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| <p>1 Wednesday, 18 July 2018 2 (10.30 am) 3 Welcome and opening remarks by THE CHAIR 4 THE CHAIR: Good morning, everyone and welcome to Day 8 of 5 the first substantive hearing of Children in Custodial 6 Institutions investigation. Today the inquiry will hear 7 witness evidence from some more of the institutions, 8 from Ofsted and from our expert witness, Mr Wood. 9 Ms Hill, if there are any matters you need to deal 10 with at the moment? 11 MS HILL: No, chair, good morning. The first witness of the 12 day is Matthew Brazier from Ofsted and Mr Straw will ask 13 him some questions. Thank you. 14 MR MATTHEW BRAZIER (affirmed) 15 Examination by MR STRAW 16 MR STRAW: Mr Brazier, I think you're giving evidence on 17 behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, 18 Children's Services and Skills, HMCI, and the Office for 19 Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, 20 Ofsted. Is that correct? 21 A. That's right. 22 Q. What's your role for those companies, organisations? 23 A. I'm the Ofsted specialist adviser for looked-after 24 children. I am an inspector, but I am primarily based 25 in Ofsted's social care policy team and I have some lead</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 1</p> | <p>1 submitted document, please, OFS008116. Could that be 2 brought up on screen, please? 3 It's something entitled, "Range of compliance and 4 enforcement action", and at 3.2, it has statutory and 5 non-statutory enforcement actions, which list a number, 6 there and could you, please, go over the page to 7 internal page 31. You can see that those enforcement 8 actions continue there and include prosecution for 9 an offence. 10 Could you turn over the page, again, please, to 11 internal page 32. That list of enforcement actions 12 continues and we can see there, the second bullet point, 13 it includes cancellation of a registration and, third 14 bullet point, refusal of a registration. 15 Are those the enforcement powers available to Ofsted 16 in respect of, inter alia, secure children's homes? 17 A. That's right, yes. 18 Q. How many times each year is a secure children's home 19 inspected by Ofsted? 20 A. Twice a year. 21 Q. Notifications. Could you explain what notifications are 22 required from a secure children's home? 23 A. We expect providers to notify us of serious incidents 24 and there's a number that's set out in the Children's 25 Home Regulations of the kind of incidents that they're</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 3</p> |
| <p>1 responsibility for the secure estate. 2 Q. Starting with secure children's homes, please, is it 3 right that HMCI regulates and inspects secure children's 4 homes? 5 A. That's right, yes, sorry. 6 Q. How many secure children's homes are there currently in 7 England? 8 A. There are 14, mostly run by local authorities, the one 9 run by a voluntary organisation. 10 Q. So 13 run by local authorities and one by a voluntary 11 organisation. Is that right? 12 A. Yeah, Nugent Care, yeah, that's right. 13 Q. Are any of them run by private profit-making companies? 14 A. No. 15 Q. You have described in your witness statement, which is 16 OFS007941 -- which, with your permission, chair, I will 17 formally adduce? 18 THE CHAIR: Thank you. 19 MR STRAW: You describe in that in some detail from 20 paragraph 5 onwards the background and framework to 21 secure children's homes. Because we have already had 22 a witness from the DfE who has gone over some of that, 23 then I won't trouble you with the detail of that. 24 A. Okay. 25 Q. But could I take you, please, to a document, a recently</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 2</p> | <p>1 meant to notify us of, and that is the instigation of 2 a child protection investigation and the outcome of 3 a child protection investigation. If there's 4 an incident of child sexual exploitation, death of 5 a child, issues like that and there is also a sort of 6 caveat at the end where it will say, "and any other 7 serious incident that the provider deems to be worthy of 8 notification". 9 Q. In your statement at paragraph 19 you explain that the 10 incidents which regulation 40 requires the secure 11 children's home to notify you about include allegations 12 of abuse by a person working at the home -- 13 A. That's right. 14 Q. -- involving a child who is in the home. Is that 15 correct? 16 A. That's right, yes. 17 Q. So does that include, then, any allegation of sexual 18 abuse by staff? 19 A. It does, but I guess it's probably worth saying that 20 there's some difficulties in always classifying what is 21 deemed to be serious. We have tried to make it clearer 22 to providers, as far as we can, within the parameters of 23 legislation of what kinds of incidents that we need to 24 be told about, so sometimes there may be incidents which 25 maybe begin like an allegation but then may be later</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 4</p> |

1 retracted, for example, or something that might be seen
 2 as inappropriate touching but then considered not to be
 3 notifiable and it's a matter of professional judgment
 4 sometimes about whether they do notify.
 5 We tend to get overnotified, if anything, rather
 6 than undernotified because providers tend to be worried
 7 that, if they don't notify, they might be in trouble
 8 with us at some later stage.
 9 Q. But if a provider was looking at an allegation of sexual
 10 abuse by a member of staff against a child, it would be
 11 open to them, would it, to say, "Because of the
 12 circumstances, this isn't a serious event and so we're
 13 not required to report it to Ofsted?"
 14 A. Well, it depends. Sometimes circumstances might take
 15 over, so, for example, if a child had retracted very
 16 quickly or the agency had decided that the agency had
 17 looked into it and no further action was required, it
 18 may be that they didn't notify us and it's very
 19 difficult to generalise about this kind of thing because
 20 it really depends on the different circumstances and it
 21 may be that we might pick up on that at a later
 22 inspection and look into it and think, "Actually, you
 23 should have notified us", but the circumstances can vary
 24 so much, but I think the -- basically, it's more likely
 25 we would be notified rather than not notified.

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1 Q. Is there any requirement under the regulations for you
 2 to be notified about an allegation of sexual abuse
 3 against a child by a peer, so by another child detained
 4 in the institution?
 5 A. Yes, we would expect to be notified of that --
 6 Q. You would?
 7 A. -- ordinarily, yes.
 8 Q. The inquiry asked you to produce records of the
 9 notifications you had received from 1 January 2009 up
 10 until 31 December 2017.
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. You describe in your witness statement at paragraph 23
 13 that you don't have complete records of notifications
 14 actually received to 2009 and 2010, but to the best of
 15 your knowledge, you have complete records of
 16 notifications post-2010?
 17 A. That's right.
 18 Q. Is that correct?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. What is the total number of notifications that you have
 21 records of received by Ofsted between 1 January 2009 and
 22 31 December 2017, across all of the secure children's
 23 homes?
 24 A. I'm sorry, I don't have that -- we would have to come
 25 back to you on that exact figure, unless it is in the

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1 statement and I have --
 2 Q. It is --
 3 A. -- forgotten that I have it.
 4 Q. -- sorry, I will take you to that.
 5 A. Sorry, I'm testing my memory and --
 6 Q. It's not a memory test, it's --
 7 A. That's right, and not working very well.
 8 Q. Not at all.
 9 A. Okay.
 10 Q. Paragraph 27, you note there that --
 11 A. So we had 66 across 18, yes, in paragraph 26.
 12 Q. So 66 is the total number of notifications --
 13 A. Yes, across the 18.
 14 Q. -- in that period?
 15 A. Yeah.
 16 Q. And those 18 secure children's homes listed, does that
 17 include children's homes which only take welfare
 18 placements?
 19 A. It does, it includes all of them, including the ones
 20 that have closed in that period, as well.
 21 Q. The inquiry has performed what's been called
 22 a prevalence analysis, so it's asked a number of
 23 relevant bodies to produce any information they hold
 24 about allegations of sexual abuse in that period. And
 25 it came to the following figures: in all of the secure

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1 children's homes, in total in that period there were 280
 2 separate allegations of sexual abuse. However, 109 of
 3 them were between a child and staff or a teacher.
 4 Then taking the shorter period, the start of 2011
 5 until the end of 2017, to take account of your
 6 difficulty with records in those first two years.
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. During that shorter period, there were 224 allegations
 9 in total and 94 allegations said to have been done by
 10 a member of staff.
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. Do you have any comment on the comparison between those
 13 and the 66 --
 14 A. The discrepancy, yes, we see the discrepancies clearly.
 15 Some of it goes back to something, you know, things that
 16 I've referred to already about different interpretations
 17 of what's notifiable and not notifiable. We did -- we
 18 haven't looked at -- we do need to do some work at
 19 looking at each incident in detail, but from our initial
 20 understanding of them is that some of the incidents may
 21 be duplicates. So that might affect our records, but
 22 it -- but generally speaking, as far as we can tell,
 23 most of the things that we would deem to be notifiable
 24 on the information that we have, that we were notified
 25 about them, but there may be several that weren't

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1 **actually notifiable under the regulations.**
 2 Q. Would it be fair to summarise it in this way: without
 3 you looking into it in more detail, it's not clear
 4 whether there was actual under-reporting of incidents
 5 that should have gone to you --
 6 **A. Yes.**
 7 Q. -- or the incidents which didn't go to you didn't need
 8 to be reported because of the definition?
 9 **A. Well, on balance, we'd say that from what we can see the**
 10 **evidence would suggest that they weren't notifiable, but**
 11 **I think with any self-reporting system there's always**
 12 **some problems around omission. That's always likely to**
 13 **be the case in, hopefully, a small number of cases.**
 14 Q. Do you think it would be better if the statute just said
 15 all sexual abuse should be reported to Ofsted or do you
 16 think it's appropriate as it is now?
 17 **A. Well, it's really important that we get to hear about**
 18 **serious incidents that we need -- that will help us plan**
 19 **inspections and respond accordingly and sometimes take**
 20 **urgent action. It's very important that we don't hear**
 21 **about things that aren't considered serious because it's**
 22 **a poor use of our resources, it wouldn't allow us to use**
 23 **them in the way that they're meant to, which is, as**
 24 **I say, take appropriate and proportionate action.**
 25 **We do receive an inordinate number of referrals --**

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1 of notifications already and, as I say, it's a problem
 2 of -- you know, overnotification is a problem that we
 3 have -- and the way we have responded to that is by --
 4 we have ongoing conversations within all the regions
 5 with providers about what is -- what is notifiable.
 6 Providers ring us up on a regular -- ring individual
 7 inspectors and talk through whether it's notifiable or
 8 not on a regular basis, but we have also issued -- we
 9 have published guidance this year for providers, and for
 10 inspectors, to try and make it as clear as possible what
 11 should be notifiable so that we can close that gap of
 12 what maybe should be notified and what we do actually
 13 receive.
 14 Q. Moving on to secure training centres, what's Ofsted's or
 15 HMCI's role in secure training centres?
 16 **A. We inspect secure training centres on an annual basis.**
 17 **There is three secure training centres in England and we**
 18 **do joint inspections with CQC -- Care Quality**
 19 **Commission -- and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons**
 20 **and we do that under a service level agreement with the**
 21 **Ministry of Justice. We're not the regulator of**
 22 **secure training centres, so that's an important**
 23 **distinction to make between the way -- our relationship**
 24 **with STCs and with secure children's homes.**
 25 Q. So the list of enforcement actions that we have seen

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1 arising in secure children's homes you don't have those
 2 in secure training centres?
 3 **A. They don't apply in secure training centres, that is**
 4 **right.**
 5 Q. You mention in paragraph 38 of your witness statement
 6 that approximately eight weeks before an inspection
 7 Ofsted requests behaviour management data from the
 8 secure training centres from the YCS. How is it that
 9 data comes into Ofsted's hands before an inspection;
 10 does it rely on self-reporting from the
 11 secure training centre or do you have a more direct
 12 route of getting that data?
 13 **A. We get that information via the Ministry of Justice, who**
 14 **provide us -- we contact the Ministry of Justice for**
 15 **that data. We don't get it directly from the**
 16 **secure training centres.**
 17 Q. Does that process rely on self-reporting at some stage
 18 in the process or is it a more direct route to getting
 19 the data?
 20 **A. Well, it is self-reporting, but they have their -- they**
 21 **have certain, you know, contracts that they're expected**
 22 **to report on certain things, which is monitored by the**
 23 **Ministry of Justice, I'm sure they will explain to you**
 24 **already about what they expect in terms of information**
 25 **from the different training centres.**

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1 **But, yes, essentially, it relies on them to report**
 2 **the data that they collect. But they do have -- there's**
 3 **other checks and balances against that. There is the**
 4 **Youth Justice, you know, the monitor that's on-site that**
 5 **may -- that has oversight as well of what's happening in**
 6 **the secure training centres, too.**
 7 Q. I will move on to Rainsbrook, if I may --
 8 **A. Yes.**
 9 Q. -- about an issue that you raise in your witness
 10 statement in respect of the inspection of Rainsbrook in
 11 2015, in February 2015. We have heard already that
 12 an overall rating of "inadequate" was given to
 13 Rainsbrook then and you refer in your statement to
 14 a number of serious incidents --
 15 **A. That's right.**
 16 Q. -- that were revealed from Rainsbrook. Could we have
 17 a look at that, please, it's OFS007941, page 15,
 18 paragraph 46, please, towards the bottom of the page.
 19 You explain at the top about an incident that we heard
 20 more about yesterday, one incident involving two young
 21 people in one bedroom where the CCTV footage showed this
 22 being facilitated by a senior member of staff who was on
 23 duty and further enquiries discovered that it's likely
 24 that one young person was allowed to defecate on the
 25 other young person, likely on their head or face.

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| <p>1 Then, towards the bottom of that paragraph, you 2 refer to another incident which was seen on CCTV footage 3 whereby a member of staff was seen to be riding a young 4 person who was on all fours in a communal living area. 5 The young person was observed to be crying. Again, the 6 STC undertook a full investigation -- I'm sorry, 7 I should say, in respect of the first incident, the STC 8 undertook a full investigation. 9 Similarly, in the second incident, the STC undertook 10 a full investigation leading to staff dismissal: 11 "The log held by the YJB at the time included other 12 issues of concern regarding allegations of inappropriate 13 relationship or touching between young people and 14 staff." 15 After a serious incident like this, is there 16 a process by which Ofsted will try to learn lessons, or 17 any of the inspectors will try to learn lessons, so will 18 look at the incident and try to assess whether there are 19 systemic issues such as staff training, which may have 20 contributed to the incident, which should be addressed 21 to try to prevent it happening again? 22 A. Sorry, can you repeat -- do you mean for Ofsted to learn 23 lessons or for the centre -- for Ofsted to look at 24 whether the centre should learn lessons? 25 Q. Sorry, for Ofsted to look at whether the centre should</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 13</p> | <p>1 A. We would expect -- we don't want to do their work for 2 them. We would expect them to tell us what they 3 expected to do and we would make a judgment on whether 4 that was adequate. It's not for us to be prescriptive 5 about how they should do things. We would look for good 6 outcomes of course, but we're trying to look at this in 7 the round, so, as I say, we're not just led by incident, 8 we're trying to look at the whole practice and we're 9 really clear that the leadership response to incidents 10 such as this needs to be really robust and it probably 11 wouldn't promote improvement if it was left to Ofsted to 12 be prescriptive about what they had to do. We would 13 expect them to be able to be driving that themselves 14 and, if they weren't able to do that, then we would 15 respond accordingly. 16 Q. Okay. Following that report we understand from 17 Professor Hardwick's evidence that G4S commissioned 18 Mr Narey to carry out another report. 19 A. Yes. 20 Q. Were you surprised by that? 21 A. I think it's fair to say we were surprised, yes, yes. 22 Q. Has it happened on another occasion, that the 23 establishment has commissioned a report to follow-up 24 a report that Ofsted has done? 25 A. Not to my knowledge, but I suppose, more generally</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 15</p> |
| <p>1 learn lessons? 2 A. Yeah, okay, yeah. That's clearly part of the framework 3 that we, especially in our leadership and management 4 judgment, would have for a -- to consider them to have 5 good leadership and management, we would expect leaders 6 and managers to learn from the incidents, to reflect, 7 understand their strengths and weaknesses, have a really 8 good understanding of what they're good at and what 9 they're bad at and really have a reflective approach to 10 practice. And all the things that you would expect to 11 happen after something as serious as this, you would 12 want them to have a clear action plan about what they 13 would do. 14 So, for example, with an incident like this, we 15 would not just look and see whether they were responding 16 appropriately to this particular incident, we would want 17 to know that their actions were robust enough to make 18 sure it didn't happen again and that would inform our 19 inspection and judgments. 20 Q. Making that judgment about whether lessons should be 21 learned, whether training is adequate or something else 22 needs to be changed, is it right that that judgment is 23 made by the STC rather than by Ofsted? So the analysis 24 of where the change needs to be made is done by the STC 25 itself rather than Ofsted, or how does that work?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 14</p> | <p>1 speaking, organisations such as schools, local 2 authorities will often have other people come in and 3 help them on their improvement journey, so, you know, 4 I wouldn't say it's not a legitimate thing to do if they 5 think that is best for them, although that's -- you 6 know, as a straight answer to your question, we were 7 surprised, yes. 8 Q. Could we have a look, please, at your most recent annual 9 report. This is at INQ001492. I should say I am 10 following the outline of the topics list but won't be 11 following it to the letter. 12 Could you go to page 3, please. Just to show the 13 date, 13 December 2017, the report, and then to page 83, 14 please. The bottom of the page. Paragraph 192. 15 I'm just going to read this out and then ask you 16 a question about it, if I may. Paragraph 192 says: 17 "There is a marked contrast between the inspection 18 outcomes for secure children's homes and 19 secure training centres. While 86 per cent of secure 20 children's homes have been judged good or outstanding, 21 all of the secure training centres have been judged less 22 than good." 23 A. Yes. 24 Q. Then, over the page, 193: 25 "Inspectors of secure children's homes have noted</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 16</p> |

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| <p>1 strengths in ..."</p> <p>2 Then there are a number of bullet points noting the</p> <p>3 strengths there that include:</p> <p>4 "Staff's ability to develop positive and effective</p> <p>5 relationships with young people who are disaffected."</p> <p>6 194, please:</p> <p>7 "Our findings from inspections of</p> <p>8 secure training centres reflect serious concerns held</p> <p>9 nationally about the experiences of children and young</p> <p>10 people in them. In particular, we are concerned about</p> <p>11 poor behaviour management and the safety of children and</p> <p>12 staff. Inspectors found secure training centres that</p> <p>13 were characterised by rising levels of violence between</p> <p>14 children and young people and assaults on staff. This</p> <p>15 was exacerbated by rules and sanctions being</p> <p>16 inconsistently applied and difficulties in recruiting</p> <p>17 and retaining staff across all three centres. Despite</p> <p>18 pockets of better practice, staff often did not have the</p> <p>19 skills and experience to respond to children's needs</p> <p>20 with the necessary sensitivity and care."</p> <p>21 You've mentioned skills and experiences there. Were</p> <p>22 there other reasons that you identified for the poor</p> <p>23 performance of secure training centres?</p> <p>24 A. A lot of the reasons, the main problems that they have</p> <p>25 been having over the recent -- over recent years which</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 17</p> | <p>1 about how we inspect, really. We would want to make</p> <p>2 sure that we focus on the right things in secure</p> <p>3 training -- in all secure settings, so we have reflected</p> <p>4 on the way we inspect and we're working -- we have just</p> <p>5 recently published -- in fact, yesterday -- published</p> <p>6 a consultation on changes to the inspection for the</p> <p>7 way -- to inspections for secure training centres, the</p> <p>8 proposals for changes to those inspections, to make them</p> <p>9 closer to the way we inspect secure children's homes,</p> <p>10 which we think will make a better comparison of</p> <p>11 outcomes, really. If we're looking at the same things</p> <p>12 in the same way, it would be easier to say more clearly</p> <p>13 about why there might be differences between -- such</p> <p>14 stark differences between the outcomes that they</p> <p>15 experience.</p> <p>16 So that's how we review it. We review it by whether</p> <p>17 we're -- by whether we're inspecting in the right way,</p> <p>18 but we -- I mean, obviously, there's been a review of</p> <p>19 Youth Justice as well by Charlie Taylor was done</p> <p>20 recently and we're informed by that. HMIP have done</p> <p>21 several thematic inspections. So the learning, you</p> <p>22 know, all feeds into how we operate.</p> <p>23 Q. So the Charlie Taylor review, I think, was back in --</p> <p>24 was that 2016?</p> <p>25 A. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 19</p> |
| <p>1 has seen a big dip in inspection outcomes has been</p> <p>2 around instability of leadership and at certain points</p> <p>3 very, very high staff turnover and high levels of</p> <p>4 violence, just, you know, it's a sort of environment</p> <p>5 that really doesn't help staff and others to flourish,</p> <p>6 really and certainly it has had a huge impact on -- on</p> <p>7 outcomes for children.</p> <p>8 So we would say that, yes, leadership and staff --</p> <p>9 staffing problems have been the two key reasons for the</p> <p>10 difficulties that they have experienced, the</p> <p>11 difficulties that the children have experienced.</p> <p>12 Q. Could you turn, please, to page 10 and the bullet point</p> <p>13 at the bottom of the page, please:</p> <p>14 "Secure children's homes are doing well for children</p> <p>15 and young people. By contrast, outcomes for children</p> <p>16 and young people in young offender institutions and</p> <p>17 secure training centres are much less good and sometimes</p> <p>18 extremely poor. Lessons need to be learned urgently</p> <p>19 about how best to educate and take care of children in</p> <p>20 the secure estate."</p> <p>21 So far as you know, has there been any formal</p> <p>22 review, any formal process to try to learn lessons as</p> <p>23 was recommended in that annual report?</p> <p>24 A. Not to my knowledge. In terms of the comparisons,</p> <p>25 I mean, the review that we undertake is about looking</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 18</p> | <p>1 Q. And the Youth Justice Improvement Board, I think was</p> <p>2 before this December 2017 annual report. Is that</p> <p>3 correct, is that your understanding of it?</p> <p>4 A. Sorry, please say that --</p> <p>5 Q. The Youth Justice Improvement Board by NOMS was, I think</p> <p>6 back in 2017 before your December 2017 --</p> <p>7 A. I think so, yes.</p> <p>8 Q. -- report was published. Has there been any formal</p> <p>9 review outside Ofsted -- so not Ofsted's responsibility,</p> <p>10 but by HMPPS or anyone else -- taking you up on your</p> <p>11 invitation that lessons need to be learned urgently</p> <p>12 about how best to take care of children in the secure</p> <p>13 estate?</p> <p>14 A. It's probably not for us, I mean, I know you've heard</p> <p>15 quite significant evidence from the MoJ last week that</p> <p>16 talks about their plans. We meet with them regularly</p> <p>17 about what we think and how we might -- how inspections</p> <p>18 might assist better understanding of what -- how we can</p> <p>19 make sure that we look at the right things for children.</p> <p>20 Q. Are there any key points, key lessons that should be</p> <p>21 learned from Ofsted's perspective -- not from Ofsted</p> <p>22 but --</p> <p>23 A. I think, from our perspective, I mean, we do see the</p> <p>24 difference. We do. We see -- obviously, we inspect</p> <p>25 secure children's homes and inspect</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 20</p> |

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| <p>1 secure training centres and there's some significant 2 differences in the way that those places operate. We 3 think that there's -- the key difference between 4 a secure children's home and a secure training centre is 5 that secure children's homes tend to be, generally 6 speaking, much more child-centred with a real focus on 7 young people as children first, prisoners second, going 8 back to the Charlie Taylor's -- the basic tenet of his 9 report, of his review. They tend to be smaller groups, 10 higher staff:child ratio. Staff tend to be better 11 equipped, better trained to sort of meet the needs of 12 the vulnerable children that are looked after in those 13 establishments.</p> <p>14 So, yes, we do see some significant differences 15 between how children are looked after and what the focus 16 is.</p> <p>17 Q. Thank you. Moving on to surveys, could you bring up, 18 please, OFS007974. Is this the questionnaire for secure 19 children's homes --</p> <p>20 A. It is, yes.</p> <p>21 Q. -- that you use? Could we have a look at page 5, 22 please, just to get a flavour of some of the questions 23 that are asked. You can see top of the page there: 24 "I feel safe inside the children's home?" 25 Then a number of boxes that could be ticked. Then,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 21</p> | <p>1 whether they've got someone to talk to. It's something 2 we don't -- but we don't necessarily have to look at 3 that through surveys, it's part of our inspection 4 framework. Surveys are part of the way that we gather 5 children's views; only one way. They help us have 6 an understanding of the culture in the setting when we 7 arrive, but we also speak to children when we get there 8 and we also look at what the secure training centres and 9 secure children's homes hear themselves from children, 10 so that there's a variety of ways that we gather 11 children's views to help us develop lines of enquiries 12 and plan what we do on inspection.</p> <p>13 Surveys, so surveys are one way of doing that. 14 I suppose I'm fudging the answer slightly because 15 I think it is important that we do know that children 16 know, have someone to talk to if they're worried about 17 anything and that is a key descriptor of good in both 18 frameworks, as it happens but surveys isn't the only way 19 we would do that, so I suppose in one way, yes, that's 20 a good question, because simply we do want to know that, 21 but we wouldn't necessarily think the survey might be 22 the best way of doing that.</p> <p>23 Now, I realise we operate both these frameworks and 24 we -- and we do -- we have plans to align these surveys 25 and think more closely about having consistent questions</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 23</p> |
| <p>1 underneath that: 2 "If you don't feel safe inside, please tell us why?" 3 Other questions down that page. Can you go over the 4 page, please, to page 6. A few other examples of the 5 questions you ask: 6 "I can talk to staff about what I think?" 7 "11. Would you like to tell us more about this?" 8 "12. If someone has picked on me or upset me, staff 9 have helped me?" 10 "13. Would you like to tell us more about this?", 11 and so on. 12 I'd just like to compare that, please, to the 13 questionnaire in STCs, so OFS007953, page 3 of that, 14 please. Question 3.2 says: 15 "If you have a problem, who would you turn to?" 16 Then it gives a number of options which include 17 "no-one" and then a list of individuals. 18 Is it correct that that sort of detail, that 19 question in particular doesn't appear on the SCH 20 questionnaire for children? 21 A. Yes, that is right. 22 Q. Is it a useful question and would it be useful if that 23 was included on the SCH questionnaire? 24 A. I think -- there are differences. I think they can be 25 useful. It's very important that we do know about</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 22</p> | <p>1 that we ask children via the survey, so we're in 2 discussions with HMIP and with CQC about how we make 3 sure that we're a bit more consistent with doing that. 4 So that's something for us to consider, whether we do 5 that or not. And there may be other ones that we might 6 want to look at as well and vice versa, I guess, about 7 whether -- we tend to ask more open questions in our 8 survey, in the Ofsted survey for the secure children's 9 homes. We tend to use it -- rather than as a way of 10 collecting definitive information about what children -- 11 or data about what children are feeling, there's -- 12 they're useful ways of raising concerns and we can take 13 action, if necessary, if we get specific concerns 14 raised, but also to -- as I say, to help us plan 15 inspections and develop lines of enquiry, so they have 16 several purposes.</p> <p>17 Q. Okay. I think we have seen already that in STCs, the 18 children are asked, "Have you been -- have you 19 experienced any of the following from young people?", 20 and one of the options is sexual abuse? 21 A. Yes. 22 Q. And another question, "Have you experienced any of the 23 following from staff here?", and one of the options is 24 sexual abuse. 25 I think you don't ask that specific question -- any</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 24</p> |

