

1 Monday, 20 July 2020  
2 (10.30 am)  
3 THE CHAIR: Good morning, everyone, and welcome to Day 11 of  
4 this public hearing. Ms Langdale?  
5 MS LANGDALE: Good morning, chair. As you know, we are  
6 hearing from four complainant core participants today,  
7 and may I invite Mr Hughes, please, to swear in LA-A354.  
8 WITNESS LA-A354 (affirmed)  
9 Examination by MS LANGDALE  
10 MS LANGDALE: Good morning, LA-A354. You know that I am  
11 using that number or cipher to protect your identity?  
12 **A. Yes.**  
13 Q. And you also know that, as we move through the evidence,  
14 we will not be using names for people who haven't been  
15 convicted of offences, and we have got numbers or we can  
16 refer variously to "house father" and "house mother" if  
17 that is easier.  
18 If we do make any error in that regard, don't worry,  
19 I can invite the chair to make a restriction order to  
20 prevent publication of that name or detail.  
21 With that in mind, you have helpfully provided the  
22 inquiry with a statement dated 19 May 2020. Have you  
23 had a chance to look at that again recently, and can you  
24 confirm that statement is true and accurate?  
25 **A. Yes, I've looked at it, and it's true, to my belief, and**

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1 **can I explain it? -- a very regimented, very physical**  
2 **guy, very physical guy, yeah.**  
3 Q. How did he behave towards you? How was he physically  
4 towards you?  
5 **A. Physically, he was just carefree. He wouldn't think**  
6 **twice of putting his hand on you at all. He wouldn't**  
7 **think twice. Like I've explained in my statement, he**  
8 **was the type of person where there was no solution to**  
9 **anything, it was just with a physical hit, with**  
10 **a physical slap or -- physical abuse, basically, yeah,**  
11 **yeah, or sometimes psychological as well, you know, the**  
12 **same -- it could go either way.**  
13 Q. Tell us, things like a childhood memory where you spill  
14 a drink. I mean, children spill drinks. What was the  
15 response when you did that?  
16 **A. You'd get slapped around the side of your face if you**  
17 **spilt a drink or if you spilt your food or if you didn't**  
18 **like the food or you couldn't eat the food because the**  
19 **food wasn't very nice to eat. Sometimes you only ate**  
20 **the food because, you know, otherwise, you'd go hungry.**  
21 **That was the situation. So if you didn't eat the food,**  
22 **you got punished regardless. So if you forced yourself**  
23 **to eat the food and you became sick at the table, you'd**  
24 **get punished for that. It would either be a slap around**  
25 **the side of the face or the head or you would have to**

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1 **accurate, yes.**  
2 Q. Thank you. You explain in that statement that you were  
3 made a ward of the court aged 4 or 5 years of age and  
4 you came into Lambeth's care and were placed at  
5 Shirley Oaks in the mid '70s, when you were 4 or 5. You  
6 also mention you were briefly at Southvale. Can you  
7 remember anything about that brief time at Southvale  
8 Assessment Centre?  
9 **A. Yeah, I mean, it was back in the '70s, so, yeah, I was**  
10 **there briefly, before Shirley, for a short period, from**  
11 **what I remember. Yeah, it was a very short period I was**  
12 **at Southvale for.**  
13 Q. Then you were placed in a house at Shirley Oaks, and you  
14 say there was probably about 15 to 18 children in that  
15 house, and you were the youngest?  
16 **A. Yeah. We was the youngest, and the longer you stayed,**  
17 **then you became -- there were younger children that came**  
18 **underneath you, and so it went on like that, as people**  
19 **came and left care, yes.**  
20 Q. You were very young, as you have said in your statement,  
21 and you describe the house father there and how he was  
22 towards you. Can you tell us about that, just referring  
23 to him as the house father and the house mother as well?  
24 **A. The house father, he ran it with his wife, yeah, and he**  
25 **was quite a big guy, a very physical guy, very -- how**

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1 **basically stand in the corner and face the wall for**  
2 **a few hours.**  
3 Q. When you were slapped and you were crying, did any other  
4 member of staff, or any adult, comfort you or help you  
5 or support you after that kind of treatment?  
6 **A. No, no staff intervened. They were just there. They**  
7 **saw things and all the things that went on, but nobody**  
8 **intervened, no, because he had supreme control, he was**  
9 **in charge. Him and his wife were in charge. They had**  
10 **supreme control of the whole house. No staff that**  
11 **worked there said anything to them. They was all**  
12 **friends as well. They all lived in that area. Most of**  
13 **them lived in -- where Shirley Oaks was, that area, so**  
14 **they all had a common, you know -- they were friends,**  
15 **anyway, so, I mean, nobody really said anything.**  
16 Q. The psychological punishment that you describe, you gave  
17 an example. Tell us the example of having to empty  
18 kitchen cupboards and what you were required to do and  
19 the consequences?  
20 **A. Well, that would be, like, if we were caught talking in**  
21 **bed at night-time, because you have to understand they**  
22 **were like dormitory rooms. So if you were caught**  
23 **talking in bed, talking to somebody, talking to your**  
24 **brother or talking to another resident in the house,**  
25 **then you were dragged out of bed and taken downstairs**

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1 for not going to sleep. And what you had to do,  
 2 basically, is empty -- because the kitchens were big.  
 3 So you had to empty everything -- all of the contents  
 4 out of the cupboards. But the trick was, you had to put  
 5 them back exactly the way they were, because if  
 6 something was slightly out of sync or something wasn't  
 7 right to his mind-set or to his wife's mind-set, you'd  
 8 put it back in -- you'd have to take it all out and  
 9 start again. You don't know how long that would take.  
 10 That could take hours. That could take most of  
 11 the night.  
 12 Q. What happened the next day? Were you required to carry  
 13 on with the day, get up, move into the --  
 14 A. Yes, you got up when you were supposed to get up and  
 15 you'd wash up and then you'd come down for breakfast and  
 16 just carry on as normal, part of the routine.  
 17 Q. You also describe witnessing the house father beating  
 18 other people in the house?  
 19 A. Yeah, because what it was -- it was a big house, and he  
 20 sat at the head of the older children on one big table  
 21 in the dining room, and we -- his wife sat at the head  
 22 of the younger children. The tables were side by side,  
 23 you know, so he would target certain children, older  
 24 children, also, that was on the other table. We used to  
 25 call them the biguns and littleuns, so the biguns'

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1 Q. You also describe how you were taken to the seaside on  
 2 one occasion and how you were humiliated there by the  
 3 house father?  
 4 A. Yeah. What happened is, they lived some -- they had  
 5 a place --  
 6 Q. Don't worry about where it is. We know it is the  
 7 seaside.  
 8 A. Yeah, by the coast, yeah, the three of us, me and my two  
 9 brothers, yes.  
 10 Q. What happened? What was your brother required to do at  
 11 that --  
 12 A. Well -- my youngest brother, yeah, he was forced to  
 13 entertain the people in that place. He had to dance on  
 14 a table.  
 15 Q. How did he feel about that? How did you feel watching  
 16 that? Did you feel that was humiliating?  
 17 A. Yeah, it was traumatising -- you know, as an adult now,  
 18 when I decipher all of this stuff, you know -- at the  
 19 time, my brain was -- it was a combination of fear,  
 20 a combination of, you know, not knowing what was going  
 21 on, numbness, you know, because your brain at that age  
 22 is not alert enough to understand the dynamics, the full  
 23 dynamics of what the situation is. But I know he was  
 24 forced to dance on a table in front of the crowds to  
 25 a particular song that was out at the time. There was

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1 table. He used to target -- especially one boy that was  
 2 there, all the time, he used to target him all the time.  
 3 Q. You also explain how, not surprisingly, at this stage  
 4 you were wetting the bed. You were a young child in  
 5 that environment. What was the reaction to the house  
 6 father or the house mother when that happened?  
 7 A. To wetting the bed?  
 8 Q. Yes.  
 9 A. You'd get slapped up. You'd get slapped up, slapped  
 10 around the legs and the backside. You'd get slapped.  
 11 And then -- yeah, and then sometimes you would have  
 12 to -- yeah, you'd get slapped up. And then you'd either  
 13 sleep in the bed until the morning and then you faced  
 14 punishment the next day or, again, it was that same --  
 15 it was the routine -- you'd have to face the corner.  
 16 They'd drag you downstairs and you had to face the  
 17 corner. You faced the corner, the white walls, you had  
 18 to stand and face the corner until they was ready to --  
 19 sometimes you were tired, sometimes you couldn't even  
 20 stand properly because you're tired as well because  
 21 you're half asleep still, but you've wet yourself, so  
 22 you have to still face the corner until you can't really  
 23 stand no more. And if you keep falling down because  
 24 you're tired, you'd repeat the same cycle the following  
 25 night.

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1 a certain dance to that song back in the early '80s, '81  
 2 or something like that, and he had to entertain the  
 3 people in this -- it was like a -- you know, one of  
 4 those union clubhouses, like a membership with a bar and  
 5 them kind of things, yeah.  
 6 Q. You also say when you were at Shirley Oaks you suffered  
 7 from racism, so do you want to expand on that? How was  
 8 that for you?  
 9 A. Well, it was just regular -- they had no fear of using  
 10 racist words. I mean, the word "nigger" was just  
 11 standard procedure. That was a standard word that was  
 12 just used. "Coon" was a common one then as well, "You  
 13 little coon. Get out and play, you little coon".  
 14 "Coon" was used regularly as well, along with the word  
 15 "nigger". You see, sometimes what happens is, when they  
 16 say that word so long, you become normalised. So then  
 17 what they would do, they would try to get technical and  
 18 then they'd start using the demographics of yourself,  
 19 like, my self-esteem, because I'm from mixed parentage.  
 20 So then they would start using words -- I didn't know  
 21 what these words meant at that time, "half breed", or  
 22 they'd call me "half pint", "half pint", you know, or,  
 23 like I've said, "mongrel" was used as well.  
 24 You know, and even times, you know, even when he'd  
 25 spoken about my mother, because he used to -- my mother

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1 was seriously sick, but then he used to call her  
 2 a "nigger lover". She wouldn't be in that predicament  
 3 if she wasn't a nigger lover.  
 4 Q. You say you started to believe you were there for  
 5 a reason "and I was damaged at birth". Was that the  
 6 impact of this kind of abuse?  
 7 A. Yeah. See, what you have to understand is, you  
 8 normalise the situation because you think it's normal.  
 9 You don't know any different. See, if you come into the  
 10 care system at that age, you don't know anything else.  
 11 So when you start hearing those words and that  
 12 treatment, you know, the punishment methods they used to  
 13 use, you think it's normal. You think that's how  
 14 everybody else is treated, that's what you're supposed  
 15 to go through. You wet the bed, you get punished. You  
 16 spill your food, you get punished. You get physically  
 17 hit if you do something by accident or whatever it is,  
 18 you normalise the situation. You think it's normal. It  
 19 becomes your everyday routine. You don't know any  
 20 different. We didn't know what happens in normal  
 21 families. We didn't see -- we didn't know how a normal  
 22 family operated. We only saw what we saw on the  
 23 television. We didn't know how it was supposed to be,  
 24 you know, the treatment. We didn't know that. We  
 25 thought this is what's supposed to happen, "If you do

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1 Q. So you didn't have a relationship with any particular  
 2 social worker that you could talk about what was  
 3 happening to you?  
 4 A. No, in Shirley, we was very young so we thought it was  
 5 normalised. I did move from Shirley to The Elms, which  
 6 was like an extension of Shirley because it was the same  
 7 staff. They all used to work in Shirley. I complained  
 8 one time, only because I was in severe pain --  
 9 I complained to my mother, because he gave me an upper  
 10 cut to the stomach, I had it from another staff that  
 11 used to run The Elms, a house father. It was only  
 12 because I was in severe pain at school and the school  
 13 noticed it. I came home early and I complained to my  
 14 mum and she complained to the house father and the house  
 15 mother of The Elms, but then you got punished for  
 16 complaining, you see, so you knew the consequences if  
 17 you complained: when everyone leaves, when there's  
 18 no-one around, no other adults around, when, you know,  
 19 there's no outsiders, then the punishment begins, you  
 20 will get punished for complaining.  
 21 Q. Taking you back to Shirley before we move on to  
 22 The Elms, when you were there, your mother visited  
 23 sometimes and brought you gifts when she could?  
 24 A. Yeah. She was a very sick lady. She used to make her  
 25 way, you know, up to The Elms, because in them days,

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1 this, A, B, C, this is what happens to me".  
 2 Q. These were very formative years for you, weren't they?  
 3 You went in at 4/5, you left around 9. These are where  
 4 you were developing as a young child?  
 5 A. Yeah, we was very young when we went into care. We was  
 6 in the homes -- a few homes before Shirley around the  
 7 country, but, yeah, we was still very young when we went  
 8 into Shirley Oaks. We were taken from the Clapham  
 9 area -- we used to live in Lambeth, but also around  
 10 Clapham. Our first journey to Shirley Oaks was a social  
 11 worker coming in -- we were staying at my grandma's  
 12 because my mum was in hospital from a severe road  
 13 accident. He said to "Get your stuff together because  
 14 we're going on a holiday". So we was excited because we  
 15 thought we were going on a holiday, me and my two  
 16 brothers. We got our stuff together and then he took us  
 17 to Shirley Oaks.  
 18 Q. Did you stay in touch with that social worker or any  
 19 social worker? Were they visiting you when you were in  
 20 Shirley Oaks?  
 21 A. He visited us at Shirley Oaks, the same one that took us  
 22 there. Then, for the first part of -- when we left  
 23 Shirley Oaks to another home just down the road called  
 24 The Elms, he was there for the first part of that. Then  
 25 he left and another social worker came on the scene.

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1 The Elms just seemed like it was very far out in the  
 2 countryside --  
 3 Q. Sorry, did she visit you at Shirley? I was asking you  
 4 about Shirley?  
 5 A. Sorry, yeah, Shirley, she visited us regularly at  
 6 Shirley.  
 7 Q. She brought you gifts to Shirley. What happened to  
 8 those gifts?  
 9 A. Well, what they used to do, basically, is just lock --  
 10 they used to take our mother's gifts and lock them in  
 11 a room. They had a room full of gifts that people's  
 12 parents had brought up to Shirley Oaks to visit their  
 13 kids and they used to lock all these gifts in a room.  
 14 They had their own room. They had their own, like,  
 15 front room, living room, in that house under lock and  
 16 key. It was their room. So they used to stash all the  
 17 stuff in their room, all the gifts and presents in their  
 18 room.  
 19 Q. There was also a football coach at Shirley Oaks that you  
 20 describe, and his mini. Can you tell us about that?  
 21 A. Yeah, he used to take us -- me from that house and other  
 22 children from Shirley for football practice. That's how  
 23 I remember him. He used to come around and take us to  
 24 practice football.  
 25 Q. What did he do with you in the car?

