

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FPF

Support person present: No

1. My name is FPF My date of birth is 1980.  
My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Background

2. I am married to FLP and we stay in our house in Glasgow along with my step son. We also have our adopted daughter and another former foster girl, who is now twenty one and have full parental control of.
3. Prior to being a foster mother I was employed as a home carer looking after the elderly. We were instructed by the social work that one of us had to be at home at all times and at that time that was me. After my time as a foster mother I returned to the caring industry and was again working as a home carer looking after the elderly. My qualifications are L and D 9 (assessment qualification), HNC in Health and Social Care, PD in Supervision in Health and Social Care and I am a qualified SVQ Assessor.

### Becoming a Foster Carer

4. When I married my husband FLP we found out we could not have children of our own. We tried to see if we could get IVF but as we had our step son we did not qualify for this. We then discussed the option of adoption.
5. FLP was a teenager when his family began being foster carers and they did this for a number of years. Whilst waiting on any adoption we decided that fostering would be

something that would be something we would be good at. We had a spare room at our first house.

6. We contacted Glasgow social work department and we were introduced to Kathy Coll. She came to the house several times over several months. This included finding out about our families and our background. We also had to attend meetings held at the social work offices. This whole process took the best part of a year for it to be completed and this was in 2003.
7. To begin with we were looking to do emergency foster care and on a short term and respite basis. We were also conscious that my step son, who was ten or eleven at the time, had to be looked after. We asked that any of the children we were to look after would be younger than him, but we were happy to take either boys or girls. At the beginning the social work agreed to this, but as soon as the first call came in it had changed.
8. I was asked to provide references and I think one of them was my former employers that we put forward. I think the social work did make contact with those references.

### *Training*

9. Part of the training process was the staff would have discussions with us as to how we might deal with some of the issues arising from the children we might look after. We would attend the social work offices once a week where they would go over different scenarios. We were also introduced to some foster parents who came along to provide assistance with the experiences they had dealt with. Many of those scenarios I had experienced as a home carer. This part of the process took several months.
10. We also attended courses which were held during the day at different hotels. Again we would go over issues that some children would have experienced in their lives. I am sure that Child Protection was one of the courses we attended. Those courses were mandatory. We were given dates of the different courses and had to make arrangements to ensure we attended them all.

11. I found many of those courses to be quite interesting and helpful. Listening to some of the other foster carers were much more helpful because they had faced those issues. Later during my time as a foster mother I also gave lectures on some of those courses. Prior to giving my lectures I had been told by one of the senior social workers that I should limit some of the content I would talk about as they did not want people to be frightened off. I found that I always wanted to speak with the foster parents as they were more insightful. It was the same when I spoke, the new foster parents came to me with things they wanted to discuss. I do think that potential carers should be told more about how to deal with the serious issues they are likely to face. It would give them a better understanding and make them better carers.
12. One area I don't recall many training days was the topic of learning and disability issues. There needs to be more emphasis placed on this by the social work teams.

#### *Foster Care Arrangements*

13. I never saw that being a foster parent was a job. I saw that I was providing care for someone and was happy to have them as part of our family. We spent every penny we got from the social work and some of our own, on the kids. We also treated all the kids we looked after the same way we treated our own.
14. Our main contact for ourselves when we were foster parents was a link worker. That person continually changed over the years. They were usually nice when we were dealing with them and they were nice with the kids when they came to the house. I have a photograph in the house with one of the link workers playing with the kids. Any issues, we updated our link worker and they would tell us they would take the issue up with seniors. There were many times when there would be no action taken by the senior staff.

### *Financial Support*

15. We did get financial support from the social work. The usual money was about £250 every two weeks, per child in our care. The money was paid into our bank account. They would also send a slip to our address confirming the amount we were being paid and for which child it related to.
16. Sometimes we would get an emergency fund but that was usually when a child first arrived. That fund varied but could amount to £100. Sometimes if it was really late at night when the child arrived we would have to go to the 24 hour shops to get some clothes.
17. Perhaps once a year we might have been sent a letter for the "Index" shop. That would be to help provide some extra bed linen. We would take that letter to the shop and be given pillows, quilts etc. up to the value stated on the letter. That was helpful, but if you had a child that issues with bed wetting or worse then it barely touched the cost we laid out.
18. Some of the children we looked after had anger issues and they would break some of the furniture or cause damage to my car. If that happened we had to pay for the replacement or repair.
19. I know of carers who are in fostering just for the money. They have used the money they receive to pay for their mortgages and bought nice houses. They would use some of the money for the kids and some of the money they paid themselves a wage. I think if people are treating fostering as a job then they might not be treating the children as part of the family and not giving them enough love and care.
20. However they use that money I think it should be exempt from National Insurance and Income Tax purposes, because inevitably we would end up using our own money as well.

### *Foster Home Household*

21. The first house we were in when we fostered was a three bedroomed house. At that time we had two girls and our son. We thought about being able to provide care for more children but we knew we needed a bigger house. We then swapped with [FLP] parents and bought each other's houses so that we had more rooms available. We later sold that and moved to another house. All the houses were in the same area of Glasgow at most a couple of streets apart. This helped when it came to schooling, as the kids going to the school could stay there even though we had moved house.
22. In relation to [FLP] parents they stayed very close to us. [FLP] sister stayed just a couple of streets away.
23. When I first started seeing [FLP] I got on really well with his family. They were good with [FLP] and helped him out while he had been a single parent. In the beginning I got on really well with [FLP] sister. Our relationship nowadays is very fragmented and we don't have much to do with them. Our youngest daughter always had a good relationship with her grandparents and liked being with her grandad.