6 (Pages 21 to 24)

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>1 specific questions --</p> <p>2 A. We don't.</p> <p>3 Q. -- about sexual abuse --</p> <p>4 A. We don't.</p> <p>5 Q. -- in relation to children in secure children's homes?</p> <p>6 A. As I say, our questions tend to be -- in our judgment,</p> <p>7 it is better that we do ask open questions to give</p> <p>8 children a chance to tell us about things that they feel</p> <p>9 comfortable about telling us. Our experience of surveys</p> <p>10 is, if you -- especially a direct question about sexual</p> <p>11 abuse, that the chances are fairly low of them</p> <p>12 disclosing and, to be honest, I'm not sure, you know,</p> <p>13 whether we would expect them to. You know, I think</p> <p>14 young people are often mistrustful of what is going to</p> <p>15 be done with that information and whether -- we know</p> <p>16 that from our findings in secure training centres, they</p> <p>17 obviously don't have a trust in the system to do</p> <p>18 anything about it and also the data suggests that we</p> <p>19 have very low numbers, actually, that do disclose that</p> <p>20 way.</p> <p>21 We would hope that settings are the kind of</p> <p>22 environment that over time they might -- with the right</p> <p>23 kind of help, that they might disclose, but we have to</p> <p>24 be really sensitive. These are very vulnerable children</p> <p>25 and, on balance, we think that it's best not to be so --</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 25</p> | <p>1 independently and dealt with by someone independent of</p> <p>2 the establishment?</p> <p>3 A. Well, I suppose there could be circumstances where we</p> <p>4 thought there might be a real danger that the child --</p> <p>5 if the child's safety would be jeopardised by letting</p> <p>6 certain people know, then we would take different</p> <p>7 action, we would make sure that it was dealt with</p> <p>8 outside. So we would be aware that there may be reasons</p> <p>9 why we wouldn't want to involve somebody. It may be</p> <p>10 that the allegation is made against that particular</p> <p>11 individual, for example, so if we thought that any</p> <p>12 investigation might be jeopardised, then we would look</p> <p>13 to do it separately.</p> <p>14 Q. As I understand it, is that a sort of exceptional</p> <p>15 procedure --</p> <p>16 A. Yes.</p> <p>17 Q. -- and, normally, allegations go to the governor of the</p> <p>18 institution?</p> <p>19 A. Yes, but we would triangulate evidence. We would speak</p> <p>20 to the Local Authority Designated Officer as part of the</p> <p>21 inspections as well, so we would -- we would need to be</p> <p>22 satisfied, if there is any reason why we thought the</p> <p>23 right action hadn't been taken or that child's -- that</p> <p>24 a child's safety was at risk, we would take action</p> <p>25 ourselves.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 27</p> |
| <p>1 use a survey as a direct way of asking that question.</p> <p>2 Q. You mention there, I think, children are often</p> <p>3 mistrustful of where the information is going?</p> <p>4 A. Or how it might be responded to and what it might mean</p> <p>5 for them as well if they do.</p> <p>6 Q. Can I just understand the process? If a child was to --</p> <p>7 in an STC, if a child was to say, "Yes, sexual abuse by</p> <p>8 staff" --</p> <p>9 A. Yes.</p> <p>10 Q. -- would that go back to the governor of the</p> <p>11 institution, so would the allegation be sent back to the</p> <p>12 governor within the institution?</p> <p>13 A. If we heard it via a survey answer, we would speak to</p> <p>14 the governor or the director of the STC and expect</p> <p>15 a very quick response about what they're going to do</p> <p>16 about it and we would need to be really satisfied that</p> <p>17 that action has been taken. We triangulate that</p> <p>18 evidence. If we weren't satisfied, we would take the</p> <p>19 necessary action ourselves to make sure that child was</p> <p>20 protected.</p> <p>21 Q. Is there any system in respect of a child who is</p> <p>22 concerned about colleagues of the alleged abuser</p> <p>23 becoming aware of the allegation; is there any system</p> <p>24 whereby the allegation will be kept separate from the</p> <p>25 establishment so it will be referred entirely</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 26</p> | <p>1 Q. I'm just going to move on to inspections and deal with</p> <p>2 this fairly quickly. Could we have OFS007974 on the</p> <p>3 screen, please. The inspection handbook for</p> <p>4 secure training centres. This also refers to another</p> <p>5 handbook, "The inspections of secure training centres:</p> <p>6 the inspection framework evaluation schedule and grade</p> <p>7 descriptors", published in July 2015. Do those two</p> <p>8 documents amount to the framework for inspections of</p> <p>9 secure training centres?</p> <p>10 A. Sorry, are they coming up here? (Indicated)</p> <p>11 Q. The other one won't come up, no, if we can keep this one</p> <p>12 up, please.</p> <p>13 A. Sorry, I was expecting ...</p> <p>14 Q. OFS007947.</p> <p>15 A. Okay, yes, thank you.</p> <p>16 Q. So does that and the other document I mentioned amount</p> <p>17 to the overall framework?</p> <p>18 A. That's right, yes, it does, as it stands now.</p> <p>19 Q. Thank you, just to see the equivalent for secure</p> <p>20 children's homes, please, OFS007963. Is that the</p> <p>21 framework for inspections of secure -- of, sorry,</p> <p>22 children's homes?</p> <p>23 A. It is, yes.</p> <p>24 Q. It is. As they stand, are there -- in terms of the</p> <p>25 evaluation criteria in each context, are there -- is</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 28</p> |

1 there overlap between them but still significant
 2 differences between the two of them?
 3 **A. There is some overlap. I think the evaluation criteria,**
 4 **particularly around some of the criteria for safety, for**
 5 **example, and helping with protection in secure**
 6 **children's homes are very similar, but there are**
 7 **different judgments. There is eight judgments that we**
 8 **make for secure training centres and only four in secure**
 9 **children's homes, so we're very aware there are**
 10 **differences which makes comparisons quite difficult at**
 11 **times. We -- and that's why we're making proposals to**
 12 **align these frameworks more closely and particularly**
 13 **bring secure training centres closer to secure**
 14 **children's homes. So we're suggesting that we have**
 15 **fewer judgments and mimic the four judgments that we**
 16 **make in secure children's homes.**
 17 Q. Sorry to jump in, let's have a look at those proposals.
 18 OFS008113, please. Page 4, please. These are the
 19 proposed changes that you're consulting on from 17 July.
 20 Is that correct?
 21 **A. Yes.**
 22 Q. Yesterday.
 23 **A. Yes.**
 24 Q. Over at page 4, the first proposal is altering the eight
 25 judgments that you have of secure training centres in

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1 terms of overall effectiveness and replacing them with
 2 a streamlined structure which, over at page 5, please,
 3 you describe mirrors the structure used for inspection
 4 of secure children's homes. Would that mean that,
 5 according to your proposals, there would be closer
 6 alignment --
 7 **A. Absolutely.**
 8 Q. -- between the two of them, but they wouldn't be
 9 identical; is that correct?
 10 **A. Not absolutely identical. We haven't got to the detail**
 11 **yet. Some of the guidance may be different, taking into**
 12 **account the differences between the types of**
 13 **establishment that they are, but that's more about**
 14 **inspection activity. In terms of what we look at, we**
 15 **don't think there should be any significant difference,**
 16 **including the evaluation criteria. We think it's really**
 17 **important that wherever children live or wherever they**
 18 **receive help, they should expect similar standards of**
 19 **care and attention and protecting, and so that's why we**
 20 **want to make them as consistent as possible.**
 21 **We will -- what we intend to do is where there needs**
 22 **to be differences, there will be, but we expect them to**
 23 **be minor. Where there's -- we want to avoid unnecessary**
 24 **differences, which isn't helpful for the sector, it**
 25 **isn't helpful for children. We want to make the**

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1 **statements that we make about what standard of care and**
 2 **support they get to be as clear as possible.**
 3 **There's a particular proposal around the judgments**
 4 **that we would make a judgment on help and protection and**
 5 **that would conflate in broad terms the judgments that we**
 6 **currently make in secure training centres around safety**
 7 **and promoting positive behaviour.**
 8 **We think that conflating that judgment into one more**
 9 **simple judgment around help and protection would give**
 10 **a much clearer message about what -- how safe children**
 11 **are in secure training centres than we do currently,**
 12 **where it's spread over more than one judgment area.**
 13 Q. One of the things you note further down that page,
 14 paragraph 16, please, is another proposed change that
 15 the, as I understand this, anyway:
 16 "The judgment of how well children and young people
 17 are helped and protected at secure training centres will
 18 be a limiting judgment. This means that, if inspectors
 19 judge this area of provision and care to be inadequate,
 20 then, overall, the 'experiences and progress of
 21 children' judgment will always be inadequate."
 22 **A. Yes.**
 23 Q. Does that reflect a change? In other words, at the
 24 moment, is the situation that you can be judged
 25 inadequate in terms of safety in

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1 a secure training centre but still get an overall rating
 2 of "good"?
 3 **A. That's not a change. That's how it is now. I think**
 4 **there has been -- with respect, there's been some**
 5 **misunderstanding about what inadequacy is and what we**
 6 **mean by "inadequacy" in inspections.**
 7 **We make -- most people here in this room will know**
 8 **this, but we make -- there's four different judgments,**
 9 **a four-point scale, we make judgments. So we start with**
 10 **"inadequate" and then "requires improvement" to "good"**
 11 **and then to "outstanding". So "requires improvement" is**
 12 **effectively requires improvement to be "good", but it**
 13 **doesn't mean that -- it means that it needs to be better**
 14 **to achieve "good", but those weaknesses that we might**
 15 **see when we judge something to be requiring improvement**
 16 **doesn't mean it's what we might consider below the line**
 17 **of serious and widespread.**
 18 **If it was serious and widespread systemic problems,**
 19 **we would call it as "inadequate", undoubtedly, but at**
 20 **the moment, we would -- you could not get a "good"**
 21 **judgment in a secure training centre. That's with the**
 22 **current framework. You could not be -- you would get**
 23 **an -- automatically, you would get an "inadequate"**
 24 **judgment if you were inadequate for safety.**
 25 Q. Understood. Just briefly then, the role in young

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1 offender institutions, Ofsted's role is explained in
 2 your witness statement and is a limited one involving
 3 inspecting education, skills, work activities --
 4 **A. That's right.**
 5 Q. -- and that sort of thing. Just to formally adduce it,
 6 with your permission, chair, OFS007961 is the handbook
 7 for that inspection. And finally, I think you have seen
 8 Howe & Co's proposals --
 9 **A. Yes.**
 10 Q. -- for reform. Do you have any comment on Howe & Co's
 11 proposals?
 12 **A. Well, apart from the general comment that they seem**
 13 **sensible, but we -- I think most of them -- or are**
 14 **sensible to us, but I think I'd only want to comment on**
 15 **things that are within our remit. Would you be able to**
 16 **get -- put them up for me to remember which ones I'm**
 17 **talking about, because it's the numbers that I don't**
 18 **remember.**
 19 Q. Of course.
 20 **A. But there's particular ones on training.**
 21 Q. So it is INQ001751.
 22 **A. Thank you very much.**
 23 **So I think it's (iii), I think and then there is**
 24 **a couple of other ones later that are related to**
 25 **training. I think we would limit ourselves to comments**

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1 **at this stage, really, on the recommendations about**
 2 **training, that we would support in principle that idea**
 3 **that staff just need to have, we would -- with all the**
 4 **comments about all the areas of expertise that Howe & Co**
 5 **are suggesting that staff should be equipped to address,**
 6 **we think that's self-evidently right and we would**
 7 **support that. We just feel that -- very strongly, that**
 8 **staff need to be equipped to be able to do their job**
 9 **properly and look after those vulnerable children who**
 10 **are in those establishments.**
 11 MR STRAW: Does the panel have any questions?
 12 THE CHAIR: Yes, I have one or two, thank you.
 13 Questions by THE PANEL
 14 THE CHAIR: Do you routinely read children's files in your
 15 inspections?
 16 **A. Yes, we would look at a lot of documentary evidence.**
 17 **Children's files, children's plans. We would look at**
 18 **medical records. So, yes, that's part of what we do to**
 19 **triangulate evidence as well as other activities like**
 20 **observations, speaking to children and staff.**
 21 THE CHAIR: So my question is, in your professional opinion,
 22 do you think that in the current placement of children
 23 across the secure estate, are there children who are
 24 wrongly placed in terms of meeting needs for care, help
 25 and protection in any of the three institutions? In

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1 other words, are there children and young people in YOIs
 2 and STCs who should be in secure children's homes in
 3 order to provide the best possible care and protection
 4 for them?
 5 **A. I think -- I think it's likely, I mean, it's certainly**
 6 **true the kind of environment that we have seen too often**
 7 **in secure training centres would suggest that those**
 8 **children would -- you know, that have been placed at**
 9 **risk, placed in very, very difficult and upsetting**
 10 **situations and that they should be placed in**
 11 **environments -- and I'm speaking generally -- they**
 12 **should be in the environment, the kind of environment**
 13 **that I described as -- that generally, secure children's**
 14 **homes have those kind of characteristics, so a nurturing**
 15 **environment, staff are able to respond to their needs,**
 16 **understand them properly, focus on them as children**
 17 **rather than as offenders, know how to understand and**
 18 **reframe and manage their behaviour. So I suppose the**
 19 **answer is simply, yes, they would be better off in the**
 20 **kind of environment that was able to meet their needs**
 21 **better than secure training centres often have, from**
 22 **what we have seen on inspections.**
 23 THE CHAIR: So how do you think that situation might be
 24 improved?
 25 **A. Well, we -- speaking from an Ofsted point of view, the**

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1 way that we frame our inspections is, "This is what
 2 'good' looks like", and for establishments to be good
 3 they have to meet that. And the kind of characteristics
 4 that we're talking about are those. This is why, over
 5 the last few years, secure training centres haven't. If
 6 they met those, then that would happen. I think it's
 7 difficult and I'm probably -- you know, I don't want to
 8 go beyond our remit, it's probably a question for
 9 government, but I think that if you -- we need to
 10 provide the kind of environment that I've talked about,
 11 so when -- when they're thinking about secure schools,
 12 for example, or what secure estate should look like, we
 13 would expect to see those characteristics of size,
 14 higher staff ratio, skilled staff, really positive
 15 relationships between staff and children.
 16 THE CHAIR: Sorry to press you on this --
 17 **A. That's all right.**
 18 THE CHAIR: -- but are there children -- what are the
 19 reasons that children are at the moment placed in
 20 institutions? I don't mean generally, I mean individual
 21 children, going back to the assessments that you have
 22 read in their files --
 23 **A. Yes.**
 24 THE CHAIR: -- of their needs? How can that shift?
 25 **A. Well, there is a shortage of provision. There's -- we**

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|---|--|
| <p>1 know that -- and you will have heard that assessments</p> <p>2 are made about what is the best place for a child to go</p> <p>3 into and the sort of sliding scale and the more</p> <p>4 resilient they are, the more likely they are to end up</p> <p>5 in a YOI, and the least resilient or the more support</p> <p>6 they need, simply put, they're more likely to end up in</p> <p>7 a secure children's home. But there is a finite amount</p> <p>8 of provision, so it means that the less provision there</p> <p>9 is, the less likely they are to be in a secure</p> <p>10 children's home and the more likely they're going to go</p> <p>11 up that sort of larger more institutional provision.</p> <p>12 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Turning to a different aspect, do</p> <p>13 you use lay inspectors in your inspections?</p> <p>14 A. Not in secure training centres, no, or not in secure</p> <p>15 children's homes.</p> <p>16 THE CHAIR: In children's homes generally?</p> <p>17 A. No, we don't, no.</p> <p>18 THE CHAIR: Do you think there is a case for recruiting</p> <p>19 trained young people, possibly care leavers themselves</p> <p>20 with the appropriate understanding?</p> <p>21 A. It is something we're considering. We're very conscious</p> <p>22 that to do that, you need to do it well. There's risks</p> <p>23 involved in that. We need to make sure that we invest</p> <p>24 in that kind of arrangement, mainly to support children</p> <p>25 to do it, to do it well and it shouldn't be</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 37</p> | <p>1 have had it already, so no need to put it up, but it is</p> <p>2 INQ001492 where, at paragraph 189, the Ofsted said:</p> <p>3 "Although the DfE statistics on secure children's</p> <p>4 homes show an average occupancy rate of 79 per cent,</p> <p>5 there is clearly a high demand for beds."</p> <p>6 They went on at paragraph 190 to say:</p> <p>7 "The Chair of the Association of Directors of</p> <p>8 Children's Services has recently suggested that each</p> <p>9 vacant bed is currently attracting 15 referrals."</p> <p>10 In other words, there may not be enough beds in the</p> <p>11 places that children need them most.</p> <p>12 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Straw.</p> <p>13 MS HILL: Bear with me a second. (Pause).</p> <p>14 MR STRAW: This is a question from Howe & Co that's come</p> <p>15 out. Is it part of Ofsted's role to assess whether</p> <p>16 children are properly placed in a YOI, STC or SCH and,</p> <p>17 if not, whose role is that?</p> <p>18 A. It's not our role. It's -- the secure children's homes</p> <p>19 and the secure training centres, referral will be made,</p> <p>20 they have a responsibility to consider the mix of the</p> <p>21 children that they have already within -- and they do.</p> <p>22 It is within their gift to say, "This is going to be</p> <p>23 a problem for us, in terms of accepting that child" or</p> <p>24 "It might be a risk for that child to come into the</p> <p>25 current group", so it's normally -- you know, the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 39</p> |
| <p>1 underestimated. So I think some might say we're a bit</p> <p>2 slow off the blocks about this, but we definitely, you</p> <p>3 know, that we have -- we're talking about how we can do</p> <p>4 that safely and proportionately. So, yes, it's --</p> <p>5 I wouldn't disagree with you that it's an idea --</p> <p>6 THE CHAIR: In terms of communication --</p> <p>7 A. -- worth considering.</p> <p>8 THE CHAIR: -- it works quite well --</p> <p>9 A. Absolutely, yes.</p> <p>10 THE CHAIR: -- for young people who have had -- from</p> <p>11 a similar background --</p> <p>12 A. That's right we are aware of --</p> <p>13 THE CHAIR: -- to engage.</p> <p>14 A. Yes, and we're aware the Care Inspectorate in Scotland</p> <p>15 are doing -- they're doing that and we're talking to</p> <p>16 them about their experiences and see if we can learn</p> <p>17 from their experiences, and I think they're coming to</p> <p>18 a meeting of ours next month, in fact.</p> <p>19 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much.</p> <p>20 A. Okay.</p> <p>21 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much.</p> <p>22 A. Thank you very much.</p> <p>23 MR STRAW: Chair, just before we finish, there is just one</p> <p>24 comment from the recent annual report from the inspector</p> <p>25 which may help in response to one of your questions. We</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 38</p> | <p>1 referral is made with -- the MoJ make the referral --</p> <p>2 commission the beds for secure training centres and</p> <p>3 local authorities commission the beds for secure</p> <p>4 children's homes. So the referral is then discussed and</p> <p>5 then the leaders or the responsible -- the registered</p> <p>6 manager of the secure children's homes would have</p> <p>7 a discussion and make the final decision about whether</p> <p>8 that placement is appropriate.</p> <p>9 We wouldn't get involved at that particular point</p> <p>10 although there are times when we might -- our advice</p> <p>11 might be sought on it. We tend not to get involved in</p> <p>12 case decisions, we certainly don't want to get involved</p> <p>13 in case decisions but we might advise from a regulatory</p> <p>14 point of view or a legal point of view, but we might</p> <p>15 also then get involved at a later stage if we think that</p> <p>16 there hasn't been sufficient consideration of the</p> <p>17 matching and proper planning and whether that -- whether</p> <p>18 the decision was the right one for that child, so we</p> <p>19 might see it on inspection or we might get it through</p> <p>20 complaint or whistleblowing or a regulation 44 report or</p> <p>21 other sources of involvement, but we don't routinely get</p> <p>22 involved in the decision-making because we don't get</p> <p>23 involved in case management.</p> <p>24 MR STRAW: Unless there is anything else from the panel</p> <p>25 that's everything for Mr Brazier. Thank you very much.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 40</p> |

1 **A. Thank you.**
 2 MS HILL: Chair we're going to hear now from
 3 Sharron Rollinson, so I propose to call her and ask some
 4 questions and then take the break.
 5 MS SHARRON ROLLINSON (sworn)
 6 Examination by MS HILL
 7 MS HILL: Thank you very much. You're Sharron Rollinson; is
 8 that right?
 9 **A. I am.**
 10 Q. You've given a witness statement to the inquiry which,
 11 with your permission, chair, I'll formally adduce,
 12 please. It's INQ001759 and appended to that were
 13 various exhibits which we may or may not need to deal
 14 with in detail, but that, Ms Rollinson's statement, was
 15 dated 29 June 2018. Is that right?
 16 **A. Yes.**
 17 Q. Thank you, chair.
 18 Ms Rollinson, by way of background you have been
 19 asked by the inquiry to give some evidence because of
 20 your work with Medway Council as assistant
 21 Local Authority Designated Officer or LADO from
 22 March 2016 to April 2017, working in the context of
 23 Medway. Is that right?
 24 **A. That's correct.**
 25 Q. Just help the chair and panel a little bit, please, with

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1 your professional background?
 2 **A. I qualified as a social worker in 2002. I also gained**
 3 **a Masters in Social Sciences in 2002 where I specialised**
 4 **in systems theory. More recent roles I have had, I was**
 5 **head of service for a youth offending team and I was**
 6 **also head of service for looked-after children,**
 7 **fostering, adoption and leaving care and I believe**
 8 **that's why I was appointed to the role in Medway. I was**
 9 **surprised that I was given the title of assistant LADO**
 10 **because I felt it diluted the impact that the role could**
 11 **have.**
 12 Q. But you have extensive experience of criminal justice in
 13 relation to children and in particular in relation to
 14 looked-after children, as well, is that right?
 15 **A. I do.**
 16 Q. Help us then, please, with what your key
 17 responsibilities were as assistant LADO?
 18 **A. When I was interviewed for the role, I was told that**
 19 **I was going to be working alongside Kent Police in**
 20 **relation to viewing footage that had been gained from**
 21 **a Panorama programme. Some of that footage had been**
 22 **aired on television, but the majority of the footage**
 23 **hadn't, so the role that I was undertaking was specific**
 24 **to the concerns that had come about from the Panorama**
 25 **programme. I was also going to be receiving any new**

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1 **referrals that came in from Medway Secure Training**
 2 **Centre that would ordinarily go to the LADO in that**
 3 **local authority area.**
 4 Q. Just to be clear in terms of the dates of your
 5 employment, I think we have said you began work
 6 in March 2016, so that was a couple of months after the
 7 Panorama programme had been broadcast in the January?
 8 **A. Yes.**
 9 Q. And you worked at Medway until April 2017, so you worked
 10 over the period of time when it transitioned back to the
 11 MoJ?
 12 **A. I did, yes.**
 13 Q. Help us then, please, with your overall impression when
 14 you were working at Medway of the approach to
 15 safeguarding that you witnessed.
 16 **A. I was very surprised at the inexperienced approach by**
 17 **frontline staff, senior managers and the lack of**
 18 **policies and procedures to support staff who were**
 19 **undertaking key roles to protect children who were not**
 20 **only vulnerable themselves but were potentially**
 21 **vulnerable to each other, based on the nature of their**
 22 **experiences before they went into that setting, so**
 23 **I thought I was going to be going into a situation and**
 24 **seeing policies of the highest standard in relation to**
 25 **care of children who had lost their liberty.**

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1 **When I got there, they were woefully inadequate and**
 2 **it was a very slow approach to improving those policies**
 3 **which I believe left those young people at continued**
 4 **risk of serious physical harm and sexual abuse, and**
 5 **there was a very limited possibility that those children**
 6 **were going to achieve effective rehabilitation in those**
 7 **circumstances.**
 8 Q. I think just a few more details on your overall
 9 impression, Ms Rollinson. You have described the
 10 approach to safeguarding that you saw as "immature and
 11 inexperienced". I think you said at paragraph 8 of your
 12 statement that both staff and managers appeared to
 13 prioritise the protection of staff over the protection
 14 of the young people; is that fair?
 15 **A. Absolutely.**
 16 Q. Overall, I think you say that the policies and
 17 procedures were in no way robust, which surprised you,
 18 because you would have expected the highest level of
 19 safeguarding, given the vulnerability of these children?
 20 **A. Absolutely. And when you consider the ages of those**
 21 **children, they would have reached an age where**
 22 **ordinarily they could remove themselves from the**
 23 **experience of an abuse or harm, but they were contained**
 24 **in an environment where they were unable to walk away**
 25 **from the experiences they were having and they were**

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1 **certainly unable to raise concerns with people that**
 2 **could support them. That was evident again and again,**
 3 **and I met many young people within the STC, and also**
 4 **after their release from the STC, who were still unable**
 5 **to share concerns when we asked them to formally raise**
 6 **them. They would have off-the-record conversations with**
 7 **us, but they were just so unable to document the**
 8 **concerns in a way that we could help them that we**
 9 **couldn't move things forward for them, and that was very**
 10 **frustrating, because I really wanted to help them to**
 11 **understand that we cared and we could make things**
 12 **better.**

13 Q. I think we have seen from some of the records that
 14 include your emails and things like that, there are
 15 various examples that we might come to where a child has
 16 disclosed something that might be sexual abuse but then,
 17 when pressed to formalise it, has not felt able to do
 18 so, for whatever reason.

19 **A. That's correct.**

20 Q. Is this right: that you have said in your witness
 21 statement that you found it distressing to see how the
 22 young people were being treated?