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1 **A. Well, him -- that -- he used to -- what he used to do,**  
 2 **because he had -- at the time, the car that he was**  
 3 **driving looked like a really -- we used to think it was**  
 4 **a cool car, you know, tinted windows, alloy rims, we**  
 5 **used to think it was a nice car. What we used to do, we**  
 6 **used to pretend to drive his car -- he used to let us**  
 7 **pretend to be driving his car, the gear stick and**  
 8 **steering wheel and sit on top of him on his lap. So we**  
 9 **used to pretend to drive the car.**  
 10 **But then, what he used to do, he used to put our**  
 11 **hand down on his genital areas. See, at the time when**  
 12 **I was young, I knew it was -- I thought, again, that it**  
 13 **was -- it wasn't a wrong -- why is he doing that? But**  
 14 **I didn't know how wrong it was -- because I was so**  
 15 **young, I didn't understand that, you know, why has he**  
 16 **got my hand there? You know. There was other kids in**  
 17 **the car at the same time. Maybe three kids -- another**  
 18 **two kids in the back seat also.**  
 19 **Q. So as you say in your statement, at the time you thought**  
 20 **that was normal or just something that was done?**  
 21 **A. Yeah.**  
 22 **Q. It was later that you appreciated what that was about?**  
 23 **A. Yeah, I thought this was what you had to do to pretend**  
 24 **to drive the car.**  
 25 **Q. You were then moved, as you say, to The Elms, and you**

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1 time?  
 2 **A. Yeah, soap up. Soap up. Used to soap up your backside,**  
 3 **soap it up. Sometimes they'd make you soap up. But,**  
 4 **see, I didn't know. I just had no idea at that time**  
 5 **what -- what that was. I just didn't know. He used to**  
 6 **take us one by one in the shower. You see, the boys**  
 7 **used to have to queue up. The way the shower room was**  
 8 **designed, there was a little hallway area outside the**  
 9 **shower room so he used to take us in one by one at**  
 10 **shower time. It used to be called shower time. When**  
 11 **you'd get ready for shower time, again, I thought that**  
 12 **was normal behaviour. I didn't understand that wasn't**  
 13 **normal behaviour at that time.**  
 14 **Q. As you say, at this point was when you had been punched**  
 15 **in the stomach and you did complain to your mother who**  
 16 **came to the home to complain about it, which must have**  
 17 **required real courage from her, too, to come and speak**  
 18 **up and speak out?**  
 19 **A. What happened is, yeah, she -- she came up.**  
 20 **I complained about it to her, not realising that it**  
 21 **would -- you know, she would come and complain to the**  
 22 **wife of the house father and it would move up from**  
 23 **there. Yeah, because I was in pain at the time, severe**  
 24 **pain, so I had to say something -- because she asked me**  
 25 **what was wrong and I told her what was wrong, what**

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1 took belongings, didn't you, they were in bin liners,  
 2 your belongings, some contents from the home, did you?  
 3 **A. Yeah, that's right, yeah.**  
 4 **Q. What happened to that bin liner when you went to**  
 5 **The Elms?**  
 6 **A. Well, the situation was, when we got to The Elms, the**  
 7 **staff there on duty, we got to The Elms and what they**  
 8 **done is they emptied the contents -- what we had --**  
 9 **a few belongings from Shirley. They emptied it on the**  
 10 **floor and said, "This has all got to go in the bin now.**  
 11 **This is all going to go in the garbage, and that's it.**  
 12 **Start again from zero".**  
 13 **Q. So you had no childhood toy, comforts, books, nothing**  
 14 **that was yours that went with you, as you left Shirley,**  
 15 **to this new home?**  
 16 **A. No. No. Everything was eradicated. It was a clean**  
 17 **slate. You'd tip it on the floor into a small pile.**  
 18 **But the other children, it was in front of the staff and**  
 19 **the other children. I think, again, this is what**  
 20 **happened to everybody there, standard procedure. So you**  
 21 **empty all your contents and then anything we brought**  
 22 **from Shirley was just thrown in the garbage.**  
 23 **Q. When you went to this next home, there was a member of**  
 24 **staff you say there, when you were in the shower,**  
 25 **"rubbed soap in my bottom" and you were 9 or 10 at that**

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1 **happened, and then she complained to the house mother,**  
 2 **who denied it. What the house mother told her was that,**  
 3 **oh, I was -- the only reason why I'm saying that is**  
 4 **because I was told off about something that I was doing**  
 5 **wrong a few weeks prior to that situation, and it's all**  
 6 **lies, I made it up. So, yeah, obviously after that**  
 7 **situation, we got punished for that -- well, me and my**  
 8 **siblings got punished for me complaining.**  
 9 **Q. What food were you given? What was the punishment as**  
 10 **a consequence of the complaint?**  
 11 **A. They used to call it the Coventry technique. The**  
 12 **Coventry technique. You were sent to Coventry. They**  
 13 **used to call it, "You're being sent to Coventry".**  
 14 **I didn't know what that was, being sent to Coventry.**  
 15 **That means no-one can acknowledge you. Staff, other**  
 16 **children, no-one can speak to you. That means you come**  
 17 **home from school, you come home for dinner, get ready**  
 18 **for dinner, no-one can acknowledge you. You have extra**  
 19 **chores, like cleaning everybody's shoes and things like**  
 20 **that, but when you sit down for dinner, no-one can talk**  
 21 **to you. You don't eat, you sit at the table, everyone**  
 22 **eats their food first, then you eat your food. No-one**  
 23 **can talk to you or be seen -- the other children, even**  
 24 **if they're your friends, if they get caught talking to**  
 25 **you or acknowledging you or saying something, you know,**

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1 speaking to you, they would get after they finished with  
 2 you, they will be sent to Coventry also. So no-one --  
 3 even the other staff, no-one could say nothing to you.  
 4 They acted like you was just not there, invisible.  
 5 No-one was allowed to talk to you, and that's what being  
 6 sent to Coventry was.  
 7 Q. You say in your statement the effect was that you didn't  
 8 complain again after that?  
 9 A. No, because, when you're a small kid, you don't want  
 10 that to happen. You want to talk to your friends. You  
 11 want people to talk to you because you know they're not  
 12 allowed to talk to you. The only time they can maybe  
 13 talk to the other children is they can whisper to you at  
 14 night-time, they can say a few words before they fall to  
 15 sleep, before you go to sleep, because that's the only  
 16 chance they get to speak to you because they can't be  
 17 seen talking to you, because, if they get caught, they  
 18 get the same punishment. After your time of Coventry is  
 19 up, they will get the same punishment.  
 20 Q. You also said that at that time you witnessed a girl  
 21 being sexually abused when you were on the floor. What  
 22 did you see? What happened?  
 23 A. Well, how it was is -- the house father -- again, he had  
 24 his own front room, his own room that nobody -- only him  
 25 and his wife could go into. What he used to do on the

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1 what was happening to us wasn't the -- wasn't normal.  
 2 As I got older, you know, at The Elms, and in secondary  
 3 school I opened my eyes a bit and I realised --  
 4 I started to realise that that wasn't the correct thing  
 5 to do. But my education just wasn't there. I didn't  
 6 have an -- I used to get into fights all the time.  
 7 I couldn't pay attention to nothing, you know. I was  
 8 suspended for fighting, which I got punished -- further  
 9 punishment for in The Elms. I just didn't have any  
 10 attention -- I couldn't pay attention to anything.  
 11 School was a bit of a blur education-wise. I didn't  
 12 have no education.  
 13 Q. No-one discussed that with you, why you weren't  
 14 interested in education then or what you were missing  
 15 out on? That wasn't a conversation you had with  
 16 a social worker or even a teacher?  
 17 A. No. No, the teachers, them times, I think as well, in  
 18 them years, they didn't -- it was a very -- it was  
 19 a white, middle-class school. It wasn't a private  
 20 school or anything but it was a very -- you know,  
 21 people -- I used to think they were rich kids because  
 22 I didn't know. You know, they had money, they had lunch  
 23 money, they had things -- I didn't see that stuff before  
 24 so I just assumed they were rich people. Yeah, nobody  
 25 said anything about my education. The teachers --

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1 weekends, he used to get a video -- they used to rent  
 2 videos. So he used to get a video from the movie -- the  
 3 video shop and watch a film. While we -- we used to sit  
 4 on the floor watching the TV, watching the film, he used  
 5 to have the girls, some of the young girls in there,  
 6 another family, especially two sisters, he used to have  
 7 them on his lap, and he used to have his hands under  
 8 their skirt, his hands all over them, and he used to --  
 9 you know what I mean, bounce them up and down on his  
 10 knee. Again, I knew that -- I didn't understand the  
 11 severity of it, and the girls didn't neither, because  
 12 they let him do it because they didn't -- I don't think  
 13 they -- we didn't see that as wrong at the time. So,  
 14 yeah, we used to be watching the movies on the floor,  
 15 sitting on the floor, and he used to be on his couch  
 16 behind us sitting on the floor watching the movie. He'd  
 17 have these young girls on his lap and he'd have his  
 18 hands all over, all over.  
 19 Q. What happened to your schooling through this period, all  
 20 the time, really, by now you're a teenager --  
 21 A. My mind wasn't on education. I couldn't focus on that  
 22 in the classroom. I couldn't -- especially when I got  
 23 older, I started going to secondary school in that area,  
 24 and then I started to try and work things out.  
 25 I started to click as I got a bit older that this --

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1 I think the teachers -- I think one teacher said to me  
 2 one time, "Go and just read -- if you don't want to be  
 3 here, just get out of the classroom. If you don't want  
 4 to learn anything, go and get out of the classroom. Go  
 5 and do whatever you want to do, go and kick a ball in  
 6 the field". Yeah, I didn't have no education.  
 7 Q. When you were in your teenage years, you went to  
 8 a foster home, didn't you? You don't need to say where  
 9 that was or identify the family.  
 10 A. Yes.  
 11 Q. How was that for a period?  
 12 A. It was another shakeup call for me. The particular  
 13 environment I was in, it was a very, very tough  
 14 environment to be in at that time. And at that time in  
 15 this country, there were lots of challenges going on at  
 16 the same time. I was in a very high crime rate area at  
 17 that time in inner London. So I had to -- me and my  
 18 brother had to get street smart fast; otherwise, we were  
 19 fair game, you know? So we went from -- the environment  
 20 that we was in, in care, we got -- we basically just had  
 21 to change up and get street smart just to survive, and  
 22 that was the foster parents where I was living.  
 23 I didn't have time -- again, I didn't have no time for  
 24 education. I had no time for education at all. So  
 25 I went from one environment to another environment where

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1 it was just -- yeah, it was highly infested. People  
 2 would try and sell me drugs on the way to school.  
 3 That's the type of area it was at the time. I went from  
 4 one extreme to another extreme and I didn't have time to  
 5 adapt. I had to get street smart fast.  
 6 Q. You had, we know, a placement, briefly, with a family  
 7 member as well. Then you say in your statement you were  
 8 around 17 or 18 the last time you dealt with social  
 9 workers and you became independent after this. You were  
 10 in a bedsit briefly --  
 11 A. Yeah.  
 12 Q. -- and in a hostel, and then, at 18, you were given  
 13 a flat?  
 14 A. Yeah.  
 15 Q. You had no idea about life at this age?  
 16 A. No, no. By 14, I had already started drinking. By 15  
 17 I was -- say 15, I'd already started drinking. I was  
 18 a heavy drinker. I was already smoking marijuana.  
 19 I was really trying to blur out -- because I didn't know  
 20 my past, you see. It was a bit of a blur. Lots of  
 21 things I'd blanked out. There was lots of gaps --  
 22 I can't -- to this day, there's many gaps. I can't add  
 23 the dots together. I just remember specific places and  
 24 people but I can't add everything -- there's no  
 25 streamline. I can't remember anything consistently

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1 that they deserved that because I didn't think I was  
 2 worth anything myself.  
 3 Q. You tell us in your statement about various work you've  
 4 had at times. You've worked as a security guard and  
 5 you've done other sporadic work. Particularly, you have  
 6 worked or mentored, haven't you, in a children's home?  
 7 A. Yes.  
 8 Q. Tell the chair about that, how you have used your  
 9 experience to assist youngsters in the care system?  
 10 A. After years of -- I spent decades before that getting to  
 11 that. I spent decades, like I said, substance abuse,  
 12 and class A drugs as well. I'd smoke a little crack  
 13 cocaine, alcohol, for the last few decades I blurred  
 14 a lot of stuff out. I did menial jobs, like you say,  
 15 security work and things like that, and then  
 16 I eventually got into a situation where I was starting  
 17 to try and see things straight, and then I -- then SOSA  
 18 came about and I started to reacquaint people I used to  
 19 know in Shirley from when I was a small child. That  
 20 helped me get myself together a bit more, have a bit  
 21 more self-belief, because I know these people had been  
 22 through the same stuff when I'd been through when I was  
 23 a small child. That give me a bit more -- a little bit  
 24 more self-belief. I saw this job going with Surrey  
 25 County Council, and I just thought, okay, you know,

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1 about my childhood because I've blanked a lot of it out.  
 2 But I knew it wasn't good. I knew it wasn't good.  
 3 That's the thing. So I spiralled -- I went down the  
 4 road and the last I started, yeah, drinking and drugs  
 5 from when I was around 15 years old, yeah.  
 6 Q. You said in your childhood you had no sense of  
 7 self-belief, it destroyed any self-belief. Do you want  
 8 to expand on that for us? Because you have set out how  
 9 life was difficult. What was it about your self-belief  
 10 that was destroyed in all of this?  
 11 A. Well, see, the thing is, I didn't think I was worth  
 12 anything. I didn't -- I was -- I didn't think, you  
 13 know, the things that the staff used to say to me when  
 14 my time spent in care I thought were ringing true, that  
 15 I wasn't supposed to be here, I wasn't supposed to --  
 16 I wasn't worth -- I wasn't going to make anything of  
 17 myself. Yeah, no, I wasn't going to survive. I'd end  
 18 up either locked up or, you know, dead from abuse,  
 19 self-abuse, dead or locked up. They didn't give me --  
 20 I didn't have any self-belief of myself. I didn't think  
 21 I was worth anything. I didn't think I was worth  
 22 anybody's time. The average human being, I didn't think  
 23 I was worth anyone's time. You know, I didn't want  
 24 to -- I didn't feel anybody was worth -- it wasn't worth  
 25 me putting myself on anybody else because I didn't feel

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1 maybe I could do something like that, and at least try  
 2 and correct the past in a different way. I went for  
 3 this job, and I got the job, took the -- I told them  
 4 about my experiences and why I wanted to do the job, so  
 5 they took me on as a mentor to these teenagers, and  
 6 I work with the teenagers and try and steer them onto  
 7 the right path. That's what I do now.  
 8 Q. How do you think it helps that you have been in care  
 9 yourself and have those experiences when you're working  
 10 or supporting people in the care system? What do you  
 11 bring to that role, do you think?  
 12 A. Oh, big time. You know, because I -- they used to call  
 13 us damaged goods, "Nobody wants you", that kind of  
 14 stuff. What I try and do is install in them that you're  
 15 worth -- you're a human being and you have got just as  
 16 much right to be here as anybody else. For whatever  
 17 reason, you're not with your parents. Everyone has got  
 18 their different reasons for being in the system, but you  
 19 are just as worth it, you have just as much reason to be  
 20 here as anybody else. It doesn't matter what -- what  
 21 your dynamics are. Like in Shirley, Shirley Oaks, there  
 22 were so many different kids in there. There was white,  
 23 mixed race kids and black kids, there was Asian kids.  
 24 What you have to realise as well, and I work with them  
 25 now, there are siblings that -- you would have a white

Page 24

1 sibling, he's got a mixed race sibling. So whatever  
 2 that sibling went through at that time, it also affected  
 3 the other sibling. You know, because you had white,  
 4 black and other ethnic groups in the care system. So we  
 5 all suffered the same, you know. We had -- The Elms and  
 6 Shirley, all the homes I've been in, there was white  
 7 siblings in them homes, also, also suffering because of  
 8 what we went through also. All of us. It affected us  
 9 all different -- in different ways, and with these  
 10 teenagers I work with now, the same thing, I try and  
 11 explain to them that, you know, it's not about the  
 12 dynamics where you're from, it's steering you onto the  
 13 right path and then trying to have some self-belief  
 14 about yourself and just try and understand that it  
 15 doesn't matter where you come from, you have as much  
 16 right to be here as anybody else.

17 Q. You say in your statement:  
 18 "I hope lessons are learnt from this and it's put  
 19 into the history books."  
 20 You say -- you make reference:  
 21 "It happened in this country under the noses of  
 22 everybody."  
 23 A. That's right. That's correct.

24 Q. What do you mean "under the noses of everybody"?  
 25 A. Well, everybody. When I analyse this stuff now as an

Page 25

1 know, you have to remember, Shirley Oaks was its own  
 2 place. It was separated from the rest of the public.  
 3 Nobody -- you had to drive into Shirley Oaks. So any  
 4 time we had visitors, everybody would act like  
 5 everything is normal. You know, people's parents came  
 6 to visit, people's relatives came to visit. Anybody  
 7 from outside, they knew who were coming, everybody acted  
 8 like it was a joyful, normal place. But those people  
 9 leave at the end of the day and then everything gets  
 10 back to how they used to run the place. That's what  
 11 I mean, it was under the noses of everybody.