### *Children Fostered*

24. During the time we were foster parents we looked after in excess of thirty children. The maximum children we looked after at any given time was probably five or six. The ages ranged throughout our time from about eighteen months old to around twelve years old.
25. We never fostered any children we were related to and we never considered changing the names of any of the children we were fostering.
26. There was one girl who wanted to change her name at the school to our surname. She asked to do that as it stopped her friends asking about the different names. When she was at the school she would call me mum. That was unusual as the kids normally called us by our first names. She left us in unusual circumstances. She had been in



touch with her sisters when she was fifteen and when she stopped being under the care of the social work she suddenly decided to move out and be with her sisters. That never worked out and she ended up being homeless, which was not something we ever wanted for her. Later she traced us through Facebook and we met up. She apologised for leaving so suddenly. She also told us that she did come to the house we had when she stayed with us, but we had moved to a different house. We are in frequent contact through Facebook and she now has her own family. She still occasionally asks me for advice, maybe about her earlier health issues. She knows she can come to me whenever she needs anything.

27. The first children we looked after were aged four and ten. This was a girl and an older boy, who was the same age as my step son. We agreed to it despite our requests about younger children. Not only did the social work change the age range they also changed the length of stay from short emergency care to long term. The older one stayed for five years, and the younger one around ten years.
  
28. This child was adopted and was much better with her own family and was able to show love and affection. Her brother was not so good. Their mother later got in touch and said you could see the difference in the girl, who was much more loving and caring than her brother. The mother put that down to the way we looked after the girl. We still have contact with them today. The girl remembers us fondly and we catch up most years.
  
29. When my youngest daughter arrived with us it was around 2007 and while we waited on the adoption process being completed she stayed with us as a foster child. At the end of this process we adopted her in 2009. The social work told me that she suffered from global developmental issues. She came to us when she was about two years old and they told me that she was around six months behind other children of her age. They told me that she would not be able to cope with being in main stream education. I fought this idea and got the right doctors in place to provide the different support she needed. She was able to stay in main stream education throughout all her time at school, passed her exams and is now going to college. We were not given any help from the social work.

30. Other children arrived with similar issues but as I was not the permanent parent then I could not get the right help they needed. The social work was always a barricade. They would say they were going to get the help but nothing ever happened. It was different from my daughter as I was her permanent carer and they had to help me because I just kept pushing them. I might have caused the social workers some problems, but her needs were the most important thing.
31. Our second daughter arrived in 2011, when she was eleven years old, and we were able to get full parental after the allegations. When the allegations were made against the family the social were threatening to take her away from us. We were fighting to stop this but felt we were struggling to keep her.
32. The social work came to the house and they removed her clothes and took them to a different house, without my daughter even being told about it. They called at the school and tried to take custody of her from there. She refused to go with them. She was about fifteen at this time. I contacted a solicitor who gave me details of a lawyer who specialised in child custody issues. This was passed to my daughter and she attended at his office for a meeting. At the end of the meeting the lawyer made the application to block her being removed from our care.
33. We all had to appear at a Hearing and the panel asked what my daughter wanted from the process. She told them that she was happy and wanted to stay with us. Our link worker also gave evidence that she was against this and wanted her removed into her care. My daughter spoke with panel members and made a request for that person to be removed as she was not representing her interests.
34. Another social worker, for the child, was asked to provide evidence on behalf of the social services. She stated that her senior had instructed her to state that she too wanted my daughter removed. She told the panel that she completely disagreed with her senior and our link worker and that she thought we would be good for our daughter. She had made several unannounced visits to the house to check on my daughter and never saw any issues.

35. The panel came to the decision that she could stay with us and we were given a Parental Rights Order until she turned sixteen. She is now twenty one and still stays with us. When she was eighteen she came to her own decision about wanting to change her name to [REDACTED]. It was after the process with the custody hearing that the relationship with the social work had broken down and we decided we were no longer going to foster children.
36. One girl who stayed with us brought drugs into our house. We reported it to the social work and the police. That girl was taken away from us for some respite care. I went to visit her at the new home she was placed in. I placed a bag on the bed and she immediately got upset and told me that it would have to be placed into a cupboard. Everything that she had in the home had to put in a certain place. That girl did not like this strict regime and really appreciated it when she came back to stay with us. She also got hold of my bank card and was using the card to top up her mobile phone, which amounted to nearly five hundred pounds. She admitted that she had taken my card and registered it so she could top up her phone. I managed to get that money back from the bank as they classed it as fraud. She also stole some jewellery. That placement had to come to an end.
37. She did contact us some months later saying she was sorry and asking to come back. I had discussions with different social workers, including a senior, I think her name was Jennifer Bell, and we agreed to take her back. Not long after she returned she was back to stealing from us again and we had to tell the social work to come and take her away.

#### *Placement Preparation*

38. Through some of the training we were shown some of the things that we might have to deal with as foster parents. Some of the kids that we looked after had serious issues that they had experienced prior to coming to our house.



39. When the kids arrived we were never shown any records or care plan for them. Although on most occasions we were given some details of the children we were being asked to look after sometimes this was not enough information.
40. Sometimes we might have been given access to a booklet that had been provided by the Children's Hearing. That might have supplied us with some background of the child. Without all the information it is difficult for people to realise how much damage has been inflicted on the children.
41. In my experience kids being placed in foster care do not have a proper care plan. In my work I have seen the kids with care plans make better improvements as the carers have something to work towards.
42. The problem with no plan and no information is you never know what the child's likes and dislikes are. You are left to find all this out for yourself and that may take some time. There were times when a health visitor called and we might get some information from them, especially important such as if they may have missed some inoculations. Those visits from health workers were random as she might just be passing and calling in to catch up with the young ones. The one we had was very helpful.
43. We sometimes struggled with the lack of information and support provided. The social work would come out with excuses that they were too busy. They were happy kids had placements and were no longer their worry. We always had the option to refuse a new child if we did not want anyone else at that time.
44. There was no matching of the children we were looking after. Some of the children were a good match to our family dynamics. If there was better support given for all, things might have been different.
45. Most of the time when we had a new arrival at our house then the kids that were already there would take the new child to the room to play. This gave FLP and I time to have a conversation with the social workers dealing with that child.