23 **A. I did and -- it was difficult to see and, also, when**
 24 **I went into the secure training centre to gain more**
 25 **information from them, the environment didn't enable**

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1 **them to share those concerns with me, really. Staff**
 2 **were in very close proximity. Sometimes they were**
 3 **jangling keys and chains by the door.**

4 Q. Pause there. In fact, I think you said it was very
 5 distressing to see how the young people were treated,
 6 but I think you're talking now about, when you went into
 7 the STC, about the lack of opportunity for young people
 8 to talk to you in your role?

9 **A. Yes.**

10 Q. Is that what you're talking about?

11 **A. Yes, yes. Sorry.**

12 Q. Tell us a little bit more about the logistics of that
 13 then, please?

14 **A. So going into the STC, the room that was used was often**
 15 **just down from the staff rooms, so where -- just down**
 16 **from the governor's room at that point, and there would**
 17 **be professional visits taking place in rooms close by.**

18 Q. That's lawyers and things like that or social workers
 19 or --

20 **A. Yes, or YOS officers, and that would mean there was**
 21 **a lot of traffic up and down that corridor, so staff**
 22 **would always accompany the young people to those other**
 23 **visits and the young people were clearly aware that**
 24 **staff were around and were able to hear any disclosures**
 25 **that they might be making, so there was no way that the**

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1 **children would speak to us.**

2 Q. You have said in your statement, I think, that because
 3 of that risk, young people would be unwilling to talk.
 4 On a number of occasions, you asked the staff not to
 5 stand outside the room in a way that was intimidating,
 6 but you don't feel, I think, that sufficient action was
 7 done in response to that. Is that right?

8 **A. No, there was talk of another room or a better area**
 9 **being made available for young people, so there was**
 10 **a recognition that things needed to get better, but when**
 11 **I left, that wasn't in place.**

12 Q. Tell us a little bit more, please, about your view of
 13 what you have described in your witness statement as the
 14 different categories of staff, different types of staff.
 15 Tell us a bit more about that, please.

16 **A. Well, one of the allegations that was brought forward**
 17 **was actually a member of staff who raised a concern**
 18 **about one of the staff holding hands with a young person**
 19 **underneath a cushion and that member of staff raised**
 20 **concerns. I went back into the STC to speak to that**
 21 **member of staff with a member of Kent Police and that**
 22 **member of staff was unwilling to give a statement to the**
 23 **police about the concerns that she'd got.**

24 Q. Just pausing there, Ms Rollinson, I will ask you some
 25 detail about that particular case. I am asking you more

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1 about the different types of staff, I think you
 2 suggested that there were two different categories of
 3 staff. Can I ask you that first, please?

4 **A. Sorry. So I was informed that there are two types of**
 5 **staff at the STC. There are staff that tend to stay**
 6 **there for a long time and they have been there for many**
 7 **years and then there are staff that join the STC and**
 8 **leave very quickly.**

9 Q. You have said, I think, in your witness statement that
 10 there was a recruitment difficulty. Is that right?

11 **A. Yes.**

12 Q. There was a high turnover of staff with a number of
 13 individuals leaving soon after joining?

14 **A. Yes.**

15 Q. You say that your perception is that that was as
 16 a result of being unable to conform to the culture and
 17 the environment?

18 **A. Yes.**

19 Q. Just help us a bit with that, please, what do you mean
 20 by that?

21 **A. So the staff that were being recruited often lacked**
 22 **experience of working with children who were highly**
 23 **vulnerable, so that would automatically make the**
 24 **environment very difficult for them and they were**
 25 **often -- the training that was available to them was**

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| <p>1 just not robust enough to give them the platform that 2 they needed to deliver the role. 3 Q. I think you have suggested that you're aware that the 4 NOMS, as it then was, who took over the running of the 5 STC had plans to address that training gap. Did you see 6 signs of that changing when you left in early 2017? 7 A. There were signs of that changing, but I remained 8 concerned about the staff that were present at the 9 centre at that time. 10 Q. You, I think, saw in the context of your employment the 11 BBC footage -- 12 A. Yes. 13 Q. -- that had not been part of the Panorama programme; is 14 that right? You saw, I think, the uncut version of the 15 footage. Is that correct? 16 A. I did, yes. 17 Q. Help us with what in particular you saw on that footage 18 that concerned you? 19 A. On that footage, there was some footage of staff who 20 were being trained on an induction programme and there 21 was a very superficial approach to how important the 22 role was and although the trainers were saying all of 23 the right things in the training, the delivery of the 24 training was such that it wasn't really important and in 25 a break where the trainer was still present, there was</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 49</p> | <p>1 occurring between staff in a smoking area and I felt 2 that that indicated that those staff were highly likely 3 to have assaulted children out of view of the cameras. 4 Q. You have mentioned at the end of paragraph 10 of your 5 witness statement that the first lot of footage with the 6 induction training you shared or was shared with the 7 then manager. How did that then manager respond? 8 A. It was -- I think the words used were it was "staff 9 letting off steam". 10 Q. When was that in the chronology of the time you were 11 there? 12 A. I can't be sure, but there will be records on Medway 13 LADO files that give you accurate dates. 14 Q. Was that within the G4S period or the NOMS period? 15 A. The initial -- the footage that was taken that I viewed 16 was taken in the G4S period when the undercover reporter 17 was in the STC. The concerns raised were raised with 18 the second governor that was in place when NOMS were put 19 into the STC. 20 Q. Can you remember who that was? 21 A. That was Jonathan French. 22 Q. Was the footage that you have described in the second 23 part of your evidence about this, the discussions about 24 children being assaulted off-camera, do you have any 25 recollection of that being discussed between you and the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 51</p> |
| <p>1 a break, a natural break in training, the trainer was 2 still present and they were joking about "Oh, this is 3 not how you do it when you get out on the floor. This 4 is just for training". 5 And that -- I felt that indicated that the -- that 6 that training was flawed, because it was, "This is what 7 you say you do. You don't actually do this when you get 8 out on the floor with the children", and that really 9 disappointed me, because these were new staff who were 10 going into an environment where they would be protecting 11 children from harm in the future and that approach to 12 induction and training means that everything that 13 follows is potentially flawed, really. 14 Q. I think you also saw footage of staff having 15 conversations in the smoking area. Is that right? 16 A. Yes. 17 Q. What did you see on that? 18 A. A member of staff who had been present at the STC for 19 some time was in the smoking area and he was talking to 20 other staff about how best to manoeuvre children 21 underneath the cameras so that you can assault them 22 without the cameras seeing the assault occurring. 23 Q. What did you feel when you saw that, or how did you 24 respond to that? 25 A. I was shocked and saddened that this was a conversation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 50</p> | <p>1 manager or not? 2 A. Myself and Jonathan French? 3 Q. Or any other management-level person. 4 A. That would have been discussed and that was discussed 5 with Kent Police were aware of that, too. My manager -- 6 my manager at Medway Local Authority was aware of that 7 and NOMS were aware of that. 8 Q. Do you have any recollection of how the NOMS manager, 9 whoever that was, responded to the footage showing staff 10 purporting to talk about assaulting children off-camera? 11 A. It was the approach was that that was staff letting off 12 steam. 13 Q. So that phrase applied to both of these, is that right, 14 both to the induction training and to the assaulting 15 children off-camera? 16 A. No, no, that applied only to assaulting children 17 off-camera. 18 Q. I see. And what was your understanding of how the 19 management responded to the induction training footage, 20 perhaps I can do it that way? 21 A. I would say that there was generally a lack of response 22 that I expected to -- things that are so serious. 23 I felt like I was sometimes a lone voice in raising the 24 concerns that I had. 25 Q. You said at the end of paragraph 10 of your statement</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 52</p> |

1 that the induction training footage was shared with the
 2 then manager who did not appear to understand the
 3 serious nature of this kind of attitude and how it could
 4 impact on the young people and the quality of care that
 5 they received.

6 **A. Yes.**

7 Q. Can you help us with which manager that was?

8 **A. That would be Jonathan French.**

9 Q. You go on, I think, to say that you were particularly
 10 concerned or surprised, were you, that staff weren't
 11 given any anti-discrimination training, given the racial
 12 make-up of many of the children or the pattern of
 13 children at Medway. Can you help us with that?

14 **A. That was -- we had a number of concerns being raised by**
 15 **young people about inappropriate use of language and**
 16 **derogatory terms being levelled at them and, when I --**
 17 **it was when G4S were managing the STC. I spoke to**
 18 **Ben Saunders and asked about the training programme in**
 19 **place for staff and said, you know, "What training are**
 20 **you giving staff in relation to diversity and**
 21 **anti-discriminatory practice?", and there was no**
 22 **training in place for staff at that time.**

23 Q. Then perhaps just finally before we have our break,
 24 there was also a concern that you expressed, is this
 25 right, about staff receiving money to purchase mobile

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1 phones, cigarettes, drugs and other items for the young
 2 people?

3 **A. Yes, that was -- as part of my role I went out with**
 4 **Kent Police and saw lots of young people in the**
 5 **community. One of the common themes from several young**
 6 **people was that mobile phones were readily available in**
 7 **the custodial environment and when we talked to them**
 8 **about how that could be, several young people shared**
 9 **with us the same response of how they received mobile**
 10 **phones, cigarettes or other items that shouldn't have**
 11 **been present in the STC.**

12 Q. You had understood, I think, that it was possible for
 13 young people to receive money by post, that family
 14 members and friends of the young people were passing
 15 money to staff, I think, through the windows of the
 16 staff cars. Is that right?

17 **A. Yes.**

18 Q. Staff would then arrange for mobile phones to be
 19 provided to the young people in exchange for this money?

20 **A. Yes.**

21 Q. What was your broad concern about those processes or
 22 practices?

23 **A. Well, it's fundamentally inappropriate for that to**
 24 **happen and I felt very naive that I was surprised**
 25 **because -- as I said, several young people shared the**

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1 **same information and I felt that that -- I always**
 2 **wondered how mobile phones got into prisons and the**
 3 **children told me that they would ask -- members of staff**
 4 **would tell them what cars they drove and where the car**
 5 **would be parked on the car park and they would tell**
 6 **family members to post money into the open window of the**
 7 **car and then the member of staff would bring a mobile**
 8 **phone in for them.**

9 MS HILL: Chair, perhaps we can take our mid-morning break,
 10 there are quite a few more questions for Ms Rollinson.

11 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Ms Rollinson.

12 We will return at 12.05 pm.
 13 (11.47 am)
 14 (A short break)
 15 (12.05 pm)

16 MS HILL: Thank you, Ms Rollinson. I just want to ask you
 17 a few more questions, please, about the video footage.
 18 Can I go back to that part of your evidence, please?
 19 I'd just like to clarify some of the points that you
 20 have made and I hope I can do this fairly.

21 You have described in your witness evidence
 22 essentially two bits of video footage from the Panorama
 23 material that were of concern to you. One was the
 24 induction training and one was the smoking area footage
 25 where assaults off-camera were being discussed.

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1 **A. Yes.**

2 Q. Can I just be very clear: which of those bits of footage
 3 did you discuss with Mr French?

4 **A. Both of those pieces of footage would have been**
 5 **discussed with Jonathan French. They were discussed**
 6 **with Jonathan French.**

7 Q. By you?

8 **A. Yes.**

9 Q. In what context did those discussions take place?

10 **A. So when I was viewing footage, I actually got ahead of**
 11 **the police in the viewing of the footage so the police**
 12 **were viewing the footage and I was also viewing footage,**
 13 **the same footage that the police were viewing, and when**
 14 **the police had concerns about the footage, they would**
 15 **contact me. When I had concerns, I would contact them.**
 16 **So my first point of contact was always the police**
 17 **because I didn't want to damage the police investigation**
 18 **that was ongoing at that point, and then we would make**
 19 **a decision about how we were going to approach the**
 20 **concerns that were there.**

21 **Sometimes the concerns that I found didn't meet**
 22 **police threshold and those two pieces of footage we're**
 23 **referring to didn't meet police threshold. So the**
 24 **criminal threshold for the police to be interested in**
 25 **that footage was not there. So at that point, I was**

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| <p>1 given complete permission to share the concerns I had 2 with the STC, so that we could form a plan of action 3 around how we were going to address the concerns that 4 were there. 5 Q. You gave some evidence beforehand about some specific 6 words being used about "staff letting off steam". 7 A. Yes. 8 Q. To be very clear, who said those words? 9 A. Jonathan French. 10 Q. And what part of the footage, if any, did you understand 11 they related to? 12 A. I understood that to refer to the smoking area comments 13 about manoeuvring children under the cameras to assault 14 them. 15 Q. I hope that deals with those points of detail. If it 16 doesn't, I'm sure I will be asked to ask you some 17 further questions. 18 Can I move on then, please, to the evidence you've 19 given about the purchasing of PlayStations for young 20 people and issues around pornography that we have heard 21 a little bit about. What's your understanding of what 22 had happened and what was your concern about those 23 issues? 24 A. A referral came in to the team about a PlayStation that 25 had been found to have a pornographic film on it and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 57</p> | <p>1 children would ask staff to purchase items that they 2 wanted, whether that be clothing or PlayStations. Staff 3 would use their own money to purchase those items and 4 then there was a suggestion that the money would be 5 claimed back from the child's account that they held, 6 but in the PlayStation incident, the money was not 7 claimed back, so that's open to so -- abuse on so many 8 levels and children in that environment having to rely 9 on staff to purchase essential items and also then 10 having staff purchase non-essential items for them, it's 11 an unfair approach to the children that are there. 12 One of the biggest things about children and young 13 people that I've encountered in the criminal justice 14 system is they have got a really strong sense of 15 fairness and what's appropriate for themselves and, in 16 those situations, when you can see one child being 17 treated more favourably than yourself, it's got to be 18 really difficult to understand. 19 Q. Is this right, that you have explained in paragraph 18 20 of your statement that your broader concern around this 21 issue was that there wasn't a clear policy or procedure 22 in place to regulate what could be bought and what was 23 appropriate and what wasn't and that then some sort of 24 makeshift policy, you say was put in place? 25 A. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 59</p> |
| <p>1 it's my understanding that when PlayStations go into the 2 STC, that they're disabled so that there's certain parts 3 of the PlayStation that are disabled so children can't 4 put any additional films on to them, so it's kind of 5 a safety measure, so that they haven't -- they can't 6 access the internet, I guess, I'm not an expert on that 7 but I know that parts of the PlayStation are disabled. 8 I don't know how the STC found out, but they found 9 that there was a pornographic film on a PlayStation in 10 a child's room. They referred that in to us and then we 11 found that a member of staff had purchased the 12 PlayStation for that child, from her own money, and that 13 raised a whole raft of concerns, because I could not 14 understand how that would be appropriate or possible for 15 a member of staff to do that. 16 Q. Why were you concerned about that, Ms Rollinson; what 17 were you concerned in particular about? 18 A. Well, I was visiting the STC on a weekly basis at this 19 point. I'd met with a number of young people. One 20 young person in particular was wearing clothes that 21 didn't fit him properly and I could see one child 22 without appropriate clothing and another child who was 23 being bought PlayStations by a member of staff. 24 When I explored that further with staff at the STC, 25 at that time there was a system in place whereby</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 58</p> | <p>1 Q. But I think you felt overall that this wasn't a robust 2 enough response. Is that right? 3 A. Absolutely not and I was astonished that that approach 4 was in place in any event. This was only two years ago 5 that approach was in place and children were 6 experiencing that approach in a custodial environment. 7 I was totally shocked. 8 Q. Can I go to some points of detail now, in particular 9 about certain allegations that are reflected in the 10 notes that you have provided to us. Can I deal first of 11 all with the issue that we heard about a little bit 12 through Mr Wood and Mr French yesterday and this 13 involves the allegation of a female member of staff, 14 this is F41, and a male child or young person, A93, 15 where to try and summarise it, I hope as fairly as 16 I can, the concerns were that footage showed the pair of 17 them in a room on a sofa, that the body language 18 appeared, from your perspective, to be more or very much 19 like that of a boyfriend and girlfriend, F41 instigated 20 holding A93's hand under a cushion and your concern was 21 that because of how the cushion was placed, that F41 22 might have been touching A93 in the genital area under 23 the cushion as well as holding the hand. Was that 24 right? 25 A. It was a possibility.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 60</p> |

1 Q. I think we will hear more in due course about F41 having
 2 been involved in one of the PlayStation issues that we
 3 will come to, but were you also concerned that the
 4 footage appeared to show F41 and A93 going into the
 5 kitchen area?
 6 **A. Yes, the original referral came in. A member of staff
 7 had observed the member of staff that was holding the
 8 child's hand under the cushion and had raised concerns
 9 with managers about it, so that's where the original
 10 referral came from. It was a member of staff who had
 11 observed that and the member of staff in her original
 12 statement with managers at the STC said that she was
 13 concerned that that member of staff and the child were
 14 going in and out of the kitchen area.**
 15 Q. What had you been told by several young people at Medway
 16 about the kitchen area, about what happened there?
 17 **A. The kitchen area was particularly problematic for the
 18 children who were at the STC and several young people
 19 talked about terrible physical assaults that occurred in
 20 the kitchen area.**
 21 Q. Was the kitchen area covered by CCTV?
 22 **A. No, no.**
 23 Q. Was that known by staff and children?
 24 **A. Yes, it was known by staff and children, and children
 25 also talked about sexual abuse that they experienced in**

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1 **the kitchen area.**
 2 Q. In particular, have you said at paragraph 22 of your
 3 written statement that you were told by several young
 4 people at Medway that they, the young people, had been
 5 given oral sex by female members of staff in the kitchen
 6 area?
 7 **A. Yes.**
 8 Q. Have you explained in your statement that the footage
 9 appeared to show A93, that's the child or young person,
 10 get up from the sofa and walk into the kitchen and F41
 11 follow the boy to the kitchen area?
 12 **A. Yes.**
 13 Q. What did the CCTV then show of what happened in the
 14 kitchen?
 15 **A. Well, the CCTV doesn't show the kitchen area. The
 16 member of staff that observed the member of staff
 17 holding hands under the cushion had said that she was
 18 worried because she had observed the child sitting on
 19 the floor in front of the member of staff that had been
 20 holding hands with him, so he was sitting -- she said he
 21 was sitting on the floor in the kitchen area in front of
 22 the member of staff.**
 23 Q. Just pause there, I think you do say that what the video
 24 did show was the lower half of the young person's -- of
 25 the adult's body was behind the frame of the kitchen

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1 door?
 2 **A. Yes.**
 3 Q. So that's what could be seen?
 4 **A. Yes.**
 5 Q. The video footage showed the young person, A3, walk
 6 through the corridor -- forgive me that's the young
 7 person who passes by. A93, the young person, could not
 8 be seen on the CCTV --
 9 **A. No.**
 10 Q. -- is that right?
 11 **A. No.**
 12 Q. But then what could be seen was another child coming
 13 past, A3?
 14 **A. Yes.**
 15 Q. What was understood to have happened as far as A3 was
 16 concerned?
 17 **A. Well, in the wall of the kitchen there's a window, so
 18 that you can actually look into the kitchen area if you
 19 are walking past and that child attempted to look into
 20 the kitchen area through the window and the member of
 21 staff struck him to the face and he -- he immediately
 22 bent forward and held his nose area, so he appeared --
 23 he appeared to feel pain when he was struck to the face.**
 24 Q. You have said in your witness statement at paragraph 23
 25 that based on the video footage, it appeared that F41 --

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1 I think that's the same female member of staff who had
 2 gone into the kitchen with A93 and who was then seen to
 3 strike A3; is that right?
 4 **A. Yes.**
 5 Q. You say in your witness evidence that based on that
 6 video footage, it appeared that F41 did not want A3, the
 7 passing child, to see what was happening in the kitchen
 8 area?
 9 **A. Yes.**
 10 Q. I don't want to take too much time on the documentation,
 11 but we do have your notes, I think, in relation to these
 12 incidents and, is this right, that this incident was --
 13 or this -- the cushion element at least of this came to
 14 your attention, I think, in about April 2016?
 15 **A. Yes.**
 16 Q. Does that sound about right?
 17 **A. Yes.**
 18 Q. Perhaps we can bring up the initial notes about this,
 19 please, which are at MED000019_006. And if we can
 20 scroll in, please, on the details of the allegation part
 21 of this, which is dated 4 April 2016.
 22 It's in your bundle if you wish to look at it there,
 23 but it should come up on the screen, Ms Rollinson. It's
 24 MED000019_006. (Pause).
 25 Members of the panel it's in tab C of your bundle.

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| <p>1 MED00019_006 is the reference I have. It's internal 2 page 6 of MED000019 which is at tab C of the panel's 3 bundle? 4 A. Tab C, page 6? 5 Q. Yes, thank you. If we scroll in on the details of the 6 allegation part, you can see: 7 "The referral was made regarding an allegation of 8 inappropriate conduct by another member of staff towards 9 a young person. The member of staff who made the 10 allegation has been met with and a fact-finding 11 investigation has taken place. The member of staff 12 about whom the allegation has been made has been 13 suspended. The concerned member of staff reported that 14 A93 and the staff member were seen to hold hands under 15 a pillow." 16 Pausing there, is this right, that another concern 17 about the nature of this relationship was that A93 had 18 a particular room, of course, in the centre, but that 19 F41 had been sleeping in a room nearby? 20 A. Yes, can I just be clear on that point, though? The 21 original referral that was received only raised concerns 22 about the hand-holding incident. It was -- I was 23 informed accidentally, almost, of the further concerns 24 of this member of staff sleeping in the room next to the 25 child and also talking to him on the corridor in her</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 65</p> | <p>1 various allegations. Just taking it briefly, did you 2 ask to see the CCTV? 3 A. When I was observing the CCTV of the hand-holding 4 incident, I asked to continue viewing it because I was 5 concerned that the child was approaching the kitchen 6 area with the member of staff and I based that on the 7 conversations I'd had with several young people about 8 the kitchen area and their fears and concerns about the 9 kitchen area of the STC. 10 Following those discussions, we -- 11 Q. Just before we leave the CCTV, I think, is this right, 12 that you also endeavoured to see the CCTV of the night 13 time where -- 14 A. Yes. 15 Q. -- you were concerned about the member of staff being 16 there in her pyjamas? 17 A. Yes. 18 Q. There was a period of time where you were given some 19 CCTV that I think was cut too soon; is that right? 20 A. Yes, the CCTV did not show the concerns that we had 21 actually gone in to view, so going back to the question 22 that you asked about, the further information that was 23 received, so I went into the STC to view the footage and 24 Ben Saunders was the governor at the time and he said to 25 me, "It's not until you start looking that you realise</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 67</p> |
| <p>1 pyjamas. That was a chance conversation with the 2 governor at that time that resulted in further 3 information being added to the referral that came into 4 us. 5 Q. If I have understood it correctly, the room in question 6 where the staff member was sleeping next to A93 was 7 a room where a staff member was not meant to sleep. Is 8 that right? 9 A. Absolutely not. That would be absolutely inappropriate. 10 That was a young person's room and I would just not 11 expect a member of staff to be sleeping in -- 12 Q. So it was a vacant young person's room? 13 A. It was a vacant's young person's room. It was not 14 a staff room. It was not a staff area. And staff 15 should not be in pyjamas in those areas. 16 Q. Can I just bring up, please, MED000021_001. Members at 17 the panel, this is at the beginning of your tab D, 18 I think this document from around the same time later 19 in April makes clear that there were laminated notices 20 on the beds in the children's rooms, I think, saying 21 that staff should not use them as sleeping quarters. Is 22 that right? 23 A. Yes. 24 Q. Help us then, please, with the nature of the 25 investigation that you were involved with into these</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 66</p> | <p>1 there are other things to see", and I said, "What do you 2 mean by that?"; and he said, "Oh, she was on the 3 corridor in her pyjamas", and I said, "Well, we need to 4 see the footage about that. That's serious", and that's 5 when the additional concerns were raised with us. So 6 I was concerned that those were not raised with us 7 immediately, although the governor knew that a member of 8 staff was sleeping in the bedroom next door to the child 9 whose hand she had been holding and who she had been 10 observed to be having an inappropriate relationship 11 with. 12 Q. Just can we bring up briefly, please, MED000019_055, 13 because I think this is a record of the viewing of the 14 CCTV with a member of Kent Police. If you see this, 15 Ms Rollinson, the entry at the bottom, it is clear this 16 is your note: 17 "Caroline and I [that's the DC] viewed the CCTV 18 footage that was there and we found the footage had been 19 cut and did not show the incident of concern, which was 20 hand holding under a cushion. We shared this with Rena 21 and she said that she felt the footage had been cut too 22 soon. We also asked to view the footage that had been 23 mentioned to me by Ben Saunders - the member of staff on 24 the landing in her pyjamas talking to A93 through the 25 hatch - when we viewed the footage, we also became aware</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 68</p> |