12 Q. You were asked what recommendations you think should  
 13 follow for children in care now and how they're placed  
 14 to avoid this happening again, and you say you recommend  
 15 foster placements should not be in the middle of  
 16 nowhere, as Shirley Oaks was.  
 17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. What do you mean by that? Can you expand on that for  
 19 us? It is your last paragraph.  
 20 A. Yeah, what it is is, I don't think -- they shouldn't be  
 21 in the middle of nowhere. I've thought about some of  
 22 these recommendations, and especially the children that  
 23 are in care, it should be -- they shouldn't be in the  
 24 middle of nowhere and the demographics of that  
 25 particular area should reflect on the children, you

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1 adult and I look at what's happened back in those  
 2 decades, it's hard to believe that that was going on.  
 3 This is supposed to be a civilised country. This  
 4 country is supposed to be a beacon of light where people  
 5 from all over the world come to try and get a better  
 6 life. It's supposed to lead by example. Those things  
 7 that were happening in those places which were run by  
 8 local authorities and local government at the time, who  
 9 had an insight -- there's no way nobody can say they  
 10 didn't -- somebody knew what was going on. The staff  
 11 who didn't do anything about these things were just as  
 12 guilty as the people that were doing it, because they  
 13 had a chance to say something to someone, they had  
 14 a chance to tell somebody about these things, and nobody  
 15 in the houses that I was in, nobody said nothing, and  
 16 that's what I mean, under the noses of everybody,  
 17 because you've got two choices: you can do something or  
 18 you can choose to look the other way. And they chose to  
 19 look the other way and that was the situation at the  
 20 time. That's what I meant "under the noses of  
 21 everybody". Nobody -- you complained to a social  
 22 worker, the social workers didn't have a clue what was  
 23 going on in these places. They -- on their sporadic  
 24 visits, everybody acted like everything was normal. Any  
 25 time we had visitors from the outside -- because, you

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1 know, the particular child in care.  
 2 The homes -- they should never, ever have been run  
 3 by families -- family members, husbands, wives, because  
 4 then they start bringing their children into the  
 5 equation and their relatives and their children.  
 6 I mean, like, what they did with us, they used to give  
 7 our presents that our mother brought to their own  
 8 grandchildren and their grandchildren used to play with  
 9 our presents in front of us and that was traumatising to  
 10 watch. So the family -- the whole family thing should  
 11 never be allowed again.

12 The children should be universally represented, not  
 13 just by front-line staff, senior management should be --  
 14 it should be universally represented, you know, not just  
 15 have -- you know, you've got a few, like anything, staff  
 16 working on the front-line and all of the senior  
 17 management having to be white, and it still is like that  
 18 in some local authorities.

19 So they don't have an understanding sometimes of  
 20 what -- the needs of the child, the children, at the  
 21 time.

22 Q. You say there should be an open and transparent  
 23 environment?  
 24 A. Open and transparent, yes. Everything should be  
 25 transparent and open. There shouldn't be no -- the

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1 children should be inclusive -- any decisions made about  
 2 children, the children need to be included in that.  
 3 Like, we didn't -- I mean, we were told we was going on  
 4 holiday when we first went to Shirley Oaks. That's what  
 5 the social worker told us, we was going on holiday, and  
 6 we was thinking, how come -- why are we here still? And  
 7 that turned into years of living in Shirley Oaks. The  
 8 children need to be included in any big decisions like  
 9 that, you know, any decisions made on children, they  
 10 need to be involved in them decisions.  
 11 Q. Did you ever feel you were told about the plans, for  
 12 example, when Shirley closed and you moved on, did  
 13 anyone ever talk to you about where you were going and  
 14 what your childhood was going to look like, or was that  
 15 just not a conversation to be had?  
 16 A. No, they didn't know where we was going. When I recall,  
 17 my younger brother said to them, "So where are we  
 18 going?" Because they said the home was going to be  
 19 closed soon. What had happened was, we had gone on  
 20 a joint holiday house in Shirley Oaks with The Elms  
 21 before, we had got -- two houses together had gone on  
 22 a holiday somewhere to some Butlins camp somewhere.  
 23 I don't want to get into that, but, yeah, my younger  
 24 brother said, "Oh, just out of curiosity" -- they said,  
 25 "We're closing down soon," and he said, "Where are we

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1 and, when we go through your evidence, we are going to  
 2 talk about social aunt and uncle, rather than names.  
 3 A. Okay.  
 4 Q. We will manage it as we go through, and if we don't,  
 5 I can ask the chair to make a restriction order to  
 6 prevent any identification, and we can make sure the  
 7 transcript doesn't have those identifying details in  
 8 them, if they are going to lead to identifying you.  
 9 A. Right, okay.  
 10 Q. Thank you for providing your statement. We have it, and  
 11 it is dated 27 May 2020. Have you got it near to you  
 12 and can you just tell us that it's true and accurate, as  
 13 far as you're concerned?  
 14 A. Yes, I can. Yeah, it's true and accurate, as far as I'm  
 15 concerned, yes.  
 16 Q. You tell us in your statement that you came into care  
 17 when you were 11 years of age because of neglect and  
 18 physical abuse at home, and you were placed, we know, at  
 19 Shirley Oaks for a couple of months. So you were 11  
 20 going to this place. Tell us what it was like for you,  
 21 going in there, what it felt like, what the home was  
 22 like?  
 23 A. I remember obviously going there straight from school,  
 24 the social worker took me there straight from school,  
 25 and I just remember it being really far from school and

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1 going? Are we going to go with those other kids that we  
 2 went on holiday with?", and the house mother said, "Oh,  
 3 that's a good idea. Yeah, would you like that?", and  
 4 that's how we ended up going to The Elms.  
 5 MS LANGDALE: Thank you very much. I have got no further  
 6 questions. I don't know if the chair has. Thank you.  
 7 THE CHAIR: No, we have no questions. I'd like to thank the  
 8 witness very much for his evidence. You have assisted  
 9 the inquiry by telling us about your shocking  
 10 experiences and we are grateful to you. Thank you very  
 11 much.  
 12 A. No problem.  
 13 MS LANGDALE: Thank you.  
 14 (The witness withdrew)  
 15 MS LANGDALE: Chair, shall we resume at 11.45 am? That's  
 16 when the next witness is expected to give evidence.  
 17 THE CHAIR: Yes. We will return at 11.45 am. Thank you.  
 18 (11.14 am)  
 19 (A short break)  
 20 (11.45 am)  
 21 MS LANGDALE: Please may I call LA-A300.  
 22 WITNESS LA-A300 (affirmed)  
 23 Examination by MS LANGDALE  
 24 MS LANGDALE: LA-A300, you know I'm going to be using  
 25 a number rather than your name to protect your identity

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1 then I remember when I first went into -- it was  
 2 Violet House. I remember it being on a really long road  
 3 and it was like halfway down. I just remember it was  
 4 always really dark in there, always really dark. From  
 5 the moment I went in there, I used to always think, "Why  
 6 aren't the lights on?". It was just always dark.  
 7 I can't explain why. Yeah, and I shared a room with  
 8 another girl, who I had not met the first night I moved  
 9 in there because she had run away, but I always remember  
 10 the house uncle would constantly refer to her -- like,  
 11 when I used to say, "Oh, where's the girl that I'm meant  
 12 to be -- whose room I'm sharing?", and he used to  
 13 constantly refer to her as a prostitute, and obviously  
 14 I'd never heard this word before, that was the first  
 15 time I'd ever heard that word, but that's how he always  
 16 referred to her, even when she did eventually appear,  
 17 that's what I could always remember from the first day  
 18 I went there.  
 19 Q. How were the aunt and uncle to you? Did they -- were  
 20 they caring in any way?  
 21 A. Not at all. Even though, obviously, I'd come straight  
 22 from home, for me I just felt like anywhere would be  
 23 safer for me than being at home, but when I went there,  
 24 no, it was, like -- there was no -- I wasn't expecting  
 25 them to love me like they'd love their own children, but

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1 it was so cold, and what didn't help was, the house  
 2 always seemed dark. So it was dark, they were cold, you  
 3 didn't receive any love or, you know, "How are you  
 4 feeling today? Do you want to talk about anything? Is  
 5 there anything we can do for you?"  
 6 To me, it just ran like a business; you know, down  
 7 to the point where you'd ask for something to eat and  
 8 they'd say things like, "Well, Social Services haven't  
 9 sent the money through for you yet". "So, what does  
 10 that mean? I can't eat until you get the money through  
 11 for me?". It always felt cold.  
 12 Q. You say that about meal times. If there was a takeaway  
 13 for the family of the house parents, you were told you  
 14 couldn't have that because there was no money sent for  
 15 you --  
 16 A. That's right, yeah, because they used buy their  
 17 children -- they had two boys, and they used to get them  
 18 takeaways, yes.  
 19 Q. You talk about having to go hungry and how not having  
 20 food was a punishment. Is that right?  
 21 A. It wasn't -- it was because I went -- I went to school  
 22 in Brixton, and tea time was about 5.30, and, again,  
 23 they would say, "Because we haven't got no money from  
 24 Social Services for you" -- they'd give me enough travel  
 25 to either get to school and walk home or walk to school

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1 combed. No. No.  
 2 Q. Were you able to raise that or did somebody else say,  
 3 "Look, she needs certain creams for her skin, oil",  
 4 et cetera? Was that ever mentioned by anyone else or  
 5 ignored?  
 6 A. It was just ignored. And, if you did mention it, they  
 7 weren't going to listen anyway.  
 8 Q. Why did you say that? What was your impression about  
 9 nobody listening anyway?  
 10 A. I knew from when I first went there that it was going to  
 11 be as bad as being at home, just without the beatings.  
 12 That's how I felt at that time. I just felt like,  
 13 "Should I go back home?". Yeah, I don't know.  
 14 Q. You say in your statement you did run away on occasions  
 15 when you were at Shirley Oaks. Did anyone follow that  
 16 up with you and ask you why you were running away or how  
 17 you felt about that?  
 18 A. Never. Never. When you used to return after you'd run  
 19 away, they just used to make sure that you had a bath  
 20 and that your hair was washed. They never used to say,  
 21 "Why did you run away? Is there anything we can do to  
 22 make things better? Is anyone bullying you?"  
 23 Absolutely nothing. They didn't even look for us, they  
 24 didn't phone the police. I know one time I disappeared  
 25 for three days and absolutely nothing. And I was going

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1 and get home. So obviously, I'm gonna get the bus to  
 2 school because it was dark as well -- because I'd have  
 3 to leave early, it was dark, and get to school.  
 4 Obviously I got no school dinners -- because there was  
 5 free dinners when I was at home, but obviously now I'm  
 6 not at home, the school meals weren't sorted out. So  
 7 I'd spend the whole day with no food, and then  
 8 I would be walking home from Brixton, Tulse Hill, all  
 9 the way to -- it wasn't even Croydon, it was, like,  
 10 Shirley, that's actually through Croydon. By the time  
 11 you got back to the home, there was no dinner because  
 12 I wasn't home in time. It was impossible to get home on  
 13 time.  
 14 Then, one day at school, I'd just -- again, I'd just  
 15 had enough, I just had a breakdown, and then the  
 16 teachers would give me money to get back home in order  
 17 for me to be fed when I got home. They would then be  
 18 taking money out of their own pocket for me to get on  
 19 the bus to get home. I think bus fare was about 5p then  
 20 as well.  
 21 Q. What about possessions in the home? Did you have things  
 22 you needed -- creams, oils, other things, clothes? Tell  
 23 us about that?  
 24 A. No. To the point I was constantly picked on at school  
 25 because my skin was always dry, my hair was never

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1 to school. So, therefore, I know that no-one was  
 2 looking for me. So no.  
 3 Q. You say in your statement you had a social worker -- you  
 4 don't need to name her -- who was nice to you at that  
 5 time before you went to Southvale?  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. Did she never ask those questions of you or seem to know  
 8 what was happening with you on a day-by-day basis?  
 9 A. I used to see my social worker maybe once a week or once  
 10 every couple of weeks, but, yeah, she used to, like, ask  
 11 me -- because she was really nice. She used to, like,  
 12 ask me how I was and whatever. I don't ever remember  
 13 saying to her, "My skin is dry" or "My hair needs" --  
 14 obviously, we have to oil our hair, certain combs --  
 15 because we can't just use, like, basic combs in our  
 16 hair. No, I don't think I ever used to say to her, "No,  
 17 I need all of these things", because obviously, at the  
 18 time, I was still, like -- I didn't want to be at home  
 19 but I didn't want to be there, but I didn't want to be  
 20 sent back home so maybe I was thinking, "I don't want to  
 21 say too much in case they say, well" -- so I never used  
 22 to say much.  
 23 Q. So that made you very vulnerable, didn't it, worrying  
 24 about being sent home?  
 25 A. It did make me vulnerable. I knew at the time -- even

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1 **though I was only 11, I knew I was extremely vulnerable**  
 2 **from the moment I was leaving that house in the morning**  
 3 **at about 6.30 to go to school, and I just remember it**  
 4 **would be pitch black, walking -- just to get out of**  
 5 **Shirley Oaks itself, down that long road. That alone,**  
 6 **it used to be pitch black, and, you know, I'm a little**  
 7 **girl, standing at the bus stop. You know, I remember**  
 8 **all sorts of things. Yeah, so --**  
 9 Q. Then you were moved to Southvale, weren't you, when you  
 10 were around 11 or 12?  
 11 **A. Yes.**  
 12 Q. You were there for longer, weren't you, than  
 13 Shirley Oaks?  
 14 **A. Yes.**  
 15 Q. You had a good six months there. Tell us your first  
 16 impressions again when you get there? What was it like  
 17 physically, first of all?  
 18 **A. When I first got there -- I think I'd -- I can't**  
 19 **remember if I went there straight from Shirley Oaks or**  
 20 **if I went to school first and then I went there. All**  
 21 **I remember is, the first time I ever went there, going**  
 22 **through the door with my social worker, did all whatever**  
 23 **it is, the paperwork, et cetera, et cetera, she left and**  
 24 **then the next thing they're telling me to strip naked**  
 25 **and they're searching my hair for nits. Now, why do**

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1 **you.**  
 2 Q. You also say:  
 3 "At Southvale, I was constantly in trouble. Nothing  
 4 really phased me after what I'd been through, but the  
 5 staff constantly spoke to you putting you down all the  
 6 time."  
 7 Again, what do you remember about that? What was  
 8 said to you? What kinds of things?  
 9 **A. Just all sorts of things like, they were just constantly**  
 10 **like -- anything you asked them, they would just like**  
 11 **brush it off like they didn't want to talk to you or**  
 12 **they'd just give you the most -- what you wanted to hear**  
 13 **but it might not have been what you wanted to hear.**  
 14 **For example, I remember one day going to school and**  
 15 **I left Southvale and I was at the bus stop for about an**  
 16 **hour waiting for the bus. No bus came. I went back**  
 17 **around to Southvale because, by now, it must have been**  
 18 **gone 9.00. I knew I was late. I went back around to**  
 19 **Southvale and said to them, "You know what, I have been**  
 20 **at the bus stop for about an hour. There was loads of**  
 21 **people there, no bus. Any chance you could take me in**  
 22 **the mini bus or someone could drop me or you could give**  
 23 **me a note, or whatever?", and all of that conversation**  
 24 **was through an -- not through the intercom, it was**  
 25 **through, like, this glass -- like, it was reception. So**

