

Social Care Institute for Excellence

Interview Summary Sheet

Title Page

Ref no: C1597/01

Collection title: Care Leavers' Stories

Interviewee's surname: Thompson

Title: Mr

Interviewee's forename: Colin

Sex: Male

Occupation: After School Club
Manager/ Specialist
Intervention Worker

Date of birth: 1971

Dates of recording: 19.03.13

Location of interview: Social Care Institute for Excellence, 2-4 Cockspur Street, London, SW1Y 5BH

Name of interviewer: Tamisan Joe

Type of recorder: Canon XF 305

Recording format : .mxf

Total no. of tracks: 1

Mono or stereo:

Stereo

Total Duration: – 2:35:07

Additional material:

Copyright/Clearance: Full clearance

Interviewer's comments:

Track 1 [02:35:07] [Session: 19th March 2013] [00:00:00] Talks about his life before care in Somers Town, London with mother and little brother. Discusses mother's incapacity to care for children, also due to epilepsy and medication. Recalls being taken to the caretaker's house for dinner the night he was taken into care aged 8 . [00:03:30] Discusses memories of first foster placement- being scared of the dogs and feeling odd. [00:05:29] Discusses his urge to be part of a family, highlights his awareness of being a looked after child,[00:07:36] talks about being bullied . [00:08:43]Discusses diversity of daily routines in different foster placements, scoffing breakfast in first foster home. Used to steal French Fancies (cakes) from friend's fridge on way to school. Describes as most amazing childhood memory of being given Tottenham [Hotspurs] football club away kit. Mentions his awareness of other people making decisions about his life. [00:13:01]Discusses his traumatic memories of being locked in bedroom with little brother by mother . Was left alone to explore local area at very young age- including site where British Library now stands; Shaw Theatre; local laundry. Talks about his childhood memories of his mother being taken to hospital and brother being taken into care. [00:16:00] Discusses his coping strategies when roaming the streets including visiting bakery in Charlton Street and laundry.[00:17:20]Talks about memorable incidents as a child including receiving a drum kit and happy time at primary school. Mentions anxiety towards the dentist due to spending lot of time there as child. Mentions feeling cared for at school. [00:20:00]

Track 1[cont.from 00:20:00]Mentions pride he feels in way he has dealt with his past experiences discusses the level of neglect and unfair treatment he received from some carers, [00:25:36] discusses how moving to a particular foster family when he was 14 impacted his life for the better . Talks about after his experience in a children's home wanting to be accepted into foster family , remembers calling foster parent s mum and dad, describes forcing his way into the foster family. Talks about having a nickname of CP that has stuck with him in his adult life. Describes being able to talk to his foster , mother, having sense she could understand and put his point across, mentions how he would communicate his life story to other people. [00:32:40] Discusses what trust meant to him at age 14, talks about trust with his biological family members. [00:34:22] Talks about lack of relationship with biological dad, remembers meeting one time and going to a cafe together, but did not meet him again before his dad passed away. Talks about wanting to find out more about his past, for his children's sake, highlights how much understanding his daughter has of his childhood. Talks about his lack of a relationship with biological mother before going into care, sudden disappearance of little brother when his brother went into care, different memories including being put in bath that was too hot, watching Dr Who on the television, having album with James Bond music . Talks about an accident that happened to him. [00:44:36]

Track 1 [cont. from 00:44:36] Discusses his defence mechanisms as a child of both avoiding bullies and instigating fights. Talks about how he displayed the anger within him .Talks about his primary school, enjoying getting into trouble with headmaster as it gave him sense of identity. Discusses his childhood memory of finding crates of Corona lemonade and cream soda bottles , selling them back to fish and chip shops. [00:48:31] Talks about his childhood friends and who he socialised with, talks about disliking goodbyes, expresses how much he needed care and attention . [00:51:18] Talks about how being in care has affected his relationships, mentions his anxiety towards the opposite sex and rejection . [00:53:02] Talks about his coping strategies, learnt in therapy, writing a book, preferring honesty to affirmation from other people. Discusses his definition of crazy. Talks about how he would numb his pain. [00:56:25] Talks about it being unusual for him to have been in care past 18th birthday, but this was due to being sectioned age 16. [00:58:13] Talks about how being in care

affected his birthdays, discusses disliking Christmas in care until he got to last foster placement. Describes not liking the cream cakes his mother always brought into school for his birthday.[1:00:47]

Track 1[cont. 1:00:47] Talks about Mothers and Fathers Day meaning nothing to him, but buying foster carers cards . [1:01:36] Talks about how care in Somerset affected his identity as a Londoner, fighting to get it back when returning to London by running market stall. Describes how his belief were affected by being in care, talks about his self image , becoming confident Cockney after moving to last foster placement. [1:05: 35] Talks about getting badly treated by children when he was in care in Somerset but received good treatment from teachers and after school club workers despite being in trouble with the law. Talks about how care has shaped his life, mentions searching for his lost childhood [1:10:30] Talks about most positive role model being his surrogate Nan he met in Somerset, who developed his love of antiques, and looking up to foster siblings. Mentions other more destructive role models. Talks about doing work with care leavers , being a trustee of the charity Voice for seven years , looking up to the ex chairman or chief executive of Voice. [1:15:45] Describes having four foster placements, moving from first placement after a year down to Somerset. Mentions reading his foster care files. Was sent back to London by second foster carers after two years. Talks about second foster placement feeling like an adventure, but also about how isolated he felt in Somerset, and how he kept in contact with people in London .Talks about second foster carers being gamekeepers, first time foster carers, not used to dealing with unruly child from London. [1:24:50]