46. One of the girl's we looked after was placed at very short notice. We were telephoned by the social work asking if we were able to take this girl on. At that time we had a spare bed and agreed to her coming to our house.
47. When this girl arrived she was dressed in a white forensic suit. She arrived with no clothes. It turned out her mother had been arrested and there was no one to look after the girl. As a result both had been taken to the police station. When she was in the station she had wet herself and the police had no spare clothing so had her dressed in the forensic suit. We had a little supply of new underwear and pyjamas which we got her changed into. The social work handed over about £100 for us to go and buy her some clothes. We found ourselves going to a 24 hour Asda to buy the clothes she would need. We were told nothing about her background.
48. Initially when she arrived the other kids took her to their room to help get her settled. They were playing with some of the toys in their room. When the social workers left I went to the room and found she had wet herself again. I took her to the bathroom to get her cleaned up. There was no problem getting her washed but when I placed her onto the toilet she lost her temper and lashed out and began hitting me. I went out the bathroom to compose myself and then returned. I got her calmed down and again had her changed. When she went to bed she again wet herself. Once more we got her changed along with fresh linen for the bed.
49. In the morning we reported what had happened when she had lashed out. The social workers then told me they had forgotten to tell me that she wore nappies on a full time basis and it turned out she had a fear of the toilet. That meant I had put her through something that was frightening her, which I would never have done if I had been given all the correct information.
50. That was completely wrong and we were let down that the social work left out that sort of information. We could have bought pull ups when we were at the shops and I certainly would not have placed her on the toilet with her having that phobia. In this girl's case the social work were only interested in getting her handed over to some foster parents and off their hands.

51. We were never given any psychological help for this girl. I remember she was about seven years old and I videoed what was happening when she was lashing out and sent it to the social work so they could try and understand it better. There were no referrals for the likes of CAMHS. She had special needs school but went to main stream schooling with an assistant to help her. She only dealt with the toilet issue, cleaning her up and nothing about the root cause of those fears.
52. Some children who had experienced many bad things in their life will reveal some of those things at completely random times and places.
53. We had another boy who had issues with hitting people. We would have him with us to some shops and he would be enjoying himself. As soon as he was home he might go to the bedrooms and hit one of the other kids who was there. This was much the same when he was at nursery, he would be fine one minute and then for no reason hit another kid. One day I was told by another parent that she witnessed a teacher grabbing the boy, twisting his arm and dragging him up the corridor. I was obviously upset with this and spoke with the head teacher and the social work. No action was ever taken against the teacher.
54. At night we were losing sleep because sometimes he would get up during the night and go into the other rooms and frighten the kids. If we had been out, maybe at a café and he was kicking off I could speak with him and get him calm again. If he was in the company of other kids he might kick off at any time.
55. The social work did arrange for a referral to deal with his violence. But part of that treatment was he was given toy guns and swords as presents. That only encouraged him. At the end of the treatment it was decided that the best place for him was a group home and not a family environment. I completely disagreed with this. On a one to one with him I was able to keep him calm.
56. One day we were in the car with another boy and another child passed us whilst riding a pedal cycle. The boy blurted out that he could remember having a bike but that it

was burnt in a fire. FLP and I were looking at each when he disclosed this, but the training kicked in where we were told not to react when this situation arose. The child went on to tell us his father had been sitting in the bathroom of his house and had taken some drugs. Someone had then put something through the letter box causing the house to catch fire. We didn't react and later informed our link worker of the boy's disclosure.

#### *Daily Routine and Sleeping Arrangements*

57. The routine was I would usually get the kids up. FLP was up earlier around six o'clock getting ready for his work. They were all washed and dressed and down for breakfast. I then got the younger ones into their buggies for nurseries and school. Other kids, if at a school further away, would be picked up in a taxi with an escort. The rest of the day I would spend with the babies or whoever might still be in the house.

#### *Washing and Bathing*

58. As far as showers and baths were concerned the kids would have them every day. If they wanted to have an extra shower it was never an issue. The younger ones I would put into the bath, have some play time, settle them down and then put them into their beds, where I would tell them some stories.
59. The older ones had their privacy when they went for the bath or shower. I had to be there for the younger ones in case they slipped in the bath. I would sit on the floor beside the bath and help when they needed. Other older kids I might be outside and although the door was shut if they shouted on me for something I would go in.
60. Sometimes I had to tell the older ones to go for a shower, but that was just typical of most teenagers. I might also have to remind them to brush their teeth.
61. I don't know what routine my sister in law used for the children she looked after. When I saw them I did not notice anything out of the ordinary.



62. We did not have any areas in the house that were out of bounds. Our bedroom door was normally closed but there was no restrictions if they wanted to go in.
63. I don't know what arrangements my sister in law did at her house with the food or any of the meals. My kids were not there so there was never any information coming back.

#### *Clothes and Shoes*

64. When it came to getting new clothes for the children, other than an emergency arrival, then they would be able to choose what they liked.

#### *Mealtimes*

65. When it came to meal times we all sat around the dining table. FLP and I sat with the children. We would talk to the children and try to catch up on how their respective days had gone.
66. I remember one of the children being fed home cooked spaghetti that I made and they told me they had never seen this, other than out of a tin. Another girl said that she did not like chicken. We then bought some turkey slices and tried her with that. She said she liked it and we later moved onto chicken slices and again she liked that. She progressed to enjoying chicken.
67. If we were having dessert that might be given slightly later while we all watched television.
68. There were some healthy snacks available which we kept in the fridge. The other treats were usually kept high and out of reach. There were also fruit in the basket. If the kids wanted the food from the fridge or the fruit they were free to help themselves. The other treats were given out but, we tried to encourage the healthy foods first. If they were particularly hungry I would make them something.