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1 **I need to take my clothes off, if you're only looking at**  
 2 **me for nits?**  
 3 Q. You say that was a female member of staff -- we won't  
 4 say who it was -- doing a search and looking at your  
 5 hair. Then, what did they do with your hair?  
 6 **A. They didn't do anything. They just said they were**  
 7 **looking for nits. But they did cut my hair. Not on**  
 8 **that particular day, my hair was cut at another time.**  
 9 Q. Were you asked whether you wanted your hair cut or was  
 10 that something that was just done?  
 11 **A. It was something that was done, and it was something**  
 12 **that I noticed a few other girls there -- any other**  
 13 **homes that I'd been to, I noticed they had short hair as**  
 14 **well. And they would all say the same thing: "The staff**  
 15 **cut my hair".**  
 16 Q. You also mention that you felt like you were in a prison  
 17 in Southvale. What was it about the building or the  
 18 place that made you feel like that?  
 19 **A. Literally, every door was locked behind you. I just**  
 20 **always remember, you went through that door, they locked**  
 21 **it; you went through the next door, they locked it.**  
 22 **I don't know why, but the doors were locked all the**  
 23 **time. I don't know if it was because the girls were on**  
 24 **one side and the boys were on the other and they didn't**  
 25 **want us to mix, but the doors were always locked behind**

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1 **the person that was behind me, they didn't even do**  
 2 **anything to, "Let's see if we can find her a lift",**  
 3 **absolutely nothing. Just, "Get to school". "Can I have**  
 4 **to say I'm going to be late?" "No". That's basically**  
 5 **what it was like there. They were just cold.**  
 6 Q. So no care or attention at all; just business  
 7 despatched, you were despatched off?  
 8 **A. Yes, literally. I mean, as a young person, you**  
 9 **shouldn't really know if it feels like somebody is**  
 10 **running a business, but I don't know how I would have**  
 11 **known that at that age, but that's what it felt like.**  
 12 **It was -- they were running a business, and they weren't**  
 13 **interested in the children, not at all. We were just**  
 14 **there.**  
 15 Q. Leslie Paul was your key worker, wasn't he?  
 16 **A. Yes.**  
 17 Q. You say at first you thought he was okay. Tell us about  
 18 that? What did he seem like at first?  
 19 **A. At first he seemed great. I always remember him with**  
 20 **his camera. He used to tell us that he was**  
 21 **a photographer. I suppose it was the first time I felt**  
 22 **like somebody was listening to me speak. That's how**  
 23 **I felt when I was with him, that I can actually speak**  
 24 **and he would listen and I also felt like I could get**  
 25 **away with things with him.**

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1 Q. What did he give you? What kind of things -- when you  
 2 say "get away with things", what do you mean? What was  
 3 he giving you at that time?  
 4 **A. Cigarettes. Cigarettes. Sweets. Money. If you can**  
 5 **imagine somebody giving you £5 back then as a child, you**  
 6 **know, you were rich. Just like money, sweets, being**  
 7 **able to get away with certain things around the home as**  
 8 **well.**  
 9 Q. You say, looking back, you can see some of the things he  
 10 liked to do to the girls as he walked past them were  
 11 inappropriate. What sort of things? What would he do?  
 12 **A. Just make comments, like he'd -- like -- he'd make**  
 13 **comments like, "You've got a nice bum" or he'd smack you**  
 14 **on the bum.**  
 15 Q. You also say that sometimes he'd sit you on his knee.  
 16 What was that about, again?  
 17 **A. I don't know. I just felt like, I think -- because he**  
 18 **knew that -- I think he knew that I knew that I trusted**  
 19 **him and, yeah, I mean -- I don't know. Yeah. So we'd**  
 20 **be, like, in the TV room or there'd be a room --**  
 21 **I always remember the snooker table would be in there,**  
 22 **and it'd be like, yeah, he'd be sitting down, "Come and**  
 23 **sit on my knee" or "Come and sit on my lap". Do you**  
 24 **know, again, I don't know, you'd just think, finally**  
 25 **somebody -- because I never, ever got that kind of**

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1 Q. Did he ever develop the pictures, do you know? Did you  
 2 ever see what he was doing with the pictures?  
 3 **A. Yes, because I remember the dark room there as well.**  
 4 Q. This was at his home?  
 5 **A. Yes.**  
 6 Q. And the pictures were developed?  
 7 **A. Yes. I remember the first time I ever went there and**  
 8 **there was a wall and it was just full of black and white**  
 9 **pictures. I'd never seen anything like it. And it was**  
 10 **just full. It just reminded me of when I watch horror**  
 11 **films or films about serial killers and they have got,**  
 12 **like, everything mapped on the wall. That's what it**  
 13 **looked like. It was just full of all children,**  
 14 **different ages, different colours, but it was just full**  
 15 **of topless children everywhere, black and white pictures**  
 16 **of children everywhere.**  
 17 Q. You, we know, left Southvale and moved on to another  
 18 home.  
 19 **A. Yes.**  
 20 Q. When you moved on to the other home, did you still go  
 21 back to Les Paul's flat?  
 22 **A. All the time, yeah. Whenever I ran away, I would go**  
 23 **there.**  
 24 Q. Did you stay there?  
 25 **A. Yes.**

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1 **attention at home from my mum. My mum never said to me,**  
 2 **"Come and sit on my knee, come and give me a cuddle", so**  
 3 **when somebody is saying that to you, you're thinking,**  
 4 **"Finally, somebody is just paying me a bit of**  
 5 **attention", but obviously you don't realise at the time**  
 6 **it's actually inappropriate.**  
 7 Q. Did he ever come into the shower room while you were  
 8 there?  
 9 **A. Yes.**  
 10 Q. What happened? Can you tell us what happened then?  
 11 **A. Well, I'd be -- because they had, like, communal showers**  
 12 **in there, and, like, he'd come into the shower**  
 13 **sometimes, yeah, and just be inappropriate.**  
 14 Q. He took you to buy clothes, you tell us; yeah?  
 15 **A. Yes.**  
 16 Q. And invited you to his home?  
 17 **A. Yes.**  
 18 Q. Did you go around to his home and did you ever take  
 19 others around to his home?  
 20 **A. I did go to his home, on many, many occasions. And,**  
 21 **yes, I did take other children there as well.**  
 22 Q. What did he do when you were at his home?  
 23 **A. What we used to do was, we used to drink, smoke**  
 24 **cigarettes. Drink, smoke cigarettes, eat. Sometimes he**  
 25 **used to ask to take pictures, which I let him do, money.**

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1 Q. Did he ever attempt to sexually assault you there?  
 2 **A. Yes, he did.**  
 3 Q. What happened? Do you want to tell us what happened, or  
 4 not?  
 5 **A. Well, I mean, a few times I stayed in his bed. It's**  
 6 **a bit difficult to talk about it. But he tried to rape**  
 7 **me once, but I don't know if it's because -- I don't**  
 8 **know where I found the strength from. It's probably**  
 9 **because I behaved like a little boy. Because the hair**  
 10 **was short, everybody'd mistaken me for a little boy.**  
 11 **But, yeah. But, yeah.**  
 12 Q. You also make reference to him taking you to another  
 13 man's house to have photographs taken. Is that right?  
 14 **A. Yes. It was about two bus stops -- because I know**  
 15 **Herne Hill, because obviously --**  
 16 Q. Don't worry about where it is.  
 17 **A. Oh, sorry. Because I knew the area, so it was about two**  
 18 **bus stops up the road from where he lived.**  
 19 Q. What did you think was going on when that was happening  
 20 and photographs were being taken of you? What did you  
 21 think that was about?  
 22 **A. Nothing, because if you imagine, when I first went to**  
 23 **Southvale, and I meet a man with a camera, it was**  
 24 **normal, because I never heard anyone question, "Why are**  
 25 **you always walking with a camera?" You know, I never,**

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1 ever heard anyone question that. So -- and because it's  
 2 what I saw when I first went there, it was normal.  
 3 I just thought that was normal.  
 4 Q. You tell us you didn't tell anyone about it at the time.  
 5 How did you not -- why was that? Why did you not tell  
 6 anyone? Because, as you say, you thought it was normal  
 7 or not anything concerning?  
 8 A. Do you know, I don't know why. I think because --  
 9 I think because it was also the first time for me that  
 10 I had -- thinking back, maybe because I had a little bit  
 11 of freedom and a bit of money in my pocket, and maybe  
 12 I just didn't want it to stop. I don't know why.  
 13 I don't -- I literally don't know why. But I just know  
 14 that whenever I was with him, I could do things maybe  
 15 that other children couldn't do and get away with it, so  
 16 it might have been that. And other children knew that  
 17 as well.  
 18 Q. When you were in the home that you used to leave -- you  
 19 say it wasn't such a secure place and that's how you  
 20 were able to get out and go to Leslie Paul's flat. Did  
 21 anybody ask you, when you got back to that home, "Where  
 22 have you been? What have you been doing?", or not?  
 23 A. No. No. No, not at all.  
 24 Q. You went on, as a teenager, to be fostered. I don't  
 25 need you to name who fostered you. How did that go for

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1 A. The boys, their sons used to constantly feel -- what  
 2 they called feeling us up, where they'd be touching your  
 3 crotch or your breast. That was something that they  
 4 always done, and especially with this other girl that  
 5 I shared a room with, because, obviously, she had really  
 6 big breasts and they were always grabbing her.  
 7 Q. There was a time, wasn't there, where you say you were  
 8 in the park with boys, those boys, and the police were  
 9 called. Again, tell us what happened? Was it a member  
 10 of the public that called the police? And then what  
 11 happened when the police came? Again, don't mention who  
 12 the boys were, but what happened?  
 13 A. So we were -- it was -- through the park, the back of  
 14 the park, there was a disused railway line and we was  
 15 all walking along the tracks and they were feeling us up  
 16 again.  
 17 On the other side of the tracks, it was the back of  
 18 people's houses, back gardens, back of the houses, and  
 19 the next thing you know, as we was about to walk  
 20 through, like, this tunnel, we just saw a couple of  
 21 police coming towards us, and they came over and they  
 22 were, like, asking us, oh, what are we doing. It was  
 23 the oldest boy that said, "Oh, we're just up here  
 24 looking for car tyres that we can take back down. We're  
 25 the children of the parents from the children's home",

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1 you, generally, that period in foster care?  
 2 A. Do you know what, it was all right at first, although  
 3 I felt like they were trying to make me like their  
 4 daughter, who never went out, she just sat in her  
 5 bedroom all day and read books or would listen to music,  
 6 and I felt like they were trying to make me like her  
 7 when I was already a child that -- I was a street child,  
 8 you know. So I struggled a little bit with times I was  
 9 allowed out and times I had to be back. Obviously  
 10 because I had to be back for things like lunch, tea,  
 11 whereas, in the home, you didn't have to be back for  
 12 lunch or tea, you just had to come back at 7.00 o'clock.  
 13 So I could leave in the morning at 9.00 and not have to  
 14 be back until 7.00. They'd have no idea where you were  
 15 the whole day. To then go on to be fostered and be  
 16 told, "Right, you've got to be here at this time for  
 17 that and that time for that", I struggled a little bit.  
 18 I was used to being out on the street all day and coming  
 19 back at the time I was given.  
 20 Q. You then moved to another home -- we don't need to say  
 21 what that home was -- by the time you were about 14 or  
 22 15 and you shared a room with two other children there.  
 23 You also say, at that home, the staff running that home  
 24 had children, or adult children, who were doing what do  
 25 you? What did you endure there?

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1 and that was it. But the police didn't ask any of us  
 2 that were there, "Are you okay? Do you know them? What  
 3 are they doing?" Absolutely nothing.  
 4 Q. So they gave an explanation about what was happening and  
 5 you didn't have a voice in that. You didn't say  
 6 anything and you weren't asked anything?  
 7 A. Didn't say anything at all.  
 8 Q. You then refer in your statement how your next  
 9 placement, it was arranged for you to rent a room. I'm  
 10 not going to say where the area was. There was an  
 11 advertisement placed in the local media for  
 12 accommodation for you. You say you were actually taking  
 13 the calls after the advert for people. How was that  
 14 working then? Again, don't say where it was or the  
 15 neighbourhood particularly, but why were you talking  
 16 calls about where you might be moving to?  
 17 A. Because they didn't care. Because they literally --  
 18 I remember when the ad went in and they actually even  
 19 had the times that I could be contacted on. So it was  
 20 not even like, "Oh, you can ring this number between  
 21 9.00 and 5.00", where the chances are I would have been  
 22 at school or college between those times and they could  
 23 have taken the calls. They actually did the ad so  
 24 I took the calls between certain times in the evening.  
 25 You know, I always remember things like people ringing

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1 **up and just saying things like, "Oh, if you do sexual**  
 2 **advances for me, you can keep the rent money when it**  
 3 **comes", and I just could not believe the phone was**  
 4 **ringing 24/7 with -- all men, all men that was ringing,**  
 5 **offering me rooms, and then it was only when someone**  
 6 **else said, "This isn't right. She shouldn't be taking**  
 7 **these calls and vetting these people. We need to step**  
 8 **in", that somebody eventually stepped in and took it**  
 9 **over.**  
 10 Q. You eventually were found a hostel, I think, and then  
 11 a flat when you were 17. I'm not going to mention the  
 12 area where the flat was. Did Social Services arrange  
 13 that for you, that accommodation?  
 14 **A. Yeah, because I remember filling out the housing form**  
 15 **just before I think I turned 16. Yeah, because I got**  
 16 **the flat when I was 17. I filled out the housing form**  
 17 **and, yeah, I had a choice out of a few flats to look at.**  
 18 **Yeah.**  
 19 Q. What was the flat like, the flat that you moved into?  
 20 Was there electricity, a cooker, that kind of thing?  
 21 **A. There was absolutely nothing. So, basically, I was in**  
 22 **the flat for two and a half weeks. I didn't know**  
 23 **about -- I didn't know how or who to call for**  
 24 **electricity, gas. I was in this flat by myself,**  
 25 **literally sitting on the floor, sleeping on the floor,**

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1 **them up in what I thought was this horrible world where**  
 2 **horrible things were constantly happening to you. So**  
 3 **when I got pregnant the first time, I terminated it,**  
 4 **because I just thought, I cannot bring a child into this**  
 5 **world. Yeah. So -- yeah, it was difficult.**  
 6 Q. Were you signposted to outside agencies or anyone that  
 7 could help you in your early adulthood to deal with what  
 8 you had dealt with?  
 9 **A. No. No. Never.**  
 10 Q. You say in your statement:  
 11 "I am pleased something is finally happening, that  
 12 children abused in Lambeth's care are finally getting  
 13 some justice. I cannot believe it has taken so long and  
 14 that the children that were in care around the time  
 15 I was finally have a voice and are going to be heard."  
 16 What do you mean about that, about finally being  
 17 heard? Why is it so important?  
 18 **A. It is important because, like, I remember when I had my**  
 19 **daughter, and I went to -- I don't know if having my**  
 20 **daughter just suddenly -- everything came flooding back**  
 21 **and you just realise just how wrong and how things that**  
 22 **happened in your childhood were so wrong, and went to**  
 23 **Lambeth, you know, and I really believed that they were**  
 24 **listening to me, something was going to be done.**  
 25 **I don't know what I expected to be done, but I thought,**

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1 **for about two and a half weeks, no gas, no electricity.**  
 2 Q. Did you have any social worker visiting you or any  
 3 aftercare help?  
 4 **A. No, I didn't, because, literally, I just remember going**  
 5 **into that flat and that was it. It was goodbye. That**  
 6 **was it.**  
 7 Q. You then moved on in your life, and you say, looking  
 8 back, you feel as though "no-one has ever listened to me  
 9 or believed me". Through all the periods you're  
 10 describing, what do you mean about "no-one listening to  
 11 me or believed me"?  
 12 **A. Adults -- I just find, when you're a child -- I don't**  
 13 **know, back then, I just find adults, they don't listen**  
 14 **when you talk, they always brush you off, they're too**  
 15 **busy, they'll come back and talk to you but they never**  
 16 **get back to you. I just think that a lot of them just**  
 17 **can't be bothered, and even -- I don't know. I just**  
 18 **find it's all, like, when you touch on sexual abuse,**  
 19 **that's when you really see people back away from you as**  
 20 **well. They just don't want to know. I don't know why.**  
 21 Q. How were your 20s and 30s for you in moving on from  
 22 having been in care? Did you get support or help with  
 23 those issues?  
 24 **A. I don't get any support. Like, I never wanted to have**  
 25 **children because I didn't want to have a child and bring**

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1 **"Right, okay, someone is finally -- from Lambeth is**  
 2 **listening to me", and then --**  
 3 Q. Was this in the '80s? Just to date that, would that be  
 4 around the 1980s you're talking about or later?  
 5 **A. This was the '90s, because my daughter --**  
 6 Q. Don't tell us --  
 7 **A. It was about 1990/1991. Then about a week or a week and**  
 8 **a half later, I get a letter just saying that,**  
 9 **basically, if I continued with what I was saying, the**  
 10 **allegations, they were going to take me to court for**  
 11 **slander, and obviously, looking back now, I wished**  
 12 **I did, I wished I'd kept on and on and on and going**  
 13 **there and maybe getting the police involved. I really**  
 14 **wish I did. Because, you know, obviously it's taken**  
 15 **a long time, but finally, you know, we're being listened**  
 16 **to.**  
 17 Q. You say in your statement you felt that your mum had  
 18 taken away your early years and Lambeth had taken away  
 19 your teenage years. Do you want to expand upon that?  
 20 How did that leave you as an adult, with that  
 21 combination?  
 22 **A. Just felt like I just questioned myself every single**  
 23 **day: "Why am I here? Why am I here? I have had a shit**  
 24 **childhood." Early years, getting to Lambeth, I thought,**  
 25 **"Okay, you know, they can work with me". I'm not saying**

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1 I would have made 100 per cent improvement, but, you  
 2 know, they could have done things with me, worked with  
 3 me, made me a better person. But absolutely nothing.  
 4 So for me, my life probably didn't really start until  
 5 I was about -- even though I had my daughter, I would  
 6 still say maybe about 25, really, that I started to,  
 7 like, finally get some kind of control. Yeah.

