

<p>1 Tuesday, 7 July 2020</p> <p>2 (10.30 am)</p> <p>3 THE CHAIR: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to Day 7 of</p> <p>4 this public hearing. Ms Dobbin?</p> <p>5 MS DOBBIN: Thank you, chair. May I call the first witness</p> <p>6 of today, please, and that's Ms Val Suebsaeng.</p> <p>7 MRS VALERIE SUEBSAENG (sworn)</p> <p>8 Examination by MS DOBBIN</p> <p>9 MS DOBBIN: Ms Suebsaeng, I think that you made a statement</p> <p>10 to the inquiry which is dated 8 November 2019.</p> <p>11 A. That's correct.</p> <p>12 Q. Is that statement true, to the best of your knowledge</p> <p>13 and belief?</p> <p>14 A. Yes.</p> <p>15 Q. Did you also make a statement to the police, which</p> <p>16 I think is dated 12 November 2014?</p> <p>17 A. Yes, that's right.</p> <p>18 Q. Is that statement also true, to the best of your</p> <p>19 knowledge and belief?</p> <p>20 A. Mmm.</p> <p>21 Q. Ms Suebsaeng, I think that you were also known by the</p> <p>22 name of Val Rogers; is that correct?</p> <p>23 A. In my working career, I was known as Val Rogers.</p> <p>24 Q. Were you a social worker in the local authority of</p> <p>25 Lambeth between, first, the years of 1976 and 1983?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 1</p>	<p>1 A. That's right.</p> <p>2 Q. Did you then have a period of maternity leave and return</p> <p>3 in 1984?</p> <p>4 A. I did.</p> <p>5 Q. Between 1984 and 1989, were you a team leader in Lambeth</p> <p>6 Social Services?</p> <p>7 A. Yes.</p> <p>8 Q. Did you go on, after 1989, to work in other local</p> <p>9 authorities?</p> <p>10 A. I did, until I retired in 2011.</p> <p>11 Q. I am going to ask you about the period when you were</p> <p>12 a social worker in Lambeth. I think it is right that in</p> <p>13 1984 you were responsible for the long-term team; is</p> <p>14 that right?</p> <p>15 A. That's right -- one of the long-term teams. There were</p> <p>16 actually three of them.</p> <p>17 Q. Can you explain what the long-term team did, please?</p> <p>18 A. Yes. The long-term team, which consisted of five social</p> <p>19 workers and a social work assistant, were responsible</p> <p>20 for children in care, children who had come into care</p> <p>21 and children who were on what was then known as the</p> <p>22 Child Protection Register and, occasionally, children</p> <p>23 who were not in care but who were at risk of coming into</p> <p>24 care.</p> <p>25 Q. As part of your responsibilities, Ms Suebsaeng, did you</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 2</p>
<p>1 have children who were placed in your care living in the</p> <p>2 Angell Road Home?</p> <p>3 A. Yes, I did.</p> <p>4 Q. Was Angell Road a home that you had confidence placing</p> <p>5 children in?</p> <p>6 A. Very much so at the time, because it was our local</p> <p>7 children's home, so there were -- there was quite a lot</p> <p>8 of contact between the manager at Angell Road and the</p> <p>9 staff in my area office. That doesn't mean that</p> <p>10 Angell Road was exclusively for the use of my team or my</p> <p>11 area office, area 3. Angell Road was for the use of any</p> <p>12 child in Lambeth. But special relationships were</p> <p>13 developed between staff in area 3 and Angell Road</p> <p>14 because it was in our area, so to speak.</p> <p>15 Q. Who was the manager of the Angell Road Home?</p> <p>16 A. The manager was John Carroll.</p> <p>17 Q. Was part of the confidence then that you had in that</p> <p>18 home because it was a home that you were very familiar</p> <p>19 with?</p> <p>20 A. I wasn't particularly familiar with Angell Road, and</p> <p>21 I can't recall having a large number of children</p> <p>22 actually placed there who were the responsibility of my</p> <p>23 team. But I knew John Carroll because he had built up</p> <p>24 relationship with the management team in my area,</p> <p>25 area 3.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 3</p>	<p>1 Q. Was he someone who was adept at building up those kinds</p> <p>2 of relationships?</p> <p>3 A. He was extremely -- what can I say? He was outgoing and</p> <p>4 friendly, and I think he went out of his way to</p> <p>5 establish relationships with the managers in particular.</p> <p>6 Q. In your statement that you made to the police, you said</p> <p>7 that Angell Road was a centre of direct work in Lambeth.</p> <p>8 A. This was a project which John Carroll set up in</p> <p>9 Angell Road, in conjunction with a social worker from</p> <p>10 area 3 who was in my team. Certainly the social worker</p> <p>11 was actually doing an advanced social work course at</p> <p>12 Goldsmiths College, and I believe that John Carroll was</p> <p>13 also doing the same course, and so the two of them set</p> <p>14 up the project, which was focused mainly on direct work</p> <p>15 with children. At the time, there was a lot of thinking</p> <p>16 that the child's voice was not being heard in the social</p> <p>17 work process, and so this initiative was an attempt to</p> <p>18 ensure that children could be encouraged to express</p> <p>19 themselves and talk about what their own feelings were.</p> <p>20 Q. Can you explain what direct work actually was?</p> <p>21 A. Yes. The worker who was responsible for the direct work</p> <p>22 would enter into a kind of contract with the child</p> <p>23 whereby they would have regular sessions. Depending on</p> <p>24 the age of the child, the sessions might be very short</p> <p>25 or they could range up to about an hour, and they would</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 4</p>

<p>1 have to be regular so that the child knew where they</p> <p>2 stood. At the beginning of the work, it was important</p> <p>3 that the worker and the child reached an understanding</p> <p>4 about what the purpose of the work was. That depended</p> <p>5 very much on the plan for the child. If the plan was</p> <p>6 for the child to return home to their parent, then</p> <p>7 that's what the work would focus on. If the plan was to</p> <p>8 move a child into another alternative family, whether</p> <p>9 that's extended family or an adoptive family or</p> <p>10 a fostering family, then the work would focus on that.</p> <p>11 So it was very much about preparing the child for</p> <p>12 change. Looking at the child's history, so there was</p> <p>13 a certain amount of life history work involved as well,</p> <p>14 but then helping the child to prepare themselves for any</p> <p>15 changes or moves that they might have to go through in</p> <p>16 the future.</p> <p>17 Q. A couple of questions arising out of that. First of</p> <p>18 all, was there a therapeutic element to this work?</p> <p>19 A. I think the thinking at the time was that this was</p> <p>20 therapeutic, in that the child was being encouraged to</p> <p>21 express their feeling, but I think I indicated in one of</p> <p>22 the statements that both Helena Allen and John Carroll</p> <p>23 attempted to engage the local psychiatrist who we knew</p> <p>24 very well, Dr Jonathan Dare, to supervise the work, and</p> <p>25 he was reluctant to supervise it.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 5</p>	<p>1 Q. I'm going to ask you some questions about that. I just</p> <p>2 want to focus at the minute on what was going on in</p> <p>3 Angell Road.</p> <p>4 My second question was, was this work that was</p> <p>5 taking place on a one-to-one basis with children?</p> <p>6 A. Yes, it would be one to one: the worker who was doing</p> <p>7 the direct work and the child.</p> <p>8 Q. Was John Carroll carrying out this one-to-one work with</p> <p>9 children? Sorry, I think you went mute for a second.</p> <p>10 He was.</p> <p>11 A. Mmm.</p> <p>12 Q. The other thing you said was that Angell Road was</p> <p>13 a centre for this work. Does that mean that this was</p> <p>14 the only home, or the only location, in Lambeth that</p> <p>15 this sort of work was going on in?</p> <p>16 A. As far as I know, although I wasn't familiar with what</p> <p>17 was happening in other children's homes, and it could</p> <p>18 well be that John Carroll encouraged other children's</p> <p>19 homes to take up this work. I don't have any direct</p> <p>20 knowledge of that.</p> <p>21 Q. But I think you do say that there was a special room set</p> <p>22 aside at Angell Road for this work, and equipment for</p> <p>23 direct work as well?</p> <p>24 A. That's right. That's right.</p> <p>25 Q. Do you know what sort of equipment that was?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 6</p>
<p>1 A. Well, my understanding is that the room was made to be</p> <p>2 comfortable, so there were cushions, it wasn't like</p> <p>3 a formal interview room with -- with the kind of chairs</p> <p>4 that might be used for formal interview. It was</p> <p>5 intended to be more child friendly. So it was</p> <p>6 comfortable to sit in, and there was also toys for</p> <p>7 smaller children, and I think paper and pencils and all</p> <p>8 of that sort of stuff, so that children could be</p> <p>9 encouraged to use whatever method they wanted to express</p> <p>10 themselves.</p> <p>11 Q. Ms Suebsaeng, did you visit that room at that facility</p> <p>12 yourself?</p> <p>13 A. I can't recall now ever going in there, so -- I was</p> <p>14 obviously -- I did go into Angell Road and I was taken</p> <p>15 around, but I think it was just pointed out to me, "Oh,</p> <p>16 that's the direct work room", but I can't now recall</p> <p>17 actually seeing what it was like inside.</p> <p>18 Q. To your knowledge, was it well known in Lambeth that</p> <p>19 this sort of work was going on at Angell Road?</p> <p>20 A. It was certainly well known in my area, in area 3.</p> <p>21 I can't say whether it was well known in other parts of</p> <p>22 my directorate. It was a big organisation, Lambeth, at</p> <p>23 that time, so there were eight area offices and there</p> <p>24 were a number of children's homes, so I can't speak for</p> <p>25 any of the others; only my own area.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 7</p>	<p>1 Q. I think it is right, though, that children who were in</p> <p>2 care across Lambeth went to Angell Road; is that right?</p> <p>3 A. Yes. It was possible for any -- for a child from any of</p> <p>4 the areas to actually go to Angell Road if they had</p> <p>5 a vacancy. So if the child needed to come into care,</p> <p>6 then there would be a search for a vacancy, and if it</p> <p>7 was for the right age group and an available vacancy,</p> <p>8 then the child could be sent there.</p> <p>9 Q. I want to come back to Dr Dare, if I may. Dr Dare was</p> <p>10 the local psychiatrist at King's Hospital; is that</p> <p>11 right?</p> <p>12 A. He was. He was child and family psychiatrist.</p> <p>13 Q. Was he the local psychiatrist, then, that Lambeth would</p> <p>14 use when they needed to have a child evaluated or</p> <p>15 assessed?</p> <p>16 A. I think it's fair to say that area 3 and my management</p> <p>17 group had a strong relationship with Dr Dare, and we</p> <p>18 would often refer cases to him for assistance. So,</p> <p>19 occasionally, he would become directly involved with</p> <p>20 a child and family and make recommendations. He might</p> <p>21 also be used as an expert witness in court cases. So we</p> <p>22 did have a close -- I had a close relationship with him,</p> <p>23 but I can't -- I have no idea whether he had similar</p> <p>24 close relationships with other areas in Lambeth.</p> <p>25 I don't believe he did.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 8</p>

1 Q. The point is this, though, Ms Suebsaeng: he refused an
 2 invitation to become involved in direct work in
 3 Angell Road?
 4 **A. Yes. He expressed reservations about it.**
 5 Q. What were those?
 6 **A. His reservations particularly were that he felt that any**
 7 **therapeutic work with a child needed to take place in**
 8 **a context where the plan for the child was very clear**
 9 **and the child knew that the child was going to go home**
 10 **or was going to go to another family and that that plan**
 11 **had been approved either by the agency or by the court.**
 12 **I think he felt that the direct work programme that**
 13 **was set up by John and Helen wasn't strict enough around**
 14 **that issue.**
 15 Q. Did he also think that there was risk in it because of
 16 the lack of boundaries?
 17 **A. Well, yes, in the sense that what I'm talking about is**
 18 **boundaries around the care planning, and he felt that**
 19 **there were -- there was a risk that the child would feel**
 20 **unsafe because the care plan wasn't clear for the child,**
 21 **so the child didn't know where they were going or what**
 22 **was happening. So to open up a therapeutic relationship**
 23 **with a child in that context he felt was not good.**
 24 Q. Did he also have concerns about this sort of work being
 25 in the hands of employees or care workers within care