Track 1[cont. from 1:24:50] Describes being in a children's home next, education being disrupted and happiness he found in fourth foster placement. Describes the impact his foster mother and father, Mum and Dad, had on his life, his children have their surname, made him feel accepted. [1:28:28] Talks about good childhood memories from fourth foster placement and school .Talks about enjoying holidays including playscheme at Coram's Fields, London. Through his job as after school club worker describes unexpected feelings of warmth when meeting new employee, who was his old play worker. Talks about his surrogate Nan, Aunt Thelm, showing him care and affection. [1:31:38] Talks about the smells he remembers as a child, including burning tar and the laundrette, Tottenham kit and bakers. [1:33:28] Describes his visions of the future when he was a younger of wanting family unit [1:35:35] Talks about his lack of financial support systems and preparations he had before leaving care . Talks about disliking being on his own. [1:38:08]Talks about complicated and painful procedure of accessing his foster care records, finding lots of blanked out material due to Data Protection Act. Mentions he was advertised in the Times Newspaper as a foster child, disliking horrible ways he was described, complaining to the council . [1:41:08]Talks about what he has gained from being in care, talks about working with children in care has given him a sense of identity. Talks about his frustrations towards the system[1:44:15].

Track 1 [cont. from 1:44:15] Discusses how he was not supported academically, feels he missed out on opportunities and has a sense of regret about this, compares situation to today, disappointment at only slight improvement for educational attainment for children in care. Talks about how being in care affected his choice and voice, talks about the many different types of jobs and companies he has worked in and for. Talks about the separation with his wife due to alcohol problems, becoming playworker after giving up drinking. Discusses privileged position of working with children. [1:49:28] Talks about playing the role of the parent to his biological mother, not finding parental role model until last foster placement. Admits the sympathy he has towards his biological parents. Talks about feeling rejected due to his circumstances around being in care. [1:52:30] Talks about huge amounts of freedom he had as a child Talks about before he went into care , contrast to children today. [1:53:54]

Did not feel safe though , due to bullying and unpredictability of his biological mother's behaviour. Talks about his granddad being the closest maternal parent he had.[1:55:02] Discusses what trust means to him now, mentions he feels safe and happy when he is with his children. [1:56:11] Talks about his counselling experiences and how it helped in his life mentions undertaking psychoanalysis.[1:58:56] Talks about the advice he would give to people coming into care mentions children in care should have mentors who are not professional and listen to them. [2:00:39]

Track 1 [cont. from 2:00:39] Talks about if he could go back in time and what he would tell himself. Returns to subject of primary school as place of people who cared for him and had his best interests at heart., as well as last foster carers. Mentions the lack of nurture as a child affecting his adult life . [2:05:57] Agrees with statement 'No one can change their past, but they can shape their future' [2:07:33] Talks about his independent life after leaving his foster placement, talks about getting into debt . Talks about his foster parents supporting him while living independently, but feeling isolated. [2:10:18] Talks about his first night in his accommodation, sleeping with the radio on Talks about living in his flat for a year and lost it due to rent arrears, before he was sectioned. Mentions receiving no support other than from foster carers. [2:12:50] Talks about his adult life and self-destructive behaviour. Mentions he felt scarred. Talks about being in a self-destructive relationship. Discusses in contrast the doors that have opened for him being in care including work for Prince's trust and media work for National Care Leavers' Week. Talks about being part of the decision making process for children in care. Talks about being true to himself, discusses the most important thing to him is being a dad. [2:19:31] Talks about what he is doing now , his children, running an after school club , working with young people with behavioural difficulties, describes privileged position. Talks about how he feels about his life now, irony of working in borough in which he was looked after and working with his former workers. Talks about being content in work, home life and relationships. [2:22:10]

Track 1 [cont. from 2:22:10] Talks about how he has created a new family partly through trial and error. Mentions he has been doing a lot of soul searching talks about fear of failure . Talks about making sure his children did not have an upbringing like him. Talks about his identity being based around his children.[2:26:28] Talks about renewing contact with his biological mother in 2012 after 26 years . Talks about having compassion towards his biological mother [2:28:38] Talks about the impact he will have on the next generation, mentions making a difference with his voice . [2:30:11] Talks about meeting staff he knew in residential homes but not the children. Mentions wondering what happened to other children. Talks about taking his daughter to all of the places he had lived when he was younger after getting his file. [2:33:04] Discusses why he was keen to tell his story through wanting to make a difference but also as way of giving his daughters a chance to understand their father more in the future. [2:35:07] [End of interview].