8 Q. You've been asked to suggest any recommendations in  
 9 order to try and prevent similar offending occurring in  
 10 the future or to improve the response to such offending.  
 11 You raise, again, then, your view that children in care  
 12 aren't listened to. You suggest that, apart from  
 13 Social Services, children in care need someone separate,  
 14 away from the care system, to talk to. What are you  
 15 thinking there? What would be helpful for children in  
 16 care?

17 A. Just for, like -- kids in care need somebody outside of  
 18 the care system that they can talk to. If they feel  
 19 they're not being listened to, they can speak to that  
 20 person, and that person can then voice what the child  
 21 has been saying as well.

22 Also, I remember when I was in care, I didn't have  
 23 a social worker for maybe -- they'd actually forgotten  
 24 that I didn't have a social worker for maybe about two  
 25 years, and I found that's when a lot of things were

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1 grateful. It's very important to us to hear about it.  
 2 Thank you.

3 A. Thank you.

4 (The witness withdrew)

5 MS LANGDALE: Chair, we resume again at 13:45.  
 6 THE CHAIR: Yes, thank you. We will do that.  
 7 (12.19 pm)  
 8 (The short adjournment)  
 9 (1.45 pm)  
 10 THE CHAIR: Good afternoon, everyone. Ms Langdale?  
 11 MS LANGDALE: Thank you, chair. May I call LA-A307.  
 12 WITNESS LA-A307 (sworn)  
 13 Examination by MS LANGDALE  
 14 MS LANGDALE: LA-A307, you know I'm using a number today to  
 15 protect your identity?  
 16 A. Yes.  
 17 Q. That we will also be saying "auntie" or "uncle", rather  
 18 than names?  
 19 A. Yes.  
 20 Q. And we have a cipher or a number to use for other people  
 21 you refer to in your statement. If we make a mistake,  
 22 either of us, I can invite the chair to make  
 23 a restriction order over the name, so I don't want you  
 24 to worry about this, but just so that you know, that's  
 25 what we are going to try to do?

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1 happening to me as well when I didn't have a social  
 2 worker because -- yeah.

3 Q. So you think that relationship with a social worker is  
 4 really important, someone who knows you and is able to  
 5 understand you?

6 A. Yeah. I mean, I can't speak on behalf of all the social  
 7 workers, but the ones that I had, they were great. But  
 8 once the first one had gone, there was literally  
 9 no-one -- and I also found that as well that a lot of  
 10 the staff that were there, I don't know if they were  
 11 qualified, but they always seemed to be friends or  
 12 sisters or brothers. There was always a connection. So  
 13 you couldn't really complain because the chances are you  
 14 would have been complaining to a family member or  
 15 a friend. So it was very, very difficult.

16 Q. So you couldn't speak confidentially to anyone or start  
 17 a conversation with someone for fear of the person you  
 18 were complaining about in the situation finding out?

19 A. Yes. Exactly, yes.

20 MS LANGDALE: Thank you. I have no further questions,  
 21 chair.

22 THE CHAIR: Thank you. We don't have any questions either.  
 23 But I'd like to thank the witness very much for her  
 24 evidence. We appreciate how difficult it can be to have  
 25 to recall experiences such as yours, and we are

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1 A. Okey-dokey.

2 Q. You have helpfully provided the inquiry with a statement  
 3 dated 19 May 2020?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Can you confirm for the chair and panel, please, that  
 6 that's true and accurate, as far as you're concerned?

7 A. It is true and accurate, yes.

8 Q. We know that between 5 and 9, the records show that you  
 9 were in and out of care, and that, at the age of 9, you  
 10 were taken to Shirley Oaks with your brother?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Again, I don't want to ask very much about your brother,  
 13 although you will, I'm sure, refer to him at various  
 14 points. We are focusing our evidence on you and your  
 15 experiences.

16 A. Okay.

17 Q. But of course it impacted on you, you say, when you  
 18 first arrived, that you were separated from your  
 19 brother, weren't you? You were put into different  
 20 cottages?

21 A. Yes, we was.

22 Q. Tell us your impressions of the cottage you were in when  
 23 you first got there and what it was like?

24 A. When I first went into Fir Cottage, it was a very dark  
 25 atmosphere in there, compared to where we'd just dropped

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1 my brother off, and of course, over the days to come, it  
 2 was terrible. It was a terrible -- the atmosphere in  
 3 his cottage and my cottage was -- it wasn't comparable.  
 4 It was terrible.

5 Q. You describe -- don't give us the details of the other  
 6 children -- very early on, hearing other children being  
 7 physically abused and what happened to them. Just tell  
 8 us what you had to listen to or hear?

9 A. It was at night that, after about two weeks I was there,  
 10 I would hear a friend of mine, a young lad [redacted] --

11 Q. Don't worry. We will remove that descriptor, but carry  
 12 on. You remember that particular boy.

13 A. -- and a young girl, who were screaming at night, and  
 14 I knew who they were, and it was terrible, because -- it  
 15 was just terrible to hear. Of course, it's shocking  
 16 because I wasn't expecting nothing like that, and then  
 17 to hear it, it was just terrible.

18 Q. Then you describe how that physical abuse started to  
 19 happen to you. What happened to you?

20 A. Yeah, within two to three weeks of me being there, I was  
 21 woken up at night, my bed being stripped and I was being  
 22 hit and then screamed at to stand on the stairs, with  
 23 the house mother having a lot of fun doing that. She  
 24 would go past you and hit you and pretend to hit you,  
 25 make you stand on the stairs. It was just cold. It

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1 times that there was at least eight to ten people in the  
 2 house, but I can only remember the three people, and  
 3 I can't remember anyone else in there. That is what's  
 4 so strange.

5 Q. You describe an incident when the house mother came at  
 6 you and you hit her back, swearing at her. Tell us  
 7 about that incident and what you did immediately after  
 8 it.

9 A. Well, I was in the ablutions and I went to go to toilet,  
 10 and, unfortunately, she came in at that time, and she  
 11 went absolutely crazy at me. She was hitting me and  
 12 screaming at me, and I just blew -- it was the final  
 13 straw, and I cleared every beaker off there and I was  
 14 swearing at her, yes, and next thing I know, she was  
 15 screaming for the older boy there, and I was held down  
 16 and she put soap in my mouth, a carbolic soap, and I was  
 17 bleeding from the mouth, I was dribbling, it was just  
 18 terrible.

19 Then they left me in the room on the floor and then  
 20 I got up -- I don't know how long it was, to be  
 21 honest -- and I ran to the front door. I ran down to my  
 22 brother's cottage. I banged on the door, and the house  
 23 mother opened the door, and she was upset, and I thought  
 24 I was in trouble. But she took me in and it took ages  
 25 to remove the soap, and I just remember the stinging,

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1 seemed like a very long time we were standing there, or  
 2 I was standing there.

3 Q. You describe an occasion when that house mother made you  
 4 stand in front of all of the beakers, laughing and  
 5 hitting you until she got to the spot. Can you tell us  
 6 about that incident?

7 A. Yes. From standing on the stairs -- she would take you  
 8 either onto the stairs or into the ablutions, and she  
 9 made me stand in front of the beakers -- we all had our  
 10 own beakers all lined up and she made me stand in front  
 11 of the beakers in the cold ablutions.

12 Q. You say, at the time this was happening, you were too  
 13 frightened to tell anyone. What was it that made you  
 14 frightened, if it doesn't seem obvious, to tell anyone  
 15 about that?

16 A. What, the actual what was going on?

17 Q. Yes.

18 A. It was just I was told it would only get worse if you  
 19 did tell anyone. That was from one of the older boys  
 20 there.

21 Q. So the children in the house knew this was happening to  
 22 each other?

23 A. Yes. I would say yes, they'd seen and heard what  
 24 I heard. This is what I'm saying: the strange thing is,  
 25 I can only remember -- although I have read so many

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1 I was dribbling, and it just took ages to remove.

2 Q. You stayed at that house after then, did you?

3 A. Yes. I never went back to Fir Cottage after that.

4 Q. Years later -- I'm going to come to records later. But  
 5 years later, when you saw your records of your time,  
 6 this is back in the '70s, when you saw your records, did  
 7 you ever see a reference to why you left Fir Cottage in  
 8 your records?

9 A. No. There was no record of why I left. There was no  
 10 record of me even being in Fir -- it wasn't even  
 11 mentioned.

12 Q. Sorry, I should have said, this was the '60s, wasn't it?  
 13 I don't want to be specific. But it was the '60s?

14 A. Yes. There was no mention of why I was removed. It was  
 15 like I -- I just arrived there and there was just  
 16 nothing mentioned whatsoever in there. The thing was,  
 17 was that I had a female welfare officer when I was in  
 18 Fir Cottage, and I don't know whether I'm reading into  
 19 things, but just thinking back, I don't know -- she was  
 20 moved, and it says in my records that she's moving on,  
 21 and then, like I say, I was in Elm Cottage. I don't  
 22 know why she was moved on. Then I had another welfare  
 23 officer. So I don't know whether she'd said something  
 24 or if I said something to her beforehand, I don't know,  
 25 I cannot say. I had another welfare officer. But, no,

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1 nothing was mentioned -- nothing at all has been  
 2 mentioned why I was removed from Fir Cottage.  
 3 Q. Then, when you were in Elm Cottage, you soon ended up in  
 4 the sick bay, didn't you?  
 5 A. Yes, I did.  
 6 Q. Tell us about that chapter? What happened there?  
 7 A. Well, apparently I was put into a sick bay with  
 8 shingles, and I was told -- and I remember it well --  
 9 that -- young people don't get shingles anyway. I was  
 10 in sick bay, and it would have been two or three nights.  
 11 I was woken up by a man in a white shirt, and he had my  
 12 hand and masturbating his erect penis. I told him,  
 13 "Leave me alone", and all he said to me was, "I'm here  
 14 to look after you, to take care of you", and that's all  
 15 he said, and he walked away. All I remember of that man  
 16 is his white shirt.  
 17 The next morning, I told the matron what happened,  
 18 only to be told I'd had a bad dream. This is the  
 19 strange thing: I think I was more angry at her, because  
 20 I didn't understand what happened that night. I knew  
 21 what he'd done was wrong, like I said, but I was more  
 22 angry with her because she wouldn't believe me.  
 23 Two/three nights later, I was woken up again and he  
 24 was sitting on my bed. I couldn't see -- all I see was  
 25 his back and he had his hands down my pyjamas, and

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1 A. The house mother, yeah, definitely, 100 per cent.  
 2 Q. You then describe how your brother was moved from that  
 3 cottage and you stayed at that cottage. That was  
 4 unexpected from your point of view. You didn't know why  
 5 that had happened, did you?  
 6 A. I didn't know why my brother was removed. No, there was  
 7 no explanation given. I've got my own mind-set on that.  
 8 You know, now I know exactly what happened to me, I can  
 9 only put my own mind-set on it.  
 10 Q. Is that that you would have spoken to your brother and  
 11 not having him there meant you would have had no-one to  
 12 talk to, like you would have spoken to him?  
 13 A. No, I just -- he was just gone. After that -- to be  
 14 honest, I'd very rarely see him unless we went home on  
 15 a weekend. I'd very rarely see him because, one, he was  
 16 in the outside school and I was in the inside school.  
 17 He was quite a distance away from me in the -- in  
 18 Shirley. My recollection is, I'd very rarely see him.  
 19 Q. I'm going to ask you now about the man we are referring  
 20 to as LA-F64?  
 21 A. [Redacted]?  
 22 Q. The man you talk about from paragraph 36 onwards in your  
 23 statement. Just have a look at that, so you know.  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 Q. The man about the play. I want you to tell us about

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1 I screamed at him again and he just got up without  
 2 a word.  
 3 I think what I haven't said is that the bedding in  
 4 the sick bay, they had thick -- I think it was green  
 5 rubber around the bed, and it smelt horrible and it was  
 6 very hot. Anyway, he just walked away and, again, in  
 7 the morning, I told -- when the matron showed her face  
 8 again, I told her what had happened, and she just got  
 9 nasty and told me to stop talking a load of nonsense and  
 10 just walked away from me.  
 11 Q. When you left the sick bay and went back to the cottage,  
 12 did you tell the auntie about it?  
 13 A. I asked to speak to my house mother, and we went up into  
 14 her private quarters, and I explained what happened to  
 15 me in sick bay, and she asked me did I tell anyone, and  
 16 I told her what had happened and I told her I'd spoken  
 17 to matron, and she seemed very concerned. I explained  
 18 to her everything that happened on the two occasions.  
 19 I don't know -- obviously now I've had my records,  
 20 nothing's in my records, so I don't know. I don't know  
 21 whether she told anyone or whatever, but it's not in my  
 22 records.  
 23 Q. But you've got a very clear recollection you told two  
 24 people at the time -- the matron and also a house  
 25 mother?