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1 respect of two children, who I am going to refer to as
 2 B10 and B11.
 3 **A. Okay.**
 4 Q. I don't want you to say anything about those children,
 5 Ms Suebsaeng, save this: those children were not two
 6 boys, were they?
 7 **A. No, they were a sibling group, but not two boys.**
 8 Q. I think it is right that approval had been given by
 9 Lambeth that those children be adopted?
 10 **A. Yes, eventually. That's a long process in care planning**
 11 **to get to that point.**
 12 Q. But that point had been reached?
 13 **A. But that point had been reached, and they were approved**
 14 **for adoption.**
 15 Q. The Carrolls made an application in respect of them; is
 16 that right?
 17 **A. By "the carers", who do you mean?**
 18 Q. Sorry, the Carrolls, Ms Suebsaeng.
 19 **A. Sorry, the Carrolls, yes.**
 20 Q. John and his wife?
 21 **A. They made an application. They offered themselves as**
 22 **long-term foster carers, not as adopters.**
 23 Q. Can you recollect when this was?
 24 **A. It was certainly after we had obtained approval to place**
 25 **the children for adoption. I'd have to look at my**

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1 homes?
 2 **A. No, I don't believe that was his reservation, because he**
 3 **was -- he was actually somebody who worked closely with**
 4 **social workers. He had a social worker on his team.**
 5 **And he was -- he was actually very helpful to us in**
 6 **giving consultation and support to social workers who**
 7 **were, for example, undertaking life story work with**
 8 **a child. So he was supportive of that principle, as**
 9 **long as it was properly supervised and managed.**
 10 Q. Do you know if he had any concerns about the supervision
 11 of direct work within Lambeth?
 12 **A. Obviously he was not happy about the Angell Road**
 13 **project, in that he wouldn't offer himself as**
 14 **a supervisor, but I think he was -- it depended on which**
 15 **person he was working with, so, I mean, he personally**
 16 **reassured me that my staff, if they were undertaking**
 17 **work, he was confident of the work that they would be**
 18 **doing.**
 19 Q. I understand.
 20 **A. Helena Allen, of course, was involved in this project,**
 21 **and he'd expressed his reservations about that.**
 22 Q. Thank you. I am going to move on to another topic,
 23 please. This is the first fostering application or
 24 attempt that the Carrolls made that you're aware of.
 25 I think you say in your statement that this was in

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1 **statement to work out the actual timing.**
 2 Q. I'm not sure that that will help you. I'm going to ask
 3 that a document is brought up on screen, please,
 4 Mr Hyde. This is WAN000002_024. Ms Suebsaeng, can you
 5 see that? If you look just underneath the first hole
 6 punch, this is from a different set of records, but
 7 I think that this refers to the children who you knew
 8 about. It says:
 9 "Mr and Mrs C have made a previous unsuccessful
 10 application to Lambeth to be considered as a permanent
 11 family for two children ..."
 12 **A. That's correct.**
 13 Q. "... who were living in the children's home run by Mr C
 14 in 1986."
 15 **A. Yes.**
 16 Q. It goes on to say:
 17 "The sibling group were eventually placed with
 18 a couple who have no prospect of having natural children
 19 of their own."
 20 **A. That's right.**
 21 Q. Can I just confirm that that corresponds with the
 22 children whom you had responsibility for?
 23 **A. That's right.**
 24 Q. We may not need to go to this, but in the same set of
 25 records there is reference to the Carrolls having been

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1 interviewed to a shortlist in respect of those children.
 2 Does that correspond with your memory of the process?
 3 **A. Yes, in the sense that, when the Carrolls applied to**
 4 **long-term foster the children, the social worker, who**
 5 **was my social worker, actually considered their**
 6 **application and, as part of their application, she**
 7 **interviewed and met with both John Carroll and his wife.**
 8 Q. Was that a formal process of assessment by her as to
 9 their suitability?
 10 **A. Oh, no. A formal process of assessment is a very**
 11 **lengthy process, which was undertaken with the couple**
 12 **who eventually adopted them, but the interview with the**
 13 **Carrolls was simply in order to decide whether or not we**
 14 **wanted to proceed with an assessment of the Carrolls.**
 15 Q. So it was a preliminary process to assessment; is that
 16 right?
 17 **A. Yes.**
 18 Q. Was that assessment of them referred to another local
 19 authority at any time?
 20 **A. No, because a decision was taken not to proceed with**
 21 **them.**
 22 Q. Can I ask you this: are you aware of any fostering
 23 application or any assessment of the Carrolls having
 24 been referred to any other local authority besides
 25 Wandsworth?

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1 **wrong one. So he argued that he and his wife were**
 2 **a better option because they knew the children's mother**
 3 **and that they could facilitate contact with the**
 4 **children's mother.**
 5 **Having said that, they weren't prepared to offer**
 6 **themselves as adopters; they were only prepared to offer**
 7 **themselves as long-term fostering.**
 8 Q. I think that you said in your police statement that his
 9 reaction made you feel uncomfortable; is that right?
 10 **A. He argued -- he was somebody who would argue quite**
 11 **strongly for his own -- to get his own opinion across,**
 12 **so -- and he was never -- he was never threatening, he**
 13 **just argued with us about the decision. But at the end**
 14 **of the day, he had to decide that the decision would be**
 15 **made in a -- initially, of course, the decision is made**
 16 **in a review, in a childcare review, but subsequently the**
 17 **decision is made by the Lambeth Adoption Panel, and the**
 18 **adoption panel would actually explore all the options**
 19 **that were available and then make the decision.**
 20 Q. I want to ask you about another fostering application
 21 that the Carrolls made that you became involved in.
 22 I think it is right that Mr Carroll approached you to
 23 ask you to be a referee for him in respect of two other
 24 children -- I'm not going to say anything about them.
 25 But is that right?

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1 **A. It certainly wasn't at this time.**
 2 Q. So in terms of the two children whom you had
 3 responsibility for, no other local authority was
 4 involved in assessment or consideration of
 5 the Carrolls --
 6 **A. No.**
 7 Q. -- as appropriate for placement parents for those
 8 children?
 9 **A. No.**
 10 Q. Have you ever heard of any fostering application by the
 11 Carrolls or any assessment of them being referred to
 12 Southwark Council?
 13 **A. Only since I received the bundle from the inquiry.**
 14 Q. This probably follows, then, Ms Suebsaeng, but just to
 15 make this clear: did you ever provide a reference for
 16 the Carrolls for an assessment of them by
 17 Southwark Council?
 18 **A. No.**
 19 Q. Returning to B10 and B11, then, please, you've explained
 20 in your statement that the decision was made to place
 21 these children with the other family. How did
 22 Mr Carroll react to that?
 23 **A. He was not happy about it because he thought he was**
 24 **making a better offer for the children, and he thought**
 25 **that our decision going with the other family was the**

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1 **A. He did, yes.**
 2 Q. Can you explain what he said to you in the course of
 3 asking you to be a referee for him?
 4 **A. Yes. He actually declared his criminal conviction, and**
 5 **he also declared that he had been subject to**
 6 **a disciplinary by Lambeth. So he gave me this**
 7 **information when he was asking me to act as a referee.**
 8 Q. What was your reaction to him telling you that?
 9 **A. I was surprised and shocked. I wasn't even aware that**
 10 **John Carroll had been in care himself. So he was**
 11 **actually opening up to me his own history, and at the**
 12 **same time saying, "This is what happened to me. This is**
 13 **a long time ago. I'm now asking you to act as**
 14 **a reference because I really want to offer something to**
 15 **children in care".**
 16 Q. What did he tell you about his conviction?
 17 **A. Well, he told me that -- he minimised it. That's**
 18 **something that I recognise now. I didn't recognise at**
 19 **the time that he might have been doing that. But he**
 20 **described it to me as -- I used the term "horseplay" in**
 21 **my statement. I can't remember exactly what the words**
 22 **were that he would have used, but that was the**
 23 **implication, that this was something playful that**
 24 **happened, and that it happened in the children's home**
 25 **where he'd actually been a resident, and that he had**

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1 then gone back to that children's home to work, or
 2 possibly as a volunteer, and he indicated that the age
 3 of the child, the victim, was similar to his own age at
 4 the time.
 5 So, of course, looking back on it now, I recognise
 6 that he was minimising what was happening, and it was
 7 certainly an experience of grooming me.
 8 Q. Why were you not astute to the possibility of his
 9 minimising it at the time?
 10 A. I think, at that time, my knowledge of how paedophiles
 11 operated was really, you could say, non-existent. It
 12 was only a few years later that I actually understood
 13 how people in that situation worked.
 14 Q. Do you really need knowledge of paedophilia to alert you
 15 to the risks when someone is telling you that they have
 16 been convicted by a criminal court of sexually abusing
 17 a child?
 18 A. I suppose what I was trying to balance at the time was,
 19 yes, this was an offence, he was convicted -- I had no
 20 doubt that it happened and that he was convicted -- but
 21 I was balancing that with my experience of him, as
 22 someone who was very committed and popular in the area
 23 that I worked in, that it had happened 20-odd years
 24 before, that Lambeth had actually agreed, through
 25 a disciplinary process, that he continue to work with

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1 what happened in Lambeth at that time. That's what made
 2 me think about the two children that were placed by my
 3 team.
 4 Q. You have a clear recollection of --
 5 A. (Overspeaking).
 6 Q. What did Mr Pope say about it?
 7 A. He confirmed that he had had the disciplinary, and he
 8 told me what the outcome of that disciplinary was, that
 9 John was allowed to continue to work, but there had been
 10 a final written warning given.
 11 Q. Was that a sufficient basis for you to decide that you
 12 would be a referee then for Mr Carroll?
 13 A. As I explained, I was trying to balance that information
 14 against the fact that there was a criminal conviction,
 15 but also the fact that this had happened 20 years
 16 previous, that John had actually been a child in care
 17 himself and was expressing a wish to give something back
 18 to children in care, and I suppose a little bit of
 19 a feeling from me that he had attempted to offer a home
 20 to children and that I turned him down. That was the
 21 previous two children.
 22 So all of these feelings, you know, come up. It has
 23 an emotional impact on you, which of course now, with
 24 the benefit of hindsight, I recognise was the wrong
 25 decision, but, for what it's worth, that was the

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1 children.
 2 Q. Can I just stop you there, Ms Suebsaeng. I just want to
 3 take you through this in stages, if I may. He told you
 4 that he had a conviction. He minimised it. Did you
 5 check to see whether or not what he had told you about
 6 the conviction was accurate?
 7 A. No, I didn't. But I did explore -- I did decide that
 8 I needed to ask the person who chaired the disciplinary
 9 what had happened and what were the reasons for him
 10 agreeing to John continuing to work. I can recall
 11 having that conversation with David Pope.
 12 Q. So you were prepared to take Mr Carroll at his word, in
 13 terms of what he said about the offence, but you did
 14 want to check the position as regards why he had been
 15 retained by Lambeth?
 16 A. That's right.
 17 Q. I don't think, in your police witness statement, you
 18 refer to having spoken to David Pope about that. Is
 19 there a reason why you didn't mention it?
 20 A. I think, as time has gone by, more and more memories of
 21 what happened have come back to me. So when
 22 I originally gave the police statement, I think it was
 23 in response to an advert that I saw in a local paper,
 24 and it may have been one of the earlier inquiries,
 25 seeking information from anybody who had knowledge of

