

Witness Name: Connolly  
Statement No.: 1  
Exhibits: 4  
Dated: 19 April 2017

## THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

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EXHIBIT PC/ 4

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the **guardian**

### Former councillor jailed for sex abuse

**Sarah Hall**

Tuesday 9 October 2001 03.12 BST

A former assistant director of social services, magistrate and Labour councillor has been jailed for abusing boys in a children's home scandal which may have had as many as 70 victims over 30 years, it emerged yesterday.

Alan Prescott, 62, who was described at the Old Bailey as a "pillar of his local community", was sentenced to two years in prison after admitting indecently assaulting four boys in his care between 1970 and 1980 while he was superintendent of a Tower Hamlets children's home.

After being in charge of the home, he became assistant director of social services at the borough, before moving on to become chief executive of Toynbee Hall, a charitable organisation, until his arrest in August last year.

The court heard that the former Havering councillor, fondled boys aged 15 to 19 as they lay in bed, confessed after the trial of William Starling, a colleague and "house parent" at St Leonard's, the home in Hornchurch, Essex, over which Prescott presided from 1968 until it closed in 1984. In April, Starling was jailed for 14 years for 19 offences including two rapes, buggery and indecent assault, on 10 girls and one boy as young as five over a 20 year period at St Leonard's and The Greensteads, a home in Basildon, Essex.

The men's sentences - handed down in April and, for Prescott, last Thursday - can only now be reported after the judge yesterday halted proceedings against Haydn Davies, 62, from Plymouth, a third alleged paedophile who was facing offences of assault involving boys at St Leonard's in the 1970s and 1980s.

The case against him was dropped after police lost video evidence from alleged victims, taken during an earlier, aborted, investigation - and the defence successfully argued that without this he could not be guaranteed a fair trial.

Speaking after yesterday's hearing, Detective Inspector Daniel O'Malley, said Operation Mapperton had unveiled a "harrowing" tale of systematic child abuse at the homes, and that the investigation was continuing. With 3,000 children having passed through the homes while Prescott, Starling and Davies were working there, he believed as many as 70 may have been abused.