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1 this, and if you want a break at any moment, just say.  
 2 Take your time.  
 3 A. When my brother was removed from the cottage, this  
 4 gentleman came up to me -- to Elm and asked me if  
 5 I wanted to take part in a play with him so it could be  
 6 performed in front of the school, and I agreed to do so.  
 7 The first time I was taken down there, and the rest  
 8 of the time I'd go down there and walk down to his  
 9 house -- do you just want me to carry on with what  
 10 happened?  
 11 Q. Yes, tell us what -- if you can. So this is going to  
 12 his house. You were taken to his house for the purposes  
 13 of a play, were you, for rehearsing?  
 14 A. Yes, for the first time, and then I walked every other  
 15 occasion I went down there. We'd go into his house, and  
 16 it was like his office, or a small room, and we would  
 17 start this play, and all I can remember is that the end  
 18 bit was "the tobacco that counts". Going back, I'm sure  
 19 it was an advert on television, and he'd done a skit on  
 20 that, but we wasn't -- we wasn't practising long. It  
 21 seemed a short amount of time.  
 22 Then he would say "Okay", and he'd put his arm  
 23 around and say, "Take a bow" and we'd take a bow and  
 24 he'd said, "Go to the ablutions and get  
 25 yourself bathed", or whatever, but don't get my hair

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1 wet. I remember it clear as day. I'd come out, and  
 2 it's the same every time: I would have a sandwich, a bit  
 3 of cake and a hot chocolate, and then that's where  
 4 everything stopped. Because I cannot remember ever  
 5 going back to Elm House from there. How I got back  
 6 there, I don't know. And that's on every occasion that  
 7 I went down to his place, that I never remember coming  
 8 back.  
 9 Twice, I woke up on his floor and there was a chair  
 10 halfway up my body when I woke up. I was sound asleep  
 11 and then I woke up and this chair was on me. That's it,  
 12 on them two occasions, I couldn't remember what happened  
 13 to me, going back to Elm.  
 14 Again, I've got my own opinions what happened to  
 15 me --  
 16 Q. Was there an occasion where there was more than one man  
 17 there? There were a number of them?  
 18 A. This was what's come back to me. There was a woman and  
 19 another man, who I know now that he was a [redacted],  
 20 and of course [redacted].  
 21 Q. LA-F64, yes.  
 22 A. Yes. I remember just shouting at him that he hurt me on  
 23 a number of occasions, and the memory came back of what  
 24 they actually done to me. I was on a table, and  
 25 I was -- my chest was on the table, and my legs didn't

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1 there". Why was this not done by them?  
 2 Q. So you told them that you didn't want to go back to that  
 3 house anymore --  
 4 A. Yes.  
 5 Q. -- and that you didn't want to do the play?  
 6 A. No, when I said that, I was never -- I never went back  
 7 there again and that play was never done in front of  
 8 the school.  
 9 Q. Were there any questions asked by the house mothers  
 10 about that, or why you didn't want to go back, or  
 11 anything?  
 12 A. No, I think they knew. Personally, I think they knew.  
 13 They could see what a terrible state I was in anyway.  
 14 They must have known. I can't even say how many times  
 15 I was down there. I can only remember this one time it  
 16 happened. So how many times did this happen? How many  
 17 times? Why didn't they step in? Why was it me that had  
 18 to say, "I'm not going down there no more". Why?  
 19 Q. You also say that your records show you were sent on  
 20 a summer camp with LA-F64 --  
 21 A. Yes.  
 22 Q. -- (interference). Can you remember anything about that  
 23 summer camp or not?  
 24 A. I looked when I got my records and there is a letter  
 25 there asking -- he's asking if I can go. I think it

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1 even touch the floor, and someone was holding my legs,  
 2 because I couldn't kick. I couldn't do nothing. I was  
 3 screaming at them. All I remember is this woman was  
 4 either photographing me or filming me while whoever was  
 5 raping me from the other end.  
 6 There was classical music going, and that is what  
 7 sparked this off, my memory, because I put on classical  
 8 music, and suddenly it was like everything switched on.  
 9 As I say, this woman kept coming to the front and  
 10 leaving me, going -- and then coming back again, and  
 11 I was just screaming, "You're hurting me, you're hurting  
 12 me", and I remember -- the crazy thing, I just remember  
 13 [redacted] giving me a glass of milk, and I remember  
 14 very well just drinking this damn glass of milk, and  
 15 then everything after that was a complete blur. I don't  
 16 remember going back to Elm from there.  
 17 This is what I've said before in my statement:  
 18 I always classed Elm as a sanctuary, being what happened  
 19 in Fir Cottage, and looking back at it as an adult now,  
 20 I must have been in a terrible state when I got back,  
 21 and I've been asking the question, why didn't my house  
 22 mothers do something? Because I can't remember.  
 23 I don't know whether this was on Fridays that I went  
 24 there, but I can't remember the days afterwards. I've  
 25 asked why was it me that had to say, "I don't want to go

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1 might be to my welfare officer, I don't know. I was in  
 2 no Scouts. I was never in the Scouts. I know I was  
 3 there a day or two and that was it, I was brought back.  
 4 Something happened there. I don't know what happened,  
 5 but it was only one or two days and I was brought back  
 6 to Elm Cottage. There's nothing in my records to say  
 7 why. I can't remember why. But it's not in my records  
 8 again. It's the same when I've seen in my records,  
 9 everywhere I went, if I had a knock or whatever, it was  
 10 always in my records that I was seen at the doctor's, or  
 11 whatever. But when it comes to Shirley and it comes to  
 12 the sick bay or whatever, nothing's in my records  
 13 about -- it's just incredible.  
 14 Q. You also tell us that at some point when you were in  
 15 Elm Cottage, there was a wonderful lady who wanted to  
 16 possibly adopt you, and you were hoping for that, were  
 17 you, but that never happened, did it?  
 18 A. No. I was asked -- she was a wonderful lady. I can  
 19 remember when she used to come in -- I can't remember if  
 20 she was the cook or the cleaner, and I used to make cups  
 21 of tea, and we really got on so well, and I was with my  
 22 welfare officer and he was talking to me about  
 23 the possibility of doing this, and after a time, we --  
 24 I visited them at least five or six times, met the  
 25 husband and her son, and then there was a meeting with

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1 her and I think my welfare officer was there -- yes, he  
 2 was, and he said, "It's not taking place now", because  
 3 my mother had said no, and that was the last time I --  
 4 she must have left, because ...  
 5 Q. Have you got a glass of water there?  
 6 A. Yes, thank you. Because I never saw her again. No  
 7 explanation. I can now look back as an adult and  
 8 just -- she was more likely upset as well, because I got  
 9 on so well with the family.  
 10 Q. One of the things that you flag up is that both then,  
 11 around this possible adoption, and later on, when you  
 12 were at an approved school, you weren't really told your  
 13 true circumstances, were you? No-one was explaining to  
 14 you why decisions were being made?  
 15 A. No. I'm looking back now as an adult and I can see from  
 16 my records, I believe that -- I don't mean at 5 years  
 17 old, obviously, I mean maybe at 9, when a child can  
 18 comprehend so much, he should be told the circumstances  
 19 or tried to explain to him why you can't go home, why  
 20 they have taken you out, and this is what I couldn't  
 21 understand when I was in approved school. I was boxing  
 22 captain, I was house captain, I rowed for the school,  
 23 and every time I went for a release, you'd go in front  
 24 of a committee and they'd say, "Sorry, blah, blah,  
 25 you're not allowed to -- you won't be getting a release

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1 What was it like being in school? Again, don't mention  
 2 names of teachers.  
 3 A. No, okay. My schoolteacher, he was okay, but he was  
 4 very heavy with the slipper. I mean, he didn't hold no  
 5 prisoners when it came to the slipper. He was quite  
 6 brutal.  
 7 But, I must say, like I said in my statement, you  
 8 know -- because my education wasn't great. He  
 9 introduced me to Enid Blyton with "The Faraway Tree" and  
 10 I've adopted ...  
 11 Q. Take your time. Have a drink.  
 12 A. I've adopted that with the grandchildren, with  
 13 "The Faraway Tree", and they absolutely love it.  
 14 Q. You say you started running away -- you ran away from  
 15 Shirley Oaks and, when you were caught, you went  
 16 somewhere else. What made you feel like running away  
 17 from Shirley Oaks? It will seem obvious, but why were  
 18 you running away?  
 19 A. I'd just had enough. I'd just had enough of it. I just  
 20 wanted to get out of there. Then I ran away with  
 21 a young black friend of mine from Shirley and we got  
 22 caught. I didn't want to go back to Shirley Oaks, and  
 23 they put me in another home, Orchard House, and, again,  
 24 I had a tough time there at school, and it's in my  
 25 records that I stepped out of a queue and, for some

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1 date", and I'd be seeing people going out and thinking,  
 2 "What's going on here?", and then I'd go again --  
 3 I think it was every two or three months -- three  
 4 months, I think, "Sorry, you can't go. You're not  
 5 getting a release date". And at the last time, I just  
 6 blew, and I told them what I thought and my house  
 7 father, he was a good man, he was a good man,  
 8 ex-professional fighter, and he tried to calm me down.  
 9 But if they would have told me the reason why, it's  
 10 because they didn't want me at home and there was  
 11 nowhere else for me to go, I could have understood that.  
 12 Instead, I just said, "Enough's enough", but,  
 13 unfortunately, the final straw come, and I used to get  
 14 on very well with my house father in approved school,  
 15 and he caught me smoking, and he creeped up behind me  
 16 and he hit me up the back of my head, and I turned  
 17 around -- and it's one of the biggest mistakes I've  
 18 done -- and I hit him back, and he -- quite rightly, he  
 19 beat me, and I just thought, "There's no way I'm going  
 20 to get out of this place", and I ran away.  
 21 Q. Let me take you back to Shirley Oaks, because that's  
 22 before you go to approved school. We know you run away  
 23 from Shirley Oaks, which I want to ask you about.  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 Q. When you were at Shirley Oaks, how was school for you?

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1 reason, one of the teachers decided -- and he punched me  
 2 in the back of the head behind the ear and I reacted.  
 3 Then I was taken up to the headmaster, and this is all  
 4 in my records, where he asked me to move a table so he  
 5 could cane me and I told him what to do with the table,  
 6 and he proceeded to cane me. And I had bruises and cane  
 7 marks on my backside and all over my wrists and in my  
 8 records he said I didn't move my hands. Well,  
 9 unfortunate for him, I was going home for the weekend to  
 10 my parents, my mother, and obviously the lump and the  
 11 bruising behind the ear and the bruises on my arms and  
 12 backside. And then, when it was reported, it said in my  
 13 records it wasn't too excessive.  
 14 Q. We know that, as you say, you went to approved school  
 15 and I think you were charged with the theft of a motor  
 16 vehicle, or something like that, taking and driving  
 17 a car or something?  
 18 A. Yeah, when I left, yeah, it said that I'd stolen a car.  
 19 Well, that's fantastic because I couldn't drive.  
 20 I didn't drive until my 20s. I had no inclination to  
 21 drive. Cars meant nothing to me. But they did say that  
 22 I'd stolen a car. But what he should have said is --  
 23 because when I explained to you about my house father,  
 24 he hit me and hit me badly, which I accepted, and I'm  
 25 not saying nothing bad about this man because I admired

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1 **the man, and it was my fault for hitting him, but that's**  
 2 **what should have been said, "Why run away?". I'd had**  
 3 **enough. But to say I stole a car. It's just**  
 4 **ridiculous.**  
 5 Q. Again, without examining the various institutions or  
 6 approved school you were in until you were discharged,  
 7 I think in 1971 or thereabouts, you saw in one of those  
 8 institutions -- you don't need to say which it was or  
 9 where it was -- LA-F64 again, didn't you?  
 10 **A. Yes. That was when I was waiting for -- because when**  
 11 **they did try to give me another three years for this car**  
 12 **theft that never happened, I appealed against it.**  
 13 **Because they removed me from a boys' prison back to this**  
 14 **other place that [redacted] was now the governor. For**  
 15 **some reason, I was put in a cell. And he came in and**  
 16 **all he said was, "Hello, [redacted]", and gave me three**  
 17 **cigarettes --**  
 18 Q. I'm just going to make sure that your name is removed  
 19 and also that we refer to the cipher. Carry on.  
 20 **A. Yeah, he just said, "Hello", and I looked at him and he**  
 21 **just gave me three cigarettes. I can't remember**  
 22 **anything else was said. I don't know whether he looked**  
 23 **at me and thought, "This man's filled out a bit and**  
 24 **I don't want to mess with him". I don't know. And**  
 25 **I never see that man again all the time I was back in**

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1 abuser against their prey."  
 2 Is that how you feel you were treated and  
 3 stigmatised?  
 4 **A. Yes, I was, yes, I do. Because I think it's very easy.**  
 5 **Even, when I said, when I got punched behind the ear and**  
 6 **caned, the person [redacted] said the boys said**  
 7 **I deserved it. Well, considering I was the youngest one**  
 8 **there, I can't ever remember being in a queue with them**  
 9 **where they would have seen this. It was just**  
 10 **ridiculous, you know, how someone can say that**  
 11 **I deserved this.**  
 12 Q. You were asked to provide your thoughts on what Lambeth  
 13 could do in order to try to prevent similar abuse  
 14 occurring in the future or improve the response to such  
 15 abuse when it occurs. You say:  
 16 "An important thing is to listen to children and  
 17 watch for changes in children and at all costs believe  
 18 the child."  
 19 Do you want to expand on that? When you say "watch  
 20 for changes in children", what is it about your  
 21 experience that, when you look at your records now,  
 22 causes you to ask these questions you are about who knew  
 23 what?  
 24 **A. I just feel that if a child -- if something is happening**  
 25 **to a child, you and the welfare officers can see**

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1 **that place.**  
 2 Q. During the time that you were there, or subsequently,  
 3 did you ever speak to the police about that man or any  
 4 of these events? At the time?  
 5 **A. No. No, when I was in that place waiting to go for my**  
 6 **appeal, I never seen [redacted] again. There was a man**  
 7 **there that -- a big man, a big northern guy, who**  
 8 **introduced himself by hitting me in the head with**  
 9 **a bunch of keys and saying to me, "Why is it that you're**  
 10 **such a tough guy in an approved school? You've been so**  
 11 **good here", and I told him I was going for my appeal and**  
 12 **he said, "It ain't going to happen". On a number of**  
 13 **occasions, he tried to provoke me and provoke me by**  
 14 **hitting me in the head with keys at different times.**  
 15 **Even on the day I was going for my appeal, that man was**  
 16 **standing by the transport, even goading me on then, and**  
 17 **then I told him, "You don't want me to come back here.**  
 18 **If you touch me again, you're going to have a big**  
 19 **problem, a massive problem".**  
 20 Q. You didn't go back, did you?  
 21 **A. No.**  
 22 Q. You say in your statement at paragraph 83:  
 23 "On reading through my records, it was so easy to  
 24 make me out to be a problem, a liar or a thief just to  
 25 portray me in a bad light to cover any comeback on the

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1 **a difference in that child, and you do change. Like**  
 2 **I said, the difference with being in Fir Cottage, it's**  
 3 **got to have been noticed, you know. It can only stem**  
 4 **from that. You've got to listen to the child. And I've**  
 5 **said, take the child -- it's no good a welfare officer**  
 6 **going to, like, say, Fir Cottage and talking to me while**  
 7 **that evil woman was there and thinking you're going to**  
 8 **get some sort of truth, because you're not. You need to**  
 9 **take that child away. You need to talk to that child on**  
 10 **neutral ground so he opens up without the fear of her or**  
 11 **someone that's doing the abuse. Not hearing it,**  
 12 **basically. You can talk one to one with your welfare**  
 13 **officer. That is my opinion, you know, that it should**  
 14 **always believe the child. Let the adult prove that the**  
 15 **child is a liar, not say the child is a liar first**  
 16 **because this is where it is all wrong.**  
 17 Q. The child should be able to talk openly to their welfare  
 18 worker on neutral ground?  
 19 **A. Yes, take them away and let them talk.**  
 20 Q. You also say, based on your experience, you feel a child  
 21 must be informed and told the truth. Your own  
 22 experience was, throughout your records, they say you  
 23 were a problem "because I wanted to go home". But you  
 24 didn't know, did you, the position there?  
 25 **A. No, when I've been reading through my records, it**

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1 becomes the norm when you're at home. If you get  
 2 slapped or someone's drinking or the boyfriend doesn't  
 3 like you, it becomes the norm. But when they decide to  
 4 take you away from there, and then -- like I said  
 5 before, I was in a place called Herne Hill, which  
 6 I loved, for a year. I loved the place.  
 7 Q. That was before you went to Shirley Oaks?  
 8 A. Yes, when I was 5 years old.  
 9 Q. Did people care for you there? Did it feel like you had  
 10 adults who cared?  
 11 A. The people in there were beautiful people. I loved the  
 12 people. I loved the school. I just loved it there.  
 13 And then they take you away from there and then put you  
 14 back into a situation where they took you away from --  
 15 you know, to look after you, and that whole year was  
 16 absolutely wasted. I cannot understand why they would  
 17 do that. And I say -- you can't explain to  
 18 a 5-year-old, but you can certainly explain to a child  
 19 why you can't go back. When I read my records and you  
 20 hear she wasn't maternal, the men that she went with  
 21 hated us [redacted] and [redacted]. They didn't like us  
 22 at all. But they'd still put us back into that  
 23 situation.  
 24 Q. I'm going to ask that the family information is removed.  
 25 But you're saying very clearly your records were

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1 station -- you know, in front of people that really  
 2 doesn't want to get involved or whatever. You need that  
 3 person there to protect them. You really do.  
 4 MS LANGDALE: Thank you very much. There are no more  
 5 questions from you. The chair may have questions for  
 6 you. Chair, I am also going to ask for a restriction  
 7 order for names and family information within the  
 8 evidence.  
 9 THE CHAIR: Thank you. I will make the restriction order as  
 10 you've described.  
 11 We have no questions, but I'd like to thank the  
 12 witness very much for his evidence. All of us here on  
 13 the panel know it takes courage to talk about what has  
 14 happened as a child and since then, and we do appreciate  
 15 you doing this, so thank you very much. You have helped  
 16 the inquiry.  
 17 A. Thank you, chair. Thank you very much. Bye, now.  
 18 MS LANGDALE: Thank you. Bye.  
 19 (The witness withdrew)  
 20 MS LANGDALE: Chair, we resume at 3.00 pm?  
 21 THE CHAIR: Yes, thank you.  
 22 (2.31 pm)  
 23 (A short break)  
 24 (3.00 pm)  
 25 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Ms Langdale?

