company I was keeping, but I got passed that.
131. I met my husband and have been with him for thirteen years now. We have two kids.
132. I started college to do nursing, and did an access to care course. Then I ended up doing an HNC in social care. I worked as a residential worker and got to senior management level. I am now doing a degree in residential child care. I think I ended up going into that because of my own upbringing and birds of a feather flock together.

### **Impact**

133. As I've got older, I have been upset about the fact that I took money from JAS after he did things to me. I had always been a street smart kid, so I get angry that I allowed that to happen to me. Now that I work with vulnerable people, I can see that what he did was manipulation, but it still bothers me.
134. My education was absolutely affected by my time in care. I was in so many different schools that I had no interest in schooling. I did get an education later on.
135. I got involved with taking alcohol and drugs, and got caught up with wrong people, with the choices I made. I look back on my time in care, and my behaviour and the things I did and it isn't a reflection in who I am today.
136. My time in care has affected me as an adult. I am conscious of being judged. I have always had low self-esteem and low confidence. I have had periods where I have felt

very low and spoken to the doctor about my mental health. I still get really low sometimes, but have managed to avoid taking any medication for it.

137. I have seen psychologists as an adult. I have always had problems with intimacy as and was referred to a sex therapist when I was 22 years old. At first, I couldn't even talk to the lady because I was shy, but I managed to speak to her and tell her what happened. She referred me to another psychologist but I didn't go to see her. I didn't want to talk about it all again.
138. I phoned Digby Brown and they put me in touch with Future Pathways. I have spoken to them, and they referred me to a Counsellor. I have had six sessions with a Counsellor last year, which helped me to talk about my past. I don't think it was healthy for me and it drained me. I feel like I am resilient and have always managed to pack my abuse away and not think about it.
139. The Counsellor referred me to a psychologist, who I saw, and they think I have post-traumatic stress disorder.
140. I used to hit my husband and lash out when I first started going out with him, thirteen years ago. I don't do that now. I don't lash out now but do sometimes still get angry.
141. I got my records and they said horrible things about me as a kid. I have a nice life now and have achieved things despite social workers saying I wouldn't amount to anything. That affected my confidence all over again and made me really low.
142. My relationship with my little sister was affected because we were separated and didn't have contact. I met my little sister on a bus when I was nineteen, and she was fifteen, and I didn't even know who she was. We are back in touch but she has mental health issues, and we are not really that close. I talk to my older sister, but we were all separated as kids so we are not as close as we could have been.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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### **Records**

145. I tried to get my records when I was about 22 years old. I contacted Parkhead for them, but they had been moved to Easterhouse Social Work Department. I chased them for about eighteen months before I got them.
146. They asked me to go and see the first batch in the office with them before taking them away. Then the second two batches were sent to me.
147. I have still not read them all. It was horrible to see what was written about me as a young person. It said that I wasn't emotionally intelligent, wouldn't amount to anything, and was a child who knew the system. These were comments written by social workers from when I went into care, aged three, until I left. The worse comments were when I was younger, before eleven years old.
148. What I read in my records doesn't reflect me as a person. It hurt me reading them and affected my confidence again, and made me feel low.

**Other information**

- 149. I feel I could have been more supported as a young person in care. I had about ten social workers so there was no consistency. The social workers didn't know me as a person. They just saw what was written about me on a piece of paper, which wasn't always positive. Young people in care need consistency and people they can trust.
- 150. Foster carers need to be trained on how to care for complex young people. They need to be taught how to look behind behaviours, and to spot issues. They need to learn how to be positive and nurturing.
- 151. I know the system has changed in terms of employing suitable people to work with young children.
- 152. I hope the Inquiry will prevent abuse happening to young people in care, and make sure there are better and more positive outcomes for young people in care.
- 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.

Signed.....  .....

Dated..... 20/6/19.....