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1 decision I took at the time, to help him.
 2 Q. Did you think about risk to children at the time?
 3 A. Well, I think I need to just reiterate that my knowledge
 4 of how paedophiles operated was minimal at that time.
 5 Q. I think what you say about that in the last page of your
 6 police statement was:
 7 "At that time in the early 1980s, little was
 8 understood about child sexual abuse."
 9 A. That's right. I can recall that the Cleveland Inquiry
 10 had happened not long before all this, and that was very
 11 much suggesting that professionals were finding sexual
 12 abuse where there wasn't any. In that case, it was
 13 doctors.
 14 Q. That didn't apply here, did it? This was someone who
 15 had a conviction for indecently assaulting a child
 16 already.
 17 A. Yes. But that doesn't -- but, at the time, it wasn't
 18 clear that people who had done that would then go on to
 19 abuse again and again and again.
 20 Q. It wasn't the early 1980s either, was it, Ms Suebsaeng?
 21 It was 1988?
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. Can we just look then -- Mr Hyde, can we bring up
 24 WAN000002_026. If we could enlarge the first paragraph,
 25 please. I think this is your interview with the social

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<p>1 worker from Wandsworth?</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. It states there you were aware of Mr C's conviction:</p> <p>4 "She had also been the social worker for the sibling</p> <p>5 group Mr and Mrs C originally applied to foster. She</p> <p>6 described Mr C as having a natural manner with children</p> <p>7 and both loving and nurturing, someone who is able to</p> <p>8 set limits and controls and can be slightly</p> <p>9 authoritarian. She felt able to support their fostering</p> <p>10 application while stressing and emphasising she had only</p> <p>11 a professional relationship with Mr C."</p> <p>12 We see, at the end of that, that that was your</p> <p>13 interview in August 1988 -- sorry, the end of the page,</p> <p>14 Mr Hyde.</p> <p>15 A. That's right, yes.</p> <p>16 Q. So children could have been placed with the Carrolls in</p> <p>17 part on the back of your recommendation or your support</p> <p>18 of their fostering application?</p> <p>19 A. Yes.</p> <p>20 Q. After you found out about the conviction, Mrs Suebsaeng,</p> <p>21 did you stop placing children that you had care of at</p> <p>22 Angell Road?</p> <p>23 A. I don't believe that any children were placed at</p> <p>24 Angell Road by my team after that, but that wasn't</p> <p>25 a deliberate decision. I mean, if the opportunity had</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 21</p>	<p>1 arisen, if I'd needed to place a child at Angell Road,</p> <p>2 then I would have done.</p> <p>3 Q. What about the carrying on of direct work at</p> <p>4 Angell Road?</p> <p>5 A. That continued.</p> <p>6 Q. Did you raise any concern or object to that carrying on</p> <p>7 once you found out about Mr Carroll's conviction?</p> <p>8 A. Well, I actually felt that the decision had been taken</p> <p>9 at a higher level, in the sense that the disciplinary</p> <p>10 panel chaired by the assistant director made the</p> <p>11 decision that John Carroll could continue to work with</p> <p>12 children. So I took that on face value. In hindsight,</p> <p>13 of course, I shouldn't have done.</p> <p>14 Q. Did you have any concerns at the time about direct work</p> <p>15 carrying on at Angell Road?</p> <p>16 A. No, because I think I believed what John Carroll had</p> <p>17 told me, that he had minimised the conviction and told</p> <p>18 me that it had happened many years before and that he no</p> <p>19 longer posed a risk. I assumed that.</p> <p>20 Q. Ms Suebsaeng, I am going to move on because there are</p> <p>21 a couple of questions that core participants also wanted</p> <p>22 asked of you, so I am just going to move to those, if</p> <p>23 I may, quite swiftly.</p> <p>24 Were you ever aware of any allegations of sexual</p> <p>25 abuse being made by children whom you had responsibility</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 22</p>
<p>1 for who were placed in Lambeth homes?</p> <p>2 A. I honestly cannot recall any.</p> <p>3 Q. In your police statement, you mentioned that David Pope</p> <p>4 was rumoured to be a Freemason. That's the then</p> <p>5 Director of Social Services. Why was that something</p> <p>6 that you mentioned in your police statement?</p> <p>7 A. Because it was a rumour in the area. I guess it may</p> <p>8 have been of relevance, in the sense that there may have</p> <p>9 been some kind of an old boys' network operating in</p> <p>10 Lambeth, which -- I mean, I can't say any more. I don't</p> <p>11 have any direct evidence, so ...</p> <p>12 Q. Is that something that you thought or experienced, that</p> <p>13 there was such a network in Lambeth?</p> <p>14 A. No.</p> <p>15 MS DOBBIN: If you'd just like to wait there, Ms Suebsaeng,</p> <p>16 the panel may have questions for you.</p> <p>17 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Ms Dobbin. I have no questions.</p> <p>18 I will ask my colleagues. Ms Sharpling?</p> <p>19 MS SHARPLING: No, thank you, chair.</p> <p>20 THE CHAIR: Mr Frank?</p> <p>21 MR FRANK: No, thank you.</p> <p>22 THE CHAIR: Sir Malcolm?</p> <p>23 PROF SIR MALCOLM EVANS: No, thank you, chair.</p> <p>24 MS DOBBIN: Thank you, Ms Suebsaeng, I think that completes</p> <p>25 your evidence.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 23</p>	<p>1 A. Thank you.</p> <p>2 (The witness withdrew)</p> <p>3 MS DOBBIN: Chair, I was going to ask if we could move</p> <p>4 immediately to the next witness. That's Mr Clive Walsh.</p> <p>5 THE CHAIR: Yes, please proceed.</p> <p>6 MR CLIVE CHARLES WALSH (sworn)</p> <p>7 Examination by MS DOBBIN</p> <p>8 MS DOBBIN: Mr Walsh, can I just ask you to say your name,</p> <p>9 please, so that we can check everything is working?</p> <p>10 A. Good. I'm Clive Walsh.</p> <p>11 Q. If you'd like to wait there, Mr Walsh, I'm going to ask</p> <p>12 that you are sworn.</p> <p>13 A. I just have been.</p> <p>14 Q. I'm so sorry, Mr Walsh. Can you give your full name to</p> <p>15 the inquiry, please?</p> <p>16 A. Clive Charles Walsh.</p> <p>17 Q. Mr Walsh, you should have two statements in front of</p> <p>18 you. One of them is signed on 9 January 2020. It is</p> <p>19 the statement that you made to the inquiry?</p> <p>20 A. I have.</p> <p>21 Q. Is that statement true, to the best of your knowledge</p> <p>22 and belief?</p> <p>23 A. It is.</p> <p>24 Q. Do you have a second statement in front of you, which is</p> <p>25 one you made to the police, dated 26 August 2014?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 24</p>

1 **A. Yes, I do.**
 2 Q. Is that statement also true, to the best of your
 3 knowledge and belief?
 4 **A. It is, indeed.**
 5 Q. Mr Walsh, I understand that you were formerly an
 6 employee of Southwark Council; is that right?
 7 **A. It is.**
 8 Q. You began your professional career as a probation
 9 officer?
 10 **A. I did.**
 11 Q. Did you then move into management positions within the
 12 Social Services Department at Essex Council?
 13 **A. Yes.**
 14 Q. Is it right that you joined Southwark Social Services
 15 Department in 1978 as an assistant director?
 16 **A. It is.**
 17 Q. Between 1985 and 1989, were you the head of fieldwork
 18 and community services at Southwark Council?
 19 **A. I was.**
 20 Q. I think it is right that you retired in 1989?
 21 **A. Indeed.**
 22 Q. You have provided the inquiry with evidence about
 23 a fostering application and a meeting that you recollect
 24 happened in the region of about 33 years ago?
 25 **A. Yes.**

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1 after you left Southwark?
 2 **A. Yes, consistently.**
 3 Q. Can you explain why you got in contact with him after
 4 you read the newspaper articles?
 5 **A. Having read the newspaper article, it seemed to me that**
 6 **there was something significant missing, which was my**
 7 **experience of what had occurred in Southwark.**
 8 **I wondered if he had any recollection of that event as**
 9 **well. So I asked him whether or not he recalled.**
 10 Q. Why did you want to ask him about his recollection of
 11 it?
 12 **A. Because, at that time, I was bemused that there was**
 13 **a significant piece of history that was missing. The**
 14 **only person I knew who would conceivably at that time**
 15 **have a view of that, confirmatory or otherwise, was**
 16 **Tony Watson.**
 17 Q. So did you want to confirm with him that you recalled
 18 that there was a piece of this story missing, or did you
 19 want to confirm with him that his memory was --
 20 **A. I was clear in my recollection. I wondered whether or**
 21 **not he had a recollection.**
 22 Q. At page 4 of your police statement, Mr Walsh, you said
 23 that you wanted to speak to Tony to clear your head --
 24 **A. Indeed.**
 25 Q. -- as to what he remembered. Why did you need to clear

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1 Q. Can I ask you what it was that brought those matters
 2 back to your mind?
 3 **A. It was a newspaper article that was brought to my**
 4 **attention.**
 5 Q. Can you remember when that newspaper article was?
 6 **A. It was some little while before I made the statement to**
 7 **the police, because the statement to the police arose**
 8 **out of my knowledge of that and subsequent interaction**
 9 **with an ex-colleague.**
 10 Q. I am going to explore that. You probably saw the news
 11 articles in and around 2013 or 2014?
 12 **A. Yes.**
 13 Q. You say in your statement that, having seen the
 14 newspaper articles -- I think those must have been
 15 articles about John Carroll; is that correct?
 16 **A. That is correct.**
 17 Q. You say that you contacted someone called Tony Watson
 18 about that?
 19 **A. Yes.**
 20 Q. Can you just explain to the panel who Tony Watson is or
 21 how you know him?
 22 **A. Tony Watson was a colleague in Southwark, and he worked**
 23 **as a principal officer the next layer or rung down**
 24 **hierarchically from me.**
 25 Q. Is Mr Watson someone whom you had stayed in contact with

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1 your head about these events?
 2 **A. The events surrounding were very memorable, and it**
 3 **seemed to me -- at the time, they had been difficult to**
 4 **understand, what was occurring, and it seemed now**
 5 **difficult to understand why possibly that had been**
 6 **expunged from history subsequently, and I needed to**
 7 **understand that, if I could.**
 8 Q. Why did you need to speak to him, though, in order to
 9 gain an insight into that?
 10 **A. He was -- of the principal officers who worked directly**
 11 **to me, he was the one who was not deceased, which was**
 12 **significant, because had another one been not deceased,**
 13 **I would have been in touch with him, because he would**
 14 **likely have had a clearer view, but I wondered -- but in**
 15 **the absence of that, and because I was in touch still**
 16 **with Tony, I contacted him.**
 17 Q. When you say "a clearer view", a clearer view about
 18 what, Mr Walsh?
 19 **A. Of a strange application for fostering of the Carrolls**
 20 **and the subsequent meeting of politicians at which I was**
 21 **called to.**
 22 Q. I'm going to ask you about that, but did you also need
 23 to speak to Tony to help you piece together in your
 24 memory what had happened about this application and
 25 about the meeting you recalled?

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1 **A. That would have been a consideration. Memory fades and**
 2 **plays tricks. I'm not very good with, and never have**
 3 **been very good with, memories -- with names. Tony is**
 4 **exceedingly good with names, and he was a person who had**
 5 **worked in Southwark for longer than I had -- he was**
 6 **there when I arrived -- and had a network of friendships**
 7 **and relationships which crossed boundaries and borders,**
 8 **so was likely to have a clearer view of some things than**
 9 **I would.**
 10 Q. What did he have a clearer view or a clearer memory of
 11 about these events than you had?
 12 **A. I'm not sure that he did, to tell you the truth, because**
 13 **it was not his part of the geographical territory of**
 14 **Southwark. What he did have a clear view of was that**
 15 **this was an issue which currently was of significant**
 16 **interest to his father, who was a politician.**
 17 Q. When you say "father", do you mean his son?
 18 **A. Thank you. Yes, indeed. His son.**
 19 Q. I was just going to ask you that, because I think
 20 Mr Tony Watson, whom you are describing, is the father
 21 of the former Member of Parliament Tom Watson?
 22 **A. Yes.**
 23 Q. Is that correct?
 24 **A. Yes.**
 25 Q. Did Tony Watson put you in touch with Tom Watson?