### *Work*

69. As far as chores were concerned I would ask them to keep their bed area tidy. Sometimes rather than do that they would try to kick everything under the bed. I would help when they went to school and tidy it up. There were general things they were all asked to do such as helping to load the dishes into the dishwasher, put the toys into a basket and the crayons into the drawer.
70. I did all the ironing in the house, although FLP did help me out sometimes, but not the kids. Later my oldest daughter would help by ironing her own clothes and maybe help out our son as well.
71. We did help teach the older kids some basic cooking skills. On one occasion they tried to make homemade crisps. That might not have been their best thing ever. They knew how to use the microwave to heat up the homemade soup from the fridge. They all knew how to make sandwiches, toast etc.
72. We weren't at my sister in laws too often so I don't know what chores the kids did that stayed with her.

### *Leisure Time*

73. I don't remember any of the kids that came to us being part of any clubs or organisations. When they were settled with me that was something I would encourage and would take them to whatever activity they chose. The different kids have been involved in Brownies, football and children's boxing class.
74. There were plenty of toys, books and magazines available for the kids. There was a drawer in the kitchen where we kept the crayons and colouring books. We learned to keep them in the kitchen as we often found beforehand that the walls might be used as well.

### *Personal possessions*

75. If any of the kids arrived with their own toys etc. and if it was memory items we would get them gift boxes so they could store them and keep them separate from the group toys. Each of the children had their own chest of drawers and wardrobe so their own clothes could be kept together.
76. We also encouraged the children to have a memory box. We started this with our own kids and encouraged the new kids to do this. This was also part of the courses we were on, but I had already started it at home.
77. We never opened any bank accounts for the foster kids but we did have a piggy bank for each of them. We would put some money into each of them and encourage them to put some change they might have into it. Whenever they wanted extra sweets or treats they came to us to ask if they could get some money out of their piggy banks.
78. The older kids would give them money each month. This would be given money for their bus fares, when needed, lunch money and pocket money. We tried to teach them to budget their money. They soon learned that they might buy something smaller and cheaper one day and use the unused money to give themselves a treat on another day.

### *Trips and Holidays*

79. Any trips or holidays we did as a family. We have gone to Euro Disney on two separate occasions, the first time just after my mother had passed away. On the second occasion a new child just arrived a few days before we were due to leave. We tried to get the tickets changed but were unable to do it. That child went to another family for respite while we were away. We felt bad about that.
80. We also had a caravan which we kept at Saltcoats. My sister in law also had a caravan in the same park. She tended to have the kids play near to her caravan. Our kids were always encouraged to join in with the activities organised by the site. Other times they

would be in the caravan and playing with FLP by messing about with his hair. Our kids would be able to go to the beach during the day and the disco in the club house at night.

81. Some other foster parents that we knew also had a caravan down in Saltcoats and the respective kids would be able to play and have meals together.

### *Schooling*

82. Most of the children were staying for a lengthy period would be enrolled with the local schools. There were some who were already attending school and some were transported to their school in a taxi.
83. When it came to any homework we tried to get them to do it as soon as possible when it was lighter at night. During the darker nights we might give them an hour or so to play before we asked for the homework to be done. This was because there was less time for them to play before the sun set. The home work was done at the dining table. It was big enough for them all and if they needed help I was available.
84. Whatever school the kids went to the staff there were aware which of the children were fostered. I arranged that with the staff at the school. We both went to any parent's night held at the school. I remember the school arranged for the pupils to draw something for charity. One of our girls had drawn a picture of an eye and we bought that and had it framed for her. She was so pleased we appreciated her work. I would also volunteer to help with any of the school day trips, if they needed extra help. That might have been an end of term trip to Strathclyde Park.
85. Our oldest girl arrived when she was about eleven and we were told that she was slightly behind in school work. She worked hard and was able to catch up again. It was through help from school staff that she was able to get back to the expected standard. Foster care was good for her and gave her the encouragement to achieve this. Other kids it might be different. It is a fine line between success and failure.

### *Healthcare*

86. Some of the younger ones might come home from nursery with head lice. We would use shampoo to clear it up but would swap it with coconut shampoo as the other one burned the scalp if used too often. FDL [REDACTED] has given a statement to the Inquiry. She was in the care of my father in law and then my sister in law. She says in her statement that she suffered from head lice but I was not aware of that.
87. We took all the kids in our care to the dentist. She was really good to us as she would slot in a two hour block booking and make sure she could see all the kids on the same day. They were there every six months.

### *Bed wetting*

88. The girl with nappies could not go to the clinic as she could not hold it in. She was given no help from the social work department and was back with her dad after having spent about three years with us, this did not last more than six months.
89. Other than the girl using nappies one of the other girls had an issue with bed wetting. We managed to get her in touch with an incontinence clinic. They provided us with alarms that would activate during the night. They were all older girls so I did all the washing of their clothing.
90. One of the older girls we looked after had the same issue. She was about thirteen. She would look after herself and the only thing I asked was if she put anything wet into the basket to let me know, so I could get it washed as soon as possible.
91. I would normally get the relevant child washed and cleaned up and get them fresh clothing. I would then put the sheets into the basket for washing. FLP [REDACTED] only helped with the babies, but not with the older girls. I normally did any of the washing of the beds and linen once I got them all out to school.

### *Christmas and Birthdays*

92. When it came to any birthdays or at Christmas we spent the same amount of money on each of the children we were looking after. Sometimes if any of the foster kids had been visiting their parents and came home with a gift, we would make sure we bought the others something to make everyone feel equal. I have a photograph of one of the kids on their first birthday. They have a chocolate cake on a blanket on the floor and they were smashing it to pieces. The kid along with others there were having fun doing this.