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| <p>1 that she had been sleeping in the room next to A93's 2 which was not occupied by a young person. All staff 3 that were staffing the unit were clearly aware of this 4 as they were talking to her in the corridor and also 5 looking into the room and checking on her when she was 6 sleeping. Of further concern to me was that the staff 7 did not appear to be making the mandatory 15-minute 8 checks on the young people who were in their own rooms, 9 despite this being a minimum standard. We ask that this 10 night-time footage is cut so we can view it and [the 11 police officer] can take this away with her." 12 Just to try and pull these threads together, is this 13 right, that ultimately the police did investigate 14 various elements of this issue around the issues around 15 F41? 16 A. Yes. 17 Q. If I have understood it correctly and please do correct 18 me if I've got this wrong, F41 did face a criminal 19 charge of assault? 20 A. Yes. 21 Q. But that related to the passing child? 22 A. Yes. 23 Q. And there was no criminal charge in relation to the 24 alleged inappropriate sexual behaviour. Is that right? 25 A. That's correct.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 69</p> | <p>1 horrified by, but she had actively struck a child to the 2 face. It was difficult to watch. It was also difficult 3 because the child concerned, when we went to see him, 4 didn't want to complain. 5 Q. Just pausing there, which of the two children had not 6 wanted to complain? The child -- 7 A. Both children. 8 Q. Both children? 9 A. Both children. 10 Q. Pull up, please, if I can MED000091_001. 11 A. Can I just say something that that child said to me, the 12 child that was struck to the face? When we went out to 13 see him, he said -- and I'd viewed the footage, that 14 child did nothing at all to deserve being struck to the 15 face, and he said, "If it happened, I must have deserved 16 it", and that just indicates where these children are in 17 that environment. He did not deserve to be struck to 18 the face and it was a very difficult experience for me 19 to see that member of staff go through the court process 20 and not -- there was no result, no court result or 21 outcome for her and for that child. 22 Q. Can I pull up, please, MED000091_001, because I think 23 this reflects you trying to action your concerns at the 24 time, if I may? 25 A. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 71</p> |
| <p>1 Q. So -- I will corrected if I am wrong -- my understanding 2 therefore is that when the MoJ's response deals with 3 this issue and talks about criminal proceedings, that 4 only relates to a physical assault on the passing child? 5 A. That's correct. 6 Q. You were, I think, made aware that the police were 7 intending to close their investigation. Is that right? 8 A. Yes. 9 Q. Is this right: that the concerns about the police not 10 progressing the inappropriate relationship aspect of it, 11 they were concerned that this was partly because A93 had 12 not confirmed things to them. Is that right? 13 A. Yes, yes. When we went to visit that young person, he 14 was -- he was more concerned that the member of staff 15 involved had been suspended and just did not want to 16 speak with us about it. 17 Q. You were, I think, aware of the management involvement 18 in this allegation and, I think, is this right, just 19 summarising it, that even though the criminal 20 proceedings had continued to their normal conclusion, 21 you were nevertheless concerned about her ongoing role 22 at the centre? 23 A. Absolutely. This -- it is a member of staff that you 24 can see on video footage clearly striking a child to the 25 face. Everything else that runs alongside that, I was</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 70</p> | <p>1 Q. It's November 2016, there is a review strategy meeting. 2 If we can scroll in at the top, please, this is 3 a strategy meeting held, you were present at this with 4 other colleagues, I think, to consider concerns relating 5 to A93 and the behaviour of F41, relating to hand 6 holding, sleeping in the room, talking to A93 through 7 the door in her pyjamas: 8 "SR [that's you] noted that the recent court case 9 having been dropped gave no reassurance to the 10 local authority that this person was suitable to work 11 with children based on the evidence shared. There are 12 also wider issues within the STC relating to other staff 13 who were clearly aware that she was sleeping in this 14 room and it was also clear, when viewing the CCTV, that 15 there were no 15-minute checks taking place." 16 What did you do with those concerns, Ms Rollinson? 17 A. I raised those with senior managers at Medway and also 18 the Youth Justice Board monitor who was present in the 19 secure training centre. 20 Q. I think, just so we can try to understand this in 21 fulsome context, is this right, that there were also 22 several other people arrested but that was perhaps in 23 relation to the PlayStation-type and USB issues? Is 24 that right? 25 A. The other arrests that occurred would have been part of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 72</p> |

1 **Operation Woodley and a wider police operation concerned**
 2 **with the STC.**
 3 Q. I see, we will come back to those issues then, if I may.
 4 Then, I think, the final piece of the picture on
 5 this particular area is, please, MED000077_003 and this
 6 is an internal investigation. If we scroll in, please,
 7 on 30 November, I think that follows on from the end of
 8 the court case:
 9 "Internal investigation has [been completed and]
 10 concluded the following:
 11 "F41 should be charged in accordance with the NOMS
 12 Code of Discipline for acting inappropriately and
 13 conducting an improper relationship with A93 on [the
 14 unit] ... The charges should be considered by a formal
 15 disciplinary hearing."
 16 And then, as I think we heard yesterday, Mr French,
 17 "decided that this matter does not meet the threshold
 18 for dismissal so he has lifted [her] suspension."
 19 And when it says this here:
 20 "Concerns raised with him regarding this as we have
 21 no understanding at this stage as to how he proposes to
 22 manage the risks associated with this member of staff."
 23 Who is raising those concerns, Ms Rollinson?
 24 **A. I am.**
 25 Q. I appreciate this comes quite close to the end of your

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1 period of service there, but how was your expression of
 2 concerns responded to?
 3 **A. Jonathan French said he had followed all of the NOMS**
 4 **procedures, which gave me absolutely no reassurance**
 5 **about the NOMS procedures that were in place.**
 6 Q. Can you help us then, moving on, please, with just a few
 7 other of the issues that you have raised in your
 8 statement, then perhaps a few other issues from the
 9 documents? One of the issues that you have raised in
 10 your statement was that in relation to the viewing
 11 panels of the shower rooms. Can you help us a little
 12 bit with that, please?
 13 **A. There was an inspection of the secure training centre**
 14 **whilst I was in post and Ofsted --**
 15 Q. This is 2016, the Ofsted 2016 inspection?
 16 **A. Yes, yes. Ofsted called us in to talk to us, which is**
 17 **usual in an inspection in any event, but whilst we were**
 18 **there, they asked, did we know about the viewing panels**
 19 **in the children's shower rooms. So every child has**
 20 **an ensuite bathroom/shower room and they asked, did we**
 21 **know about the viewing panel that could be accessed by**
 22 **all staff when they draw down keys. The keys that staff**
 23 **draw down give them access to all of the corridor -- the**
 24 **cupboards in the corridors, and we were taken to**
 25 **an unused child's room where we saw the viewing panel**

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1 **for the first time. That was the first knowledge I had**
 2 **of those viewing panels being in place and what I saw**
 3 **was it would be the same size as the viewing hatch in**
 4 **the child's door, but it was a very low level of**
 5 **obscurity, so you would be able to make out the child's**
 6 **features and you would know whether or not the child was**
 7 **dressed or undressed and that viewing panel enabled you**
 8 **to have a full view of the child in the shower area and**
 9 **also, if you leaned forward, you could see the child**
 10 **sitting on the toilet area, if you wished to.**
 11 **All of the children would have been aware of those**
 12 **viewing panels because they could see them in their**
 13 **showers and I was really concerned that no child had**
 14 **ever raised that those panels were there. Part of my**
 15 **training as a social worker has been to always put**
 16 **myself in the child's position, if I can, and imagine**
 17 **how things are experienced by the child, and I found it**
 18 **quite distressing to consider that the children would**
 19 **know that there was a possibility for staff to view them**
 20 **when they were in the shower and on the toilet.**
 21 Q. I think you were concerned that children hadn't
 22 complained and you say at paragraph 30 of your
 23 statement:
 24 "I believe this is because the young people did not
 25 know that they could complain and felt they had no

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1 choice about this issue."
 2 **A. Absolutely, and we know that children who are in this**
 3 **situation are more likely than other children to have**
 4 **experienced abuse, and to have a child in a situation**
 5 **where they know their dignity can be very quickly**
 6 **compromised by people who have more power over them than**
 7 **they have themselves, I struggled to understand how that**
 8 **enabled children to feel that we respected their**
 9 **dignity.**
 10 Q. Were you concerned, again, about the lack of policy
 11 around this issue, the lack of clarity as to when the
 12 viewing panels could and should be used?
 13 **A. I was absolutely concerned and I raised that with --**
 14 **I found out that the viewing panels had been used by --**
 15 **very recently, in the last few days and weeks, and**
 16 **I raised that with the home authority of the child that**
 17 **they had been used in relation to and a strategy meeting**
 18 **was called.**
 19 **What concerned me further about the viewing panels**
 20 **was the Youth Justice Board monitor who had been present**
 21 **in that secure training centre for many months, maybe**
 22 **even beyond a year, didn't know that they existed and**
 23 **I contacted LADOs in the home authorities of the other**
 24 **secure training centres so I could be sure that they**
 25 **were aware that the viewing panels existed so they could**

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| <p>1 take appropriate action.</p> <p>2 Q. Just to be clear, I think you understood, is this right,</p> <p>3 that the specification for the building of the STCs was</p> <p>4 a common one. Is that right?</p> <p>5 A. I was informed by Jonathan French that it's in the build</p> <p>6 spec of the STCs that the viewing panels are there.</p> <p>7 Q. So they were present, as far as you understood it, in</p> <p>8 all of the STCs?</p> <p>9 A. Yes, but going back to my previous role as head of</p> <p>10 service for a youth offending service, I did not know</p> <p>11 that those viewing panels existed. This was not common</p> <p>12 knowledge and there was no policy in place about how</p> <p>13 they were going to be used. At the very least, I would</p> <p>14 have expected there to be a policy there and absolutely</p> <p>15 people with parental responsibility would be informed</p> <p>16 that there was a need to view children in those</p> <p>17 circumstances.</p> <p>18 Q. I think, in fairness, to complete this evidence,</p> <p>19 although it may not have come out in direct evidence</p> <p>20 yesterday, the recent 2018 Ofsted report on Medway notes</p> <p>21 "the recent introduction of removable boards that allow</p> <p>22 children to cover their viewing panels when, eg,</p> <p>23 showering". So I think we know from the Ofsted report</p> <p>24 that there has been some change at Medway and I think,</p> <p>25 for completeness, we did hear some evidence in relation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 77</p> | <p>1 Q. I think if we wanted to look at it, although I'm not</p> <p>2 sure we need to do in detail, it's MED000025. I don't</p> <p>3 think we need to bring it up, but you were concerned</p> <p>4 about the process around children being left together to</p> <p>5 mix --</p> <p>6 A. Yes.</p> <p>7 Q. -- unattended? There was a further issue that you were</p> <p>8 aware of that, again, I don't think we need to bring up</p> <p>9 but it's MED000023, where A94, that's a different child,</p> <p>10 had been talking to another person, another young person</p> <p>11 and was heard by a member of staff to say he had a love</p> <p>12 bite on his chest.</p> <p>13 A. Yes.</p> <p>14 Q. Is this right, that this was the subject of a strategy</p> <p>15 discussion about him?</p> <p>16 A. Yes.</p> <p>17 Q. And about what to do about it? I think there was some</p> <p>18 suggestion that this might have been caused on a bouncy</p> <p>19 castle, but he was saying it was a love bite when it</p> <p>20 wasn't. Is that right?</p> <p>21 A. When we spoke to the young person concerned, he denied</p> <p>22 that he had a love bite and said that he had -- it</p> <p>23 wasn't a love bite and it hadn't happened and there were</p> <p>24 no concerns about the care that he was receiving in</p> <p>25 relation to any love bite ever happening.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 79</p> |
| <p>1 to this about Oakhill, this issue having been raised in</p> <p>2 the inspections there, and we also heard, I think, some</p> <p>3 evidence that Rainsbrook were waiting for these new</p> <p>4 hatches or panels to be implemented. So it does seem to</p> <p>5 have been an issue raised across the STC estate.</p> <p>6 Can I just --</p> <p>7 A. Can I just -- sorry. It's really disappointing that</p> <p>8 it's taken that long for those viewing panels to be</p> <p>9 addressed.</p> <p>10 Q. I'd like to just deal very briefly, if I may, with some</p> <p>11 of the other issues that you brought to our attention</p> <p>12 and some of the other material in your paperwork and</p> <p>13 I'll just try and take this quite briefly if I may. If</p> <p>14 I have understood it correctly, there was a series of</p> <p>15 other issues around inappropriate behaviour that you</p> <p>16 raised and I will just try and summarise them if I can.</p> <p>17 One concern that you raised in May of 2016 related</p> <p>18 to, potentially, the young people themselves being left</p> <p>19 unsupervised together because of concerns that had been</p> <p>20 raised with you about inappropriate sexualised behaviour</p> <p>21 between the children?</p> <p>22 A. Mm.</p> <p>23 Q. Is that a summary of one issue that you were concerned</p> <p>24 about?</p> <p>25 A. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 78</p> | <p>1 Q. You, I think, observed his -- there was an attempt to</p> <p>2 discuss observations around his behaviour, there had</p> <p>3 been another incident involving him with some boys,</p> <p>4 I think, rushing at him. Is that right?</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 Q. There was generally discussion about whether or not the</p> <p>7 police were going to progress this and, again, I think</p> <p>8 the police felt that this particular allegation did not</p> <p>9 meet their threshold. Is that right?</p> <p>10 A. That's right.</p> <p>11 Q. There was no CCTV, there was no disclosure from him, no</p> <p>12 idea who the suspect may be, but then, perhaps, is this</p> <p>13 a pattern, that you also tried to pick up some learning</p> <p>14 from this incident, notwithstanding the lack of</p> <p>15 a criminal process? Is that right?</p> <p>16 A. I think there were many opportunities that were missed</p> <p>17 to make changes in relation to some of the things that</p> <p>18 children initially raised and then retracted, so there</p> <p>19 were serious opportunities were missed many times in</p> <p>20 relation to allegations that children made but couldn't</p> <p>21 be taken forward.</p> <p>22 Q. But on this -- forgive me, there are some documents</p> <p>23 about this particular allegation. I will come to more</p> <p>24 general themes. Can I pull up, please, MED000023,</p> <p>25 internal 24, because I think this reflects the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 80</p> |

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| <p>1 discussion with this young person with A94. If you look 2 at the top, please, this is, again, a note that you have 3 made of a meeting with him in May of 2016: 4 "He did not present as he did last time we saw him 5 and appeared fearful and withdrawn. I asked if he 6 wanted a police production order." 7 Just to be clear, that would enable him to be taken 8 from the YOI -- the STC, forgive me, to a different 9 place to talk to you. Is that right? 10 A. Yes. 11 Q. "As discussed ... I visited [him] today in Medway 12 [towards the end of this] ... and I have visited [him] 13 before and we noticed a significant change in his 14 behaviour. He appeared fearful and guarded when [we] 15 were speaking with him and repeatedly glanced at the 16 window ..." 17 He did not want to take up, I think, the opportunity 18 of a police station production order but was asking to 19 be moved to Vinney Green. 20 A. Yes. 21 Q. Although, as we have heard, there were no police 22 proceedings, ultimately, just to finish off this part of 23 the evidence, is this right, that at MED000023, 24 internal 26, you sent an email, I think, to the 25 safeguarding manager within Medway and to other</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 81</p> | <p>1 staff present and are following the policies and 2 procedures that NOMS have in relation to this." 3 You received a reply, I think -- is that right? Can 4 you help us with what the response to that was? 5 A. I can't remember the response. 6 Q. Forgive me, I'm not sure if we do know. I think what we 7 see is, at the top of internal page 26, that 8 an instruction to staff not to enter a room on their own 9 has been issued and circulated. That's at the top of 10 internal 26, and I think, unless I am told otherwise, 11 that's where the chronology ends. 12 Did you consider that that was fully understanding 13 the significance of the issues that you were raising? 14 A. I didn't and the approach again was an immature response 15 to a suggestion that a child had a love bite on their 16 body. I would have expected that to have a referral to 17 a safeguarding team as well as the LADO. I guess it 18 further -- well, I know it further demonstrates that 19 these children are not being treated as children. 20 Q. Then finally on the particular allegations in relation 21 to particular members of staff, I think our 22 understanding has been that, as far as the group of 23 issues around the PlayStation and the pornography and 24 that group of issues is concerned, that as far as one 25 male member of staff is concerned, there is a member of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 83</p> |
| <p>1 colleagues on 1 August, saying: 2 "You will be aware that the police and I met with 3 the staff member around the love bite issue. We have 4 spoken to the young person. He said he was joking and 5 talking about something else that had happened before he 6 went into custody. Given the lack of evidence and 7 information, I have to categorise this as inconclusive, 8 but I would make the following recommendations, as there 9 are clear learning points to take from this situation." 10 You say: 11 "I recommend that should an allegation of this 12 nature come through again, it is also referred to our 13 child protection team. A child protection medical 14 should have taken place to preserve any evidence of 15 a love bite on this young person's body. This would 16 have enabled us to understand whether or not this did 17 actually happen." 18 Sorry, this is on internal page 27. Sorry, we will 19 just wait for that to come up. 20 This is, chair, and panel, in your bundle at tab E 21 but I will have it brought up, please: 22 "I have also been given reassurances that staff are 23 not alone in private spaces with young people. I would 24 like to reinforce the importance of staff not entering 25 young people's rooms alone, ensuring they have other</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 82</p> | <p>1 staff who is facing criminal proceedings in relation to 2 that issue. Do you know much about that or not? 3 A. I've got no further information on that, I'm afraid. 4 Q. Our reading of the paperwork, and it may be that we can 5 clarify this completely with the MoJ, is that in 6 addition there was another member of staff who accepted 7 a police caution related to this group of incidents. Do 8 you know much about that or can't you help? 9 A. I can't help, I'm afraid. 10 Q. All right, just bear with me a second. (Pause). 11 I think if we -- just bear with me a second. If we 12 look at MED000130, I think this is some documentation 13 around this, this is F51, but it may be that you didn't 14 have very much involvement in this. Is that right? 15 A. I can't assist with that, I'm afraid. 16 Q. You can't, all right. Well we can see, and the panel 17 can see, that there are various supervision actions 18 taken in relation to F51. I think our understanding 19 about that is, just bear with me a second, actually. 20 A. That's in relation to Cookham Wood 21 Secure Training Centre. 22 Q. Forgive me, just let me check this. 23 I think our understanding is that this in fact 24 relates to the same male member of staff who is facing 25 criminal proceedings, but that a separate male member of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 84</p> |

1 staff received a police caution for conveying pictures.
 2 Do you know anything about that or not?
 3 **A. I don't, I'm afraid.**
 4 Q. I will go back then, please, to some final themes in
 5 your witness statement, Ms Rollinson. You say in your
 6 witness evidence at paragraph 32, perhaps we can bring
 7 that up, please, it's INQ001759_007 and scroll in,
 8 please, on 32 and thereafter. You say there, I think,
 9 that during your time at Medway it was clear to you that
 10 there was no real commitment to ensuring the safety of
 11 young people or to ensuring that they were well cared
 12 for and effectively rehabilitated:
 13 "I find it distressing to see how they were treated.
 14 There was a general lack of response to safeguarding
 15 concerns and a lack of transparency and openness at
 16 every level, including young people raising concerns,
 17 the investigation of these concerns and the consequences
 18 and response to inappropriate conduct. I believe this
 19 attitude to safeguarding is endemic and ingrained in the
 20 STC environment."
 21 Now, can you help us, please, with why you say that?
 22 **A. I say that because I was -- I was at Medway STC almost**
 23 **every week that I was employed by Medway. I don't just**
 24 **base that on my own observations of what was happening**
 25 **there and the things that I've put in my statement**

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1 **today. I also met with many young people who had left**
 2 **the secure training centre environment and who shared**
 3 **similar stories of abuse of a physical and sexual**
 4 **nature. They were unable to share those -- share their**
 5 **experiences in ABE interviews which meant that we**
 6 **weren't able to take things further but we may have been**
 7 **able to had they made statements.**
 8 **So it was really difficult to help those children**
 9 **and to let them know that we cared and we wanted to**
 10 **change things for them.**
 11 Q. You've talked about the STC environment. Is there
 12 something in particular that you think is endemic in the
 13 culture of STCs that was contributing to these
 14 difficulties or do you think it was confined to a period
 15 of time at Medway?
 16 **A. I think it's endemic. I think I personally think we**
 17 **would be foolish to think things are not happening now**
 18 **to children in those environments. We know that we look**
 19 **back over many years and there's been repeated issues in**
 20 **relation to the care and protection of young people in**
 21 **the secure training centre environment.**
 22 **My experience ended a year ago and, when I left that**
 23 **role, I had no reassurance that changes had been made to**
 24 **the level that we needed to ensure those children were**
 25 **safe.**

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1 Q. You say I think in 34 of your witness statement that:
 2 "I did not see a change in culture that I thought
 3 I would as a result of this transfer. There were some
 4 changes in the right direction but they were not robust
 5 and responsive in relation to the concerns we had
 6 repeatedly heard about from young people, such as the
 7 slow response to the CCTV in the kitchen area."
 8 When you left your employment, the CCTV cameras were
 9 still not present in the kitchen?
 10 **A. That's right, and that was an area that -- you know,**
 11 **trying to help staff in the STC to not be open to**
 12 **allegations, that would have been a real opportunity for**
 13 **managers to ensure that CCTV being there would mean that**
 14 **staff were not open to further allegations and we had**
 15 **shared quite clearly with senior managers the concerns**
 16 **that had been repeatedly raised by young people about**
 17 **the kitchen area.**
 18 Q. You make the point towards the end of your statement:
 19 "In an STC or any other custodial environment there
 20 is an inherent power and imbalance. The young person is
 21 unable to remove themselves from situations in a way
 22 that those who have not lost their liberty can. There
 23 is no way for a young person to remove themselves from
 24 the risk of abuse. They are often reluctant to
 25 complain, or feel they do not have a voice to complain,

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1 because they deserve to be treated in that way. It is
 2 vital that we investigate and take all steps necessary
 3 to properly understand and learn about the current
 4 issues affecting STCs. We need to use this information
 5 to respond in a way that is not superficial to ensure
 6 the protection of young people."
 7 In terms of the situation at Medway now -- obviously
 8 you no longer have direct contact with what is happening
 9 at Medway now -- what is your understanding about the
 10 members of staff who were working there when you were
 11 there? We know that some have been dismissed and people
 12 have perhaps moved on, but what's your general
 13 understanding about the transfer of staff from G4S back
 14 to the MoJ and people still working there?
 15 **A. When NOMS took over, there was just -- staff were TUPE'd**
 16 **across, so it was just the same staff team with**
 17 **a different management structure, if you like, different**
 18 **managers but the same staff team. I felt there was**
 19 **a real missed opportunity when the member of staff was**
 20 **not dismissed. The member of staff who had struck the**
 21 **child to the face and also being seen holding hands**
 22 **under the cushion, I felt that there was a real missed**
 23 **opportunity there by the management/managers in place to**
 24 **send a really clear message out to other staff that this**
 25 **behaviour was not acceptable and would not be tolerated**

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|---|---|
| <p>1 and I wondered how staff would respond moving forward.</p> <p>2 I wondered would they be confused, at best, or would</p> <p>3 they feel that this behaviour was acceptable.</p> <p>4 Q. Reflecting on all the evidence that you have given,</p> <p>5 Ms Rollinson and what you have heard, is there any</p> <p>6 further information or comment that you would like to</p> <p>7 make to the panel that you think may assist them in the</p> <p>8 issues that they're reflecting on?</p> <p>9 A. I'd just like to say that I felt privileged to meet the</p> <p>10 young people that I met whilst I was undertaking the</p> <p>11 role at Medway. I hope that I've put things over in</p> <p>12 a way that helps changes to be made and helps them to</p> <p>13 understand that I really cared when I heard their</p> <p>14 stories and I really hope that things get better for</p> <p>15 young people in the secure training centre environment</p> <p>16 in the future.</p> <p>17 MS HILL: Thank you, chair. Those are all my questions.</p> <p>18 THE CHAIR: Ms Sharpling?</p> <p>19 Questions by THE PANEL</p> <p>20 MS SHARPLING: Just a point of clarification, Ms Rollinson,</p> <p>21 that's all. You talked about the case against F41 being</p> <p>22 dropped and your statement talks about not convicting.</p> <p>23 I just wondered, was this person acquitted after a trial</p> <p>24 despite, in your words, the CCTV evidence or was the</p> <p>25 case dropped before it went to court?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 89</p> | <p>1 evidence now about the two secure children's homes that</p> <p>2 you looked at a series of allegations about. I'd like</p> <p>3 to deal first of all with those, please, in relation to</p> <p>4 Vinney Green, because we will hear about Vinney Green</p> <p>5 first.</p> <p>6 Could I ask you, please, to turn up that part of</p> <p>7 your report that deals with Vinney Green? Can I have</p> <p>8 that brought up, please, it's your second/third report</p> <p>9 so it's INQ001210 and it's internal page 11. Can we</p> <p>10 scroll in, please, to the top of that page and we can</p> <p>11 see that you were asked to look at six allegations that</p> <p>12 were raised at Vinney Green, spanning a series of</p> <p>13 periods of time from February 2010 to March 2015. Is</p> <p>14 that right?</p> <p>15 A. That's correct, yes.</p> <p>16 Q. Is this the position as far as Vinney Green is</p> <p>17 concerned, that you have pulled out -- I hope</p> <p>18 I summarise it fairly -- some themes about the responses</p> <p>19 and some concerns, but as with Aycliffe, looking across</p> <p>20 the piece of work that you have done, the concerns that</p> <p>21 you have raised about the Vinney Green response are not</p> <p>22 as extensive as in the other environments. Is that</p> <p>23 right?</p> <p>24 A. That's correct, yes.</p> <p>25 Q. All right. Just to put a little bit of flesh on the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 91</p> |
| <p>1 A. No, it went to court and the CCTV evidence was viewed in</p> <p>2 court. Magistrates had the opportunity to observe the</p> <p>3 child being struck to the face.</p> <p>4 MS SHARPLING: And the person was acquitted?</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 MS SHARPLING: Thank you.</p> <p>7 MS HILL: In fairness, Ms Sharpling I think we understand</p> <p>8 from the MoJ's response to Mr Wood's report that</p> <p>9 criminal proceedings were brought. The member of staff</p> <p>10 was found not guilty at trial.</p> <p>11 MS SHARPLING: That's what I wanted to know, thank you.</p> <p>12 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, Ms Rollinson.</p> <p>13 A. Thank you.</p> <p>14 MS HILL: Thank you.</p> <p>15 Chair, we're going to move on today to now hear</p> <p>16 against from Mr Wood about the secure children's homes</p> <p>17 evidence that he analysed and to hear responses from the</p> <p>18 secure children's homes. I see the time. I am content</p> <p>19 to make a start with Mr Wood now or perhaps to take</p> <p>20 a slightly early lunch. It's a matter for you, chair.</p> <p>21 THE CHAIR: Shall we take ten minutes of Mr Wood?</p> <p>22 MS HILL: Certainly. Thank you. Mr Wood, go ahead.</p> <p>23 MR ALAN WOOD (recalled)</p> <p>24 MS HILL: Thank you, Mr Wood, you're still under oath from</p> <p>25 when you were sworn on the last occasion. You're giving</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 90</p> | <p>1 bones of the allegations, 23 February 2010, I think the</p> <p>2 allegation there was that a female resident had said</p> <p>3 that a member of staff had said she had a nice arse and</p> <p>4 would she like to be part of a threesome.</p> <p>5 The March 2010 allegation involved a female resident</p> <p>6 telling a student social worker that a member of staff</p> <p>7 had come into her bedroom and touched her bottom and</p> <p>8 thigh in a sexual way. He would not stop when she asked</p> <p>9 him to do so and made inappropriate comments such as,</p> <p>10 "You're just so sexy," and commented on how her boobs</p> <p>11 looked.</p> <p>12 And there are, I think, various bits of information</p> <p>13 that you've got about the detail of those. Allegations</p> <p>14 from March and August were 2011 were said to involve</p> <p>15 members of staff. I think that's right, isn't it?</p> <p>16 A. That's right, yes.</p> <p>17 Q. So finally, I think, the March 2015 allegation was one</p> <p>18 allegation, if I have this correct, of sexual abuse</p> <p>19 during restraint?</p> <p>20 A. That's correct, yes.</p> <p>21 Q. All right. So help us then, please, with the themes</p> <p>22 that you drew out about the Vinney Green allegations.</p> <p>23 I think first of all you've raised some questions,</p> <p>24 again, about the complaints form which is a dynamic we</p> <p>25 have heard before, I think. Do you want to give your</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 92</p> |

1 evidence about that.