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1 application to Southwark derived from the information
 2 that you had provided to Tom Watson?
 3 **A. When a journalist from Newsnight appeared on my doorstep**
 4 **and rang my doorbell, I presumed so.**
 5 Q. Were you happy that this information, or were you
 6 surprised, I suppose is the better word, that the
 7 information that you had provided to Tom Watson ended up
 8 on Newsnight?
 9 **A. It landed up with the Newsnight reporter. It didn't**
 10 **reach Newsnight because I wouldn't co-operate. I wasn't**
 11 **pleased, no.**
 12 Q. I think that this story did end up in the print media,
 13 didn't it?
 14 **A. I'm not aware.**
 15 Q. All right.
 16 **A. Can I just say, it arrived with the police because I was**
 17 **then contacted by the police and asked to co-operate**
 18 **with them, which, of course, I was prepared to.**
 19 Q. I was going to ask you that. I think that the statement
 20 that you gave to the police was after the story had
 21 ended up in the newspapers, and I think that you're
 22 confirming that that's right.
 23 **A. Yes.**
 24 Q. Did you also speak to a Mr Tony Goss about these events?
 25 **A. No, I couldn't find him. I attempted to.**

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1 **A. He shared what I had written to him with his son, and**
 2 **then, subsequently, Tom Watson got in touch with me.**
 3 Q. When you say something that you had written, does that
 4 mean that you wrote down your memory --
 5 **A. I did.**
 6 Q. -- of these events?
 7 **A. Yes.**
 8 Q. So you wrote them down, and that was provided to
 9 Tom Watson?
 10 **A. By Tony, yes.**
 11 Q. I think Tom Watson invited you to speak to a journalist?
 12 **A. He did, and I declined.**
 13 Q. Are we to take it, then, that he provided your written
 14 account of the information given to him to the media?
 15 **A. I would suppose so, but I can't confirm. He invited me**
 16 **to meet with a journalist, and I declined. He invited**
 17 **me to meet with a police officer who was shortly due to**
 18 **retire, and I declined. And he offered to make**
 19 **available accommodation in the house for further such**
 20 **meetings, which I declined.**
 21 Q. The officer who was about to retire, is that
 22 Mr Driscoll?
 23 **A. I believe so.**
 24 Q. Coming back, then, to the stories in the press, do you
 25 understand that the information in the press about this

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1 Q. I just want to think about the issue or ask you to
 2 consider the issue of the dates when these events
 3 happened a bit more closely. Are you able, from your
 4 memory, to put a date on when Southwark had this
 5 application from Lambeth Council, this fostering
 6 application?
 7 **A. No. I can put landmarks in place.**
 8 Q. How are you able to put landmarks in place?
 9 **A. It was a feature of what occurred in Southwark that it**
 10 **became -- that I became aware that Mr Carroll was**
 11 **a schedule 1 offender, he had been disciplined in**
 12 **Lambeth where he worked as a head of home, and he had**
 13 **been given a warning. So that puts a landmark in terms**
 14 **of that date.**
 15 **My staff, I know, had contacted Croydon**
 16 **Social Services, and it's from there that they'd learnt**
 17 **of that conviction, that disciplinary hearing and that**
 18 **outcome.**
 19 **My understanding at the time was that there was an**
 20 **extant fostering application that was unlikely to**
 21 **succeed, but that formally it hadn't been yet rejected.**
 22 **So those are the two landmarks that other people can**
 23 **know about dates. I can't know about the dates.**
 24 Q. I think that's really important, Mr Walsh, just to
 25 establish that you have a clear memory of knowing that

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1 Mr Carroll's conviction had come to light at Lambeth?
 2 **A. Yes, via Croydon.**
 3 Q. And that that information -- that was what I was going
 4 to say next -- had come from Croydon?
 5 **A. Yes.**
 6 Q. You're sure that you have an independent memory of that,
 7 Mr Walsh?
 8 **A. Yes.**
 9 Q. That's not based on anything that you have read?
 10 **A. No, that's an independent, absolute recollection.**
 11 Q. Mr Walsh, I think this might be a good time, if it suits
 12 the chair, because I'm going to ask you to deal with
 13 these things in a bit more detail, to have a break.
 14 Does that suit?
 15 **A. Indeed.**
 16 MS DOBBIN: Mr Walsh, I think I have to remind you not to
 17 discuss your evidence with anyone whilst we have
 18 a break.
 19 **A. Indeed, thank you.**
 20 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Ms Dobbin. We will return at
 21 11.45 am.
 22 (11.28 am)
 23 (A short break)
 24 (11.45 am)
 25 MS DOBBIN: Mr Walsh, just before we move on to dealing with

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1 asked to do by Lambeth, what was it?
 2 **A. They were being asked to provide agreement, in short**
 3 **order, to a fostering application in respect of Mr and**
 4 **Mrs Carroll, and seemingly the request came in the terms**
 5 **of it wouldn't be necessary to be too rigorous because**
 6 **Mr Carroll was already a head of establishment at**
 7 **a children's home. He was a long-serving, trusted**
 8 **member of staff. More to the point, he and his wife**
 9 **were already de facto social aunt and uncle to the two**
 10 **boys that they were asking to foster.**
 11 Q. Can we just be clear: did Southwark have anything to do
 12 with these children or with the Carrolls or was it being
 13 asked to give this agreement as an independent local
 14 authority?
 15 **A. It was to do with being an independent local authority.**
 16 Q. You have said that Southwark was asked for its
 17 agreement. Was this a formal sort of process of
 18 assessment? What actually was it?
 19 **A. Yes, it was formal, with an element of informality,**
 20 **inasmuch as, yes, we were being formally asked to carry**
 21 **out an assessment, but being asked, or told, that we**
 22 **needn't be particularly rigorous because they were**
 23 **de facto fostering already. The boys in question who**
 24 **had -- attempts had been made to place them with**
 25 **same-race placement unsuccessfully. They were already**

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1 some of the events in a bit more detail, can I just ask
 2 you a couple of things first. First of all, the
 3 Mr Driscoll whom you referred to, the officer who was
 4 nearing retirement, whom you had been asked to speak to,
 5 had you ever spoken to him before 2013 or 2014?
 6 **A. Neither before nor since.**
 7 Q. Had you ever spoken to the police about these events
 8 before 2014?
 9 **A. No.**
 10 Q. Moving on, then, to deal with the application that came
 11 to Southwark, you have mentioned this was an application
 12 or an assessment in respect of John and June Carroll; is
 13 that right?
 14 **A. Yes.**
 15 Q. Can you just explain how this application or assessment
 16 came to your attention and what it was that you were
 17 being asked to do?
 18 **A. It was brought to my attention by Mr Glen, Don Glen, who**
 19 **was then the principal officer responsible for the area**
 20 **officers in the south of Southwark, and he came to see**
 21 **me on behalf of the staff at our area office because**
 22 **they had received what they considered to be a strange**
 23 **request and a troublesome request in the event that they**
 24 **had found more information.**
 25 Q. So in terms of what it was that they were actually being

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1 **spending holidays, weekends and camping times away with**
 2 **Mr and Mrs Carroll. So it was already a de facto**
 3 **fostering situation under the heading of being a social**
 4 **aunt and uncle.**
 5 Q. I just want to stop you to break this down, if I may.
 6 First of all, was there a social worker in Southwark who
 7 had been allocated to do this assessment?
 8 **A. Yes, there was. I can't tell you who the social worker**
 9 **was, I have no recollection. I know there was a social**
 10 **worker because it was that social worker who understood,**
 11 **correctly or not, that these boys were actually in the**
 12 **care of Croydon. That's not something I've seen written**
 13 **or confirmed subsequently, but that was their**
 14 **understanding and that was what was given to me.**
 15 **Therefore, the social worker had made early contact with**
 16 **Croydon Social Services to clarify their position in**
 17 **relation to these boys.**
 18 Q. I'm going to interrupt you because I'm going to take you
 19 through what you knew. I'm just trying to establish
 20 some basic information first, Mr Walsh. Do you know who
 21 it was at Lambeth who had approached Southwark to carry
 22 out this assessment?
 23 **A. No, I don't know the name of the person. I understood**
 24 **it at the time to be from area 6.**
 25 Q. Do you know what position the person at Lambeth who was

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1 dealing with it, did you know what their title was or if
 2 it was a manager, or anything --
 3 **A. My understanding was that it was a team leader who had**
 4 **made the request, the referral, and part of**
 5 **the strangeness was, I was being told that that senior**
 6 **social worker was not comfortable with the request but**
 7 **was under pressure to make it.**
 8 Q. Had Lambeth disclosed to Southwark the fact that
 9 Mr Carroll had already been through a misconduct process
 10 and that he had a conviction?
 11 **A. That was not disclosed.**
 12 Q. How did Southwark come to know that?
 13 **A. We were told that by Croydon staff who themselves, in**
 14 **pursuing their own fostering application from the**
 15 **Carrolls, had discovered the previous offence of**
 16 **Mr Carroll, and they, in Croydon, had already notified**
 17 **Lambeth.**
 18 Q. If these two children that Southwark was being asked to
 19 consider were in the care of the Croydon, why wasn't
 20 Croydon carrying out its own assessment? Why was there
 21 any need for Southwark to be involved in this?
 22 **A. That, I wouldn't know. It wasn't unusual for children**
 23 **to be in the -- the care authority to be one authority**
 24 **and the children being looked after in another. Why it**
 25 **was that Lambeth weren't asking Croydon to do this**

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1 Q. You have also said that Croydon were simultaneously
 2 considering another application by the Carrolls --
 3 **A. Yes.**
 4 Q. -- (interference) a child in their care?
 5 **A. Yes.**
 6 Q. Again, I'm just not quite clear, if Croydon were already
 7 assessing the Carrolls in respect of a child in their
 8 care, why wouldn't they, equally, be assessing the other
 9 two children who were in their care?
 10 **A. At that time, it was known in Lambeth -- that's what we**
 11 **became aware of -- that Croydon were not intending to**
 12 **complete the application and approve the Carrolls as**
 13 **foster parents. If you want me to be brutally honest,**
 14 **this had all the hallmarks of a side movement to get an**
 15 **agreement to get some degree of approval from somewhere**
 16 **that would give a degree of validity to the Carrolls.**
 17 Q. Are you suggesting, or is the implication of what you
 18 are suggesting, that Lambeth was going behind the back
 19 of Croydon to arrange a foster placement for Croydon
 20 children with the Carrolls?
 21 **A. It had that appearance at the time.**
 22 Q. In your witness statement -- this is your police
 23 statement, Mr Walsh -- you seem to know about the facts
 24 of Mr Carroll's conviction. I'm just looking at the top
 25 of page 8 of 16.

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1 **assessment was not something I knew or was aware of.**
 2 Q. I'm just trying to make sense of this, because if
 3 children were in the care of Croydon, it would be
 4 a matter for Croydon, wouldn't it, to decide whether or
 5 not the Carrolls were suitable foster parents?
 6 **A. Not necessarily. The Carrolls could be considered as**
 7 **foster parents for multiple authorities. They were,**
 8 **themselves, independently applicants to Croydon to be**
 9 **approved foster parents there, I think in general terms.**
 10 **They could equally and concurrently become foster**
 11 **parents in Lambeth for these named children.**
 12 Q. Just come back to the fundamental point: if those
 13 children were in the care of Croydon, that would still
 14 be a decision for Croydon, would it not, whether or not
 15 the Carrolls were suitable foster parents for children
 16 in Croydon's care?
 17 **A. That, ultimately, could have been the case. At that**
 18 **point in time, because nothing was resolved and no**
 19 **decision was on the table, then no.**
 20 Q. Again, I'm just trying to get back to the absolute
 21 fundamentals here, as to why Croydon would be asking
 22 Southwark to become involved in any sort of assessment
 23 that was ultimately Croydon's responsibility?
 24 **A. Transparency would indicate that the approach should**
 25 **have been to Croydon. It wasn't. It was to Southwark.**

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1 **A. Yes.**
 2 Q. Can I just ask, were those facts that you knew at the
 3 time?
 4 **A. Yes, that was brought to me as a factual account of what**
 5 **was known in Lambeth that had resulted in Mr Carroll**
 6 **being disciplined and given a warning.**
 7 Q. If Southwark was in contact with Croydon and you knew
 8 about the convictions and you knew the background to
 9 them, why didn't Southwark tell Croydon that Lambeth was
 10 trying to arrange this improper foster placement?
 11 **A. I think it was -- I believe that was done because, as at**
 12 **the point this was brought to me for discussion and**
 13 **determination, I made the decision that this process**
 14 **should cease, that he couldn't be -- that Croydon should**
 15 **be notified of our decision and so should Lambeth.**
 16 Q. Are you sure, Mr Walsh, that the two children that you
 17 were considering were in the care of Croydon and not
 18 Lambeth?
 19 **A. No, I can be sure that that's what I was told. I was**
 20 **told they were two boys of [redacted].**
 21 MS DOBBIN: I'm just going to stop you there.
 22 Chair, a legal issue has arisen. I wonder if
 23 I could ask you to direct that the live feed is cut,
 24 just temporarily?
 25 THE CHAIR: Yes, go ahead.