### *Discipline*

93. We treated all the kids as part of our own family. The social work were happy with this aspect of our caring but when it came to discipline they rarely agreed. If we had to discipline the kids the social work would tell us we were wrong and that we could not use whatever measures we instigated. We even had some children tell us they were not accepting any punishment they may have deserved and would tell us that their social worker had said they did not have to listen to me in this area.
94. If the kids had done anything wrong we might impose a punishment where they might be grounded. When it came to the younger kids we would use the naughty step. We waited until the child had calmed down and then told them they had to stay on the naughty step for a short time. We used an egg timer and when that ran out they were allowed off it. Grounding was kept for the older kids.
95. With regard to the girl who had been buying drugs, we took her pocket money from her to stop her being able to buy the drugs. The social work were not happy with this approach and telling us we could not take her money from her.

### *Relationship with Foster Children*

96. All the foster kids that were with us were encouraged to make friends and to feel free to bring them back to the house. Most made friends but some did not. My youngest



had a friend who was also fostered. That made it easier to for them to have sleepovers. If the other child was not fostered we would have to have gone down the route of having police checks carried out before any sleepover could take place. Some of the kids did not understand about the reasons for checks having to be made before any sleepovers could take place and some of the parents were not happy doing this.

#### *Contact with Family (other than siblings)*

97. We did help with the contact between the children we looked after to be with their own family. We would supervise some of the time they were seeing each other. I would do that so that the particular child would stay calm and the visit would be better for that child.
98. We did initially refuse one baby as the mother wanted to come to our house. I did not want that as we knew nothing about the woman. I felt we were being forced into something we did not want. Our thoughts were that we had to look after the safety of all the children in our care. We eventually did take the baby and after some months of meeting and building up a trust the mother did get to visit her baby. There was only one other parent that had permission to come to our house. He was allowed to visit but again only after we had met him and built up the trust.
99. The girl that stayed with us who had the nappy issue was another child we tried to help with family contact. We took the caravan down the coast and arranged for her to see her father who came over from Dunoon. He would come over on the ferry, meet us and take his daughter back to Dunoon and return her at the end of the weekend.

#### *Visitors*

100. The social workers for each of the children were supposed to come to the house and visit at least every four weeks but most of them were much longer, usually around six to eight weeks. When they visited they would chat to me and see how things had been since their last visit. They would ask about the house, school and anything else they were involved in. Sometimes they would go to the kid's room where they could have

a private chat with the children. Other times they might take the kids round the corner to Macdonald's for a bite to eat and a chat.

101. Our link worker would do normal scheduled visits and also carry out unannounced visits. They would check on the rooms and maybe see how much food we had in the fridge and cupboards. A lot of those unannounced visits would be near to meal times when it was chaos in the house. One of those visits my daughter and I were really sick and I had to keep her off school. We were both lying on the settees with buckets, tissues and blankets nearby us. The link visitor then complained that the house was in a mess, despite seeing us obviously sick and unfit to do anything. Other times it was never a bother.
102. I think the visits for both the kids and the carers are needed but they should be more frequent. That would help pick up anything wrong.
103. One of the kids we looked after was getting help from one of the charities. I think it may have been "Who Cares? Scotland".

#### *Review of Care/placement*

104. If there were any LAC reviews or Hearings that any of the children were required to attend then we would be there for them. If <sup>FLP</sup> was working then it would be just me. I was not given any advice as to what information they would need from me. As soon as he came in from his work he was into automatic mode helping me with the kids.

#### *Records*

105. We never kept any records of issues with the children. If there were any issues I would contact my link worker that day or early the next day. We also contacted the child's own social worker and report whatever had happened to them.

106. We had one girl who was staying with us and she was taking photographs of herself and put it on snap chat. We found this out and took her phone from her. We told the social work and their answer was that we should not take personal property from the kids but they understood why we did it on this occasion. The police were involved and took possession of the phone for examination. We spoke with a child protection officer and explained everything to him. The phone was returned after the investigation and they were happy that it was with innocent intentions and happy that she was given the appropriate advice.

#### *Leaving the Care System*

107. If a relationship broke down between me and one of the kids it was very quick before the social worker's would arrive and remove the child.
108. Other kids there were arrangements in place for them to build up the relationship with visits between them and their natural family.
109. This would be the time when the memory book was really useful as it showed what it was like during that period they were away from their home and they were loved and cared for. We often asked that they would send us photographs of their progress at home

#### *Complaints*

110. The social work never had any occasion to call on us to make any complaints about anything to do with the kids in our care. Even if I did have a complaint to make I am not certain as to the procedure that both sides should take and this needs to be much clearer to carers.
111. I remember we were having an issue with one of the boys we looked after. For some unknown reason he was always picking on one of the other boys, sometimes hitting him. One day he threw something at the other boy. I can't remember what it was that he threw but it was heavy and dangerous. He then ran from the house and was running

about mad in the street and was out of control. I contacted the social work asking for them to come to the house and see if they could help. They never arrived and instead of helping me they gave my address to the boy's mother. She came round to the house and started shouting at us. She was threatening us and blaming us for his behaviour. That was most definitely not what I wanted or expected from the social work. They should never have given out our address as it made things unsafe for everyone in the house. I had to phone the social work and told them they had to get him away from the house immediately.

### **Allegations of Abuse**

#### *Awareness of Abuse*

112. I was not aware of any abuse taking place in my house or at my father in laws or sister in laws houses. After being informed of the allegations from FDL my oldest daughter made me aware that she was bullied in the past from FDL
113. I am not aware of anything that my sister in law or father in law may have done as any form of discipline, I wasn't there enough to see anything take place.
114. FDL has given a statement to the Inquiry and she says "*The abuse started with him feeling my crotch area and then it got worse and he did other things. There were other varying kinds of sexual acts he did, but I don't want to go into the details.*" I was not aware at all. What we saw when we were around my father in law was that my mother in law did everything. He was always out with the football. I never saw much of him with the kids. He was nice with the kids and my kids admired him. My son grew up with them in their house when FLP was a single parent and had a great relationship with them. There was never any concerns for his safety.