2 **A. That's right, yes, there were examples when children**

3 **were talking to members of staff in terms of allegations**

4 **and then were asked to complete a complaints form**

5 **following that. So, again, to me, that passing that**

6 **responsibility back to that child, the member of staff**

7 **should have taken and initiated child protection**

8 **procedures from that point onwards.**

9 **The wording of information given to children and**

10 **young people was also not appropriate, in my view, in**

11 **terms of their response to allegations or processes.**

12 Q. We can perhaps just scroll in on your report because

13 I think you're dealing here, at 4.1.10, so it's on the

14 next page, please, internal page 12, and scroll in,

15 these are sort of procedural issues. At internal

16 paragraph 10 you felt the complaint form was

17 inappropriate in the sense that the child was told to

18 fill out the report, which shifted responsibility to the

19 child.

20 **A. That's right, yes.**

21 Q. You say this procedurally driven approach is clearly,

22 it's the next paragraph down, please, the next two, is

23 not child-centred and then separately, I think, you

24 raised a concern about the outcome being unduly

25 formalistic and the letter being sent to a child perhaps

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1 not being appropriately worded. Is that right?

2 **A. That's correct, yes.**

3 Q. Perhaps we can just pull up the totality of these three

4 pages. I think these are internal page 11, 12 and 13.

5 Did you feel that overall -- you've raised this at

6 various paragraphs -- there was a lack of child-focused

7 approach, be it a lack of understanding about the

8 child's need for support and planning for the child's

9 needs. Is that sort of a theme that you have pulled out

10 here?

11 **A. It does, yes. To be fair there was a mixed response,**

12 **I suppose, in terms of there was some evidence in terms**

13 **of a child-focused approach from a strategy meeting**

14 **point of view, so the minutes from the meeting did**

15 **reflect a child's perspective and some of the issues**

16 **around that, but the associated actions which were**

17 **connected to those minutes didn't always actually match**

18 **that.**

19 **There was some recognition also with previous**

20 **experiences for children and young people prior to**

21 **coming into the unit which may impact upon their**

22 **perceptions, so there's some evidence around that.**

23 **There's evidence also that children did feel**

24 **comfortable in some examples to talk to members of**

25 **staff.**

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1 Q. Did feel?

2 **A. Did feel comfortable, yes, to do that. However, there**

3 **is also examples in terms of the children being told to**

4 **fill out the complaints form which followed that, so**

5 **there's a bit of a mixture, really, I suppose here.**

6 Q. But I think in fairness some more examples of good

7 practice than you saw elsewhere?

8 **A. Absolutely, yes.**

9 Q. And I think you have said that there was -- just zoning

10 in on internal 1, please -- evidence of good

11 child-focused practice in relation to processes and

12 recordings linked to strategy meetings, but it's perhaps

13 the follow-up from that --

14 **A. That's right.**

15 Q. -- that you felt was lacking.

16 **A. That's correct.**

17 Q. You say at little 3 the point you have just made that

18 there was evidence that the children were, perhaps on

19 a greater scale, able and willing to talk to members

20 but, again, a slight lack of focus on a child's

21 concerns.

22 **A. Yes.**

23 Q. One point you dealt with at internal 5 was the concern

24 about allegations being dealt with in isolation from

25 other concerns. Now, what was that about?

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1 **A. The example which stood out for me was a very serious**

2 **issue regarding a member of staff who was arrested in**

3 **terms of possession of indecent photographs of children.**

4 **Also in terms of a sexual assault upon a child and also**

5 **possession of extreme pornography and those three things**

6 **weren't connected to children and young people per se at**

7 **Vinney Green, but children had also raised issues about**

8 **their perception of how this member of staff was**

9 **responding to them, talking to them, treating them.**

10 **The police at that point felt there was no -- there**

11 **wasn't sufficient evidence that a crime had been**

12 **committed in terms of the child's perception, how they**

13 **were being spoken to or dealt with, but it raised for me**

14 **a really big issue in terms of the fact that how**

15 **important it is that children's feelings and experiences**

16 **are logged correctly and taken account of, because**

17 **actually those children were picking up on other issues,**

18 **I think, so the external world of this member of staff**

19 **may well have been starting to mingle in terms of the**

20 **staff role he actually had.**

21 **So the way in which those things were treated -- and**

22 **I didn't see any evidence following the unit becoming**

23 **aware that a member of staff had been arrested, in terms**

24 **of going back to that young person and trying to explore**

25 **that again.**

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1 Q. I think you have concluded this, is this right, at
 2 internal 7:
 3 "There was a lack of analytical rigour in relation
 4 to an overall examination of practice issues, which may
 5 have added to an overall understanding of the levels of
 6 risk associated with members of staff."
 7 **A. That's right.**
 8 Q. So I think you were saying that the information from the
 9 children about this member of staff making them feel
 10 uncomfortable --
 11 **A. That's right.**
 12 Q. -- wasn't being used to assess the risk that member of
 13 staff imposed.
 14 **A. In terms of the evidence I saw there was little proof of**
 15 **that, yes, that is right.**
 16 Q. You, I think, made the point that there was one
 17 allegation, as we have heard, in relation to restraint
 18 but scroll in, please, on 8 and 9 here. This is in the
 19 context of good levels of awareness of the staff of the
 20 child's experiences of abuse and the likely reaction to
 21 being restrained. The records indicate there was some
 22 concern in regards to how the restraint was managed and
 23 how members of staff communicated with the child, but
 24 I think you felt there was still some areas for
 25 potential improvement. Can you help with what they

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1 were?
 2 **A. Yes, certainly. I think in terms of what the staff in**
 3 **the unit actually learned from that, so are you going to**
 4 **transfer that learning in terms of the wider picture for**
 5 **members of staff. So, for me, there was good evidence**
 6 **in terms of perceptions that this child may react in**
 7 **certain ways due to previous experiences, but how that**
 8 **was then translated into action and reflex of practice,**
 9 **which is about responding to what they knew, so there**
 10 **was a gap there, I think. So, again, it was a very**
 11 **mixed view in terms of the response and how people**
 12 **perceived this.**
 13 Q. Finally, the next page, please, is this right, that in
 14 2010 and 2011 the allegations that were reported did
 15 not, as far as you were concerned, have clear outcomes
 16 set out. Is that right?
 17 **A. I think there were two records on information I saw**
 18 **whereby the outcomes weren't actually written down, so**
 19 **I was unsure about what the outcome of the investigation**
 20 **actually was.**
 21 Q. And although it's perhaps slightly at the margins of our
 22 scope, is this right, that some allegations of historic
 23 abuse were made by two individuals within our time
 24 frame --
 25 **A. That's right, yes.**

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1 Q. -- 2013 to 2014, but about abuse having said to have
 2 taken place many, many years before. And you make the
 3 point that the police had felt that they were unable to
 4 proceed with that and you were concerned on a general
 5 level about the impact on the children of that.
 6 **A. I think in terms of the evidence I saw was there was**
 7 **really good evidence that the police did actually**
 8 **attempt to investigate and did a lot of work in terms of**
 9 **trying to draw those connections through.**
 10 **However, when they approached various children**
 11 **service departments in terms of records from members of**
 12 **staff who actually worked there at that period of time,**
 13 **my understanding is they were told that there were no**
 14 **records kept.**
 15 Q. Just to be clear, this was about members of staff who
 16 had worked at the establishment in the late 1960s and
 17 mid 1970s?
 18 **A. That's right, yes, and I think there was change of**
 19 **structure, change of approach, change of statutory**
 20 **service delivery methods. However, I would have**
 21 **expected that records of members of staff would have**
 22 **been kept, but the police were very clear this they**
 23 **couldn't progress these allegations because they were**
 24 **told there was no records during that period of time.**
 25 Q. I think the final point you make on Vinney Green, and

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1 the last point on this page, was that a concern about
 2 two separate occasions when inappropriate and possibly
 3 illegal pictures had been found on a young person's
 4 phone and it didn't appear that the proper processes had
 5 been followed about that. Is that right?
 6 **A. I think that was the incident whereby that related to**
 7 **a separate establishment.**
 8 Q. Forgive me, yes, you're quite right. So I think you
 9 later clarified that material came from a different
 10 place?
 11 **A. I did, yes. That's right.**
 12 Q. Forgive me. Is there anything else about the
 13 Vinney Green documentation overall that you wish to draw
 14 to the panel's attention?
 15 **A. I suppose for me one of the things, I suppose, in terms**
 16 **of the difference in terms of the numbers of children,**
 17 **numbers of members of staff, the focus in terms of**
 18 **safeguarding is easier to spot here than the other**
 19 **establishments we have been looking at, and that could**
 20 **be related to the fact that the staff numbers are higher**
 21 **in terms of per head of child.**
 22 **The numbers of children are obviously lower there,**
 23 **as well, so there's more opportunity for children to**
 24 **form those positive relationships but, again, it felt**
 25 **a bit to me that there were significant gaps there,**

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1 **which to a certain extent were actually picked up on and**
 2 **recognised. However, there is obviously, from examples**
 3 **given, other significant problems, as well.**
 4 MS HILL: Thank you, chair. Those are all my questions for
 5 Mr Wood and we will perhaps hear the response from the
 6 institution after the lunch break.
 7 THE CHAIR: Thank you. We will return at 2.05 pm. Thank
 8 you.
 9 (1.06 pm)
 10 (The luncheon adjournment)
 11 (2.05 pm)
 12 MS HILL: Thank you very much, chair. I will call, please,
 13 Alison Sykes.
 14 MS ALISON SYKES (affirmed)
 15 Examination by MS HILL
 16 MS HILL: Thank you very much. You're Alison Sykes; is that
 17 right?
 18 **A. I am.**
 19 Q. You've provided some evidence in your capacity as the
 20 Head of Secure and Emergency Services for South
 21 Gloucestershire Council?
 22 **A. That's right.**
 23 Q. Part of that role means you are the registered manager
 24 for Vinney Green?
 25 **A. Yes.**

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1 Q. Help us a little bit, please, with your professional
 2 background, Ms Sykes.
 3 **A. So I'm a qualified social worker, a background of**
 4 **working in child protection and I also have a degree in**
 5 **health and social care and a Master's degree in**
 6 **leadership and health and social care.**
 7 Q. Is this right: that before you became the registered
 8 manager for Vinney Green in April 2015, for four or
 9 five years prior to that you had been the head of care
 10 at Vinney Green?
 11 **A. That's correct.**
 12 Q. So you have been actively involved in that establishment
 13 for almost eight years. Is that a fair summary?
 14 **A. Yes.**
 15 Q. Please help the panel understand what your role, both as
 16 registered manager and head of care, involves?
 17 **A. As head of care, I was case managing some of the young**
 18 **people. There was two of us, two heads of care, so we**
 19 **had 12 young people each and we also supervised the**
 20 **staff that were directly caring for the young people.**
 21 **As registered manager, I take full responsibility for**
 22 **the -- all the actions that are in the secure -- the**
 23 **Children's Home Regulations 2015.**
 24 Q. Yes, I think we saw and heard some evidence about the
 25 various quality standards that apply and it is your

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1 statutory or regulatory responsibility to make sure they
 2 happen. Is that right?
 3 **A. That's right.**
 4 Q. By way of background, can I formally adduce, please, two
 5 witness statements from Ms Sykes? The first is dated
 6 9 September 2016, that's SGC000010, and the third, in
 7 fact, statement from Ms Sykes -- we don't need to adduce
 8 the second statement because that goes to prevalence
 9 only -- is dated 6 July of this year and it's SGC000029.
 10 Tell us a little bit, please, Ms Sykes, about the
 11 background to Vinney Green, what sort of institution it
 12 is, what sort of establishment, numbers and things like
 13 that?
 14 **A. Okay, we are a 24-bedded unit. We have -- since 2015,**
 15 **we have all Youth Justice Board young people, so all the**
 16 **young people that come to us come through the criminal**
 17 **route. Some exceptions to that. Previous to that, we**
 18 **had three of our beds that were from the welfare**
 19 **units -- welfare markets, so they came through the**
 20 **family courts. Even though we are all -- all our beds**
 21 **are commissioned with the Youth Custody Service, we**
 22 **still do sometimes have a young person through the**
 23 **welfare route, if we have a bed vacancy.**
 24 **We have been open as a secure children's home since**
 25 **1990, I have said in my -- 1995, I think, and I think in**

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1 **some of the confusion, it has been -- it's been referred**
 2 **to, Vinney Green, as a secure children's home.**
 3 **Previously, there was a Vinney Green Children's Home in**
 4 **a different building and still under South**
 5 **Gloucestershire, but it is two completely different**
 6 **entities, if you like.**
 7 Q. Then I will deal, first of all, if I may, with some of
 8 the general systems evidence that you have given. Can
 9 I ask, please, for your first statement to be brought
 10 up. It's SGC000010, internal page 2, please.
 11 In answer to question 1 -- perhaps we can scroll in
 12 on your answers to that -- you gave some general
 13 evidence about the systems in place to protect children
 14 from sexual abuse at Vinney Green. So perhaps you can
 15 just take us through, A to H, what you have said there?
 16 **A. Okay. So all young people, all members of staff have**
 17 **an annual safeguarding training and that includes the**
 18 **paperwork that they have to fill in and they also have**
 19 **a pack to take away with them, so they have that with**
 20 **them at all times or have access to it at all times.**
 21 **Senior managers do the safeguarding training, the**
 22 **advanced safeguarding training, every three years,**
 23 **that's multi-agency training. Safeguarding policy is**
 24 **covered annually in supervision as well, we have**
 25 **a policy each month and safeguarding is in it every**

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| <p>1 12 months.</p> <p>2 CCTV covers all areas of the unit, with the</p> <p>3 exception of the children's bedrooms and we do have some</p> <p>4 communal toilets. Obviously CCTV isn't in there. Live</p> <p>5 CCTV footage is available in the control rooms. That's</p> <p>6 the rooms where staff are, if they're not directly with</p> <p>7 the young people, so everything could be seen that's</p> <p>8 going on in the individual communal rooms, and we have</p> <p>9 access to that CCTV to play back over 28 days.</p> <p>10 We have -- our LADO comes in monthly to view all</p> <p>11 incidents that we have recorded, regarding restraints</p> <p>12 and physical intervention.</p> <p>13 Each young person has their own bedroom, which is</p> <p>14 an ensuite, and they are not permitted to go into each</p> <p>15 other's bedrooms. Staff are encouraged not to go into</p> <p>16 bedrooms for obvious reasons, the reasons why we're</p> <p>17 here. There are exceptions to that, of course. We</p> <p>18 would go in if we saw a young person self-harming and,</p> <p>19 you know, it is -- it's a children's home so there are</p> <p>20 some very practical reasons why you might go in, help</p> <p>21 them change a channel on their TV. If they are having</p> <p>22 a -- you know, they just can't make up their bed very</p> <p>23 well, we would help them go and fit the bottom sheet.</p> <p>24 We would do practical things like that, but we would</p> <p>25 only go in when there was a particular reason to go in.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 105</p> | <p>1 are a female and they're on their cycle, they may keep</p> <p>2 their pants on and they remove their clothes so we can</p> <p>3 check there is nothing in their clothes, they then show</p> <p>4 each side using the dressing gown so we can just see</p> <p>5 that they're not keeping anything, but we wouldn't view</p> <p>6 them naked.</p> <p>7 Q. That is the most intrusive sort of search I think you</p> <p>8 perform. You make the note here that the reasons for</p> <p>9 such a search are always recorded and the findings are</p> <p>10 always recorded; is that right?</p> <p>11 A. That's right.</p> <p>12 Q. Pulling those threads together if we can pull up</p> <p>13 internal page 7 of your first statement, you say at the</p> <p>14 end of paragraph 2 there that, in your opinion, overall,</p> <p>15 there are effective measures in place to prevent a child</p> <p>16 being sexually abused insofar as possible?</p> <p>17 A. I do believe so.</p> <p>18 Q. Help us then, please, with the information you've</p> <p>19 provided about the detail of the training that's given.</p> <p>20 This is at section 3 of your first statement. So it's</p> <p>21 internal page 3, please. Please tell us a bit about the</p> <p>22 mandatory training that staff receive, what that covers,</p> <p>23 how long it lasts and things of that nature.</p> <p>24 A. Okay, the safeguarding training, there is actually</p> <p>25 within my evidence the pack of what we go through, so it</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 107</p> |
| <p>1 Q. I think you say that staff are aware that they need to</p> <p>2 be on CCTV as much as possible?</p> <p>3 A. Absolutely.</p> <p>4 Q. So that's a sort of understanding by the staff. Is that</p> <p>5 right?</p> <p>6 A. Absolutely, yes. Yes. And when you're talking to</p> <p>7 a young person at their bedroom, you make sure that you</p> <p>8 are stood at the outside side of the door so CCTV can</p> <p>9 see you. Yes, and so obviously sometimes the restraint</p> <p>10 does take place in a bedroom and a member of staff would</p> <p>11 press their flare so that other staff would come so they</p> <p>12 wouldn't be dealing with that on their own. And then</p> <p>13 personal searches are done and it's within the</p> <p>14 documentation, we have fairly strict criteria for its</p> <p>15 level 1, level 2 or level 3 and who gives permission to</p> <p>16 do those and those are intelligence- or risk-led.</p> <p>17 Q. You say that if a level 3 search is necessary, which I'm</p> <p>18 assuming is the most intrusive sort of search, there are</p> <p>19 always two members of staff present and a manager must</p> <p>20 give authorisation?</p> <p>21 A. That's right.</p> <p>22 Q. Is that what we might call a strip search elsewhere?</p> <p>23 A. It's not a strip search in the fact that the child would</p> <p>24 not be viewed naked, so the child removes their clothes</p> <p>25 under a -- they have a dressing gown to put on. If they</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 106</p> | <p>1 covers the signs and symptoms of abuse. It also looks</p> <p>2 at radicalisation, it also looks at child sexual</p> <p>3 exploitation -- am I answering the right question?</p> <p>4 Q. Yes, that's fine.</p> <p>5 A. I am. Sorry, for a moment -- I was lost for a moment.</p> <p>6 Q. Let's just pull up your reply to question 3 on internal</p> <p>7 page 3 first of all, please: you dealt there with annual</p> <p>8 safeguarding training for all staff regardless of their</p> <p>9 role, that's delivered by you --</p> <p>10 A. That's right.</p> <p>11 Q. -- with a child protection trainer from the council,</p> <p>12 I think annually, and it's half a day long?</p> <p>13 A. That's right.</p> <p>14 Q. Senior members go every three years for an advanced</p> <p>15 safeguarding course. The safeguarding policy is covered</p> <p>16 in supervision annually as a reminder of</p> <p>17 responsibilities. Staff are supervised monthly?</p> <p>18 A. Yes.</p> <p>19 Q. Tell us, please, about your process for reflection on</p> <p>20 practice and performance?</p> <p>21 A. So we have, obviously as you would imagine,</p> <p>22 a supervision form that raises particular issues we want</p> <p>23 discussing, supervision, and we have that as a direct</p> <p>24 question to have that time with your supervisor to</p> <p>25 reflect on practice and that might be reflecting on good</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 108</p> |

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| <p>1 practice as well as practice that could be done better</p> <p>2 and that's to encourage an openness that we appreciate,</p> <p>3 within a very pressured setting, you might not always</p> <p>4 get things exactly right and it's about being able to</p> <p>5 discuss that, reflect on it and what would you do better</p> <p>6 in the future.</p> <p>7 Q. In terms of recruitment, you say that all staff receive</p> <p>8 or undergo a Warner interview by yourself prior to</p> <p>9 commencing employment. Just help us understand a little</p> <p>10 bit about what that is?</p> <p>11 A. Okay it's a non-competitive interview and it's to look</p> <p>12 at the member of staff's values, beliefs, norms, their</p> <p>13 attitude towards the very vulnerable young people we</p> <p>14 work with and the majority of staff come and pass that</p> <p>15 and it is a case of you need to pass it. There have</p> <p>16 been occasions when I've said to the member of staff,</p> <p>17 "I really don't think you're suitable for us because of</p> <p>18 how you're thinking about the young people. You're</p> <p>19 thinking of them as criminals first and not as children</p> <p>20 first".</p> <p>21 And sometimes, that member of staff, despite having</p> <p>22 gone through all the rest of the interview process,</p> <p>23 says, "Actually, do you know, now I have thought about</p> <p>24 this, I'm not sure I can work with young people who have</p> <p>25 done those acts of crime and I don't want to be in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 109</p> | <p>1 interview?</p> <p>2 A. We do all these ones before, absolutely.</p> <p>3 Q. You make the point at H that only when all of the above</p> <p>4 have been completed will an offer of employment be made</p> <p>5 that is then subject to a period of probation. Any</p> <p>6 concerns are logged and discussed and DBS checks are</p> <p>7 renewed every three years?</p> <p>8 A. That's right.</p> <p>9 Q. Externally, you have certain checks in place for</p> <p>10 visitors to the home. Is that right?</p> <p>11 A. Yes, yes. So all the visitors that come and see the</p> <p>12 young people have to be approved by the young person's</p> <p>13 youth offending team, and it's our understanding that</p> <p>14 within the youth offending team there is also social</p> <p>15 care and police that will inform them if they think</p> <p>16 someone is unsuitable to visit.</p> <p>17 Q. At section 4 of your statement on internal page 3, you</p> <p>18 confirmed that 0 per cent of your staff have not had the</p> <p>19 mandatory training, because effectively it is</p> <p>20 mandatory --</p> <p>21 A. It's mandatory.</p> <p>22 Q. -- and it means mandatory; yes?</p> <p>23 A. Absolutely.</p> <p>24 Q. Then help us, please, a little bit, in a broad sense,</p> <p>25 with how allegations of sexual abuse are responded to,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 111</p> |
| <p>1 employment".</p> <p>2 If I'm honest, if somebody came and was</p> <p>3 a determined, predatory paedophile they aren't going to</p> <p>4 sit in a Warner interview and tell me that, but what it</p> <p>5 does allow is to explore some things about young people,</p> <p>6 their vulnerabilities, their age vulnerabilities, their</p> <p>7 knowledge at that level -- given that they have often</p> <p>8 been abused -- of sexual experiences. Members of</p> <p>9 staff's opinions on asylum seekers, we have many young</p> <p>10 people whose right to be in the country isn't</p> <p>11 necessarily known at the point they are with us. It's</p> <p>12 a conversation, but it just allows me to understand that</p> <p>13 a member of staff that's come in to work with the young</p> <p>14 people we care for, what their thinking is.</p> <p>15 Q. Just to flesh this out a little bit more, please, can we</p> <p>16 go to internal page 5 of your statement, you were asked</p> <p>17 particularly about what steps are taken to prevent</p> <p>18 a person having contact with a child in custody where</p> <p>19 there are things in that person's background that might</p> <p>20 indicate they pose a risk of sexual abuse to children,</p> <p>21 and you set out, I think, over the page, A through to G,</p> <p>22 a series of steps around checks and references and</p> <p>23 things of that nature and, just by way of background,</p> <p>24 it's only when we get to G that the Warner interview</p> <p>25 happens, so you do all those checks before the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 110</p> | <p>1 if they're made.</p> <p>2 A. Okay, so at the point they are -- they are made, we</p> <p>3 would first of all make sure that the child was safe --</p> <p>4 and I'm talking now if it was made about someone in the</p> <p>5 unit, obviously there is also sometimes historic</p> <p>6 allegations made that are outside the unit, but within</p> <p>7 the unit, is the young person safe? That's a direct</p> <p>8 phone call to the LADO. If it was -- because obviously</p> <p>9 we're 24/7, if it was at the weekend or in the evening,</p> <p>10 that would be a phone call to our emergency duty team.</p> <p>11 We would then look to have a strategy meeting as soon as</p> <p>12 possible.</p> <p>13 Meanwhile, I would speak to my director, if</p> <p>14 necessary, about whether a member of staff if they are</p> <p>15 actually on shift at that time, or due to be, whether</p> <p>16 they should be suspended at that point or, at the very</p> <p>17 least, not working directly with that young person.</p> <p>18 Within Vinney Green we have two units. We have</p> <p>19 a 16-bedded unit and an 8-bedded unit, and it is</p> <p>20 possible, depending on what the allegation is and the</p> <p>21 severity of that allegation, that a member of staff may,</p> <p>22 if it's felt that they're not going to put other young</p> <p>23 people at risk, not -- just not work on this unit that</p> <p>24 that young person who has made the allegation has made.</p> <p>25 From there, from the strategy meeting, obviously</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 112</p> |