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1 MS DOBBIN: Chair, there's been an inadvertent disclosure of
 2 the ethnicity of two children who were in care. That
 3 information is redacted in our inquiry because it might
 4 tend to identify who those children were. Can I ask
 5 that you make a restriction order, please, in order to
 6 deal with that? So a restriction order that you
 7 prohibit the disclosure or the publication of
 8 the ethnicity of those children.
 9 THE CHAIR: Yes, I will make that order.
 10 MS DOBBIN: Thank you, chair. I think, with that, we can
 11 probably resume the hearing.
 12 Mr Walsh --
 13 **A. I do apologise.**
 14 Q. Don't worry, these things happen, so we will just carry
 15 on.
 16 So you had all of that information about the
 17 children. You had the details of the conviction. What
 18 view did you take of what Lambeth was doing in respect
 19 of the children?
 20 **A. Part of the consideration was that I was also being told**
 21 **that these boys had an older sibling who wished to care**
 22 **for them and was able to, in ordinary circumstances, and**
 23 **old enough, but was being regarded by Lambeth as**
 24 **unsuitable because he didn't have appropriate**
 25 **accommodation. That added to the mix, as it were, of it**

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1 **made it clear in that that they were free to share this**
 2 **with their counterparts in Lambeth.**
 3 Q. Did you think about contacting your counterpart in
 4 Lambeth to make clear what you thought about what had
 5 gone on?
 6 **A. At that point, I was perfectly confident that Mr Glen**
 7 **had the appropriate role and authority to carry that**
 8 **through.**
 9 Q. Did that end your involvement with that case for the
 10 time being?
 11 **A. For a very brief period, indeed; a matter of a day or**
 12 **two.**
 13 Q. I think it is right that after this, you say in your
 14 statement, you were asked to attend a meeting with
 15 Lambeth; is that right?
 16 **A. Yes, I was instructed to.**
 17 Q. Who gave you that instruction, Mr Walsh?
 18 **A. My director.**
 19 Q. Did he tell you why you were being instructed to attend
 20 this meeting or what it was about?
 21 **A. He told me that there was a problem with the decision**
 22 **that I had taken in relation to Lambeth, and that there**
 23 **was to be a meeting that day, that evening, at which**
 24 **representatives of Lambeth and Southwark would meet with**
 25 **me.**

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1 **being very evident very early that this was not an**
 2 **approval process that we could pursue. As far as I was**
 3 **concerned -- and this is why it had been brought to me.**
 4 **As far as I was concerned, it was -- this man was**
 5 **statute barred from fostering. I also had the view, and**
 6 **expressed it in writing, that I had serious doubts about**
 7 **the appropriateness of him being in charge of**
 8 **a children's home, and because it was not uncommon for**
 9 **children to be cared for across borough boundaries, for**
 10 **various reasons, I did ask my staff to check and assure**
 11 **me that there were no Southwark children being cared for**
 12 **in Lambeth children's homes, and that meant that**
 13 **I didn't have to pursue that as a formal matter, and**
 14 **they did.**
 15 Q. So, Mr Walsh, were you the person who ultimately, then,
 16 took the decision to refuse this approval of
 17 (overspeaking) --
 18 **A. I was, yes.**
 19 Q. You have said you took the view that Mr Carroll wasn't
 20 a fit person, is that right, to be running a children's
 21 home?
 22 **A. Yes.**
 23 Q. Did you communicate that to a counterpart in Lambeth?
 24 **A. I delivered, as I would quite ordinarily, my decision to**
 25 **Mr Glen and the area office at the time in writing, and**

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1 Q. How often did you have those sorts of meetings with
 2 Lambeth?
 3 **A. Never.**
 4 Q. Can you recollect who attended this meeting?
 5 **A. Yes. As then was, Janet Boateng, who had been, or was,**
 6 **the chair of Social Services. I had known her to be the**
 7 **chair. Whether or not she was at that time, I couldn't**
 8 **tell you now. She was accompanied by two officers: one**
 9 **who I understood was responsible for having made the**
 10 **decision to issue a warning; and the other was the**
 11 **senior officer-in-charge of Lambeth's fostering and**
 12 **adoption function. I can't, at this stage, recall their**
 13 **names.**
 14 Q. I'm just going to go back, if I may, to Janet Boateng.
 15 You said you can't remember if she was the chair of
 16 the Social Services Committee, but was she a councillor
 17 at the time of this meeting?
 18 **A. I don't know now and I wouldn't have known then.**
 19 **I would assume -- I would have presumed her, at that**
 20 **time, to be a councillor. I probably presumed her still**
 21 **to be the chair of Social Services. I had no reason not**
 22 **to.**
 23 Q. But you must have known who was attending this meeting?
 24 **A. Yes: Janet Boateng and the two officers.**
 25 Q. You were just told the names of the people who were

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1 attending, or were you told who they were?
 2 **A. I was told their names. At the time, I can't recall**
 3 **now, the male officers' names, and from Southwark it was**
 4 **the chair and vice chair of Social Services, Tony Goss**
 5 **and Elsie Headley.**
 6 Q. Going back to Mrs Boateng, you knew her as a councillor
 7 in Lambeth?
 8 **A. I knew her by reputation. I hadn't previously met her.**
 9 **She was a prominent London politician.**
 10 Q. In terms of the officers from Lambeth, did you not know
 11 your counterparts in Lambeth?
 12 **A. No, I hadn't met them previously.**
 13 Q. What was it or why did you think that one of these
 14 officers had made the decision to retain Mr Carroll?
 15 **A. Because during the discussions in that meeting, he**
 16 **did -- he took me to task for what he presumed or took**
 17 **to be my interference in Lambeth's decision making. He**
 18 **thought that that was an area outside my area of**
 19 **responsibility or competence.**
 20 Q. Was it in replying to you, then, that that implied that
 21 he had made the decision or he knew about it?
 22 **A. He was clear in that meeting that he had made that**
 23 **decision, it was his decision to take, and it wasn't for**
 24 **me to have an expressed view of it.**
 25 Q. Can you explain, then, how this meeting developed,

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1 **been not far away from agreeing, and they felt that**
 2 **they'd been misled. They were outraged that there was**
 3 **a man running a children's home in Lambeth who had**
 4 **a conviction as an adult for sexually assaulting**
 5 **a younger -- a significantly younger -- child. They**
 6 **were very angry about that, and they were also angry**
 7 **about the failure to disclose that to us. It became**
 8 **very argumentative and in fact abusive, mutually abusive.**
 9 Q. Was that racially abusive towards Janet Boateng?
 10 **A. There was an element of that, yes. Unwarrantedly.**
 11 Q. What was it that Lambeth were seeking to achieve by this
 12 meeting? You had made your decision. What was the
 13 point of it?
 14 **A. As it related to my decision, the preference was that**
 15 **that be overturned by instruction to me from Southwark,**
 16 **and that was clearly their preference. Their demand was**
 17 **that the record of my view of the inappropriateness of**
 18 **Mr Carroll working as a head of home be expunged from**
 19 **the record.**
 20 Q. Was that, then, the main thing that they seemed
 21 exercised about?
 22 **A. Yes.**
 23 Q. It was because (interference) was running a home?
 24 **A. Yes.**
 25 Q. After the meeting ended, did you have any follow-up

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1 Mr Walsh?
 2 **A. I think, in the first instance, the Southwark**
 3 **politicians were sympathetic to Ms Boateng's point of**
 4 **view. They seemed content to adopt a view that said**
 5 **that Lambeth's business was Lambeth's business and**
 6 **perhaps I'd overstepped the mark by being involved in,**
 7 **in particular, expressing a view about the**
 8 **appropriateness of Mr Carroll being allowed to continue**
 9 **as a head of home.**
 10 **In a way, the meeting came apart when -- because**
 11 **I was being challenged by the person who had made the**
 12 **decision, I drew a parallel between Mr Carroll's**
 13 **behaviour in failing to disclose his offence and**
 14 **Lambeth's behaviour in failing to disclose his offence**
 15 **to us. I drew that parallel, and I felt that that**
 16 **didn't reflect well on them. At that point, it became**
 17 **quite argumentative.**
 18 **It was also at that point that Southwark councillors**
 19 **started to grasp what they hadn't previously understood,**
 20 **that Mr Carroll's offence, as a schedule 1 offence, was**
 21 **actually an offence of sexual assault on a child. They**
 22 **then became angry. It is fair to say they were angry,**
 23 **that they felt that they had been misled, they had been**
 24 **led into, they thought, being amenable to fellow**
 25 **politicians, fellow Labour politicians, and they had**

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1 about it with your director or did you speak to anyone
 2 about it?
 3 **A. There was just -- no follow-up with my director, no.**
 4 **That was left to me to discuss, as I did, with the**
 5 **principal officer, Don Glen, who was there, and that --**
 6 **as far as we were concerned, it was dealt with and it**
 7 **was completed and it was concluded.**
 8 Q. (Interference) that you wouldn't give approval?
 9 **A. Indeed, and I --**
 10 Q. (Overspeaking) in fact, what you had said about the
 11 suitability of Mr Carroll to be an officer-in-charge of
 12 the home?
 13 **A. I've lost you. I hear you, but I can't see you, if that**
 14 **matters.**
 15 Q. That may not matter, Mr Walsh.
 16 **A. Okay, fine.**
 17 Q. Let me see if we are able to fix it.
 18 **A. That's okay. No, it was -- hello?**
 19 MS DOBBIN: Sorry, Mr Walsh. We are just trying to fix it
 20 at our end. I think, Mr Walsh, what we will do is we
 21 will take a break and see if we can fix things. We will
 22 see what we can do, if that is all right, chair.
 23 **A. Yes, indeed. For me, it is okay.**
 24 **(12.12 pm)**
 25 **(A short break)**

