

Witness Name: Derek Foster
Statement No: 1
Exhibits:
Dated:

THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Witness Statement of Lord Derek Foster of Bishop Auckland

I, **Lord Derek Foster of Bishop Auckland**, will say as follows:-

1. I spent the first eight years my career in industry and commerce, including four with Michelin Tyre Company, as a trainee executive. Four years with a small group of companies selling and fitting tyres batteries and other motor accessories as marketing director, then one year as marketing director of a dynamic start-up selling duck-down filled quilts called "Slumberdown".
2. I then quit Industry and Commerce for Youth and Community work with Durham County Council. No money but bags of job satisfaction.
3. After two years I was promoted to Further Education Officer for Durham County Council. After one more year I was appointed Assistant Director of Education for Sunderland County Borough Council, where I stayed until the election in 1979.
4. In the meantime I was elected to the Sunderland County Borough Council and appointed Vice Chairman of the Youth Employment Sub-Committee of the Education Committee. In 1973, I was elected to the Tyne and Wear Metropolitan County Council and made Assistant Secretary to the Labour Group. I was appointed Chairman of the Economic Development Committee and a few weeks later appointed Chairman of the North of England Development Council with the Deputy Prime Minister as a Member of the Board. The Regional CBI and TUC were represented as were the five local authorities. I was chosen to give a vote of thanks to the Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, when he launched a £900 million line of credit to the Russians at the Design Centre then in Regent Street.
5. In 1980, I was brought into the Labour Whip's Office by Michael Cocks and appointed Northern Whip. After a year I was appointed Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Rt Hon Neil Kinnock MP, the newly elected Leader of the Opposition, an experience worth several on the front bench. This involved trips to meet the most influential Leaders throughout Europe and the Soviet Union. Unfortunately I was

unable to accompany him to USA. I sat in on Shadow Cabinet Meetings and most other important meetings.

6. After two years a vacancy occurred for Chief Whip. I was encouraged to stand and did so. I was elected Chief Whip in October 1985 and re-elected by the entire Parliamentary Labour Party each year until 1995 when I stood down at the request of the Leader of the Labour Party, Tony Blair MP, with a promise to go straight into the Cabinet after the election, which I judged we would win.
7. After many reassurances I agreed and I was appointed Shadow Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. I remained in this position until the election in 1997, when I was appointed Minister of State at the Cabinet Office much to my dismay. I resigned after three days and eventually agreed to Co-Chair the Education and Employment Select Committee which I did until the next election. I was appointed to the Liaison Select Committee again until the next election.
8. In 2001 I was appointed to the Parliamentary Standards Committee and the Church of England Estates Committee. I remained in both positions until the next election when I was appointed to the House of Lords. In the House of Lords I was appointed to two Ad-Hoc Select Committees.
9. I ran the Whips Office in the spirit of a principle of UK Law: that each individual is innocent until proven guilty. In the case of Child Abuse, although there were several front page stories about colleagues over my tenure, no charges were ever made. Sadly most of those colleagues are now dead.
10. Similarly with other Parties, where charges were made, that was a matter for the individual Party. Again conservative and Liberal Democrat colleagues are deceased
11. I knew of no attempt to cover up anything during my tenure as Labour Party Chief Whip. Obviously the other Chief Whips will give their own witness.
12. I fell ill at the end of October 20017 and was admitted to Queen Elizabeth Hospital Gateshead and subsequently to the Royal Victoria Hospital Newcastle upon Tyne. I had a four week course of radiotherapy to deal with cancer of the oesophagus and two operations under general anaesthetic to deal with skin cancer behind my left ear. I was discharged to recuperate at home with numerous out-patient appointments until the present when I am about to embark upon a course of chemotherapy.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____