

# Social Care Institute for Excellence

## Interview Summary Sheet

## Title Page

**Ref no:** C1597/13

**Collection title:** Care Leavers' Stories

**Interviewee's surname:** Farmer

**Title:** Mrs

**Interviewee's  
forename:** Lily

**Sex:** Female

**Occupation:** Retired housewife

**Date of birth:** 1921

**Dates of recording:** 26.06.13

**Location of interview:** Interviewees own home

**Name of interviewer:** Khatija Hafesji

**Type of recorder:**

**Recording format :**

**Total no. of tracks:** 1

**Mono or stereo:**

Stereo

**Total Duration:**

**Additional material:**

**Copyright/Clearance:** Full clearance

**Interviewer's  
comments:**

Interview discusses Amy, another resident/ neighbour at Lily's housing association who also took part in the project interviews.

## C1597/13 Lily Farmer

Track one [00:32:33] [Session: 26<sup>th</sup> June 2013] [00:00:00] Lily was born in Chislehurst, the youngest of seven children. Lily's father died when she was three or six months old and Lily went into Mitcham Children's Home. Lily does not recall why she was taken into the home. She moved across four homes. Mitcham, Canterbury, Charing and Shirley. Lily states that she was an unhappy child. Describes Mitcham as a big place, she was fed and kept clean. Mentions life at Mitcham, including rules, but cannot remember it well. Left to join the war service at the age of fourteen. [00:03:15] Lily details school life, and describes herself as backward and funny. Lily enjoyed netball. [00:05:02] Recalls a Christmas at Mitcham where she got a little doll which someone took away from her. Recalls having seedcake or currantcake at tea. Anecdote about working, polishing the floors. Lily did not like the mothers at the homes, mentions getting in trouble with them, though they were not cruel. [00:07:24] Lily suggests that her mother was an alcoholic. Her brothers were taken into the home opposite hers, her sister was taken elsewhere, and it was not nice to be parted. Lily only learnt this after private service. Lily recalls moving in with her sister and her husband at the age of fourteen. Lily mentions working as a maid in private service, she did not want to return to that work, her sister invited her to stay. [00:09:10]

Track 1 [cont. from 00:09:10] Lily describes her prior life as lonely, and ponders why she and her siblings were separated. Lily worked in a laundry after staying with her sister and brother-in-law. Lily returned to work as a maid at Farnborough Hospital, recalls being happy with the other girls. [00:11:15] Discusses her marriage. Describes it as happy, with two children. Details her husband's service in the war – France, Egypt, with Montgomery. Lily lost her brother in the war, but it is not talked about. Lily's husband died sixteen years ago, she describes him as a good man. Lily mentions a lack of money, and having two children only thirteen months apart. Lily did not work during the day, but did evening cleaning shifts when her husband returned from work. [00:14:17] Lily mentions her work as a maid in Farnborough Hospital during the war, and that her mother was poor. [00:15:12] Lily describes the small cottages her mother and father used to live in at Chislehurst. [00:16:25] Lily ponders on why she had to be taken to several homes. Lily reflects on not being able to ask why. [00:17:50] Lily describes her own character as stubborn, and relates an anecdote from Farnborough Hospital, and discusses getting in trouble at the homes. Lily mentions her husband and her happy marriage. She recalls her husband's death resulting in her leaving the flat they shared, and moving into cold bungalows which she currently lives in. [00:20:37]

Track 1 [cont. from 00:20:37] Lily mentions blanking out most of her memories because she was an unhappy child. Also recalls enjoying trips to the cinema with her mother, and dance halls with Farnborough colleagues. [00:22:33] Lily states that no members of her family ever visited her until she turned fourteen. [00:26:25] Lily recalls watching a film the night before about workhouses, states that it reminded her about the home, and suggests that her mother may have been to a workhouse. [00:25:13] Lily describes her relationship with her mother as she got older. Mentions her mother's funeral, and her husband's. [00:26:41] Recalls holidays to Seaford to visit her sister with her children when they were younger. Lily mentions being unable

to swim. [00:28:20] Describes meeting another interviewee, Amy, in her supported lodgings; Amy had been to the same children's home as Lily. Lily's older sister is nearing her one hundredth birthday, Lily does not want a letter from the Queen because she does not want to live to one hundred. [00:30:27] Mentions the lack of love in children's homes, being one of many, being looked after, but missing something. [00:32:33] End of interview.