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<p>1 (12.22 pm)</p> <p>2 MS DOBBIN: Mr Walsh, you say in your statement -- I'm</p> <p>3 looking at page 5 of your police statement, at the</p> <p>4 top -- that after this meeting you received some</p> <p>5 telephone calls; is that right?</p> <p>6 A. Yes.</p> <p>7 Q. Can you tell us a bit, please, about the telephone calls</p> <p>8 you received?</p> <p>9 A. I received a telephone call from a male person, who</p> <p>10 introduced himself as Paul Boateng, and who asked</p> <p>11 whether or not he could be of assistance in resolving</p> <p>12 this troublesome matter. My position was that the</p> <p>13 matter was closed and dealt with, so there was no help</p> <p>14 to be given, thank you very much, and that conversation</p> <p>15 concluded.</p> <p>16 Q. Was Paul Boateng a Member of Parliament at this time?</p> <p>17 A. He was either newly selected or newly elected, but</p> <p>18 I wouldn't know which. He was a prominent London</p> <p>19 politician.</p> <p>20 Q. Wouldn't you remember if an elected politician was</p> <p>21 telephoning you, as in a Member of Parliament?</p> <p>22 A. I do remember that someone who said that he was</p> <p>23 Paul Boateng rang me. I do recall that very clearly.</p> <p>24 I don't recall whether or not, at that time, he had been</p> <p>25 yet elected. Certainly he was either selected or</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 49</p>	<p>1 elected.</p> <p>2 Q. You say in your witness statement -- I'm looking at</p> <p>3 page 5:</p> <p>4 "Her husband, Paul Boateng ..."</p> <p>5 This is a reference to Janet Boateng:</p> <p>6 "... was a national politician, Member of</p> <p>7 Parliament."</p> <p>8 A. Then that would have been my recollection in 2014.</p> <p>9 Q. I just want you to look at that again so that you can be</p> <p>10 sure if that's right.</p> <p>11 A. Yes, as I say, I really wouldn't want to reinterpret or</p> <p>12 reinvent it. That was my clear recollection in 2014.</p> <p>13 Q. You say that on one occasion, possibly two, someone</p> <p>14 claiming to be Paul Boateng rang you.</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. Does that mean that you are not clear about how many</p> <p>17 times this person telephoned you?</p> <p>18 A. That's right.</p> <p>19 Q. After you received those telephone calls, did you report</p> <p>20 them to anyone or take it up with anyone, that this</p> <p>21 politician was contacting you in this way?</p> <p>22 A. No. The matter was dealt with. The matter was closed.</p> <p>23 It wasn't and wouldn't have been -- on the one hand, it</p> <p>24 wasn't unusual for me to have telephone calls from</p> <p>25 Members of Parliament. Equally, just to be clear,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 50</p>
<p>1 though it wasn't an every-day occurrence, it wouldn't</p> <p>2 have been uncommon for me to receive telephone calls</p> <p>3 from people purporting to be people whom they were not.</p> <p>4 Q. Does that mean that you're not -- you have no way of</p> <p>5 being certain that it was Mr Boateng who telephoned you</p> <p>6 at that time?</p> <p>7 A. No. No, I have no way of knowing whether it was or</p> <p>8 wasn't Paul Boateng.</p> <p>9 Q. The inquiry is aware, and I think it's drawn your</p> <p>10 attention to this, that Janet Boateng ceased to be</p> <p>11 a councillor in or around March 1986?</p> <p>12 A. Yes.</p> <p>13 Q. Which would be a considerable time before the landmark</p> <p>14 dates that you have in your memory about these events.</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. Did her statement or the information provided to you</p> <p>17 cause you to pause and consider whether or not you might</p> <p>18 be wrong about her being the person who was at the</p> <p>19 meeting at which Carroll was discussed?</p> <p>20 A. No.</p> <p>21 Q. She says, and I think you have said, that there was only</p> <p>22 one meeting like this that you had with Lambeth; is that</p> <p>23 right?</p> <p>24 A. That's correct.</p> <p>25 Q. In her statement, she says that she recollects a heated</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 51</p>	<p>1 meeting with Southwark officials, but that was because</p> <p>2 of an employee at Southwark Council in a secure home</p> <p>3 that was managed by Southwark who had been involved in</p> <p>4 abuse. Does that ring any bells with you, Mr Walsh?</p> <p>5 A. No, because that's not a meeting that I would have been</p> <p>6 part of.</p> <p>7 Q. Why would that not have been a meeting that you would</p> <p>8 have been involved in?</p> <p>9 A. Because that would have been an issue for -- the secure</p> <p>10 accommodation would have been at Orchard Lodge, and that</p> <p>11 was outside my area of responsibility.</p> <p>12 Q. So if there was a meeting with Lambeth officials about</p> <p>13 a child in Lambeth's care being sexually abused in an</p> <p>14 establishment run by Southwark, you wouldn't have had</p> <p>15 anything to do with that, given your responsibilities?</p> <p>16 A. I wouldn't necessarily have known about it. Certainly</p> <p>17 I would have expected -- the fieldwork function would</p> <p>18 have been involved in that, either at area manager level</p> <p>19 or principal officer level, and I would have been</p> <p>20 involved -- if my residential counterpart had been part</p> <p>21 of that meeting, he would have expected then that</p> <p>22 I would. But this is not a meeting that I was part of.</p> <p>23 MS DOBBIN: Thank you, Mr Walsh. I think that those are all</p> <p>24 of the questions from me.</p> <p>25 Chair, do you have any questions for Mr Walsh?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 52</p>

<p>1 THE CHAIR: I will ask my colleagues. Ms Sharpling?</p> <p>2 MS SHARPLING: Just one, if I may, chair.</p> <p>3 THE CHAIR: Please, go ahead.</p> <p>4 Questions from THE PANEL</p> <p>5 MS SHARPLING: Thank you. Just one question for the</p> <p>6 witness: Mr Walsh, were any minutes taken of the meeting</p> <p>7 or did you see any minutes of the meeting?</p> <p>8 A. No, there were no minutes taken of the meeting.</p> <p>9 MS SHARPLING: Is that unusual?</p> <p>10 A. Yes.</p> <p>11 MS SHARPLING: Did you expect to see some minutes?</p> <p>12 A. Given the nature of the meeting and the way it concluded</p> <p>13 and the way it had been called, no, I didn't expect to</p> <p>14 see a minute.</p> <p>15 MS SHARPLING: I see. Thank you very much.</p> <p>16 THE CHAIR: Mr Frank?</p> <p>17 MR FRANK: No, thank you.</p> <p>18 THE CHAIR: Sir Malcolm?</p> <p>19 PROF SIR MALCOLM EVANS: No, thank you, chair.</p> <p>20 THE CHAIR: We have no further questions. Thank you very</p> <p>21 much.</p> <p>22 A. Thank you.</p> <p>23 MR O'DONNELL: Thank you, Mr Walsh.</p> <p>24 (The witness withdrew)</p> <p>25 MS DOBBIN: Chair, may we call the next witness, please, who</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 53</p>	<p>1 is Mr Richard Clough?</p> <p>2 MR RICHARD CLOUGH (sworn)</p> <p>3 Examination by MS DOBBIN</p> <p>4 MS DOBBIN: Mr Clough, can you give your full name to the</p> <p>5 panel, please.</p> <p>6 A. Richard Clough.</p> <p>7 Q. I want to ask you some questions about a report that you</p> <p>8 wrote, but first I am going to ask you a bit about your</p> <p>9 professional background, if I may.</p> <p>10 First of all, did you begin to work in residential</p> <p>11 care in 1967?</p> <p>12 A. That's correct.</p> <p>13 Q. In what capacity was that, Mr Clough?</p> <p>14 A. That would have been as a basic grade worker.</p> <p>15 Q. Did you go on to become head of the residential home in</p> <p>16 1972?</p> <p>17 A. I did.</p> <p>18 Q. Were you then elected president of the Residential Care</p> <p>19 Association in 1977?</p> <p>20 A. I confirm that's correct.</p> <p>21 Q. Then you went on to become the full-time general</p> <p>22 secretary a short time later, in 1978?</p> <p>23 A. Correct.</p> <p>24 Q. You ceased practising then; is that right?</p> <p>25 A. That's right.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 54</p>
<p>1 Q. And you became the chief executive of the Social Care</p> <p>2 Association, as of 1984?</p> <p>3 A. Sorry, that date -- yes.</p> <p>4 Q. It may not matter very much, but I think you were the</p> <p>5 chief executive?</p> <p>6 A. I was the chief executive. The reason I'm pausing there</p> <p>7 is I was chief executive for 27 years and it doesn't</p> <p>8 quite add up.</p> <p>9 Q. I think we will forgive you that. But I think that in</p> <p>10 that capacity, when you were attached to the Residential</p> <p>11 Care Association and the Social Care Association, you</p> <p>12 were also part of various working groups and advisory</p> <p>13 bodies as well?</p> <p>14 A. Indeed.</p> <p>15 Q. From time to time, you also carried out independent</p> <p>16 enquiries on behalf of local authorities?</p> <p>17 A. Not only local authorities; in all sectors.</p> <p>18 Q. I think one such public enquiry which you carried out</p> <p>19 was an inquiry for Lambeth Council in respect of</p> <p>20 John Carroll; is that right?</p> <p>21 A. It is, but I just question the word "public". It wasn't</p> <p>22 a public inquiry.</p> <p>23 Q. How would you describe it?</p> <p>24 A. It was an internal inquiry looking at factual issues</p> <p>25 relating to Mr Carroll.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 55</p>	<p>1 Q. Were you appointed on 22 February 1993 --</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. -- to carry that out?</p> <p>4 A. Indeed.</p> <p>5 Q. I'm going to turn to that report, but I just want to ask</p> <p>6 you some questions before I do about the report and the</p> <p>7 evidence that you gathered during your inquiry. First</p> <p>8 of all, Mr Clough, during the course of your inquiries,</p> <p>9 did anyone mention an assessment by Southwark local</p> <p>10 authority in respect of John Carroll?</p> <p>11 A. It wasn't in the terms of reference. No reference was</p> <p>12 made to it in evidence, nor any reference made subject</p> <p>13 to the publication of my report. The first I heard of</p> <p>14 Southwark was a few years ago when the media contacted</p> <p>15 me.</p> <p>16 Q. Second question: if any allegations of child sexual</p> <p>17 abuse had been made against John Carroll prior to your</p> <p>18 appointment in this capacity as head of a home, or if</p> <p>19 concerns had been raised about the welfare of children</p> <p>20 in his care, is that something you would have expected</p> <p>21 Lambeth to have told you about?</p> <p>22 A. The only reference I had would have been the original</p> <p>23 conviction of Mr Carroll.</p> <p>24 Q. But in terms of Lambeth's knowledge, if they knew, for</p> <p>25 example, of any allegations that had been made against</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 56</p>

<p>1 him after that conviction in respect of children in 2 Lambeth's care, is that the sort of information you 3 would have expected Lambeth to have told you about? 4 A. Although the inquiry itself wasn't about any subsequent 5 child sexual abuse, I certainly would have been 6 expecting to be informed, as it would have been 7 relevant. 8 Q. Did anyone whom you interviewed in the course of your 9 inquiry express concerns about either the risk that 10 John Carroll posed to the children at the time or 11 concern that he might be abusing children in and around 12 that time? 13 A. No issues of abuse were ever raised with me, and if they 14 had have been, I would have stopped the inquiry 15 immediately. 16 Q. Did anyone that you spoke to express concern to you 17 about Mr Carroll having links to any high-profile 18 persons? 19 A. No. Not at all. 20 Q. Similarly, did anybody express any concern to you that 21 John Carroll was being protected by people within 22 Lambeth Council or had been protected by them in the 23 past? 24 A. No evidence was given to me to that effect. 25 Q. The inquiry has heard evidence that direct work was</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 57</p>	<p>1 carried out at the Angell Road Home and that it may have 2 specialising in caring for children who had been abused. 3 Was that information brought to your attention? 4 A. No, it was not. 5 Q. Do you think that that's something that you should have 6 been made aware of when you were writing your report? 7 A. Again, it would have been -- although the enquiry 8 wouldn't have been necessarily about that that 9 particular home, it would have been relevant to mention 10 it. 11 Q. Why would that have been relevant information to you? 12 A. Because one was looking at a whole picture as to why 13 this man was appointed in the first place, and the 14 effect that that would have had on his subsequent 15 application to foster. 16 Q. I wonder if we could take up your report, please, 17 Mr Clough, just so we can look at some of 18 the information that was provided to you and what you 19 found. 20 A. (Interference) information to refer to the report, to 21 look at the report? 22 Q. Yes. If you have it in front of you, that would help. 23 Mr Hyde, can we go to LAM000020, and can we go first to 24 page 6. 25 Mr Clough, these were your terms of reference,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 58</p>
<p>1 weren't they? 2 A. Indeed. I confirm that's correct. 3 Q. I think we can probably look at these terms very briefly 4 and I can paraphrase them. The first thing that you 5 were asked to look at was to examine and comment upon 6 the decision making that was made in the disciplinary 7 hearing that took place in which it was decided to keep 8 Mr Carroll on; is that right? 9 A. Correct. 10 Q. Then you were asked to look more broadly at Lambeth's 11 practices and procedures in respect of the vetting of 12 staff who worked with children? 13 A. Correct. 14 Q. Then, number (iii), you were asked to look at the 15 process of the Carrolls' application to foster and the 16 propriety of communications between Lambeth and 17 Wandsworth officials; yes? 18 A. That's correct. 19 Q. You were also asked to look at equal opportunities 20 policies as well and how it applied in this context? 21 A. Yes. 22 Q. I'm not going to ask you any more about that. And then 23 (v), you were asked to look at any conflict of interest 24 between the welfare of children in Lambeth's care and 25 the interests of staff?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 59</p>	<p>1 A. Yes. 2 Q. In the specific context, that referred to Mr Carroll, on 3 the one hand, and the children that he had applied to 4 foster, on the other; is that right? 5 A. Yes, that is right. 6 Q. Then you were also asked to look at the effectiveness 7 and the propriety of any agreements that existed between 8 Lambeth and the Metropolitan Police, looking at alleged 9 offences by staff; is that right? 10 A. That particularly related to the audit element of 11 the inquiry. 12 Q. Yes. So when Lambeth came to look at alleged wrongdoing 13 against Mr Carroll, in terms of the running of his home, 14 I think the issue was whether or not that ought to have 15 been referred to the police; is that right? 16 A. Yes. 17 Q. We will look at that shortly. I think, finally, you 18 were asked to make recommendations as well? 19 A. That's correct. 20 Q. Just going forward in your report, then, if we look at 21 page 8, and this is paragraph 8, you took evidence from 22 24 witnesses, some who gave evidence on a couple of 23 occasions? 24 A. Yes, that's correct. 25 Q. Those witnesses were given assurances that they wouldn't</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 60</p>