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| <p>1 then you're into realms of the child protection 2 investigation and is that a police investigation, is 3 that an internal investigation, our HR department and so 4 forth. 5 Q. I see. You set out further detail about that. Can 6 I deal, then, with your response to another question 3 7 at the foot of page 7. You were asked about the 8 children who are perhaps more at risk of being abused, 9 so where there are children who present with warning 10 signs that either they are more likely to be abused or 11 warning signs involved in their behaviour that indicate 12 they are being abused. How well you feel the staff can 13 pick up on those warning signs, if I can put it that 14 way? 15 A. Yes, I think the staff are very experienced. We get to 16 know our young people quite quickly because -- 17 Q. Sorry, I will just bring up -- it's internal page 8, 18 please, at the top of that page. Within 0010, it's the 19 top of that page you were asked about this there. 20 Sorry, carry on. You were saying? 21 A. Sorry, I've lost my -- what was I saying? 22 Q. I was asking you about the warning signs that a child 23 may be abused or at risk of it or, indeed, that a child 24 may be a perpetrator? 25 A. Yes, absolutely, and obviously, when a young person is</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 113</p> | <p>1 right? 2 A. That's right, yes. 3 Q. Help us, then, with what is the home's response where 4 a child has come into the home having been sentenced for 5 a sexual offence? 6 A. Well, obviously, we have to be aware of the other young 7 people in the home. We have 24 young people and the 8 chances of having a young person that has been a victim 9 and a young person that has been a perpetrator is not 10 unusual for us, so it is about how we keep everybody 11 safe: the young person, who's a perpetrator, safe from 12 allegations or being able to do something that would 13 lead to an allegation; and the young person who we know 14 has been a victim in the past. 15 Often, the young people, to look at, have very 16 similar backgrounds and you wouldn't know just from 17 looking at them the difference in their vulnerabilities. 18 So it is about having high staff ratios. So the young 19 people are never allowed together on their own, there is 20 always a member of staff with them. We have no more 21 than four young people with one member of staff, so 22 conversations can be monitored at all times and all 23 young people have their own room, that they can't go 24 into each other's rooms. So there's no opportunity for 25 that physical abuse to take place, that's what we</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 115</p> |
| <p>1 referred to us, we have the information, the paper 2 information of what has happened to that young person 3 previous to come to us, so that gives us a good 4 understanding of what is known on paper, at least. We 5 get to know the young people very quickly, we have got 6 them 24/7, so we're giving them breakfast and we're 7 giving them supper and everything in between and through 8 the night. So we are very quick to notice if a young 9 person is acting perhaps a little bit different or their 10 behaviour is suddenly a bit withdrawn or, the other way, 11 a little bit more violent. Every young person has a key 12 worker and a case worker, so that they have specific 13 people that they can talk to and it may be that when we 14 do a handover every single morning at 7.30 and 15 a handover at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, maybe on one 16 of those handovers we highlight that that young person 17 needs someone to talk to potentially to see what's going 18 on for them. 19 Q. Just to be clear, the key worker, you explain, is 20 someone who builds a particular relationship with that 21 young person, meets with them every week on a one-to-one 22 basis, but I think the case manager is that person's 23 link to wider -- 24 A. That's right. 25 Q. -- services in the community or within the unit; is that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 114</p> | <p>1 attempt at all levels to put in place. 2 The reality is, until we got to know the young 3 person that was coming in that was a perpetrator, we 4 wouldn't actually put them in a group with somebody who 5 had been a victim because we need to know that young 6 person and know exactly what level of risk they present, 7 so they will be kept separate for a while. 8 Q. So overall, as we know, within the secure children's 9 home environment there is a mixture of justice placement 10 children and welfare placement children, but, overall, 11 do you think that mix, the risk that that mix may pose 12 is managed adequately within your institution? 13 A. I think it is, and I think in all honesty the young 14 people are, with some exceptions -- more or less, the 15 same young person has just come through a different 16 route within either the family courts or the custody 17 courts. It's very unusual to have a welfare young 18 person who hasn't committed crime, just maybe not at the 19 level that it's led to custodial. It's very unusual to 20 have a custodial young person who hasn't suffered some 21 kind of trauma. 22 Q. Thank you. Then to the bottom of that page, please, you 23 were asked about whether, in your view, the sexual abuse 24 of children is underreported, and you said, I think 25 quite fairly, "It's very difficult to answer, as I do</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 116</p> |

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| <p>1 not know what I do not know", but help us with what your 2 view about that issue might be insofar as it applies to 3 Vinney Green.</p> <p>4 A. It's really difficult to know because you set to provide 5 an environment where young people can disclose and we 6 know young people disclose when they feel safe and 7 that's certainly our efforts to try and make them feel 8 safe. We have to remember within that that you don't 9 always know exactly what's going on for a young person. 10 They still have phone access, if it's been approved, to 11 their families, so if there is an abuser there, we 12 can't -- you know, we can make them feel safe where we 13 are, but they still have contact with their families, if 14 it's been approved.</p> <p>15 From the point of view if it was a member of my 16 staff, we would hope that the young person had 17 relationships with their key worker or with other staff. 18 They have tutors within education that they could report 19 it. It is -- as I said, it's really difficult to know 20 what you don't know, but the strive is to have the 21 environment that they can report.</p> <p>22 Q. I think just bringing up, please, if we could, the top 23 of 009 you make the point that staff are rigorously 24 vetted, CCTV in place, all staff are aware of the 25 reporting procedure for disclosures. Young people, you</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 117</p> | <p>1 sometimes, regardless of what you do, and hopefully you 2 give them some safe space for them to feel safe that in 3 the future, if they don't feel the time's right now, 4 they can in the future.</p> <p>5 Q. You were asked about what improvements can be made to 6 enable children to disclose. Help us, please, with what 7 recent initiatives that Vinney Green staff have been 8 involved with to try and keep themselves up-to-date with 9 recent practice?</p> <p>10 A. Okay, so we have certainly, and I don't know -- forgive 11 me if you've already heard about it. We certainly have 12 Secure Stairs, which is an NHS model to have 13 a psychologically informed environment and my staff team 14 are currently working with our mental health team that 15 are now within the unit to try and make our unit more 16 psychologically informed, make the environment more 17 child friendly and, you know, we already are a long way 18 there, we have carpets, we have posters we have nice 19 beds, you know, it is like a home, but it is about every 20 intervention matters and giving the child time to 21 express their feelings and doing what you can for them 22 to be individual, given that, when there's 24 young 23 people together, there are some routines that have to 24 happen because the days have to go through the days, but 25 also that they have time for some one-to-one.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 119</p> |
| <p>1 say, have a telephone in their rooms, they have free 2 access to Childline and Coram Voice, which I am assuming 3 is a route to making a disclosure, if they wish?</p> <p>4 A. That's right. So those are telephones in their room 5 that can't be switched off. They're in the wall. So 6 they can make those calls. And we also have an advocate 7 from Coram Voice which comes in weekly and speaks with 8 each child individually -- if they want to, obviously.</p> <p>9 Q. You also talk about the YOT social workers and the 10 solicitors, I think the children have free telephone 11 access to reach them, if they wish --</p> <p>12 A. They do.</p> <p>13 Q. -- and there is the regulation 44 visitor who comes in 14 every month and makes herself available to the children 15 as appropriate?</p> <p>16 A. That's right.</p> <p>17 Q. You were asked why children don't disclose abuse and 18 I think you rightly referred us to the NSPCC report, 19 "No-one noticed, no-one heard", which we have read. Is 20 there anything else further you can offer on that?</p> <p>21 A. No, I just think we have a whole health and mental 22 health team within our unit that advise us and support 23 us in trying to put in a therapeutic approach into the 24 unit, and I think it's fair to say, for some young 25 people, the time isn't right for them to disclose</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 118</p> | <p>1 Q. I think you also reference at the foot of page 9 of your 2 first statement that your staff have been involved in 3 some initiatives to help understand child sexual 4 exploitation a bit better?</p> <p>5 A. They have, yes.</p> <p>6 Q. Some group work sessions helping the young people 7 understand about grooming, coercion and control. 8 I think that was in 2014/2015. Training materials were 9 introduced into the safeguarding annual training, 10 I think following that?</p> <p>11 A. Sorry, that seems a long time ago now. When you said 12 "recently" --</p> <p>13 Q. Yes, well, it's because your statement was 2016. I'm 14 sorry.</p> <p>15 A. Also, since then, we have done a very similar thing on 16 radicalisation to raise awareness on that.</p> <p>17 Q. For completeness, at the top of your internal page 10 -- 18 again, it may feel a while ago, but you did some work, 19 I think, around the risk, in particular to boys and 20 young men, of being exploited?</p> <p>21 A. That's right, yes.</p> <p>22 Q. Because I think you predominantly have boys?</p> <p>23 A. We do. Although we're a mixed unit, the reality is 24 there's far more boys sent to custody than girls and 25 there's lots of media attention and lots of reports on</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 120</p> |

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| <p>1 the risks to girls for child sexual exploitation, but 2 less so for boys, and it was about just making staff 3 aware that they are equally as vulnerable. 4 Q. You explained, I think, in answer to the next question, 5 how a young person in your unit has contact with their 6 family. Just, please, help the panel with that. 7 A. Yes, so, as previously said, they have a telephone in 8 their room and, if it's been approved by the YOT, they 9 can have telephone contact with their family. We at the 10 unit give them £2 a day. That -- the length of time 11 that lasts depends on whether they're ringing a landline 12 or a mobile. They also have the ability to put more 13 money on, if they want to, but in all honesty, because 14 they're living their life at the unit, that tends to be 15 more than enough money for them. They don't very often 16 put on extra money. 17 The only -- the reasons why a young person might not 18 have contact with their family is if the family member 19 was the perpetrator or if there's some risk with them. 20 We also allow visits at the unit and they can happen 21 during the daytime. We do discourage families from 22 coming in the educational day, but at the same time 23 there's no way we would stop a family coming if that's 24 the only time they could come. 25 And the reality for us is we have -- we might have</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 121</p> | <p>1 Q. -- steps would be taken to consider whether or not the 2 member of staff should have contact with the young 3 person. You would attend the unit and view the CCTV? 4 A. Yes. 5 Q. As soon as possible, the relevant professionals would be 6 informed -- be it the YOT, social worker, LADO, police, 7 YJB, Ofsted -- and a strategy discussion across those 8 professional representatives would be initiated? 9 A. Yes. 10 Q. You've also made clear that a child would be able to 11 request a transfer to another unit if they felt it 12 appropriate to do so. 13 A. Absolutely, yes. 14 Q. You've made the point, I think, that CCTV is saved, 15 paperwork is kept. Is there anything else about the 16 response to an allegation of abuse that you feel I need 17 to draw out from your evidence? 18 A. I don't think so, thank you. 19 Q. A few more perhaps general questions that you were 20 asked. Could I ask, please, for SGC000010, internal 21 page 12 to be brought up, please. You, I think, were 22 unable to answer questions about privately-run 23 institutions, but help us, please, with what you have 24 said about the information given to children in terms of 25 sexual activity and what is wrong and what is not wrong.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 123</p> |
| <p>1 24 young people from 24 different counties which means 2 a lot of families have to travel quite a long way. We 3 work with the YCS to do the scheme where we will refund 4 train journeys for them to come or whatever the travel 5 cost is, petrol or train or bus, yes, and they get -- 6 parents get invited to every single meeting. So within 7 the Youth Custody Service, a young person has a meeting 8 every single month to review their progress and how 9 they're doing with us. The social worker and YOT are 10 invited and so are the family members. 11 Q. Dealing, please, with some of the points of detail of 12 how an allegation of abuse would be responded to, I can 13 take this quite shortly, it's in your statement in 14 detail, please, internal page 10, answer to question 9. 15 If a disclosure of abuse is made, the immediate action 16 taken, I think you have said, is this: 17 "The child would be supported by the person to whom 18 the disclosure had been made." 19 Sorry, this is internal page 10 of SGC000010. The 20 nurse would be contacted to see if medical attention was 21 needed. The mental health team would be informed to 22 provide emotional support. There may be discussion with 23 the Director of Children at the council. In case 24 a member of staff had to be suspended -- 25 A. That's right.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 122</p> | <p>1 That's question 17? 2 A. So, yes, so we have -- so within the 3 Youth Custody Service we have a bed contract, we have 4 a duty to provide group work to the young people and 5 that's about prosocial modelling and that's looking at 6 PSHE framework, so there is work done on a daily basis 7 with young people -- a group of four young people, 8 smaller if necessary, and one member of staff going 9 through those things that every teenager really needs to 10 know about keeping safe. So, yes, we have got very 11 vulnerable young people, but actually we're teaching 12 them what every teenager needs to know about keeping -- 13 being kept safe and how they can keep themselves safe. 14 Q. You think that this reflects, does it, content around 15 sexual health -- 16 A. Yes, it does. 17 Q. -- sexual activity and the law? 18 A. Yes, it does. 19 Q. Help us then, please, with the complaint process. If 20 a child does want to complain about something, there is 21 a complaint form I think readily available and two 22 different boxes into which a complaint can be posted; is 23 that right? 24 A. That's right, yes. 25 Q. Does the person who reviews those complaints have</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 124</p> |

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| <p>1 sufficient training to identify if it raises a sexual 2 abuse issue? 3 A. So I respond to every single complaint that goes into 4 that box, that's my job as the registered manager, so, 5 yes, I consider that I have got that level. It is 6 actually a complaints, comments and compliments box, but 7 we get more complaints than compliments and comments, 8 and the young people are responded in writing from me to 9 each complaint they make. 10 Q. Then scrolling down, please, to the answer to 11 question 19 which goes in over the page. Help us 12 a little bit with how the relationships between the 13 children generally operate in terms of compared to 14 relationships that the children might have on the 15 outside world. 16 A. Yes, so it's very different for them, because, of 17 course, if you are a child in the outside world, you get 18 up in the morning in your own house and, with the 19 exception of your siblings, you're the only young people 20 there and that's your private life and then you go to 21 school and you interact with the young people there and 22 then you come home again, and then in the evening it's 23 your choice whether you mix up with those peers again in 24 the evening or at weekends. 25 Obviously, for the young people at Vinney Green,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 125</p> | <p>1 That applies to both the staff and the children; is 2 that right? 3 A. That's right. 4 Q. You make the point that if a child does disclose abuse, 5 a pivotal part of the safeguarding training is that 6 staff are trained in how to respond, keeping good eye 7 contact, giving non-verbal encouragement, keeping 8 questions natural and not asking closed questions? 9 A. That's right. 10 Q. You were asked finally, please, question 21, how can the 11 culture within custodial institutions be improved? 12 I think rightly you said that it's not right to treat 13 all custodial institutions in the same way. So what 14 would you like to say about that, Ms Sykes? 15 A. I think it's -- I know how difficult it is with 24 young 16 people with the high staff ratio, so I employ 150 staff 17 to look after 24 young people. That's from the 18 housekeeping to the catering to the admin to the care 19 staff and the casual care staff. And I am just very 20 aware in the STCs and the YOIs they do not have that 21 staffing ratio, and also I know all 24 of my young 22 people, I have had breakfast with them, as I'm sure 23 every registered manager of a secure children's home 24 would say, I have said good night to them all. That 25 becomes really impossible when you're looking after 70,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 127</p> |
| <p>1 they wake up in the morning and they have breakfast with 2 those peers, they go to education with those peers, 3 after education they go to the group work I was 4 mentioning with those peers, they spend their evening 5 activities with those peers and then at the weekend they 6 do the same. So it's a very different relationship. 7 We know some of our young people simply haven't had 8 friendships before, they haven't made friendships in the 9 community. That's part of -- you know, due to the 10 things that have happened to them and through their own 11 needs. And sometimes we see young people for the very 12 first time within the unit just making some of those 13 connections with other young people in a positive way, 14 but it is a very different experience. 15 Q. I think you have some rules in place that two young 16 people are not allowed to be alone with each other 17 without a member of staff in case of any difficulties 18 and physical contact is discouraged between the children 19 because of the risks some of them face and pose? 20 A. Absolutely, yes. 21 Q. You have a unit, "Golden rules", I think we see at the 22 bottom of this page and on to the next: 23 "We treat others the way we would like to be 24 treated. Try our best and learn by our mistakes, 25 respect each other's property and celebrate diversity."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 126</p> | <p>1 100 more young people. It's a very difficult -- 2 different field to compare like by like. 3 Q. When you were asked generally whether you have 4 sufficient staff in place at Vinney Green, you say your 5 operational ratio is 1:4 but in practice that's often 6 higher. But you do not exceed your maximum of 24 young 7 people so that the unit is never overcrowded? 8 A. That's right. 9 Q. You say at the end of 22: 10 "In my view, it is a small unit, but staff have 11 enough time to protect children. The children in our 12 care have a high level of staff contact and input 13 together with other relevant professionals on 14 a child-by-child basis." 15 I think you conclude by saying: 16 "Due to the high staff ratio [this is in 23] the 17 CCTV and the culture within the unit, it is my view that 18 young people are protected as much as possible within 19 an institutional setting." 20 And you don't feel able to comment on other 21 institutions. Is that right? 22 A. That's right. 23 Q. I think finally you were asked about how information is 24 shared with other agencies and you made the point that 25 every young person has a monthly meeting with the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 128</p> |

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| <p>1 professionals in their community, hosted by Vinney Green 2 staff, an opportunity, therefore, to share information 3 and work between the agencies and there is phone and 4 email communication between those meetings. Is that 5 right? 6 A. That's right, that's right. 7 Q. I'd like to just adduce, please, formally, a range of 8 policies that you helpfully provided, which the chair 9 and panel may look at in due course, because this will 10 give a sense of how some of the perhaps key issues 11 operate within your institution. So just formally to 12 adduce these, please, the safeguarding policy is at 13 SGC000011, that is tab B of your bundle, chair. 14 Safeguarding training materials are at SGC000012. The 15 particular policy around personal relationships in or 16 connections at work, this is a document at SGC000013, 17 which I think gives guidance to staff, does it? 18 A. That's right, yes. 19 Q. Is that right? 20 A. Yes. 21 Q. What does that policy broadly try and do? 22 A. It sets out the professional boundaries between a young 23 person -- a young person and a member of staff who's in 24 a position of trust and the boundaries that should be in 25 place.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 129</p> | <p>1 the different levels of search? 2 A. That's right. 3 Q. And then finally, there is a particular protocol around 4 CCTV at SGC000019. There is then provision, I think -- 5 just bear with me a second -- within a wider statement 6 of purpose, I think, that we might just pull up actually 7 at J, SGC000020. That is -- just let me bring that up, 8 please. That is your general statement of purpose. Is 9 that right? 10 A. That's right. 11 Q. And this tries to set out, I think, does it, your -- the 12 overall ethos and how you operate? 13 A. That's right, yes. 14 Q. And is this a document that you would imagine the 15 children are aware of or is it really for the staff? 16 A. It's really for local authorities, the YCS, Ofsted, to 17 be aware of what we are saying we are doing and living 18 by what we are saying we are doing. The young people 19 are less likely, in all honesty, to be aware of it, 20 although the context of what's in here obviously they 21 are living, that's, yes, that's their life. 22 Q. We just see very briefly you set out the sort of 23 children that you provide care and accommodation for and 24 I think this is a sort of briefing, is it, for people 25 who perhaps didn't know much about the unit?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 131</p> |
| <p>1 Q. There is a specific policy around contact between staff 2 and the young people and their families. That's at 3 SGC000015. Does that, again, try and give greater 4 guidance to staff about the risks of inappropriate 5 contact? 6 A. Absolutely, absolutely. It's really difficult because 7 we sometimes have young people with us for two years, 8 three years, we clearly get to know their families 9 because they're visiting and it's just reminding staff 10 that they're in a position of trust and they're 11 professionals and they have to have appropriate 12 boundaries. 13 Q. It includes practical things such as not -- well, being 14 aware of the risk of using social networking sites and 15 things like that, especially if they're approached by 16 a former resident -- 17 A. That's right. 18 Q. -- and having any social contact with former residents 19 or residents? 20 A. That's right. 21 Q. There is a restraint minimisation strategy at SGC000016. 22 An anti-bullying policy at 000017. A particular policy 23 around searches that you have talked about, that's at 24 SGC000018 and that sets out, as we have heard in your 25 evidence, different criteria and different processes for</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 130</p> | <p>1 A. Exactly. 2 Q. You talk about what you do, but we do see your ethos at 3 internal page 4 and that includes a range of things 4 around building positive working relationships with the 5 children, ensuring a detailed assessment of the 6 children's own needs and things -- a very sort of 7 child-specific focus -- 8 A. That's right. 9 Q. -- if I can summarise it in that way. And the rest of 10 the document sets out the ways in which you carry out 11 education, the complaints process and things like that 12 and it does include, I think, at the foot of internal 13 page 11, specific provision around promoting contact and 14 positive relationships with people who are of importance 15 to the child. Is that right? 16 A. That's right. 17 Q. You, I think, in your most recent statement, Ms Sykes, 18 have been asked to respond to Mr Wood's reports. I will 19 perhaps come to that part of the evidence now, if I may. 20 I think you've now had a chance to review all of the 21 observations Mr Wood has made and I think, is this fair, 22 Ms Sykes, in some places you found it a bit difficult to 23 be clear as to which incident he was referring to? 24 A. Absolutely and I think it was acknowledged when Mr Wood 25 was there, there was a couple that -- there was one that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 132</p> |

1 **wasn't ours and so I just couldn't -- it wasn't linked**
 2 **to Vinney Green and, yes, I got a bit confused about**
 3 **what was being said --**
 4 Q. To be fair, some of these are incidents that go back to
 5 2010 and 2011 --
 6 **A. That's right.**
 7 Q. -- one in 2013, one in 2015?
 8 **A. Yeah.**
 9 Q. But broadly, let us look, please -- if I can pull up
 10 SGC00029, and in particular you've tried to go through
 11 his comments. So if we can go to the second internal
 12 page of that, please, his broad theme seemed to be that
 13 there was perhaps a lack of child-focused planning after
 14 a strategy meeting, so what would you say about that?
 15 **A. And it is a lesson learned really, because I --**
 16 **obviously I was head of care when the registered manager**
 17 **who was doing these strategy meetings, those were taking**
 18 **place and, although, as I have said, I wasn't directly**
 19 **involved in any of these, just by coincidence --**
 20 **I easily could have been the case manager for them, but**
 21 **I wasn't. I think it's -- what we need to learn at**
 22 **Vinney Green is a lack of recording rather than a lack**
 23 **of it happening. Great consideration takes place to**
 24 **"Who's going to support that young person? When's the**
 25 **social worker visiting yet? When is the YOT worker**

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1 **going to come in and see them? When's the key worker**
 2 **next on shift?", so that the key worker can be around,**
 3 **"The person they disclosed to, how much are they going**
 4 **to be around? They clearly feel safe to those", but**
 5 **I just have to take, you know, acknowledge, yes, in the**
 6 **paperwork those details and that level of thought isn't**
 7 **recorded and captured, and even looking now, that's**
 8 **something I'm going to make sure I do a lot, lot more of**
 9 **consistently, yes.**
 10 Q. Insofar as he seemed to perceive that on occasion the
 11 child wasn't appropriately supported with the process of
 12 making an allegation of abuse, I think you have said
 13 that you don't think that is a problem in reality. Is
 14 that something that's more about record keeping than it
 15 is about substance?
 16 **A. I really think it is. I think our young people, if you**
 17 **spoke to them, would say that they have been supported.**
 18 **I know that's easy for me to say, but I think when we**
 19 **have had allegations made or complaints made that**
 20 **haven't been of a sexual nature but of other complaints,**
 21 **the young people feel able to do that and also to make**
 22 **those allegations and feel supported within it.**
 23 Q. Perhaps we will just scroll out and look in at the
 24 remaining points that you have dealt with. I think when
 25 Mr Wood had made the point that a student social worker

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1 had been chosen by a child to disclose to you, you say
 2 in your experience that the children at Vinney Green
 3 don't differentiate between adults as being staff or
 4 not --
 5 **A. No, and --**
 6 Q. -- so it's perhaps speculative?
 7 **A. Yes, the reality is we have educational staff, we have**
 8 **care staff, we have health staff and we have students**
 9 **and unless a young person was perhaps seeing**
 10 **a psychologist, as an example, about a particular piece**
 11 **of work, I think for our young people staff are staff.**
 12 **They see them coming on shift together, we work in**
 13 **a very -- very much that everybody's working together.**
 14 **I might be wrong, but I would doubt that a young person**
 15 **would particularly know whose job role was whose.**
 16 Q. You were asked to look at the part of Mr Wood's report
 17 where he dealt with the member of staff who was found to
 18 have inappropriate content on their computer and I think
 19 you made the point that that's the sort of thing that
 20 would not necessarily come out in your recruitment
 21 processes, but that in this particular case the images
 22 were found after the member of staff had been suspended?
 23 **A. Yes, that's right.**
 24 Q. How do you respond, Ms Sykes, to the allegations Mr Wood
 25 makes about the complaints form being used to disclose

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1 abuse on?
 2 **A. And it's really difficult, because I can absolutely see**
 3 **in the cold world how it looks like a young person has**
 4 **to make a complaint for -- and any action to take place,**
 5 **and of course that isn't the case. If we become aware**
 6 **of poor practice, we will act on it regardless.**
 7 **The benefit of a complaint form is the young people**
 8 **are very familiar with it. As I said, it's a complaint,**
 9 **compliment and comments form, the young people use them**
 10 **and we encourage them to use them because they are in**
 11 **our home with very little voice and it's a way they get**
 12 **a voice and we can respond to it and it is also a very,**
 13 **very good way of capturing what the young person thinks**
 14 **and not what a member of staff's interpretation is of**
 15 **what the young person is saying.**
 16 **I also see, the other side of that, that if it's**
 17 **portrayed that actually we're not going to look into it**
 18 **unless they actually write a complaint, of course, that**
 19 **would be inappropriate. I don't believe that is the**
 20 **case.**
 21 Q. And I think just a couple more points on Mr Wood's
 22 evidence. You would agree, I think, that the letter
 23 that had been written to a child at the end of
 24 a particular investigation was not particularly
 25 empathetic in terms of its wording, but you say that