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1 informative for you to understand your life in a way  
 2 that you hadn't when you were a child or even as an  
 3 adult before you got them?  
 4 A. Yes.  
 5 Q. They're important documents to you, aren't they, in  
 6 piecing together your history through childhood?  
 7 A. Yes, because it's like a big puzzle, and when you start  
 8 fitting the pieces together, then you understand the  
 9 situation of what it was like at home. But, like  
 10 I said, to a child, it's the norm, whatever happens at  
 11 home.  
 12 Q. The final suggestion you make is, when the police are  
 13 interviewing a child, there should be someone present  
 14 who has experienced abuse and can be understanding of  
 15 the child's situation and witness as to whether the  
 16 child is being treated in a respectful and decent  
 17 manner. Really, are you driving there that children  
 18 must be treated respectfully when they're making  
 19 allegations? Is that your point?  
 20 A. Yes, that is my point. I think if the child is there  
 21 and knows the person who is sitting there with them,  
 22 that's helping them out, has gone through the same sort  
 23 of thing, I think it's paramount that should happen.  
 24 Because we have seen from the past how hard it's been  
 25 for children who have been abused, in front of a police

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1 MS LANGDALE: Chair, may I call, please, LA-A147.  
 2 WITNESS LA-A147 (affirmed)  
 3 Examination by MS LANGDALE  
 4 MS LANGDALE: LA-A147, you know that I am going to be using  
 5 that cipher or number today to protect your identity?  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. I am also going to avoid using specific dates for the  
 8 same reasons, to protect your identity, and also avoid  
 9 mentioning names of foster carers or particular homes,  
 10 if we can, as we go through your history.  
 11 You have kindly provided a statement to the inquiry  
 12 dated 27 February 2020. Do you have that near you?  
 13 A. I don't have it to hand, but I know what I put in it,  
 14 so ...  
 15 Q. Okay. Good. Can you confirm the contents are true and  
 16 accurate, as far as you're concerned?  
 17 A. Yes. There's a few bits of detail, but when we get to  
 18 them, I'll clarify them.  
 19 Q. Fine. Let's do it like that. Thank you. You have  
 20 also, and the chair and panel have this, attached to  
 21 your statement some care records, and they have also got  
 22 your table of placements, where you were placed in care  
 23 in the 1990s and 2000s. We know that that's the period  
 24 of time you're speaking about. So the chair and panel  
 25 have that, but, as we go through it, we will bring

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1 certain matters forward from within that.  
 2 You tell us, and indeed the table of placements  
 3 tells us, you were placed at no less than nine care  
 4 homes and four foster placements in your time in care;  
 5 is that right?  
 6 **A. I believe so, yes.**  
 7 Q. You've done your best, looking at the records, to see  
 8 what the precise dates were and, as you say, on the  
 9 detail and the dates, that may not be right, but you had  
 10 substantial movement, didn't you, throughout your  
 11 childhood?  
 12 **A. Yes.**  
 13 Q. Some placements with family members, approved as foster  
 14 care, I think, in one case, and others with foster  
 15 carers?  
 16 **A. Yes.**  
 17 Q. You moved between different homes as well, frequently?  
 18 **A. Yes.**  
 19 Q. You say at paragraph 10 in your statement that during  
 20 your time in care you were sexually abused on a frequent  
 21 basis and you were extremely vulnerable at the time and  
 22 taken advantage of due to your vulnerability. Before we  
 23 go through the chronology, can you just elaborate on  
 24 that for us? In what ways were you vulnerable and how  
 25 was this known?

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1 you ran away sometimes to a family member's home; yes?  
 2 **A. Yes.**  
 3 Q. That family member, as far as you're aware, was never  
 4 assessed or -- assessed as being suitable for you to  
 5 live there at such a young age?  
 6 **A. Yes.**  
 7 Q. While you were with that family member, you say you were  
 8 sexually abused on a frequent and repeated basis by  
 9 older men. Tell us about what period and what was  
 10 happening there. Particularly, tell us -- you don't  
 11 have to tell us what the area was in London, but you set  
 12 out very clearly something that happened to you when you  
 13 were, again, only about 13, I think.  
 14 **A. When I was at her house -- she didn't have a problem**  
 15 **with me seeing older guys, so I remember she used to**  
 16 **take me to, like, nightclubs for people who were**  
 17 **over 18, she would help me to dress up, so I'd like put**  
 18 **on a wig and do all the things to make myself look more**  
 19 **mature. When we used to go into the clubs, I remember**  
 20 **one morning -- because the club finished maybe about**  
 21 **5.00 or 6.00, I met a guy and I asked her if I could go**  
 22 **with him and she said yes. Yeah, so she was -- she**  
 23 **didn't actually have a problem with me talking to guys**  
 24 **who were older. Bearing in mind this guy was 36 years**  
 25 **old and I was 13. I don't know if she knew his exact**

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1 **A. Due to my age, I feel that was a vulnerability. Because**  
 2 **I was so young, I was naive. I was, to some degree,**  
 3 **quite gullible, and I just feel that -- yeah, I just**  
 4 **feel like being so young in an environment where I was**  
 5 **left to my own device, it just wasn't -- well, that's**  
 6 **how it feels, that I was just left to my own device.**  
 7 **I feel like that just exposed me to people's -- to the**  
 8 **harm of others, basically.**  
 9 Q. At paragraph 11, you explain, when you were 9, you were  
 10 in the care of a foster parent, and the foster parent's  
 11 child -- you were only 9. What happened, or what did  
 12 the foster parent's teenage child do?  
 13 **A. Okay. So her foster son, so not her son.**  
 14 Q. Yes.  
 15 **A. He would get me to engage in different sexual acts.**  
 16 **(Technical interruption)**  
 17 Q. I'm so sorry, I don't know what's happened there.  
 18 I think that interruption has disappeared. I hope so.  
 19 LA-A147, I'm so sorry. Do continue. So you -- the  
 20 foster child engaged in behaviour. What was that?  
 21 **A. So I remember he used to tell me to go underneath the**  
 22 **bed, and it was -- it was -- I think it was like a sofa**  
 23 **bed, and he would put his penis through and then tell me**  
 24 **to do things to it, so, like -- yeah.**  
 25 Q. You then moved into a different home, didn't you, and

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1 **age, but he was a fully grown adult.**  
 2 Q. Did that man have sex with you?  
 3 **A. Yes.**  
 4 Q. Did he pay for that -- did he pay you, try and pay you?  
 5 **A. No, he didn't. That was someone who I had an intimate**  
 6 **relationship with for over two -- maybe a two-year**  
 7 **period.**  
 8 Q. Again, at the same age, early teenage?  
 9 **A. Yes, so from when I was 13 until I was about 15.**  
 10 Q. Would the family member know about that or not?  
 11 **A. Yes. So she was aware that I was seeing him. She**  
 12 **didn't have any problems with me seeing him. But then,**  
 13 **also, other guys would come to her house, so, like,**  
 14 **sometimes a guy would come with his friends, and they**  
 15 **would bring weed and they would drink alcohol, and**  
 16 **obviously I was a part of this drinking and smoking.**  
 17 **I don't think I was viewed as being younger than them.**  
 18 **We were all -- I think I was seen to be in the same age**  
 19 **group as them, in the sense that they -- there's nothing**  
 20 **they was doing that they wouldn't allow me to do. So**  
 21 **whatever was happening, I was a part of it, and there**  
 22 **was a number of other females who were staying in the**  
 23 **house over the period of time in total, there was six of**  
 24 **us -- wait one second. There were five -- yeah, six of**  
 25 **us, I believe, including her baby, and I was the**

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1 **youngest, being 13, and the oldest person was 22, and**  
 2 **there was all ages in between.**  
 3 Q. Then you went back into children's homes, didn't you, at  
 4 various points in that period as well, let's say between  
 5 13 and 16, you were back in homes as well, weren't you?  
 6 **A. Yes.**  
 7 Q. Did the relationships -- or did that interaction with  
 8 older men continue when you went back into the  
 9 children's home?  
 10 **A. Yes.**  
 11 Q. Did anyone ever ask you where you were going or what was  
 12 going on in your life?  
 13 **A. Do you know what, to be fair, I remember I would talk to**  
 14 **the staff, but I can't fully tell you the content of our**  
 15 **conversations, with it being so long ago. But I know,**  
 16 **as a person, I've always been open, so, in terms of,**  
 17 **like, talking about stuff, I don't think I really hid it**  
 18 **from people, if that makes sense.**  
 19 Q. It does. I'm going to go to the records. I know you  
 20 haven't got your statement. I'm just going to ask you  
 21 to confirm things for us. You were clearly very open  
 22 about what was happening to you in terms of sexual  
 23 abuse, but just for a moment, in terms of anybody caring  
 24 about you overall and saying, "Where are you going? How  
 25 are you feeling? What's going on?", did you strike

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1 **like, "Okay, yeah, I'll take it because you told me it**  
 2 **won't kill me", yeah, just kind of exposes my**  
 3 **vulnerability and how gullible I was at that age. So,**  
 4 **yeah.**  
 5 Q. How did you get the money to pay for drugs as well?  
 6 What was happening?  
 7 **A. Okay. So in the beginning, I believe, at that time,**  
 8 **I was actually working at the fun fair with this girl**  
 9 **who was living in the children's home, and so she --**  
 10 **I paid for the pill myself or something. But this is**  
 11 **before my addiction started with class A drugs. But in**  
 12 **terms of the cannabis, I was actually selling myself to**  
 13 **buy cannabis.**  
 14 Q. Were you leaving the home to do that?  
 15 **A. Yes.**  
 16 Q. You were leaving the home, selling yourself to get the  
 17 money to do that. Did anybody ask you questions about  
 18 what you were doing, where you were going?  
 19 **A. I have no record of that. I can't recall that. But**  
 20 **also I think the first time the interaction happened,**  
 21 **like, selling my body, was when I was staying with my**  
 22 **cousin, and -- when I was 13, and then -- 13? I swear**  
 23 **I was 13 -- yeah, because it was before I turned 14.**  
 24 **Then that's when it continued. So it basically started**  
 25 **there because he was a family friend and -- yeah, so,**

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1 a relationship with anyone in these children's homes  
 2 that meant they understood you and the whole picture of  
 3 your life?  
 4 **A. I don't think so, and I think, because -- when I was --**  
 5 **a few times, I broke stuff in the house, and I got**  
 6 **arrested by the police, and I remember being reflective**  
 7 **and trying to understand that, like, a lot of it was**  
 8 **because I felt, like, unloved, I wanted attention, and**  
 9 **I guess people -- like, I just thought that my needs**  
 10 **weren't being met, if that makes sense. So I was trying**  
 11 **to find a way to communicate that I just wasn't happy,**  
 12 **and, like, my needs just wasn't being met.**  
 13 Q. When you were a teenager in those homes, by then you had  
 14 been introduced to drugs. Did you develop a drug  
 15 addiction?  
 16 **A. Yes, I was introduced -- well, I was smoking cannabis**  
 17 **from about 12, but I believe I was 13 when I developed**  
 18 **an addiction to it. And in one of the homes, over**  
 19 **a six-week period, I tried ecstasy and -- within the six**  
 20 **weeks, I tried ecstasy, crack and heroin, and when I say**  
 21 **I was gullible -- basically, the person who offered me**  
 22 **an ecstasy pill, I asked her if it would kill me and she**  
 23 **said no, so I took it. As an adult today, I know, it's**  
 24 **not practical for you to ask or believe something like**  
 25 **that. We don't know. So the fact that I was able to be**

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1 **basically, that's where it started. And then another**  
 2 **person --**  
 3 Q. We have a record of when you were about 15, and you  
 4 phoned the home that you were in in a very distressed  
 5 state. Are you able to tell us now what that was about,  
 6 or what was happening to you then? Do you know the  
 7 incident I'm talking about?  
 8 **A. Yeah. Basically, I was out, because I made plans to go**  
 9 **to a nightclub with one of the staff members, and she**  
 10 **said she would get us some ecstasy. I didn't put this**  
 11 **part in my statement because I think it was more to do**  
 12 **with the sexual side, so I didn't know how relevant that**  
 13 **was. But I think she lost her job or something as**  
 14 **a result of that. But anyway. So we was planning to go**  
 15 **and go out to a party on the weekend, so I went to an**  
 16 **area to go and buy some clothes and, whilst I was there,**  
 17 **I met a man and we started talking and he -- I believe**  
 18 **he offered me some weed and then he said we could go and**  
 19 **smoke. And so it sounded like a good idea. I went with**  
 20 **him.**  
 21 **I can't remember exactly how we got there.**  
 22 **I vaguely remember a car, but I don't think he was the**  
 23 **driver. So we went to this apartment and it was on the**  
 24 **13th floor, and I remember -- because I'm**  
 25 **claustrophobic, so he walked up the flights of stairs**

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1 with me. When we got into the flat, I remember seeing  
 2 a man there. As an adult, I now know that the man was  
 3 a drug addict and he gave the man drugs for the  
 4 accommodation so that I was left alone -- he was left  
 5 alone in the flat with me. I remember he asked me if  
 6 I wanted to have sex with him and I said no.  
 7 I think he asked me again, and I said no, and  
 8 I felt -- I thought I had a choice, and then we was in  
 9 the bedroom, and I remember he pulled down my tracksuit  
 10 bottoms and it was quite easy, because they didn't  
 11 have -- they were, like, elasticated, and I pulled them  
 12 back up and then I can remember he pulled them down  
 13 again and then he hit me at some point, but I don't  
 14 remember exactly when, but then I do remember -- the bit  
 15 what kind of really stands out is that he said to me in  
 16 a strong Jamaican voice, "If you do that again, watch  
 17 what I'm going to do to you", and at that point, I was  
 18 so scared I did not want to find out what was going to  
 19 happen, so I didn't challenge him. I just allowed it to  
 20 happen, and I asked him to wear protection, and ...  
 21 yeah. But before that, also, I guess what made me feel  
 22 really uncomfortable is that I needed to go to the  
 23 toilet and he actually escorted me to the toilet and  
 24 waited outside, so in that situation, I kind of realised  
 25 that my back was against the wall and I couldn't do

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1 2001, do you remember disclosing that you were having  
 2 sexual intercourse with three men and the staff telling  
 3 you you should attend a practice clinic for a checkup?  
 4 Do you remember that? Do you remember anyone talking to  
 5 you about underage sex and, if you're having underage  
 6 sex, practising safe sex, or not?  
 7 **A. No, but I do remember going to a clinic with a staff.**  
 8 Q. So a staff member took you to the clinic. You remember  
 9 that. What happened when you went to the clinic? Did  
 10 you have a checkup?  
 11 **A. Yeah. Yeah. All the tests were done and stuff, and**  
 12 **I think they took a pregnancy test as well.**  
 13 Q. Did you ever tell staff -- do you remember informing  
 14 them about having a sexual relationship -- telling them  
 15 it was a boyfriend who was in his 30s at the time, when  
 16 you were only 15? Do you remember that? Do you  
 17 remember telling anyone about that?  
 18 **A. So, yeah, I believe that's the guy I was talking about**  
 19 **earlier when I told you I was at my cousin's house and**  
 20 **she allowed me to go off with the man who was --**  
 21 Q. What was the reaction to the staff when you, as  
 22 a teenage girl, were talking about a relationship with  
 23 somebody in their 30s?  
 24 **A. I can't recall it.**  
 25 Q. You can't remember? It looks as though you were found