<p>1 be referred to by name in your report?</p> <p>2 A. That is also correct.</p> <p>3 Q. Can you just explain why that step was taken?</p> <p>4 A. My experience in undertaking reports of this nature was</p> <p>5 you are likely to gain far more information if</p> <p>6 confidentiality is permitted. But there was also always</p> <p>7 a rider, that if any criminality was drawn to my</p> <p>8 attention, then that confidentiality could not remain.</p> <p>9 Q. Was that the case even where, like this, the report was</p> <p>10 for an internal purpose, as opposed to one that would be</p> <p>11 published and made public?</p> <p>12 A. Absolutely so.</p> <p>13 Q. Does that mean that it was the case that, even when it</p> <p>14 came to issues of child protection, staff who worked in</p> <p>15 local authorities could be reticent about coming forward</p> <p>16 or being as frank with you as they might be?</p> <p>17 A. It's essential that if any issue of criminality is</p> <p>18 brought before you, you don't prejudice any possible</p> <p>19 subsequent police investigation, and, in those</p> <p>20 circumstances, you have to advise the people that you</p> <p>21 have no choice but to inform the police or other</p> <p>22 authorities.</p> <p>23 Q. Sorry, I'm just going back to this issue about</p> <p>24 confidentiality and trying to get people to be candid.</p> <p>25 I was asking that, even when it came to issues of child</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 61</p>	<p>1 protection, does your assurance mean that, without it,</p> <p>2 people weren't willing to be as candid as they might be?</p> <p>3 A. That is a possibility.</p> <p>4 Q. Now, just looking at the chronology of your events that</p> <p>5 you set out, I just want to look at this so that we can</p> <p>6 put some of your findings in context, if we may. I'm</p> <p>7 just going to look, if I can, at page 9. We see that,</p> <p>8 at paragraph 18, Mr Carroll commenced his employment</p> <p>9 with Lambeth on 1 March 1978?</p> <p>10 A. Sorry, can I just double-check, I think it is page 5,</p> <p>11 isn't it?</p> <p>12 Q. I'm sorry, I'm looking at the inquiry pagination and</p> <p>13 you're looking at the internal pagination.</p> <p>14 A. Okay. Paragraph numbers would probably help me.</p> <p>15 Q. It is paragraph 18.</p> <p>16 A. Fine. Thank you.</p> <p>17 Q. We see, then, at your paragraph 20, that</p> <p>18 in November 1980, he made an application to be the</p> <p>19 officer-in-charge of the Angell Road Home, and that was</p> <p>20 confirmed in December 1980?</p> <p>21 A. Yes.</p> <p>22 Q. Are these things that you confirmed from his personnel</p> <p>23 file?</p> <p>24 A. Almost certainly.</p> <p>25 Q. If we look at the next page and we look at paragraph 21,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 62</p>
<p>1 you refer to an anonymous letter that you found, and</p> <p>2 that was about Mr Carroll's conduct at the home?</p> <p>3 A. It was a scathing letter describing, by this anonymous</p> <p>4 person, how upset they were at the way he was managing</p> <p>5 the home.</p> <p>6 Q. I think later on in your report you actually set that</p> <p>7 letter out in full, don't you?</p> <p>8 A. Yes.</p> <p>9 Q. Can I just ask you, was that letter within the personnel</p> <p>10 file?</p> <p>11 A. I can't guarantee it was in the personnel file, but it</p> <p>12 certainly obviously would have been given to me in</p> <p>13 evidence.</p> <p>14 Q. If we just go over the page, if we can, I'm just going</p> <p>15 to pick up the story, or the narrative, in terms of how</p> <p>16 Mr Carroll's conviction came to light. So if we look at</p> <p>17 paragraph 28, we see that Lambeth was -- or Lambeth</p> <p>18 found out about the conviction by a letter of</p> <p>19 10 April 1986?</p> <p>20 A. That's correct, and the information came from the London</p> <p>21 Borough of Croydon.</p> <p>22 Q. That information had come to light because Mr Carroll</p> <p>23 had been assessed by Croydon in respect of a child in</p> <p>24 Croydon's care; is that correct?</p> <p>25 A. My understanding is that the application was to foster</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 63</p>	<p>1 children, at that stage, who were in the care of</p> <p>2 Croydon.</p> <p>3 Q. If we move on, then, you set out that there was</p> <p>4 a misconduct process. I don't think we need to look at</p> <p>5 that. If we go ahead, please, to page 13 of that</p> <p>6 exhibit, and that's internal page 9, and if we pick up</p> <p>7 the narrative again at paragraph 38, Mr Clough, we see</p> <p>8 there that, in October 1986, a formal application was</p> <p>9 made in respect of two children, for two children to be</p> <p>10 considered for a fostering placement; yes?</p> <p>11 A. Yes.</p> <p>12 Q. Those were the children that the Carrolls went on to</p> <p>13 make an application to be the foster parents of; is that</p> <p>14 correct?</p> <p>15 A. That is correct.</p> <p>16 Q. Again, just stay on the same page and go to</p> <p>17 paragraph 42. We see that, on 1 May 1987, the</p> <p>18 children's social worker received a call from Mr Carroll</p> <p>19 and his wife saying that they wanted to be considered as</p> <p>20 foster parents for them?</p> <p>21 A. Yes.</p> <p>22 Q. Mr Clough, is this information that you would have</p> <p>23 gotten from the children's files?</p> <p>24 A. No. This would have been given in general evidence, in</p> <p>25 documentation supplied by Lambeth.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 64</p>

<p>1 Q. Can you recollect what documentation it was that you 2 were given? 3 A. I'm afraid not in detail. 4 MS DOBBIN: I'm just going to pause one moment, Mr Clough. 5 Chair, I see the time. Would you mind if we sat 6 until 1.00 pm with this witness? 7 THE CHAIR: Yes, go ahead. 8 MS DOBBIN: Mr Clough, if we stay on that page and we look 9 at paragraph 43, we can see there that it was decided, 10 on 22 June 1987, that Wandsworth should be asked to 11 assess Mr and Mrs Carroll as foster parents. 12 A. I confirm that. 13 Q. If we go on again, please, to page 15, that assessment 14 of the Carrolls continued. I just want to look at 15 paragraph 53, and in the course of the assessment there 16 was a telephone call from an official in Lambeth to an 17 officer in Wandsworth; is that correct? 18 A. That is correct. 19 Q. If we just go forward in your report to your detailed 20 findings about that, and that's at page 52 of this 21 exhibit, Mr Hyde. Can you look at your first paragraph, 22 204, Mr Clough, you considered that that raised 23 a serious issue for your investigation? 24 A. Yes. 25 Q. Why was it a serious issue?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 65</p>	<p>1 A. The attempt to influence the process I regarded as 2 unprofessional. There's a clear record that I must have 3 seen at the time in evidence of a phone call taking 4 place that was trying to put something into the process 5 that was incorrect, namely, that the police record could 6 not be considered satisfactory. 7 Q. Just to make clear, the nature of the conversation 8 between the Lambeth and Wandsworth officials was that 9 Lambeth was suggesting to Wandsworth that the Wandsworth 10 officials ought to put "satisfactory" against "police 11 check", where that appeared on part of the form? 12 A. That is correct. 13 Q. Did you regard that as Lambeth essentially asking 14 Wandsworth to put something misleading on the form? 15 A. Absolutely. 16 Q. If we just look at what you found at paragraph 205, what 17 you have said is: 18 "The Lambeth fostering officer who is alleged to 19 have made the call at the request of the chair of 20 the fostering panel cannot remember making the call." 21 Pausing there, Mr Clough, what appears to be being 22 suggested was that it was the chair of the Lambeth 23 Fostering Panel who asked for the telephone call to be 24 made; is that right? 25 A. That is correct.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 66</p>
<p>1 Q. You then went on to say: 2 "The chair of the fostering panel admits to asking 3 for the call to be made and there is a clear record on 4 file within Wandsworth of the call being received." 5 A. And I would imagine I would have seen that record in 6 evidence. 7 Q. I'm not going to take you to that record now, Mr Clough, 8 but can I just ask you this: did you speak to the chair 9 of the fostering panel or did you interview him in the 10 course of your inquiries? 11 A. He is on the list that's been provided to me by the 12 inquiry. I can't remember in detail of the 24 people 13 who I saw, but what I do accept is that that list would 14 be a reasonable list for me to have seen. 15 Q. Can I just ask you the name of the individual who you 16 think was the chair of the fostering panel? 17 A. May I check that? Or do you want me to ...? 18 Q. If you can. If you have the list in front of you, and 19 we can also turn it up. The list, Mr Hyde, is at page 2 20 of the exhibit. 21 A. The chair does not seem to be in that list. 22 Q. There is also a list on page 3 as well. This might 23 help. If we look at page 54, please, Mr Hyde, and we 24 see, at paragraph 211, the principal officer (social 25 work) who chaired the foster panel in Lambeth seemingly</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 67</p>	<p>1 provided a written note, so we know that the principal 2 officer was the same person who chaired the foster 3 panel; correct? 4 A. The name that comes to mind, but I cannot tell the 5 inquiry that I'm 100 per cent certain, is Jack Smith. 6 Q. I don't think that's controversial, Mr Clough. Do you 7 recollect speaking to Mr Smith? 8 A. I don't recollect speaking to him, no. 9 Q. If we could go back to 205, where it says that the chair 10 of the fostering panel admits to asking for the call to 11 be made, is that likely that that was an admission made 12 to you? 13 A. It would seem so, from the wording. But I cannot 14 guarantee that. 15 Q. If we go on and look at paragraph 211, please, of your 16 report, that was the paragraph that we just looked at, 17 that refers to: 18 "The principal officer (social work) who chaired the 19 foster panel in Lambeth seemingly also provided 20 a written note supporting the application of Mr and 21 Mrs C to foster the children concerned." 22 You go on to say that you didn't have sight of this 23 note "although the principal officer concerned confirmed 24 its existence in written correspondence with the 25 director of Social Services some years later".</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 68</p>