*Later disclosures as a teenager*

115. FDL made disclosures later and says *"I think the police and social work asked all the other children questions after I gave my statement, and I think that's when it came out that another girl who was fostered by them after me, had also been abused by him. To my knowledge, it wasn't as serious as what had happened to me, but it was still serious and a horrible experience for her. She was about eleven or twelve when she spoke to the police. She had been with them since she was about six or seven. She was the only one left at their house by that point. She who was older than me, stayed with them for a few years and then went back to her mum."* We got a phone call from the social work. We were told one of the kids was making allegations against my father in law. We were asked if we would take the two girls in to our house. They said it would be easier if they came to us, who the girls knew, than going to a stranger's house. We didn't really have the space but as it was to be just a couple of days we agreed. We were instructed there was to be no contact between ourselves and either my sister in law or my father in law. I am sure it was only a couple of days, maybe three days, they were with us. When FDL came to us we found it difficult to talk to her as she was really distant. I found I could not take to the girl. After the couple of days I was phoned by the social work and told they could go back to my father in laws. We were never told anything about what the allegations amounted to.
116. I don't know how it came about that FDL went to stay with my sister in law. FLP was not getting on with his sister at that stage. I knew that my mother in law was not looking to do long term foster care because of her age. These kids needed long term and I think the reason for them going there was my sister in law was a long term carer. After the allegations they were back staying with my mother and father in law. I think they were back for a couple of years with them before they went to my sister in law.
117. We were told a girl had made allegations after arguing with my in laws about being grounded. We were told that she had made a comment along the lines that if she was going to be grounded then she would say that my father in law had touched her. I was told it was more a case not of him having done anything but that she would make the



allegations if she did not get what she wanted. My sister in law was the one that phoned the social work to report what she was saying.

118. FDL says in her statement, later when she was a teenager *"I think the police and social work asked all the other children questions after I gave my statement, and I think that's when it came out that another child who was fostered after me, had also been abused by him"*. Seven years ago when FDL made the allegations we got an unannounced visit from two social workers. They said they needed to speak to FLP and me. We were told there were now new allegations made against someone. We were instructed that there was to be no access between the children in our care and anyone else in our families. I was aware that my father was seriously ill and was upset that we could not see him. It was particularly bad for FLP being restricted when he could visit his own father. They eventually told me that there was a serious allegation against my father in law and it was a strict no contact. No other details were ever given to us except to stress that if we broke those restrictions we risked losing all the kids in our care. We followed the rules. It really upset my youngest daughter as they could not see their grandad in the six months before he passed away.
119. I have been asked if I had any knowledge of behaviour or if there were any signs by my father in law relating to abuse. They never had much contact with my kids. At that time we did not have a good relationship with FLP family. My daughter often asks why she never had any sleepovers there. The reason she didn't wasn't because of the allegations it was just that the relationship between us at that time prevented this.
120. I never saw a police officer during the entire length of the investigations. We were not given any details other than what the link worker was able to tell us. The first I knew what it was about was when I saw FDL statement.
121. We were not see my sister in law as FDL was at my sister in laws at the time she made the allegation. If FLP needed to see his family I would stay home with the kids so he could visit.

122. The last time **FLP** saw his father was the day his father died. He received a phone from his mother saying she had found him lying ill on the kitchen floor and she needed help. He went straight there but I had to stay home. We tried to stick to the social work restrictions but that was something that could not be avoided.
123. **FDL** says in her statement that as part of the discipline in the house my sister in law would send her to bed early. A lot of the kids we had were so young and we would have sometimes have them in bed early. With **FLP** up early for his work we were often in bed early as we would be too tired.
124. Another thing **FDL** says about my sister in law is *"Another thing she liked to do was throw us outside as a punishment. She did that to me one time when I'd just had a shower and only had a towel round me. It was winter time and she put me out and locked the door. I was out for about ten minutes. Every one of us got thrown outside at some point. I remember another girl being put out of the caravan when she was having a tantrum. She put her out in the rain, wearing just her pyjamas, until she stopped screaming"*. I don't know about that.
125. Another thing about my sister in law **FDL** says is *"She used to shout and swear at us a lot when we were young. She was abusive when she shouted, but I can't remember all the things she used to say"*. I wasn't there.
126. We rarely saw my sister in law interacting with the children in her care. They did visit when it was my daughter's christening but there were no issues. There was a time we were at one of the children's confirmation or communion and we were at my sister in laws house. The kids all played together and there were no issues.
127. **FDL** goes on to say about my sister in law *"She picked on my sister a lot because she behaved differently from me and another girl. She would call my sister a "mongo", a "spastic" and a "weirdo". She'd completely bully her and make her feel horrible"*. I never heard it and know nothing about it.



128. FDL adds *"She made me and the other girl go into the back garden and batter my sister one time, because she had hit someone back. Her husband was at the pub. I wasn't hitting the girl at first. I was just sort of pulling her about and she shouted at me and said she was going to batter me if I didn't hit the girl"*. I can't comment as I wasn't there.
129. Another allegation FDL makes about your sister in law is *"When my brother came to stay with us, he had a lot of behavioural issues and she would slap him or drag him up the stairs when he misbehaved. I remember he would be screaming."* I don't know who he was. I only recall girls there not any boys.
130. FDL says about your sister in law *"She found out the other foster girl was smoking and she made her eat cigarettes as a punishment. The foster girl was crying and the rest of us were in the house watching this"*. I don't know about any of them smoking.
131. FDL adds that my sister in law *"drank whisky and vodka and would tell us to pour it for her. She could drink three quarters of a bottle of vodka or whisky in one night"* I knew she would have a drink at a party but I did not know what she did in her home. My husband and I are not big drinkers and it is not something we ever paid attention to.
132. FDL adds again about my sister in law *"She got really aggressive when she started drinking and she wanted to argue with you. She would get angry and ask you about things and then twist what you said so she could shout at you"*. I don't know about that. At any time we saw her at a party it was a happy occasion. Everybody was happy and the kids were enjoying themselves. It seems what she is talking about was within the house and we weren't there.
133. FDL goes on to say about my sister in law *"She used to always say things to me about my family not wanting me. She would throw things at us and be quite destructive to the property when she was drunk. She would throw glasses at me and the other girls. They hit me a few times. She would sometimes say to us when she'd been drinking that if we moved from hers, we would go to a children's unit as no-one wants*

older children. She would say things like we'd get our stuff stolen or we'd get raped in a children's unit". I don't know of any of that.

