

Witness Name: Kevin Flint
Statement No.: 1
Exhibits: Nil
Dated: 12/7/2018

THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Witness Statement of Kevin Flint

I, Kevin Flint, will say as follows:-

I make this statement in response to a Rule 9 request served by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse having been asked on 12th June 2018 to provide a witness statement concerning my role as Head of the Nottinghamshire Child Abuse Investigation Unit.

1. My role

1.1 I am a retired Detective Superintendent of Nottinghamshire Police having served for 34yrs.

1.2 My police service is as follows:

1976 Appointed as a regular officer.
1978 Trainee Detective Constable.
1980 Appointed as a Detective Constable.
1986 Promoted as Uniform Police Sergeant.
1987 Appointed as Detective Sergeant.
1992 Promoted as Detective Inspector.
1994 Appointed as Detective Inspector Family Support Unit.
1997 Promoted as Detective Chief Inspector.
2000 Promoted as Detective Superintendent.
2010 Retired.

1.3 In 1994 I was transferred from Divisional CID to take charge of the Family Support Unit. The Unit had a title change during my 3yr tenure to the Child Abuse Investigation Unit which was approved by the Chief Officer.

1.4 My role was Head of Department with line management responsibility to a Detective Chief Inspector within Headquarters CID.

2. The Child Abuse Investigation Unit

- 2.1 My recollection is that the unit was formed in the early 1990's in an effort to tackle allegations of child abuse in a more structured, professional and dedicated manner. Prior to its inception child abuse allegations had been investigated by the respective Divisional CID with Detective Sergeants appointed as Officer in the Case (OIC).
- 2.2 The unit evolved into a team covering the whole force area with a dedicated referral unit which was staffed by police officers and periodically supported by social services personnel.
- 2.3 The unit was predominantly responsible for the investigation of allegations of familial/care abuse with stranger abuse being investigated as a Divisional responsibility with appropriate support from CAIU video trained interviewers where needed.
- 2.4 I recall that upon taking up my position on the Family Support Unit there were a substantial number of referrals awaiting investigation. These referrals were wide ranging and included varying degrees of physical abuse as well as sexual abuse allegations. A system was devised whereby all referrals were immediately risk assessed and those which attracted a high risk requiring urgent safeguarding measures were allocated as a priority.
- 2.5 I have been asked to comment on the Child Abuse Investigation Units role in the investigation of sexual abuse of children in residential or foster care and how that evolved – I have no recollection of any specific cases of this nature during my tenure but can state that such cases would be dealt with in line with the joint police/social services investigation procedures.
- 2.6 The unit was initially staffed by both Detective Constables and Police Constables but during my tenure I changed the criteria for recruitment to Detective Constable status. I supported the Police Constable resources in attaining this status with attachments to Divisional CID in order to experience the necessary elements required of the CID investigative development process.
- 2.7 All investigative resources within the unit were trained in the Sexual Offences and Video Interviewing courses.
- 2.8 During my tenure I was responsible for writing and developing the police section of the first Nottinghamshire police/social services joint child abuse investigation procedures which were launched at a multi agency event.
- 2.9 In respect of the CAIU's relationships with other agencies - Throughout my tenure I had excellent working relationships with the social services departments in both the county and city. I recall that developing protocols in the sharing of information was a key consideration in the protection and safety of children and a driver for the Child Abuse Tracking System (CATS) which was developed in the mid nineties. I also had

an excellent working relationship with the specialist lawyers working within the Crown Prosecution Service.

3. My work in the CAIU

3.1 With reference to the areas highlighted in the witness statement request;

Cases of sexual abuse allegations were subject of a joint strategy meeting which would, where appropriate, progress to a joint police/social service video disclosure interview;

During my tenure protocols and relationships developed concerning the timely disclosure of information held by the respective agencies – the needs of the victim being of paramount importance;

As stated above I have no recollection of any specific cases concerning allegations of child sexual abuse in residential or foster care;

I have no specific recollection of ever having the need to raise concerns with social services relating to management or processes within residential or foster care, but would have no hesitation in doing so if they arose through the appropriate channels;

My line manager was a Detective Chief Inspector within FHQ CID;

With regards to my role in decisions to charge – As the senior investigating officer and head of the CAIU I would expect to have an overview of all investigations being undertaken by the department. I would expect to have been briefed on the circumstances of the case and where necessary advised and supported the OIC on the most appropriate lines of investigation. Following the investigation I would have advised on the sufficiency of evidence in terms of a prosecution and where necessary referred the case for the attention of a specialist lawyer within the Crown Prosecution Service for a charging decision;

I have no knowledge of any political involvement in investigations of child abuse.

4. Disciplinary Investigations

4.1 I have no recollection of any involvement in disciplinary investigations of employees of the County/City Councils. I have read the case referred to as exhibit NSC000503 and have no recollection of this particular case.

5. Barriers to Disclosure

- 5.1 As previously stated, I have no specific recollection of individual cases of child sexual abuse within residential or foster care but can state that every effort would be made following an investigative strategy meeting to ensure the most appropriate form of disclosure interview was conducted by suitably trained personnel.
- 5.2 During my tenure; in tandem with representatives of social services, we went on to design and develop purpose built victim suites to provide the most appropriate surroundings and facilities to allow vulnerable victims to disclose their allegations of abuse.
- 5.3 Notwithstanding the above and having investigated numerous cases of both physical and sexual child abuse, I can state that barriers to children disclosing abuse may be through fear; fear of reprisals from both their abuser and their parent/carer; fear of being further abused, fear of not being believed and a fear and mistrust of the judicial process – either perceived or through actual experience.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed: DPA

Dated: 12/7/2018