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| <p>1 this particular young person was someone who you do 2 know. You say they were a prolific maker of allegations 3 and you can understand, in that context, why your 4 predecessor might have written in the way that the 5 letter was written? 6 A. Yes, and I honestly don't know if my predecessor 7 consulted with the speech and language therapist about 8 it. He may or may not have done. No, it's not 9 an example of a child-friendly letter, I totally 10 acknowledge that, but it is an example of perhaps, for 11 that young person, making it very clear when everything 12 had been done and a decision had been made. 13 Q. And finally, where Mr Wood had noted absence of 14 recording of outcomes, I think you say at internal 15 15 here: 16 "I would agree that the absence of recording of 17 outcomes is surprising and concerning and can assure the 18 inquiry that this would not happen now." 19 A. Absolutely. 20 Q. Having now had the experience of having gone through 21 Mr Wood's experience of these various allegations, is 22 there anything else that you think you have picked out 23 that you have learned that you might do better or that 24 you think was not rightly identified by Mr Wood, 25 anything else that you want to say?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 137</p> | <p>1 page 10, please, we can see that the categorisation 2 there was good. 3 A. Yes. 4 Q. Points were raised about safeguarding arrangements being 5 good, strong links with the local authority and matters 6 of that nature. 7 A. That's right. 8 Q. To bring this up-to-date, please, 2017, OFS007938, this 9 was a July 2017 inspection and, again: 10 "Overall experience is in progress of the children. 11 Good." 12 We see that in the middle of the page. And if we go 13 over the page, the overall findings were, again, that 14 the children's home was good for the reasons set out? 15 A. Yes. 16 Q. Again, internal page 7, how well children and young 17 people are helped and protected, the internal score was 18 "good"? 19 A. Yes. 20 Q. "Well defined", it says, at the bottom of the page: 21 "Well defined and transparent safeguarding policies 22 and procedures. Clear and unambiguous referral 23 processes. Staff have a good knowledge of child 24 protection matters and regularly refresh their 25 safeguarding training and other matters of that nature."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 139</p> |
| <p>1 A. No, I mean, I think I have said it, I think it's 2 a lesson learned for us that when we go into that detail 3 of how we support a child that we record it, because it 4 is very important and we do it because -- we do it just 5 by nature of, "Of course, we have got to protect the 6 child", but perhaps that you're so keen to write down 7 who's at the meeting and all those salient points about, 8 "Is the member of staff suspended?", and all those bits 9 that we have clearly not recorded that detail, and 10 that's certainly a learning point I'd take away from 11 this. 12 Q. Finally, please, can I, for the sake of completeness, 13 adduce the inspection report from Ofsted 14 in September 2016, OFS007936, internal page 3, please, 15 this is the September 2016 inspection, the findings of 16 Ofsted at that inspection, as we see, were that the 17 children's home provision was good for a range of 18 reasons that's set out? 19 A. Yes. 20 Q. I think in fairness some recommendations for improvement 21 were made but the overall judgment was one that was 22 good? 23 A. Yes. 24 Q. And insofar as the internal categorisation of how 25 children are helped and protected, we go to internal</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 138</p> | <p>1 And then finally, I think, really most recently 2 there was an inspection, an interim inspection, I think, 3 in December of 2017. That's OFS007931 -- no, it's not. 4 It's 7939, forgive me, and I think this was another 5 overall interim inspection. Is that right? 6 A. That's right. 7 Q. And it summarises, in fact, if we go -- just bear with 8 me a second -- that the last inspection was good, there 9 had been no enforcement action and it summarises what 10 the view of the inspectors were at this interim level. 11 I think there were some areas identified for 12 improvements, but overall it was a positive interim 13 inspection. Is that a fair summary? 14 A. Yes, thank you. 15 Q. I think we can see at the top of internal page 4 that 16 all of the most recent inspections had been good. 17 I think the interim February 2017 one that we haven't 18 necessarily gone to was of improved effectiveness, but 19 overall these are good or improved effectiveness 20 categories. Is that right? 21 A. That's right. 22 Q. Is there anything else, Ms Sykes, that you wish to bring 23 out from your evidence that you feel I've not addressed? 24 A. No, thank you. 25 MS HILL: Chair, those are all my questions.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 140</p> |

1 THE CHAIR: Thank you. One or two questions for you,
 2 Ms Sykes.
 3 Questions by THE PANEL
 4 THE CHAIR: Do you ever refuse to take children or voice
 5 your objections to children who may be proposed for your
 6 unit?
 7 **A. So with the YCS, obviously, all our beds are**
 8 **commissioned with them, so we've got a duty to take the**
 9 **young people. The YCS have a placements team and we**
 10 **find we have a healthy conversation with them. If we**
 11 **feel it's not appropriate, I don't think I have ever**
 12 **been forced to take a child, and I can't remember**
 13 **actually refusing to take a child. What usually happens**
 14 **is we might say, "Do you know, at the moment we've got**
 15 **three other people from that area in that gang. It's**
 16 **not helpful. Is there somewhere else they can go?", so**
 17 **it's more of a conversation.**
 18 THE CHAIR: Okay. Are children ever moved on from your
 19 service to YOI or STC?
 20 **A. Sometimes. So if a -- at the point of placement, you --**
 21 **obviously what you know about the child is, if the YOT**
 22 **knows the child before the crime, then the YOT has some**
 23 **information. Sometimes it can be a child who's not**
 24 **previously known to the youth offending team, so you**
 25 **only have the paper documentation and the decision is**

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1 **made where's best to place that child. Sometimes that**
 2 **isn't quite correct and sometimes we take referrals from**
 3 **STCs or we have a young person for a while and we say,**
 4 **"Do you know, actually, this young person's resilience**
 5 **and behaviour would be better elsewhere", so there's**
 6 **those times that young people move in and out of**
 7 **a secure children's home, and then there's also the time**
 8 **when we have a young person who's on a very, very long**
 9 **sentence, so is going to be in custody way after their**
 10 **18th birthday, and to go from us in a secure children's**
 11 **home to an adult prison would be a little bit like going**
 12 **from nursery school to secondary school and missing out**
 13 **the primary -- you know, it wouldn't be fair -- the**
 14 **primary bit in the middle.**
 15 **So we tend to look at, depending on their GCSEs or**
 16 **if they're doing A levels, when will be a good time to**
 17 **move them so that they then get settled to somewhere**
 18 **where they can stay a bit longer before going to adult**
 19 **prison.**
 20 THE CHAIR: Okay. And a last question is about incidents of
 21 violence in your setting. Roughly, how many do you deal
 22 with?
 23 **A. Okay. That's really difficult to answer because we stop**
 24 **far more than we -- than happen, and so you could -- if**
 25 **you ask a member of my team, they would say, you know,**

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1 **"All the time, every day we're keeping things calm and**
 2 **we're directing young people and distracting them to**
 3 **another direction". I wouldn't want to be quoted on**
 4 **this, but I think last year our restraints were 221 and**
 5 **that number stuck in my head, but if I went back and**
 6 **looked, I might have told you -- that might not be**
 7 **completely accurate, but it's a rough number.**
 8 **And with 24 young people, it's really hard. We**
 9 **obviously have to collate all that data, we have to feed**
 10 **into the YCS, we show Ofsted. It's hard with 24 young**
 11 **people to see trends, because if we have a particularly**
 12 **violent young person who may well need to be restrained**
 13 **four times a day because they are totally unable to**
 14 **regulate their behaviour, that completely skews the**
 15 **figures. So -- but, yes, we are very used to -- we do**
 16 **have acts of violence, yes.**
 17 THE CHAIR: Is that primarily between staff and young people
 18 or is it between young people?
 19 **A. And, again, it goes in waves and there is no particular**
 20 **trend. It's often young people to young people because**
 21 **they're volatile and adolescent and have their own**
 22 **traumas and are therefore looking to express their**
 23 **behaviour, yes.**
 24 THE CHAIR: Has anyone ever prosecuted?
 25 **A. They have. It's very, very rare. We had a young person**

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1 **who prosecuted another young person and that went**
 2 **through the court, although, I will be honest, I can't**
 3 **remember the outcome. I think the young person had**
 4 **a couple more months added to their sentence, and**
 5 **I think, in the time I have been at Vinney Green, one**
 6 **member of staff prosecuted when they were hurt, very**
 7 **hurt, yes.**
 8 THE CHAIR: Okay, thank you.
 9 **A. But it's rare.**
 10 THE CHAIR: Thank you.
 11 Sir Malcolm?
 12 PROFESSOR SIR MALCOLM EVANS: Thank you. I wonder if you
 13 could just help clarify one little point for me? This
 14 was in your third report where you were responding to
 15 some of the points made by Mr Wood and in your -- in his
 16 comments he was referring to a case where the police had
 17 interviewed a person in response to an allegation that,
 18 following a strategy meeting, there was insufficient
 19 evidence that a crime had been committed in regard to
 20 the particular allegation, et cetera, and then it
 21 emerged separately, subsequently -- well, or rather it
 22 emerged separately that the same member of staff it's
 23 recorded was arrested, interviewed in regard to
 24 possession of indecent pictures, et cetera, et cetera.
 25 In your response, you point out that the images were

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1 only found after he had been suspended. What I am
 2 wondering is what led to the suspension and what was the
 3 chronology of events and knowledge around this?
 4 **A. So -- so I am purely going because I wasn't even working**
 5 **at Vinney Green when this happened, so forgive me for**
 6 **being a little vague. So my understanding was a member**
 7 **of staff was accused of taking a bar of chocolate out of**
 8 **a young person's bedroom, which obviously we would not**
 9 **go into a young person's bedroom and remove their**
 10 **belongings, and there was also concerns about -- that**
 11 **member of staff had said to a young person or young**
 12 **people.**
 13 **At the strategy meeting, there wasn't enough for the**
 14 **police, at that point, to do their investigation, but**
 15 **that doesn't mean that we wouldn't, as an internal**
 16 **organisation, say, "Well, actually, there's enough for**
 17 **us to feel that we don't want you working here until we**
 18 **have had a look at it more and got more evidence and**
 19 **talked to more young people". So that would be the**
 20 **reason that member of staff was suspended by us, even**
 21 **though the police at that point weren't doing anything.**
 22 **I don't know what prompted the police to then go and**
 23 **remove his computer. I'm not sure, I don't know, sorry.**
 24 PROFESSOR SIR MALCOLM EVANS: Okay, thank you very much.
 25 THE CHAIR: Mr Frank?

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1 MR FRANK: Just one thing, if I may. In terms of
 2 qualifications of the staff that work at Vinney Green,
 3 I think you point out that they're all either qualified
 4 or working towards a national qualification that, within
 5 18 months of working there, all care staff have achieved
 6 an NVQ level 3 diploma in health and social care. Is
 7 that correct?
 8 **A. That's right.**
 9 MR FRANK: They receive monthly supervision?
 10 **A. That's right.**
 11 MR FRANK: And new employees receive that supervision
 12 fortnightly?
 13 **A. That's right.**
 14 MR FRANK: As well as an annual performance review?
 15 **A. Yes.**
 16 MR FRANK: So there is quite an emphasis on the training and
 17 qualifications of your staff?
 18 **A. Absolutely, absolutely. Yes.**
 19 MR FRANK: Yes, thank you.
 20 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, Ms Sykes.
 21 **A. Thank you.**
 22 MS HILL: Just one point of detail, I'm sorry, Ms Sykes,
 23 I should have made clear. In the very recent interim
 24 inspection from Ofsted -- it's OFS007939 -- there did
 25 appear to be some issues -- if we look at internal

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1 page 3, please. Some referrals had been made and
 2 I think you had identified that some referrals did not
 3 appear to have followed the home's Child Protection
 4 Procedures and statutory guidance that you, I think, had
 5 undertaken to look into what those issues were; is that
 6 right?
 7 **A. Yes, I am looking at which paragraph?**
 8 Q. It's internal page 3 of the 7939, the most recent
 9 interim inspection. There were some referrals made in
 10 late 2017 by some health professionals and you were
 11 concerned that the proper processes hadn't been
 12 followed --
 13 **A. Absolutely.**
 14 Q. -- and you looked into that?
 15 **A. That's right. So that was by -- so our health**
 16 **professionals are not directly employed by myself**
 17 **although they work at Vinney Green and I felt that**
 18 **within Vinney Green the processes had not been correctly**
 19 **followed and, even though they were a different agency,**
 20 **they're working within Vinney Green and must follow our**
 21 **processes. That has been looked at thoroughly and now**
 22 **resolved.**
 23 MS HILL: Thank you. Thank you, chair. Thank you very
 24 much, Ms Sykes.
 25 **A. Thank you.**

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1 MS HILL: Chair, I don't know whether now would be
 2 an appropriate moment to take a short break, because
 3 then we will hear from both Mr Wood and from Ms Whellans
 4 who will respond on the allegations he has looked at
 5 about Aycliffe. Thank you.
 6 THE CHAIR: Thank you, we will return at 3.15.
 7 (3.01 pm)
 8 (A short break)
 9 (3.15 pm)
 10 MS HILL: Thank you, chair. Chair, just by way of
 11 housekeeping we're hoping to conclude the evidence today
 12 by hearing first from Mr Wood in relation to the
 13 allegations at Aycliffe and then hearing from
 14 Margaret Whellans from the council in response to
 15 Aycliffe, and then potentially hearing a final short
 16 piece of evidence from Mr Wood just to try to pull
 17 together the key themes and think about the future in
 18 relation to the evidence that he's given. Then we have
 19 a short amount of read evidence. So I'm grateful if
 20 we're able to slight slightly beyond 4 o'clock.
 21 THE CHAIR: Yes.
 22 MS HILL: Thank you, chair. That will then conclude the
 23 evidence on this case study for today.
 24
 25

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| <p>1 MR ALAN WOOD (continued) 2 Examination by MS HILL 3 MS HILL: Mr Wood, turning now, please, if I may, to your 4 evidence about the allegations from Aycliffe Secure 5 Centre, can I pull up, please, your second/third report 6 which is INQ001210, internal page 14, please. We can 7 see at the top of that page that you were asked to look 8 at 13 different allegations from Aycliffe, spanning 2009 9 to 2016. Is that right? 10 A. That's correct, yes. 11 Q. And just taking that list down for now, but is this 12 right: that there were allegations, without going into 13 detail of them, that you looked at, some involving, or 14 at least one involving, restraint? 15 A. That's right. 16 Q. One involving -- well, at least some involving 17 allegations between a member of staff and some involving 18 other young people. Is that right? 19 A. That's right, yes. 20 Q. Generally, the themes that you have elicited in relation 21 to the Aycliffe allegations are perhaps rather similar, 22 is this right, to what you saw at Vinney Green, that you 23 felt there was a need for a greater focus on the 24 children's own needs. Is that right? 25 A. That's right, yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 149</p> | <p>1 Q. I think you were concerned, were you, that in this 2 particular instance what might be happening was that the 3 child or young person would be seen as the instigator of 4 a response in terms of inappropriate and potentially 5 abusive communication being initiated. Is that right? 6 A. That's correct, yes. I thought there may be 7 a connection in terms of the perception, in terms of 8 what "flirtatious comments" actually meant to the member 9 of staff or to the young person, as well, in terms of 10 who was responsible for initiating a type of behaviour. 11 Q. And was there also a theme that you elicited around the 12 use of complaints and the requirement to sort of make 13 concerns official? 14 A. Yes, there was. Very similar to the previous evidence, 15 I think, in terms of there were sort of examples in 16 terms of the official complaint needed to be completed. 17 Q. And I think, rather like the previous establishment, you 18 felt that the records were generally clearly written, 19 there was a clear account of the factual information, 20 but you felt that more should have been recorded about 21 the support given to the child. Is that right? 22 A. That's correct, yes. 23 Q. And I think you felt that, again, notes from the 24 strategy meetings perhaps didn't reflect the needs of 25 the children as well as they might have done?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 151</p> |
| <p>1 Q. And I think you didn't feel that the children's 2 experience of prior abuse or neglect in some cases was 3 properly reflected in the material that you saw? 4 A. That's correct. 5 Q. I think you say at 5.1.6 that's INQ000120 -- sorry 6 INQ001210, internal page 15, that there was some 7 inappropriate language that you saw. Do you want to 8 help the chair and panel, please, with that? 9 A. Yes, certainly. I think one of the examples I drew out 10 there was the quote was that a young person made 11 flirtatious comments towards a member of staff and 12 I just felt that that was not an appropriate way to 13 perceive this in terms of where the incident actually 14 started from. 15 Q. And you go on, I think, to say what would have been more 16 appropriate is "a record of behaviours which highlighted 17 the potential meaning for the child and the adult 18 response in terms of understanding the contextual and 19 functional nature of the comment made by the child." 20 Is that right? 21 A. That's right, yes, so what I was trying to say there was 22 that the perception of the member of staff writing that 23 down, it would have been useful to put that in context 24 in terms of a comprehension of the meaning for the young 25 person, as well.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 150</p> | <p>1 A. That's right, yes. 2 Q. There were -- I think that probably is the key themes 3 that you elicited. You did, I think, look at some of 4 the areas around restraint. Is there anything in 5 particular you wanted to say about the documentation for 6 that? 7 A. All I'd say again, I suppose, really, is that there was 8 a common theme in terms of restraints being some of the 9 triggers for allegations against members of staff and, 10 again, I think the need to understand the child's 11 perception of restraint, what it meant to them. 12 A debriefing in terms of how this could be avoided in 13 the future. So it was quite a common theme across all 14 institutions that restraint was a major potential for 15 an allegation against a member of staff. 16 Q. And then just perhaps can we scroll in, please, on 17 internal page 17 of that report to the last few 18 observations you made about Aycliffe. At 5.1.19 and 20 19 you said that the allegations about alleged peer-on-peer 20 abuse within Aycliffe all had common themes attached to 21 them -- there were three of these, I think: 22 "... namely, the lack of focus upon the needs of the 23 alleged perpetrator and victim and the issue that the 24 good evidence of recording of the allegations was not 25 matched by evidence of planning post-disclosure. There</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 152</p> |

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| <p>1 was a lack of analysis and action in regard to evidenced 2 understanding of the dynamics that are likely to be 3 evident in regards to children living in the same 4 intense environment. This may have been recorded 5 elsewhere, but the needs and experiences of children 6 should have been recorded in relation to these 7 particular incidents." 8 Is that right? 9 A. That's correct, yes. 10 Q. And I think you were asked to clarify the documentation 11 that you looked at. I think some of it was ultimately 12 considered not to be within our time frame, but overall, 13 in the fourth response you gave to the letters of 14 instruction, you confirmed that those themes remain 15 valid. Is that right? 16 A. That's right, yes. 17 MS HILL: Thank you very much, Mr Wood. I will call, 18 please, Margaret Whellans. 19 MS MARGARET WHELLANS (sworn) 20 Examination by MS HILL 21 MS HILL: Thank you very much. Ms Whellans, you're here in 22 your capacity, is this right, as Corporate Director for 23 Children and Young People Services at 24 Durham County Council? 25 A. That's correct.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 153</p> | <p>1 Q. So you have 18 who are justice placement children? 2 A. That's right. 3 Q. And 24 who are welfare placement children? 4 A. That's right. 5 Q. Perhaps we can scroll in on the end of that at 6 paragraph -- you appreciate, I think, that you therefore 7 house some of the most vulnerable young people in the 8 country, many of whom have complex problems and need 9 intensive support to help them turn their lives around. 10 You say you're one of around 15 such centres in England 11 and Wales. 12 And the purpose of Aycliffe, you say at paragraph 8, 13 is to have a positive impact on the lives of the young 14 people. You offer a variety of specialist services to 15 them from a range of different disciplines and you draw 16 the inquiry's attention, at paragraph 9, to the most 17 recent Ofsted report which judged the service 18 in June 2017 as "good". Is that right? 19 A. That's correct. 20 Q. I think you have set out -- perhaps the panel can just 21 look at paragraph 9 of your statement, we can scroll in 22 on that. We can see the various complimentary things or 23 positive things that were said around the work of the 24 staff. There was a positive compliment about effective 25 empowerment of the staff, young people building close</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 155</p> |
| <p>1 Q. You're here to give evidence partly based on a witness 2 statement given by your colleague, I think, 3 Carole Payne? 4 A. That's right. 5 Q. Can I then formally adduce the statement from Ms Payne 6 dated 26 March 2018 at DUC000269, the accompanying table 7 that begins at DUC000263 and the letter, I think, 8 Ms Whellans that you have written to the inquiry in 9 response to Mr Wood's report that's at DUC000502. 10 Can I begin, please, by bringing up some of the 11 background about Aycliffe as an establishment. That's 12 at DUC000269_002, internal paragraph 7 and going on to 13 the next page, please. Just tell us a little bit about 14 Aycliffe as an establishment. 15 A. Yes, Aycliffe is a purpose-built establishment. It was 16 newly built back in 2011 and the establishment itself is 17 made up of what we class at six different houses, 18 although it is one building around a quad in the middle. 19 So in each of the houses is somewhere between six and 20 eight beds and that is the general layout of the 21 building. 22 We actually, as stated in paragraph 7 there, we take 23 both Youth Custody Service and welfare beds and that 24 split is 18 and 24 in a provision that is a maximum of 25 42 beds.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 154</p> | <p>1 and trusting relationships, making good progress. There 2 were some concerns, I think, we see at the end of this 3 page that there was some inconsistency around restraint 4 incidents and recording of searches was not always 5 consistent and collated effectively. 6 You, I think, have then if we can continue to the 7 next page had a routine interim inspection 8 in January 2018 and, again, you are rated as good 9 I think you say at paragraph 10. There were then 10 further visits, I think, where you have, I think, tried 11 to address some of those issues, so help us, please, 12 with what you say at paragraph 10 about what steps have 13 been taken following concerns, I think, that have been 14 expressed on a previous date. 15 A. Yes, certainly, in terms of these issues, the 16 arrangement that we have is that the registered manager 17 does look at all of the actions and sets out the plan in 18 terms of actually taking that forward, so we have done 19 a lot of work with the leadership and management team in 20 terms of requirement around particularly the case -- the 21 case files and the update of that. That's very key for 22 us and for the further training around the standards and 23 requirements making sure that that high quality case 24 work is there in the system of reporting in terms of 25 issues that have been -- that have actually been raised.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 156</p> |

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| <p>1 And also -- I've just lost my bit there in terms of 2 the review of the quality of care, accepting that we 3 need to continue to work on the outcomes for young 4 people. 5 Q. I think you've explained a little bit further detail at 6 paragraph 11, that the five homes are known as "houses", 7 four of the homes accommodate up to eight people. The 8 fifth home looks after six young people. Four are mixed 9 while one is for girls only. Is that right? 10 A. That's right, yes. 11 Q. And you indicate at paragraph 12 that there is a high 12 ratio of staff to young people. Tell us a little bit 13 more about how that operates in practice, please. 14 A. So in each house we actually operate on a 2:1 basis, so 15 if there is, for example, eight young people in a house, 16 there is 16 members of staff attached to that house. 17 There's also four senior residential workers that 18 support that house as an assistant manager and a manager 19 and that staff team is the way in which the support to 20 the young people are given within each of the houses and 21 that's replicated across the centre. 22 Q. Just picking up on one of the issues that was raised in 23 the Ofsted report that we looked at, that's the use of 24 restraint. I think you have explained later in your 25 statement at internal page 7 that you do have a process</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 157</p> | <p>1 fact there's three separate elements of that that we're 2 trying to put into practice in our recording. 3 Q. Thank you. Can I pull up, please, internal page 6 of 4 your witness statement. You were asked a range of 5 questions about how the council protects children from 6 sexual abuse and I think your colleague answered that 7 general question with some points of detail and then 8 provided a table that went through them in further 9 detail. But just perhaps pulling out the headline 10 points, is this right, that the council works closely 11 with the local safeguarding children board? 12 A. Yes. 13 Q. There is an annual report published by the children's 14 board that's considered by the council's cabinet and 15 also by the Children and Young People's Overview and 16 Scrutiny Committee. So that's your sort of overall 17 governance structure. Tell us then, please, about the 18 CCTV at Aycliffe? 19 A. Just before I go on to do that, could I also say that 20 the corporate parenting panel within the council also 21 take responsibility to consider children who are in the 22 care of the local authority and have an Aycliffe 23 subgroup that also ensures that they have a contact with 24 Aycliffe Children's Home. 25 Q. Thank you.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 159</p> |
| <p>1 by which the use of restraint at Aycliffe is monitored 2 by the local children's safeguarding board, I think, 3 there is training given to staff to minimise the use of 4 force, but how is that concern about Ofsted -- forgive 5 me, about documentation of restraint that Ofsted 6 identified being addressed? 7 A. Yes, I think there's three aspects of that, that we're 8 currently looking at. I think the first one -- and, 9 actually, it has been further strengthened by looking at 10 these particular cases that Mr Wood has commented on 11 where, for the young person, there's an opportunity to 12 actually look at all restraints through what we call the 13 MATAC, a multi-agency team around the child, so that, 14 from now, that restraint -- group of people who have 15 been subject to restraint will actually be looked at 16 within the MATAC. 17 I think there is also something about being very 18 clear in terms of the recording of the incident and 19 seeing all of the incident in the round and making sure 20 that we also clarify what we have done as a result of 21 it, both outcome and impact, and then the final bit is 22 actually about the staff file as well and making sure 23 that we record about members of staff involved in 24 restraint and actually, again, the action that we have 25 taken and how we have dealt with it so that in actual</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 158</p> | <p>1 A. In terms of CCTV, with it being a new building, we have 2 CCTV throughout the building, not in the bedrooms but in 3 all of the other areas. 4 Q. And your colleague, I think, has made the point that all 5 incidents are investigated, notifiable events are 6 reported to both the Youth Justice Board and Ofsted. 7 You, I think, have dealt a little bit further, or your 8 colleague has, with the issues around restraint. There 9 are various routes, is this right, that children could 10 complain of abuse within Aycliffe if they wanted to? 11 A. That's right. 12 Q. Tell us a bit more about those, please. 13 A. I think in terms of -- clearly, through working with key 14 worker, would be a way in which they could do that. If 15 there's an allegation, it would go straight to 16 Child Protection or to LADO, depending on the -- and 17 both. There would also be, we have an opt-in scheme 18 around NYAS, where each child who comes into the centre 19 is allocated. 20 Q. This is the National Youth Advocacy Service? 21 A. That's right, so there is opportunity to speak to 22 someone there. We also have the regulation 44 visitor 23 and also Coram, in terms of -- who are normally 24 allocated in relation to the mental health needs of 25 young people.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 160</p> |