134. FDL goes on to say about my sister in law "One Christmas Eve, when I was about thirteen or fourteen, she phoned herself and kidded on she was speaking to the social work about us being taken into a children's unit. She said we were the scum of the earth and made us all pack our bags". I am not aware of that.
135. Another thing FDL alleges again about my sister in law "There was an incident after school one day when I was doing my National 5s. I had to do a report for biology and all my papers were lying on the floor in my room. She came in, she was obviously drunk, and was shouting, "Look at this mess". I think she was angry because she didn't like me studying. She ended up ripping my papers and I lost quite a lot of work." Where she talks about my sister in law stopping her education, my son is really clever and has a Masters in chemistry and he would go along to help tutor FDL FDL asked for the help and I think it was to do with Maths and chemistry. He went along several nights a week helping her. How would my sister in law allow this if she was preventing FDL education? That really confused me.
136. In relation to food FDL says "We weren't getting a proper dinner and the dog was being treated better. I feel it's important to mention this. Getting a Happy Meal for my dinner four or five times a week went on for years. I was still getting a Happy Meal for my dinner when I was sixteen. I was so slim and completely malnourished". Most meal times I was at my own house. I did sometimes take my children to MacDonald's on a couple of Friday's a month. We may have met them when we were there. I presume my sister in law was taking FDL there as a treat like we did with our kids. I always saw FDL as a thin girl. Her sister was slightly bigger built and I always presumed that was FDL body make up, being thin.
137. FDL makes mention of an entry in her dairy "I always knew I wasn't counted as family or remotely included". She never communicated with us or spoke to us much. She would even walk passed us in the street. The other kids would pop into our house. If FDL had come to us we would have helped her.



138. A further entry in her diary she says *"I don't remember what they were doing when I wrote this, but I think what happened was that they hadn't come into my room to include me in opening presents, and I've overheard them"*. I am not aware of this and would have been too busy with my lot at Christmas.
139. In relation to my sister in law's husband **FDL** says *"He could be the same as his wife when he was sober. He would shout all the time. It was mine and the other girl's job to do the dishes and clean up the kitchen every single night, and he was basically in charge of that. He'd shout at us if he thought we hadn't done it right"*. I don't know what she is talking about. He is a really quiet guy.
140. **FDL** continues about my sister in laws husband saying *"He was especially partial to another of the foster girls, so it was mostly him that would go off his head at us if we stood up to that girl when she was doing horrible things to us. He was so unfair. Even when she hit us, she didn't get told off. The argument all of us had was that she was old enough to know better, but we were painted to be pure bullies. My sister, especially, got painted as a bully as she would sometimes hit the girl back"*. I am not aware of this, but regarding bullying I have discovered in the last couple of days that **FDL** was a bully.
141. There is another entry in **FDL** diary and she mentions a trip to the Argyll Forest. We did go that time. **FLP** and I had booked the Argyle Forest the year before. We had taken all our kids the year before at Christmas and they had a great time. Because we had been there we were given a discount code and decided to use it at New Year. It was months later **FLP** parents and his sister found out we were going and they decided that would be fun so they booked. It wasn't something **FLP** and I had planned, they just tagged along. We had been there for a couple of days and it was also **FLP** birthday when we were there. Up until New Year's Eve we only saw one of the other kids. That girl turned up at our cabin with a box of Jaffa cakes for **FLP** birthday. It was so sweet.



142. On New Year's Eve we didn't want a party but my sister in law had arranged one and we went along. We were there for only about half an hour, just before the bells and just after. We drank some diet coke because we don't drink. We don't know what happened before or after we left. We then went back to our own cabin to have a party with just our kids. We had seen some of the neighbours enjoying themselves in their hot tubs and we decided that was what we were going to do with our kids. We went back to our hot tub with the kids and were all drinking coke out of champagne glasses. After about an hour we were too tired and went to our beds.
143. FDL mentions *"My uncle at least acknowledges that I'm in a funk, as he calls it. Little does he know it's much worse than that."* I presume she is meaning my husband. She never called him that at any other time.
144. FDL goes on to talk about my sister in law and says *"I've never seen a wee lassie like that in my life. She'd put some cunt into a depression. I've never seen anybody like that. If she's walking as slow as she looks, just walk ahead of her"*. We did not really see them much, so I never heard or saw anything between them. They would even go to have breakfast by themselves and would not invite us. That's just the way they were.
145. When our children saw her grandad they had a good time. My daughter does ask why she was not allowed to stay overnight but my sister in laws kids might. I think it was because the relationship was not there. It was not us stopping them it was to do with the grandparents.
146. FDL says *"At the bells, they made me sit on FLM's knee for a photo"*. I don't recall any pictures being taken.
147. With regard to my husband FDL says *"He was really funny too and I liked spending time with him, but when you got him angry he was so scary. You didn't want to get in his bad books. He was worse than the grandparents."* That is not true. He is a gentle giant. My daughter fought to stay with us and even got a lawyer involved so she could stay with us. She would not do that if he was that bad.