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1 **anything. I just had to surrender.**  
 2 Q. You've seen your records, and I'm going to ask you now  
 3 just to confirm these things that you reported at the  
 4 time, just so we can go through it roughly. So we know,  
 5 in 2001, you informed an education welfare officer that  
 6 you'd been raped whilst in the care of a foster carer,  
 7 and various parts of that are redacted. Can you  
 8 remember now? If you can't remember the conversation,  
 9 it doesn't matter, but that's what's recorded. Do you  
 10 remember revealing what had happened at the time in the  
 11 2000s in relation to the foster son?  
 12 **A. No.**  
 13 Q. There's also records in relation to the following month,  
 14 in 2001. Again, are you talking about that time in your  
 15 life? But you don't remember that. You were aged 9.  
 16 You're describing something about when you were aged 9,  
 17 but you don't remember that?  
 18 **A. No, I don't remember the detail. I just -- yeah, I just**  
 19 **remember it -- because, like, also because my brother**  
 20 **lived in that accommodation --**  
 21 Q. Don't worry about that.  
 22 **A. Okay.**  
 23 Q. You don't remember saying anything then. I'm just  
 24 trying to deal with what you reported at the time, if  
 25 I may. When you were in one of the homes in, again,

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1 with condoms in your possession. Was anything said to  
 2 you about having condoms or what you were doing at that  
 3 point?  
 4 **A. I don't have no record of that, sorry.**  
 5 Q. You also appear to have said to staff at a home that  
 6 four people had had sex without your consent, again,  
 7 around the time you say you were being paid in this  
 8 context, and you were dealing with drugs -- not dealing,  
 9 you were addicted to drugs. Do you remember saying  
 10 anything about that or anything of that nature or what  
 11 happened?  
 12 **A. (No audible answer).**  
 13 Q. Throughout this time, is your addiction to drugs or what  
 14 is happening to you being analysed or discussed with  
 15 you, between you and a doctor in any way?  
 16 **A. No. I remember asking for help with my addiction and**  
 17 **with my anger, but, yeah, I don't -- I have no record of**  
 18 **the outcome of that request.**  
 19 Q. It looks as though, again, in the early 2000s, you were  
 20 in a police station and you were talking about something  
 21 that had happened to you again, going to a man's flat  
 22 and when you had awoken to find him having sex with you.  
 23 Do you remember going to the police station and trying  
 24 to give a statement about that, or anything like that?  
 25 **A. (No audible answer).**

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1 Q. Were you ever really supported to make allegations  
 2 against any of the men you have set out and described in  
 3 your statements at all?  
 4 **A. I don't really feel that -- yeah, I don't -- yeah,**  
 5 **I can't say I feel like I was supported from what**  
 6 **I remember. I don't.**  
 7 Q. Going through your teenage stage and your teenage life,  
 8 what did you think was happening to you at the time?  
 9 How did you feel about it all at the time? Can you  
 10 remember?  
 11 **A. So at the time, I think sometimes the reason why I was**  
 12 **quite open to conversing with men and stuff is**  
 13 **because -- if I'm honest, like, even the man who was 36,**  
 14 **like, I thought that, at some point, me having sex with**  
 15 **him, he might start loving me. I know it's -- as an**  
 16 **adult, it's not real, but as a child, I just wanted to**  
 17 **feel love, and I thought maybe if I had sex with him, he**  
 18 **might love me.**  
 19 Q. You say you were open. You were discussing, weren't  
 20 you, about the fact that you believed you may be  
 21 pregnant at one point and you needed an HIV test.  
 22 I think you were about 12 then; is that right?  
 23 **A. Mmm.**  
 24 Q. You spoke about marijuana and taking angel dust?  
 25 **A. Yes.**

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1 "At no stage there was any doubt that I was at high  
 2 risk of harm by sexual abuse and I am confident this  
 3 represents the attitudes of the time towards me. I was  
 4 an extremely difficult child who was non-responsive to  
 5 social worker intervention and it appeared easier to  
 6 discharge me from care rather than take steps  
 7 appropriate to the significant risks posed to me."  
 8 Do you want to elaborate on that for us? What do  
 9 you mean that you seemed an extremely difficult child  
 10 and nonresponsive to social work intervention?  
 11 **A. So, like, the fact that I had -- because I think --**  
 12 **because of the addiction, it just made it, like, easy**  
 13 **for me to engage in the behaviour that I was engaging**  
 14 **in, ie, sleeping with guys because it funded a way --**  
 15 **like, it funded the drugs which took me away from**  
 16 **feeling how I was feeling, and I guess it was a coping**  
 17 **mechanism. Yes, I believe I was difficult, but I think**  
 18 **part of that was because my needs weren't being met, and**  
 19 **so, like, because people didn't really understand me,**  
 20 **they just put me at, like -- I don't know. I just**  
 21 **think, yeah, they didn't understand me. So instead of**  
 22 **me getting the right support, I was just kind of struck**  
 23 **off, if that makes sense, so, yes, I was challenging,**  
 24 **I do think I was challenging, but, like, I was -- I had**  
 25 **a lot of issues. Like, my mum kind of abandoned me**

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1 Q. Again, at a very young age. You mentioned this older  
 2 boyfriend a number of times, did you?  
 3 **A. I do think -- because -- yeah, I can't clearly remember,**  
 4 **because obviously it was so long ago, but I do think,**  
 5 **like, in terms of me speaking openly, I don't feel that**  
 6 **they made me feel that I'm not able to speak openly, if**  
 7 **that makes sense.**  
 8 Q. But did your life change in any way for you when you had  
 9 spoken openly?  
 10 **A. It didn't, no. In terms of, like -- I don't feel like**  
 11 **nothing was put in place or -- yeah, I don't know what**  
 12 **was done as a result of me sharing the information that**  
 13 **I shared.**  
 14 Q. Did you continue to be in high-risk situations, looking  
 15 back now, as you (interference), through those years --  
 16 **A. Definitely.**  
 17 Q. -- did that continue for you?  
 18 **A. Yes.**  
 19 Q. Did you have any understanding at the time of how you  
 20 were being exploited in that position, or not?  
 21 **A. No. I didn't even really consider these situations to**  
 22 **be high risk. I didn't know what high risk was. It was**  
 23 **just what I was doing.**  
 24 Q. You say in your statement, at paragraph 38 -- you don't  
 25 have it with you. But I will tell you what you say:

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1 **unintentionally as a child, and, yes, it's not her**  
 2 **fault, but when she was unwell, she was unable to show**  
 3 **me love. So why wouldn't I have issues?**  
 4 Q. Did you ever, through all your childhood and teenage  
 5 years, feel loved and cared for?  
 6 **A. Not really, and that's why I was looking for love.**  
 7 Q. You, at one point -- and, again, it is in your teenage  
 8 years and from your records. It says:  
 9 "Due to disruptive behaviour, have been kicked out  
 10 of school."  
 11 And there is a record that says that you said, more  
 12 than anything, you wanted to get back to school and  
 13 asked staff if they could find you a school. More than  
 14 anything, that's what you were expressing at that point.  
 15 What was your education like and was that in any way  
 16 a haven for you, being in a school with other  
 17 relationships or teachers, or not?  
 18 **A. So my education from year 4 to 6 wasn't great. I used**  
 19 **to go to school maybe a few times a week, and I think**  
 20 **that was predominantly because, like, my mum wasn't too**  
 21 **well and stuff like that. But then, when I came into**  
 22 **care, I got excluded from the school in the first -- so**  
 23 **in year 7, and then I went back to school in year 8 and**  
 24 **got excluded again. But, yeah, my schooling was --**  
 25 **yeah, it wasn't great. It wasn't great.**

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1 Q. You say in your statement at paragraph 44:  
 2 "From all my disclosures and the sexual abuse  
 3 I suffered, none resulted in a criminal prosecution. It  
 4 appears to me I was frequently disbelieved because of  
 5 the number of disclosures I made and when I would often  
 6 say I didn't want to proceed with formal charges, this  
 7 was quickly accepted without much question because it  
 8 was easier."  
 9 Just unpacking that, why do you think that was  
 10 easier and what do you mean by that? As you say, you  
 11 were recorded as saying, "I don't want to press on with  
 12 certain allegations" or things. Why was it easier for  
 13 people to accept that, do you think?  
 14 **A. Because they don't have to go through the hassle it  
 15 takes to, like, go through the process.**  
 16 Q. Did you, by going between so many care homes, foster  
 17 homes and relatives, lack any consistency in your life  
 18 or boundaries or discipline or understanding of life?  
 19 How did it affect you, living in so many different  
 20 places?  
 21 **A. I think it just created -- like, it was very  
 22 destabilising. It enabled me to live the lifestyle  
 23 I was choosing to live. I do feel like I wasn't  
 24 protected from my choices and my decisions that I made.  
 25 I didn't know better and, yeah, I just feel like, just**

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1 **older I learned about these different -- like, recovery,  
 2 rehabilitation. I didn't know -- I just knew that I had  
 3 a problem and I needed help but I didn't know how to  
 4 stop.**  
 5 Q. You also make reference in your statement to saying:  
 6 "It appears I was considered beyond saving."  
 7 What do you mean by "beyond saving" at the time?  
 8 **A. I think it's just the fact that, obviously, I was just  
 9 doing -- I was living quite a reckless lifestyle, and  
 10 the fact that no-one helped, it was quite evidential  
 11 that they probably thought it was too much work.**  
 12 Q. Did you feel you got any guidance or support into  
 13 adulthood?  
 14 **A. No.**  
 15 Q. Did you have any after-care provision? When you left  
 16 care, did you get any support then?  
 17 **A. I had a personal advisor when I was leaving care.**  
 18 Q. Did that help in any way?  
 19 **A. She was probably one of the best people that I worked  
 20 with.**  
 21 Q. How long did she work with you? How long did she  
 22 support you?  
 23 **A. I can't remember. A number of years.**  
 24 Q. So it was a number of years. That was something that  
 25 you found beneficial?

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1 **moving around didn't -- wasn't helpful. It really  
 2 wasn't.**  
 3 Q. At one point in the 2000s, you are reported to be saying  
 4 that you would like to be in a secure unit to get away  
 5 from everything. Was that anything that you can  
 6 remember being discussed with you, being in secure  
 7 accommodation?  
 8 **A. I vaguely remember a conversation about it, but I don't  
 9 remember -- yeah.**  
 10 Q. But at that point, you seemed to be expressing "just to  
 11 get away from everything". Did you know how to cope  
 12 when you were in this situation or how to take yourself  
 13 out of the cycle?  
 14 **A. No, because I didn't realise -- it's only since I've  
 15 become an adult I've realised there's such a thing as  
 16 recovery. No-one spoke to me about recovery.  
 17 I remember, when I told one of the staff in the home  
 18 that I smoked crack I think about four or five days that  
 19 week, and I said to them, "I can say no, but I don't",  
 20 and I knew it was becoming a problem, and, yeah,  
 21 I just -- yeah, I don't -- nothing was done about it,  
 22 basically.**  
 23 Q. So you didn't get any rehabilitation help or assistance  
 24 with that at the time?  
 25 **A. I didn't know rehabilitation exists. It's only as I got**

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1 **A. Yes.**  
 2 Q. In terms of support for young people leaving care, what  
 3 would your suggestion be to the chair and panel? What  
 4 do you think could help when you leave care and  
 5 adjusting to adulthood?  
 6 **A. I think teaching people life skills. So helping them to  
 7 understand budgeting and making sure they have the  
 8 appropriate support in place. So, for example, if  
 9 a young person has an addiction, being able to address  
 10 that addiction, obviously ideally before they leave  
 11 care, but those are the things that need to be  
 12 addressed, because, ultimately, when the person goes  
 13 into adulthood, they take that addiction with them. So  
 14 it is about setting them up so they're ready to move on  
 15 into adulthood in the best possible way with the best  
 16 possible chances.**  
 17 Q. You also talk about children in care need the benefit of  
 18 education and schooling, and you were deprived entirely  
 19 of this, despite wanting to go back to school. Again,  
 20 can you elaborate on that? Why is that so important?  
 21 Why do you think that's so important?  
 22 **A. Because I do feel like school gives children structure,  
 23 it creates a form of stability, it is a routine, it's  
 24 consistency. It has so many different levels to it and  
 25 also children are able to socialise and they're able to**

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1 **be children at school. I think when you're out of**  
2 **school, you've got a lot of time on your hands, and that**  
3 **time can generate negative -- yeah, it gives people the**  
4 **opportunity to engage in negativity if they've got too**  
5 **much time on their hands.**  
6 Q. You also say:  
7 "If it is difficult or the child is resistant, it is  
8 not about moving the child on or removing them from  
9 school. There needs to be persistence and one-to-one  
10 attention to get to the root of the problem."  
11 Would that have helped you?  
12 **A. I do think so, yes, because I think it is about**  
13 **acknowledging, "What are these child's needs?", and then**  
14 **meeting those needs.**  
15 Q. In terms of a child in a dangerous situation such as  
16 yours, what about -- you say that mental health  
17 treatment or rehabilitation treatment should be explored  
18 early on and get involved with that?  
19 **A. Yes.**  
20 Q. Did you get any psychological assistance at all?  
21 **A. I vaguely remember seeing someone when I was 15.**  
22 **I think she was a psychologist, if I remember rightly.**  
23 **So, yeah.**  
24 Q. You say at the end of your statement it is important to  
25 note you felt at all times unloved and broken. Is that

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1 **social work -- foster carers and care home workers,**  
2 **I think they need specialist training in dealing with,**  
3 **like, substance abuse, just general abuse, so they're**  
4 **able to recognise it and support people when they're**  
5 **kind of going through it or if they have gone through**  
6 **it. So I do feel like people -- I think training is**  
7 **a big thing. Like people being more aware and knowing**  
8 **how to respond and manage different situations**  
9 **appropriately.**  
10 MS LANGDALE: Thank you. Thank you for that. I have no  
11 further questions. I don't know if the chair and panel  
12 have?  
13 THE CHAIR: No, we have no questions, but I'd like to thank  
14 the witness very much for giving us her evidence. You  
15 have helped us by telling us about your dreadful  
16 experiences and we are grateful to you for doing so.  
17 Thank you very much.  
18 **A. Thank you.**  
19 **(The witness withdrew)**  
20 MS LANGDALE: Chair, that concludes the evidence for today  
21 and we resume tomorrow at 10.30 am with Ms Hudson giving  
22 evidence, and Ms Dobbin will be asking her questions.  
23 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Ms Langdale.  
24 (3.32 pm)  
25 (The hearing was adjourned to

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1 how it was for you, your time in care and childhood?  
2 **A. (No audible answer).**  
3 Q. Is there any other recommendation or suggestion that you  
4 want to make after your experience of life in care to  
5 the chair?  
6 **A. Well, yeah. I do feel there should be, like, specialist**  
7 **social workers. I don't know if this already exists,**  
8 **but I was thinking about it, in preparation for this,**  
9 **and I do think, like, they should be, like, complex**  
10 **needs social workers, so they have got a certain level**  
11 **of experience of being a social worker and then they do**  
12 **additional training around, like, abuse, substance**  
13 **misuse and all of the areas that children and young**  
14 **people generally struggle in, and I do think, like, it**  
15 **would be good -- if they're not allocated any children**  
16 **but they work alongside the social workers, so they look**  
17 **at the caseload, they look at the child and they make**  
18 **recommendations for that social worker, because I think**  
19 **if they have caseloads, then they get bombarded, so**  
20 **ultimately they're able to work with more -- like,**  
21 **address different issues with children. So they look at**  
22 **them and then they put a care package in place and then**  
23 **give it back to the social worker for the social worker**  
24 **to kind of deal with it. But I think it should be done,**  
25 **like, on a personal level and as a team. I think also**

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1 Tuesday, 21 July 2020 at 10.30 am)  
2  
3  
4 I N D E X  
5  
6 WITNESS LA-A354 (affirmed) .....1  
7 Examination by MS LANGDALE .....1  
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