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| <p>1 Q. And you -- I think your colleague makes the point that 2 young people have unrestricted access to complaint 3 forms, telephones through which they can call Childline. 4 There is representation from another not for profit, 5 I think, investing in children. Is that right? 6 A. Yes, that's right. 7 Q. Who meet with young people every fortnight at Aycliffe 8 and facilitate a session called My Space. You tell us 9 through your colleague's statement at the foot of page 10 internal page 8, please, that the My Space session 11 provides representatives of the young people from each 12 house to come together as a group to highlight examples 13 of good practice as well as make recommendations for 14 improvement based on their experiences. Two young 15 people from each house meet with two Investing in 16 Children project workers and the young people bring up 17 ideas on behalf of their peers. 18 In 2017, Aycliffe once again achieved the Investing 19 in Children membership award for continuing to listen to 20 the views of children and young people within the 21 children's homes. Is that right? 22 A. That's right. 23 Q. You, I think, help us in the witness statement of your 24 colleague with how it is that Aycliffe becomes aware of 25 the history of a young person. So tell us a little bit</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 161</p> | <p>1 partnership with Barnardo's to actually look at 2 a service that could support young women who had 3 experienced child sexual exploitation and within the 4 welfare system, so in actual fact it came together in 5 terms of a bid to look at what kind of programmes would 6 support young women and how that could be done best 7 within the secure environment, given that the welfare 8 agreement had been made to -- for them to come into 9 a secure setting. 10 Q. I think, for completeness, Ms Payne explains that the 11 council invests in the training of its staff and 12 utilises supervision of its staff and has developed 13 a range of codes of practice and procedures which are 14 available to all the staff and in force consistently. 15 Is that right? 16 A. That's right. 17 Q. I think I'd just like to bring up briefly, please, if 18 I may the table that your colleague provided, I think 19 it's exhibit CP5, it's DUC000263 and just to go through 20 this, please, just relatively quickly, she has set out 21 there some further detail about matters such as the 22 recruitment policy, that's at item 1. Scrolling down, 23 please, through it, item 3 is how warning signs of 24 children's particular vulnerabilities are identified and 25 indeed at 4 about whether or not a child may be</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 163</p> |
| <p>1 more about that, please. 2 A. Yes, in terms of admission, we get information from both 3 the YCS and also the hosting authority in the welfare 4 side in terms of information about the child and we have 5 an opportunity to ask further questions about that, 6 understand it. We have less time through the YCS than 7 we do through welfare. However, that, we do try to get 8 as much information as possible and then through the -- 9 in the admissions process, then we try to make sure we 10 get that information as well as all of the health 11 information on reception. 12 Q. I think you've made the point through your colleague's 13 statement that because one of your houses is female-only 14 that enables you to provide a particular service to 15 those girls who have experienced sexual exploitation 16 that allows particularly focused work to be done with 17 them. Is that right? 18 A. Absolutely, yes. 19 Q. And your colleague mentions: 20 "The Department for Education recognised the value 21 in exploring this approach by providing innovation 22 funding to promote a culture of openness." 23 I'm not quite sure what that means, but perhaps just 24 explain that to us? 25 A. Yes, there was a successful bid made around in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 162</p> | <p>1 a potential abuser. Under 5, in answer to the question: 2 "Is sexual abuse underreported at Aycliffe?" 3 She had said: 4 "It is unlikely it is under-reported in Aycliffe, 5 given the levels of staffing, CCTV and complaints 6 processes. Ofsted have highlighted to Aycliffe 7 previously some concerns about over-reporting not 8 under-reporting." 9 Is that right? 10 A. That's right. The culture within Aycliffe is very 11 clearly that any allegation that is made immediately 12 becomes -- is passed over for independent scrutiny so 13 there's no judgment made about that in the first 14 instance. 15 Q. Just over the page, she identifies that some of the 16 reasons why children may not disclose are complex, but 17 may include guilt, fear, shame and factors like that. 18 And in answer to the question about whether improvements 19 could be made, she had said about some things that were 20 already being done, the forums and so on about which we 21 have heard, but other means of reporting should be 22 developed, eg, an app. Young people, she made the 23 point, already have unlimited access to the NYAS 24 workers. She has explained in answer to 8 how contact 25 with children's families is promoted through visiting,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 164</p> |

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| <p>1 phone, Skype and so on. Families are invited to come in 2 for community events and to provide feedback, things of 3 that nature. 4 Then over the next page, please, she has set out how 5 allegations are responded to, the support put in place 6 for children, taking of witness statements, preservation 7 of CCTV and things of that nature. 8 Over the page, I think she wasn't able to comment 9 very much on the detail of whether privately-run 10 establishments offer greater or less protection. She 11 made the point that they are subject to the same 12 statutory framework which was set out. The regulatory 13 framework is set out at 14 and, again, further detail 14 was given throughout the rest of that document about 15 training. Perhaps can I just get you to deal with this, 16 please? Under 20, in terms of supervision, Ms Payne had 17 said that there were weekly staff meetings and MATAC 18 meetings and the centre manager undertakes thematic 19 workshops. Is that still what's in place? 20 A. That's right, yes. 21 Q. And about the culture of the institution, she said that 22 Aycliffe strives to improve the culture to become more 23 nurturing and aware of the issues underlying presenting 24 behaviour. She believed there was strong leadership and 25 management and the philosophy was one of exceptional</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 165</p> | <p>1 to add to, Ms Whellans? 2 A. I think just as well as saying that an advocacy worker 3 was actually appointed on reception, one of the things 4 that also happens in that reception is a map of where 5 Durham is in comparison to the rest of England and 6 Wales, just to give the young person a feel for where 7 they actually are and some of the feedback that we have 8 had informally from children is actually quite positive 9 about that, because, often, as part of their trauma they 10 are coming from either a court or from a place that they 11 don't really know. 12 Q. Thank you. I'd like just to formally adduce through 13 you, if I may, and I hope this is dealt with in 14 a proportionate way, a slightly larger number of 15 policies that you have provided as to -- that the panel 16 can look at in due course. They all begin DUC000, but 17 the ones I'd like to formally adduce, please, are: the 18 child protection policy, DUC000423; the admission 19 policy, that's DUC000419; the risk assessment for young 20 people, that's DUC000453; the bullying policy, that's 21 DUC000421. A particular policy around relationships 22 between young people, that's at DUC000451 and, is this 23 right, if we can perhaps just very briefly pull that up, 24 Ms Whellans, that that policy tries to give guidance to 25 children and young people in the home about appropriate</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 167</p> |
| <p>1 parenting with welfare the primary focus. 2 Is that still the rationale for how the home 3 operates? 4 A. That is. 5 Q. Tell us then, please, about the staffing ratio, whether 6 that is still higher, 1:2, than most other types of 7 secure establishment? 8 A. Yes, that is, and as I said earlier about the way in 9 which our whole house is staffed. 10 Q. And she answered the question of overall whether there 11 were sufficient resources in place by saying under 23 12 within the centre the answer would be yes. She believes 13 the combination of CCTV, staffing levels, procedures, 14 training, multi-agency team, making young people aware 15 of their right to safe care, external inspection and 16 an open philosophy considerably reduced the risk, while 17 recognising there is never a complete level of 18 protection. A much harder question, she says, is that 19 the broader question of availability in the community of 20 resources is more difficult to answer. Is that 21 an answer that you would give, as well? 22 A. Yes. 23 Q. And then finally she talked about how information is 24 shared with other agencies. Is there anything else from 25 Ms Payne's general systems evidence that you would like</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 166</p> | <p>1 boundaries and includes, for example, that overtly 2 sexual behaviour is not acceptable. The need to sustain 3 a relationship will not take precedence over other 4 activities and things of that nature. 5 A. That's right and that's very much worked through with 6 the young person with the key worker. 7 Q. And that staff are made aware at the end of this policy 8 of the need to appreciate that their role and influence 9 over the young people is significant, that they should 10 be seen as models by the residents. Is that right? 11 A. That's right. 12 Q. And then there are some interesting training materials, 13 please, at DUC000494, that I think are what are called 14 icebreaker activity. Is that right? 15 A. That's right. 16 Q. Just perhaps we can skim through these but these are 17 training materials about sex and relationship education 18 between the young people and they give you some 19 information, if you just scroll through these, of the 20 sort of thing that you're trying to help your young 21 people understand. Is that right? 22 A. That's right. 23 Q. And we see similar materials -- we don't need to bring 24 them up -- about sex and the law at DUC000495, about 25 what is a safe sexual activity. There is a sexual</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 168</p> |

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| <p>1 inventory training document at DUC000496. There are 2 various other policies around how the children are 3 observed and how they're managed, including that 4 children should be observed every 15 minutes when away 5 from the group, enhanced checks are every five minutes 6 when a child is particularly at risk. There are certain 7 policies around separating the children from the main 8 group and policies around difficult behaviour. Is that 9 right? 10 A. That's right. 11 Q. And, for completeness, they all begin DUC000; they end 12 446, 443, 442 and 440. 13 There is specific guidance, is this right, to staff 14 about physical contact with the children. Is that 15 correct? 16 A. That's correct, yes. 17 Q. And that's DUC000462. There is particular supervision 18 processes that I think you have described already and 19 I think that policy is at DUC000429. There is 20 a disciplinary policy ending with 430. And then 21 finally, please, there is a group of policies that I 22 think try and promote access to families, children's 23 families and professional contacts. There is a specific 24 operating policy at DUC000449. There are special 25 arrangements, I think, for the use of Skype. Is that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 169</p> | <p>1 Q. And in January 2018, at DUC000388, again, inspection 2 grading was "good" and there was more detail given, I 3 think in a report from the end of January of 2018, 4 which, I think, ties in with the evidence you've already 5 given about what's being addressed in the home. Is that 6 right? 7 A. That's correct, yes. 8 Q. And then finally, please, Ms Whellans, can I turn to 9 your response to Mr Wood's report, which is in your 10 letter at DUC000502. 11 A. Yes. 12 Q. And I think in fairness, as a broad observation, is this 13 right: you indicate that some of the material that 14 evidences support for the children might be available in 15 case files and in other work within the home rather than 16 on the material that Mr Wood saw? 17 A. That's right. I think probably our information was 18 incomplete, but I accept the point about the coming 19 together of that in a care plan. It's being dealt with 20 much more in terms of individual work with the key 21 worker. 22 Q. And then if we can pull up, please, DUC000502. You 23 responded to some of the points at the foot of this page 24 that he made about there being a variety of detail and 25 language and a lack of systematic oversight of senior</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 171</p> |
| <p>1 right? 2 A. That's right. 3 Q. How does that operate in practice within the home? 4 A. There's a room that is particularly set up for Skype and 5 people can almost book that time and be supported to 6 make contact at an agreed time. 7 Q. And at DUC000473 there is particular provision made for 8 the telephone system. How does that work for the 9 children? 10 A. Again, the telephone system is within the room with 11 the -- that's got numbers that are restricted that are 12 actually pinned in to that and children are then able to 13 make calls and receive calls. 14 Q. And I think, finally, you also have video conferencing 15 facilities available, which I think is a separate policy 16 at DUC000469. Is that correct? 17 A. That's right, yes. 18 Q. There is a complaints process at DUC000475 and I think 19 although you did provide quite a few more policies, 20 those are the key ones, perhaps, for our purposes. 21 And then, before we come to Mr Wood's report, can 22 I just formally adduce, please, the inspection by Ofsted 23 in June of 2017. That's DUC000386. I think gave 24 an overall rating of "good". Is that correct? 25 A. That's correct, yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 170</p> | <p>1 management in relation to those particular points. What 2 have you done about that? 3 A. Yes, well, certainly I've had a direct discussion with 4 the senior management around that issue and we have 5 talked about how that can be appropriately recorded and 6 described. 7 Q. Sorry, just to be clear, this is the flirtatious 8 comments allegation -- 9 A. Yes. 10 Q. -- that you have had a look at that, have you? 11 A. Yes, I have had a look at that. Whilst I think it was 12 a comment within a context, I still have taken forward 13 with the manager that a better description of behaviours 14 was actually more relevant and important and, again, 15 that's another reason and opportunity around the MATAc 16 and actually looking at the outcome from the child and 17 the plan going forward, where that kind of issue and 18 incident would be picked up at an earlier stage and also 19 recognising that these files are child files and that 20 these -- that information is recorded in that way is not 21 best childcare practice. 22 Q. I think going over the page, please, you were responding 23 to what he had said at point 9 and point 11 of his 24 report. You have said, I think, that you do believe 25 there is a culture to report allegations and of senior</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 172</p> |

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| <p>1 managers monitoring allegations and complaints. Help us 2 with what you are saying there in your letter.</p> <p>3 A. Yes, certainly in terms of the information that was 4 submitted in Mr Wood's evidence around that, I did have 5 a look at the -- and to talk about the issue of the 6 complaints and certainly the resident manager has been 7 there just over two years and he said in that time he 8 does -- he takes responsibility to review all of the 9 complaints. He knows that there was one that he -- that 10 he looked at and when he came on shift and looked at 11 that, it was inappropriate. That was then diverted 12 to -- and it is an allegation, so he's quite clear about 13 his responsibility and the requirement to report.</p> <p>14 Q. So you do consider, do you, that if a child does choose 15 to use the complaint route that it will be responded to 16 appropriately?</p> <p>17 A. Yes.</p> <p>18 Q. I think there were some further areas where you weren't 19 quite clear which allegation was being referred to, but 20 if we zone in on 5.1.13, please, you have reviewed the 21 strategy meeting notes in relation to that observation 22 by Mr Wood and what have you done in response to that?</p> <p>23 A. Yes, the -- the whole procedures, if you like, around 24 child protection have actually been reviewed by the LSCB 25 over the last couple of years, so there is a much</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 173</p> | <p>1 A. Yes, absolutely.</p> <p>2 Q. And then your final two points, I think, towards the end 3 of this page, you have expressed disappointment that 4 there had not been a systematic recording of the young 5 person's view on this particular allegation and what 6 have you taken from that observation?</p> <p>7 A. Again, it's very much linked to the health record that 8 if a child does not wish to comment then that that 9 should be recorded. At least we will know that there 10 has been a consideration of the voice of the young 11 person within that, and it just makes it clear that we 12 haven't overlooked that, which is absolutely 13 fundamental.</p> <p>14 Q. I think at the end of your letter on internal page 3 you 15 talked a little bit about the Barnardo's project that I 16 think you've mentioned already. That's the project 17 focused on sexual exploitation issues that I think you 18 have completed your evidence by saying funding had 19 finished around 18 months ago but you're trying to 20 continue with the ethos of that work. Is that fair?</p> <p>21 A. Absolutely. It's very good.</p> <p>22 Q. Ms Whellans, just reflecting on all of the issues that 23 Mr Wood identified and the work that you have done since 24 then, is there anything else that you would like to draw 25 to the panel's attention about your response to his</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 175</p> |
| <p>1 stronger working together investigative pro forma around 2 that.</p> <p>3 The issue that we have is that we're about to move 4 into a new electronic system so have not done any 5 programming work on the old system, so in a sense the 6 work has been done to actually improve the layout and 7 the opportunity of the investigation pro forma and will 8 be transferred into our Liquidlogic improved programme 9 for social work support.</p> <p>10 Q. On a professional level have you found it constructive 11 to see what Mr Wood has said about some of these 12 responses?</p> <p>13 A. Yes, absolutely. It's been really useful to have that 14 external look and if I just go back to the -- we did 15 manage to look at the issue in 5.1.2 about the lack of 16 the health profile and it's -- the issue was that the 17 child didn't want to complete it at that time, but 18 I think it would be important to note that he did then 19 go on to complete the health profile, but in terms of 20 the absence of a true record of what's happening there, 21 again, that was another opportunity for us to record 22 that appropriately.</p> <p>23 Q. So I think you're saying since your letter you've gone 24 back and done some more checks. We now know what it 25 relates to.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 174</p> | <p>1 expert analysis?</p> <p>2 A. I think what has reinforced for me was the opportunity 3 to actually have external themes looked at across the 4 secure children's home and certainly it's something we 5 will take back as a management team to consider going 6 forward.</p> <p>7 MS HILL: Thank you, chair. Those are all my questions.</p> <p>8 THE CHAIR: Just a couple of questions, Ms Whellans. How 9 many staff are at Aycliffe?</p> <p>10 A. 180. Probably about 160 care staff in total, with 11 administration and other support services.</p> <p>12 THE CHAIR: Thank you, and any idea about turnover levels?</p> <p>13 A. Turnover's actually -- I don't know the actual level but 14 generally we would say that it was -- it's not been very 15 high, that once the staff come and stay with us and that 16 I think that's part of the stability that we've actually 17 had at the home.</p> <p>18 THE CHAIR: How long has it been open?</p> <p>19 A. As a new build, since 2011. There was a previous 20 Aycliffe secure, but the new build has been since 2011.</p> <p>21 THE CHAIR: Okay, and finally have you any idea of the 22 levels of violent incidents across a year, or a month or 23 --</p> <p>24 A. Yes, actually I don't have a figure to pull around that 25 and I should think that they are probably recorded in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 176</p> |

1 different ways in terms of levels of violence, so
 2 I think the -- I do know that in terms of, you know,
 3 that kind of skirmish between children we try to do
 4 a restorative approach even though it's recorded against
 5 who -- significant events are fully recorded, but
 6 I don't know that information offhand.
 7 THE CHAIR: But it will be held by a registered manager?
 8 A. Yes, it will be held by a registered manager and we
 9 could provide that, if you want that information.
 10 MS HILL: Chair, it's certainly right to note in fairness
 11 that the Ofsted reports do always deal with a section on
 12 restraint and so most recently had recorded, I think,
 13 that the use of physical restraint does occur, records
 14 are kept, are mainly of good quality, went on to provide
 15 some observations about it and then I think the most
 16 recent visit in January was as a result of one
 17 particular incident of restraint that was looked at very
 18 carefully to see if it had been appropriate or not.
 19 A. Yes.
 20 MS HILL: So the Ofsted material does engage quite closely
 21 with restraint issues. That provides some background to
 22 your question.
 23 THE CHAIR: Yes, it does, although it doesn't necessarily
 24 cover the distinction between peer-on-peer violence --
 25 MS HILL: No, if there is further information about that

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1 that you can provide, I'm sure that the chair would be
 2 grateful.
 3 A. Yes, absolutely. We can furnish that.
 4 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much.
 5 MR FRANK: Just one question if I may, in relation to the
 6 qualifications of the staff. You have quite a lot of
 7 staff there, but I don't think we have any information
 8 about the level of qualifications that they have. Can
 9 you help us at all?
 10 A. Yes, each member of staff is required to have four
 11 GCSEs, including maths and English. They then go on to
 12 have a level 3 qualification in working with young
 13 people, if they don't already have a youth work, social
 14 work or other professional qualification, and then
 15 there's other safeguarding restraint in service training
 16 around particular issues like, for example, prevent drug
 17 working, drugs and alcohol, assisting children to speak
 18 out.
 19 MR FRANK: And they have refresher training I think every
 20 two years. Is that right?
 21 A. On safeguarding, yes. On restraint it's within every
 22 year. It's two years. And then if it's not completed
 23 within the two days, not within the one year, they have
 24 to do five days again, so restraint is within one year.
 25 Safeguarding is a programme over two years.

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1 MR FRANK: Thank you very much.
 2 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, Ms Whellans.
 3 MS HILL: Just to remind, perhaps, Mr Frank, I think the
 4 regulations we adduced from Ms Willison's evidence set
 5 out a requirement for all secured -- all children's
 6 homes staff, which includes secure children's homes in
 7 terms of it being a level 3 diploma for residential
 8 childcare. I think that's common to all the children's
 9 homes. Is that right?
 10 A. Yes, that's my understanding.
 11 MS HILL: Thank you, chair.
 12 Thank you, Ms Whellans.
 13 Just very briefly, please, call back for a final
 14 time Mr Wood, and ask the panel, please, to turn up
 15 within his second and third report section 8. It's
 16 INQ001210_025, please.
 17 MR ALAN WOOD (continued)
 18 Examination by MS HILL
 19 MS HILL: Thank you, Mr Wood. For final time can I ask you
 20 to turn to section 8, please, of your second and third
 21 report. That's where you made some overarching comments
 22 and themes that you pulled out from your analysis.
 23 Having now heard all of the evidence from all of the
 24 institutions who have responded to your report, and
 25 I think you have sat through all of the evidence from

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1 the last few days, for which many thanks, going through
 2 the themes that you pulled out, is there anything in
 3 particular that you would like to amend in your written
 4 report or expand upon or give any further context to?
 5 A. I just thought it would be useful just to draw together
 6 five overarching themes which I have identified from the
 7 evidence I've heard and also from my written material,
 8 as well.
 9 Q. Please do.
 10 A. So the first one is training and supervision of staff.
 11 There is a need for an active application of the
 12 awareness of children and young people's experiences of
 13 trauma and abuse that pre-exist a child's experience of
 14 custody, so I think that's come through quite clearly in
 15 terms of support and also supervision.
 16 Linked to that is the issue of restraint. I think
 17 the amount of training people get on restraint and
 18 safeguarding needs to be examined, I think, in terms of
 19 the amount and the time gap between those two events.
 20 The second point I make in terms of the practice
 21 approach, so I think we have heard evidence also and
 22 I have certainly drawn out the themes of
 23 relationship-based practice is the key enabling more
 24 positive interactions between children, young people and
 25 staff. There is examples of this in terms of the

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| <p>1 developments across a range of institutions, which is 2 very positive to hear.</p> <p>3 Third element would be responding to allegations 4 from children and young people and I'd just really want 5 to highlight the NSPCC's guidance in terms of best 6 practice. It would be quite useful, I think, in terms 7 of that being used as a framework for all institutions 8 across the custodial network in terms of mapping out 9 where they are in terms of those key areas of responding 10 to children when they do disclose sexual abuse.</p> <p>11 The fourth area is in terms of the data available. 12 I think the collection analysis of data that is 13 consistent, accurate, trackable, quantitative and also 14 qualitative in regards to allegations is essential and, 15 from my reading of all the documents I have gone 16 through, some institutions it's much more difficult to 17 spot where things are, to track those things, to 18 understand what the relationships are between different 19 allegations and staff members. To have one consistency 20 is important.</p> <p>21 And the finally one which links all of them together 22 really, I suppose, is importance of a child, young 23 person's centre model. In my view, that model is much 24 more likely to both reduce the likelihood of abuse 25 happening in custodial institutions in the first place</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 181</p> | <p>1 material just to finish off the evidence, if I may.</p> <p>2 Firstly, chair, we have a short note that we bring 3 up, please, on INQ001803, which is about some of the 4 evidence to do with Downview that you may remember 5 Ms Willow gave some evidence about. This is 6 a female-only establishment which holds females under 18 7 or -- forgive me -- held females under 18 8 until July 2013, and our understanding is that it has 9 not held children since that time.</p> <p>10 The alleged incidents of child sexual abuse at 11 Downview from January 2009 to July 2013 are included in 12 the prevalence analysis. Ms Willow referred to 13 a conviction of a former prison governor of Downview for 14 misconduct in a public office relating to sexual 15 activity with a young female prisoner. She quoted 16 the prosecution counsel's observations in court.</p> <p>17 We investigated that allegation and for the 18 avoidance of doubt our understanding is that none of the 19 victims in that particular investigation, Operation 20 Daimler, were under 18. Therefore, our understanding is 21 that the victims of the conduct referred to were not 22 under 18, but no doubt it's relevant, perhaps, for you 23 anyway to know about it.</p> <p>24 Two further documents, if I may. Can we bring up, 25 please, a document that Howe & Co helpfully provided.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 183</p> |
| <p>1 and also increase the likelihood of disclosure should 2 abuse occur. So there is a win/win situation there, 3 a child-centred approach would reduce the likelihood but 4 also increase the probability of children talking about 5 abuse should it happen.</p> <p>6 So those are the five points I want just to make 7 just in terms of the overarching themes throughout the 8 entirety of the hearing.</p> <p>9 Q. And it's those five themes, is it, that you would invite 10 the panel to reflect on in trying to formulate any 11 appropriate recommendations?</p> <p>12 A. That's what I'd recommend.</p> <p>13 MS HILL: Thank you very much, Mr Wood. Is there anything 14 else you would like to say?</p> <p>15 A. No, thank you.</p> <p>16 MS HILL: Chair, those are all my questions for Mr Wood.</p> <p>17 THE CHAIR: Thank you.</p> <p>18 Thank you very much, Mr Wood. We are very grateful 19 for your assistance in this investigation and your 20 careful consideration of all of the areas that have been 21 raised.</p> <p>22 A. Thank you very much.</p> <p>23 MS HILL: Thank you very much, Mr Wood.</p> <p>24 Chair, there remains a small amount of evidence to 25 adduce by way of reading and adducing certain pieces of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 182</p> | <p>1 It's INQ001805 and this, chair, is some statistical 2 material provided by the Department for Education very 3 recently, 7 June 2018, about children in secure 4 children's homes and that tells you about the number of 5 places, the availability rate. Perhaps we can scroll in 6 on the second of the tables here. I think you were 7 asking questions about availability, so the availability 8 rate continues to fall while the occupancy rate remains 9 stable.</p> <p>10 There is information about the percentage of welfare 11 placements, which has decreased, so the number of 12 justice placements has increased, I think.</p> <p>13 There are further charts and information here about 14 the gender and age of the children and various other 15 pieces of data that may assist you.</p> <p>16 Then finally, chair, in response to a question 17 I think raised earlier about how children become placed 18 in particular institutions, we have located a document 19 that we can provide you with in hard copy, but we will 20 get put on the screen, on relativity, in due course, 21 from the Youth Custody Service placement team. They 22 have a series of operational procedures set out in the 23 document, which help understand how a placement decision 24 is made and I think that was to answer a particular 25 question that perhaps feeds into the very beginning of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 184</p> |

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| <p>1 the REA, which you may remember sets out the sort of 2 children who were generally in each establishment. 3 I think this helps you understand how they get to each 4 establishment as best as we can. 5 There is one piece of material I need to read in. 6 You will remember that a couple of days ago I adduced 7 some evidence formally from the IMB, the PPO and the 8 Children's Commissioner about their visits to various 9 establishments and we invited you to read that material. 10 We should perhaps draw out that the IMB received five 11 disclosures of child sexual abuse and the PPO received 12 two. 13 Finally, within some of the evidence which was 14 explored through the MoJ witnesses, witness evidence 15 from Kieron Taylor was put forward about the YJB's 16 recording and our understanding is that they received 19 17 disclosures of child sexual abuse. 18 Now, those figures feature, chair, in the overall 19 prevalence analysis. The relevance perhaps for you is 20 of the significance of those numbers compared to the 21 material that the prevalence analysis itself generated. 22 These are reports that are made to those bodies, so 23 that's what, perhaps, we would have adduced if we had 24 had more time to read the statements in full against the 25 total number in the prevalence analysis of 1,070.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 185</p> | <p>1 MR ALAN WOOD (continued)179 Examination by MS HILL179 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 187</p> |
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| <p>1 So, chair, I think that really does complete the 2 evidence and we will return on Friday to make closing 3 statements. 4 THE CHAIR: Thank you. 5 MS HILL: Thank you. 6 (4.07 pm) 7 (The hearing adjourned until 10.30 am on Friday, 8 20 July 2018) 9 I N D E X 10 11 Welcome and opening remarks by THE1 CHAIR 12 MR MATTHEW BRAZIER (affirmed)1 Examination by MR STRAW1 13 Questions by THE PANEL34 14 MS SHARRON ROLLINSON (sworn)41 Examination by MS HILL41 15 Questions by THE PANEL89 16 MR ALAN WOOD (recalled)90 17 MS ALISON SYKES (affirmed)101 Examination by MS HILL101 18 Questions by THE PANEL141 19 MR ALAN WOOD (continued)149 Examination by MS HILL149 20 MS MARGARET WHELLANS (sworn)153 Examination by MS HILL153 21 22 23 24 25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 186</p> | |
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