148. Again she says about my husband *"Nothing happened during those few days we were at his house, but we used to visit him at times and he could be really brutal with his discipline. If you did one tiny thing wrong, he made a big thing of it."* He is not that kind of person. I don't know why she is bringing us into this as this was not part of her original statement. The police and social work would not have left them with us if we were involved in her original complaint.
149. Another things she says about my husband was *"He used to make one of their foster girls sit on the stairs for hours at a time as a punishment"* We used the naughty step. We waited until the particular child had calmed down. We would then have them sit on the step for two minutes. If they had hit one of the other children we would ask them if they needed to apologise. We took no other action. The kids would be too young to understand anything else. FDL could never have seen the naughty step being used as she was never there.
150. FDL says *"They adopted a girl and she told them that one of the wee boys they fostered, hit her in the face with car keys, and he slapped the boy hard for that. The boy was really young. I didn't see this, but one of the girls told me about it."* There is an element of truth in what she is saying. It was during one of the school holiday periods and FLP was at work. My daughter was there. The boy got a key, not a car key, and he put it into daughter's face, threatening to poke her in the eye with it. I was in the kitchen. One of the other children screamed. I ran in and got hold of the key but he had cut her with it. My daughter still has the scar from the cut under her eye. My daughter remembers that incident and can recall that I telephoned my husband and told him what had happened. At the end of this we reported it to the social work, but I can say that FLP was definitely not there.
151. Even after the key incident people and other kids were always asking how my daughter got the cut on her face and she would tell them about the boy who did it. It was never any secret.



152. With regard to the incident with the key I phoned my link worker and the boy's social worker. There was a referral made to the Notre Dame Centre in Glasgow. They saw him for about six sessions.

*Reporting of Abuse*

153. If we had any issues with any of the children we reported this to our link worker and also to the social worker who was looking after the relevant child.
154. If any of the children had concerns they knew they could speak to me. They were also close to my sister, and still are. They could also speak to my brother or my father as well. The older ones all had the numbers for the social work in their phones.
155. If what [FDL] is saying had actually happened then yes it would be abuse. My concern is she has taken an incident which she has no knowledge of and twisted it to suit and she has dragged us into it.
156. [FDL] has said in her statement about me and my husband "Another girl, who was fostered by them was really scared of the shower. I saw them drag her upstairs and force her into the shower. She was screaming." – I know who she is referring to. She was never afraid of the shower. She was the girl I have already talked about who had a fear of the toilet. I dealt with all the personal care for that girl. My husband was not involved, mainly because of her being slightly older and he did not bath the girls at that age. I can assure you the showers were never an issue. Again [FDL] has had a little piece of knowledge and twisted this to suit her.

*Allegations of Abuse for which there has been no Criminal Conviction*

157. I am not aware of any complaints or allegations of abuse being made. But there was a girl who came to us for a couple of days and she arrived with all her clothes which were pink and white. Over the weekend we were going to the park and it was all very muddy. I knew she was the same size as one of my daughters so gave her a tracksuit she could wear instead. They had fun in all the mud and when we got home we got

changed. It was a miserable weekend as far as weather was concerned and we were all just hanging about the house, playing, but just dressed in pyjamas and casuals. When she was leaving at the end of the couple of days the social work complained we had not dressed her in her own clothes. We were just trying to protect them from getting all muddy.

158. The girl's parents made the complaint to the social workers about the clothes not being used and they said she had coal up her nose. My link worker carried out the investigation and came to the house. She checked it and confirmed we had nothing in the house that would need us to use coal. I explained to the link worker that we just did not want her designer clothes getting ruined. The link worker told us she had no issues with what we did.
159. FDL further states about FLP *"One time at Christmas, he told me and two other girls to clean the bathroom. I used bleach and didn't wear gloves and we got punished for that. Both of them took the three of us to a Christmas fair in Glasgow, along with a boy who was a relative of hers. Only he was allowed to go on any of the rides. We had to just stand and watch, while they made comments like, "That's what you get for being bad". It was horrible. I was so upset the whole time. I think I was about eight."* – I never took FDL to any Christmas Fair. I have asked my brother about any fair and he reminded me that during the period FDL was talking about he was in a wheelchair. He had been hit by a car in late 2006 and his legs were smashed to pieces. He used the chair until around 2009. In 2009 FDL was eight and my brother had a cage with pins in his legs and the carnival people would not allow him on the rides. At that time I also had our own children and I would not be taking other kids without taking my own. My brother thinks the only time I took him to a carnival was before I was married so would not have known any of the kids.
160. None of the children were allowed to use bleach or any like product. As far as the cleaning is concerned I had my own way of doing the cleaning and would not let anyone else do it.



161. I have been asked if it is possible that my memory has been affected with the passage of time. The exact dates and times that is a possibility. As far as the relationship with FDL that is not true, we never had that relationship.
162. I did take the kids to the Panto and I would get tickets for all of us, I would usually try to find a deal where you bought one and got one free. I never took FDL there and never took any of my sister in laws kids or my husband's parent's foster kids anywhere.
163. I don't know why she is bringing it up now. We were never part of her original investigations. We did everything that our link worker instructed us to do, partly because if we didn't, they were threatening to take our kids away. The effect of that was the kids missed out on seeing their grandfather before he died, and they struggle with that. No police officer ever came to see us and there were no issues with any of our kids.
164. There was one of the boys we looked after and he traced us on Facebook and told us that he remembered us. We must have left a good mark on part of his life. He too was asking for any photographs of his time with us, which we were able to send to him.

#### *Reporting to Police/Criminal Proceedings*

165. I have not made any statement to the police or any other organisation.

#### **Helping the Inquiry**

166. I don't think the kids are always comfortable talking to their social worker about things that are going wrong. I think they would be better off if they had someone like a befriender that they might feel more comfortable to speak to. They could maybe go out and have a private conversation with someone who was not linked to social work and would help them.

167. I think they need to be looking into more of what kids say when they have been abused. I know that what FDL is saying against my husband and I are false, but if anything else is said they need to look at it. If what she says against my father in law is found to be false where is the protection for the carers? He died of a heart attack and stroke, caused by the stress of the allegations. FDL's sister was removed and she said she was upset as she was happy where she was. Again if this is all found to be untrue who is responsible for all of this? I fully agree that if any of it is true then FDL needs to be protected, but what about all our other kids affected by what she said?

**Other information**

168. 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... FPF [Redacted Signature] .....

Dated... 29.3.22 .....