<p>1 A. I would imagine I saw that written correspondence.</p> <p>2 Q. If we look at paragraph 213, you also went on to</p> <p>3 consider whether or not there was any formal or informal</p> <p>4 communication between Wandsworth and Lambeth staff and</p> <p>5 between elected members during the process of fostering?</p> <p>6 A. Yes.</p> <p>7 Q. Two questions about that: had someone raised that as</p> <p>8 a possible concern with you?</p> <p>9 A. No, I think it was part of the issues within the terms</p> <p>10 of reference.</p> <p>11 Q. Did you find any evidence of contact between elected</p> <p>12 members?</p> <p>13 A. No, I didn't.</p> <p>14 Q. Elected members and Wandsworth?</p> <p>15 A. No, I didn't.</p> <p>16 Q. Mr Clough, I'm not going to take you to any other parts</p> <p>17 of your report, but I just want to ask you this: you</p> <p>18 didn't make any recommendations in your report. Can you</p> <p>19 explain why?</p> <p>20 A. There were actually recommendations in the report, when</p> <p>21 one really reads it and, with hindsight, it would have</p> <p>22 been better had I highlighted those.</p> <p>23 Q. What were your recommendations, principally?</p> <p>24 A. Alongside the 20 findings -- I'm going to need to find</p> <p>25 another reference, if I may.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 69</p>	<p>1 Q. Don't worry, Mr Clough. If you help us with what your</p> <p>2 principal recommendations were?</p> <p>3 A. The principal recommendations were around employment</p> <p>4 procedure and, at the time, an inquiry report called the</p> <p>5 Warner Report was around and it was encouraging</p> <p>6 implementation of the recommendations in that report.</p> <p>7 Q. I think, rather than make any overt recommendations in</p> <p>8 your report, throughout it you indicate things that</p> <p>9 could be done?</p> <p>10 A. In the findings, because I was trying to find out</p> <p>11 exactly what happened both in the employment situation</p> <p>12 and the fostering situation, I did make 20 findings for</p> <p>13 them to examine -- in the region of 20 findings.</p> <p>14 Q. Ultimately, you concluded that Lambeth had been wrong to</p> <p>15 retain Mr Carroll once they discovered his conviction?</p> <p>16 A. That's correct.</p> <p>17 Q. Was that because you considered that the risk to</p> <p>18 children of retaining such a person was just too great?</p> <p>19 A. It was -- in their letter giving the findings, they use</p> <p>20 an expression -- and, again, if I may refer to that --</p> <p>21 about ensuring that they eliminated the possibility of</p> <p>22 child abuse and, by retaining the employment, they did</p> <p>23 not eliminate the possibility.</p> <p>24 Q. There isn't an indication in your report that you</p> <p>25 considered or communicated to Lambeth that they should</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 70</p>
<p>1 consider the risk that he had posed and speak to</p> <p>2 children who had been in his care. Was there a reason</p> <p>3 why you didn't reflect upon that or indicate that?</p> <p>4 A. The terms of reference were quite clear in what I was to</p> <p>5 examine, and it was the employment procedure and matters</p> <p>6 thereafter and the way they conducted themselves with</p> <p>7 the fostering application.</p> <p>8 Q. Even though it wasn't within your terms of reference, it</p> <p>9 wasn't something that you thought ought be communicated</p> <p>10 to them?</p> <p>11 A. There was nothing that indicated to me at the time the</p> <p>12 need to do that.</p> <p>13 MS DOBBIN: Thank you, Mr Clough. Chair, do you have any</p> <p>14 questions for Mr Clough?</p> <p>15 Questions from THE PANEL</p> <p>16 THE CHAIR: Yes, Mr Clough, I have one, just to clarify, to</p> <p>17 be absolutely clear. When Mr Carroll first went through</p> <p>18 the recruitment process, did he falsify his declaration</p> <p>19 of a conviction or was he never asked?</p> <p>20 A. My understanding is, he just simply did not make the</p> <p>21 declaration.</p> <p>22 THE CHAIR: So, in effect, he falsified it, because he did</p> <p>23 not declare it?</p> <p>24 A. As he should have declared it.</p> <p>25 THE CHAIR: Indeed. With your experience and knowledge of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 71</p>	<p>1 residential care, and indeed in other settings, what</p> <p>2 would normally the response to someone who falsified or</p> <p>3 failed to declare a serious -- or any conviction?</p> <p>4 A. Summary dismissal.</p> <p>5 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Ms Sharpling?</p> <p>6 MS SHARPLING: No, thank you, chair.</p> <p>7 THE CHAIR: Mr Frank?</p> <p>8 MR FRANK: No, thank you.</p> <p>9 THE CHAIR: Sir Malcolm?</p> <p>10 PROF SIR MALCOLM EVANS: No, thank you, chair.</p> <p>11 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, Mr Clough.</p> <p>12 A. Thank you.</p> <p>13 (The witness withdrew)</p> <p>14 MS DOBBIN: Thank you, chair.</p> <p>15 THE CHAIR: Ms Dobbin, we will return at 2.00 pm. Thank</p> <p>16 you.</p> <p>17 (12.59 pm)</p> <p>18 (The short adjournment)</p> <p>19 (2.00 pm)</p> <p>20 MS LANGDALE: Chair, may the next witness, Lady Boateng, be</p> <p>21 sworn, please.</p> <p>22 LADY JANET BOATENG (affirmed)</p> <p>23 Examination by MS LANGDALE</p> <p>24 MS LANGDALE: Can you give us your name and qualifications,</p> <p>25 please?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 72</p>

1 **A. My name is Janet Boateng. I'm a policy analyst and**
 2 **a company director.**
 3 Q. And your qualifications?
 4 **A. I have a postgraduate degree in social policy, Masters**
 5 **degree in Social Policy, and I also, too, have a CNA**
 6 **diploma in Social Policy, in Social Work Practice.**
 7 Q. You helpfully provided a statement to the inquiry dated
 8 12 June 2020. Can you confirm the contents are true and
 9 accurate, as far as you're concerned?
 10 **A. Yes, they are.**
 11 Q. Can I ask you, then, starting back when you first
 12 started work, in fact, in residential youth work from
 13 1977 to 1978. You set out that, during that period, you
 14 were working in the Shirley Oaks residential estate in
 15 Croydon. Help us with how you first became interested
 16 in residential childcare work and how you ended up
 17 working there?
 18 **A. I was working in the City of London, and I was becoming**
 19 **quite bored. There was a subjectiveness to lots of**
 20 **racism and difficulties in terms of harassment. So**
 21 **I left and I basically wanted to do something different.**
 22 **I was a young woman and I basically decided to look at**
 23 **areas of interest because I was already involved in**
 24 **community activism and obviously involved highly with**
 25 **youth clubs and with young people, and I wanted to --**

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1 **There was also, too, areas where I felt there was**
 2 **neglect in terms of culture, because the majority of**
 3 **children who were residing there, with the exception of**
 4 **one child who was white, were all either of mixed**
 5 **parentage or black Africans.**
 6 Q. In what way did you feel the children were neglected?
 7 **A. For instance, I felt that they weren't given -- it**
 8 **wasn't like a normal home that I would have expected.**
 9 **I was coming from a normal environment, normal**
 10 **Afro-Caribbean home, and I knew what that home was like**
 11 **in terms of happiness, and I didn't see any sign of**
 12 **happiness in the children in that home, and I didn't**
 13 **find that they were being cared for properly in terms of**
 14 **their skin, their hair, the food that they ate.**
 15 **I didn't see a varied menu, I didn't see the children**
 16 **being able to express themselves at the table and to**
 17 **talk, that there was lots of silence. There were**
 18 **opportunities where I wanted to take the children out**
 19 **into London for a day out, and I was prevented.**
 20 **I wanted to cook meals for the kids myself, because --**
 21 **there was a cook there, and she was quite happy to learn**
 22 **how to cook Afro-Caribbean food, and I would bring that**
 23 **food from my mother's home and I would give it to the**
 24 **worker, to the cook, or hide it in my room because, if**
 25 **the house mother had found it, there would have been**

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1 **and I lived in the Borough of Lambeth, and I wanted to**
 2 **look at whether I could make a contribution in an area**
 3 **that might be of interest. I was interested in the law.**
 4 **I had done some sessional work at a youth club there,**
 5 **and I had set up a sort of advice surgery for young**
 6 **people in Brixton, and I decided that I would probably**
 7 **apply to Lambeth. I saw an advert for the job of a care**
 8 **worker, assistant house mother, and I decided to try**
 9 **that.**
 10 Q. What was your experience? What house was it? Can you
 11 remember what house you went into?
 12 **A. I can't remember the exact name of the house, but**
 13 **I remember that it was the first house as you went in on**
 14 **your right-hand side to the complex.**
 15 Q. What was your experience, firstly, as someone working
 16 there, and, secondly, observing the children's
 17 experience? What was it like for children in the house
 18 that you were working in?
 19 **A. I was quite shocked and horrified, because I was**
 20 **expecting a different experience. I wasn't expecting**
 21 **the one which I was subjected to.**
 22 Q. So what were you subjected to?
 23 **A. That was one where the children were, I would say,**
 24 **probably not treated properly. They were neglected.**
 25 **There were aspects of, I think, emotional distress.**

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1 **serious problems.**
 2 Q. So you were the assistant house mother. Was there
 3 a house mother and a house father, to use the
 4 terminology of the day, in the house?
 5 **A. There wasn't a house father. There was just myself,**
 6 **cleaners, the cook and the house mother.**
 7 Q. How many children, roughly?
 8 **A. I would say roughly probably about eight or nine.**
 9 Q. Did you have an opportunity to get to speak with those
 10 children? Obviously we have heard evidence from former
 11 children in care and relationships that they did or
 12 didn't form with those caring for them. In the time you
 13 were there, was there an opportunity to form
 14 a relationship where a child could speak with you about
 15 something that had bothered them?
 16 **A. I tried. I tried, and I had a relationship with some of**
 17 **the children there. I tried with the -- there was**
 18 **a family who was a Jamaican family, and three of**
 19 **the children -- the daughters were in our home and the**
 20 **boys were placed elsewhere on the complex. I tried to**
 21 **form a relationship with them because I felt that there**
 22 **were issues around identity and around race that was**
 23 **quite disturbing, and I tried to plait their hair and to**
 24 **care for their hair, because the house mother would then**
 25 **cut the hair off and say, "This is not the way in which**

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1 **the children's hair is going to be cared for" and that**
 2 **I should take the African plaits out of their hair**
 3 **because they were African and the children weren't**
 4 **African.**
 5 Q. Did you feel able to challenge that? Did you feel able
 6 to challenge her and have a discussion around that?
 7 **A. Well, it was very difficult to challenge because she was**
 8 **quite a robust individual. I was a young person who was**
 9 **just there working on probation. I basically wanted to**
 10 **have a relationship with the children. The children**
 11 **would be called whenever they were seen with me. She,**
 12 **on one occasion, sent one of -- the eldest girl from**
 13 **that family with a black cloth and she said, "Go and**
 14 **tell your Auntie Janet that this is what black looks**
 15 **like, and that's not you". The child came and said,**
 16 **"Auntie Mary said that this is not my colour".**
 17 Q. I don't know what's happened. There seems to be an
 18 interruption on the screen. Lady Boateng, I don't know
 19 what's happened. I suggest we stop because I can hear
 20 somebody else talking. Chair, shall we stop for
 21 a moment or has that interruption ceased?
 22 **A. Someone's name comes up on my computer.**
 23 Q. I think the interruption has gone. Let me carry on,
 24 Lady Boateng. If that happens again, we shall stop.
 25 We have heard evidence that in some of the houses --

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1 **centred around this village, as I would call it. So you**
 2 **would meet the other house mothers there just to say**
 3 **hello, pick your children up and then go off.**
 4 **Sometimes, if you took them to the swimming pool to swim**
 5 **during the holidays, then -- or half term, then you**
 6 **might meet someone or sometimes you'd just take them,**
 7 **leave them and then you went back to work or to write on**
 8 **your reports or to, you know, do other things which was**
 9 **necessary.**
 10 Q. So the men I have mentioned aren't people you came
 11 across or knew or anything?
 12 **A. No, I didn't really -- I only knew one person there who**
 13 **I had a relationship with and she was an Afro-Caribbean**
 14 **woman who started around the same time as I did.**
 15 Q. You weren't friends with any of the men I have mentioned
 16 or any other men --
 17 **A. I didn't know anyone. I didn't get to know anyone there**
 18 **and I didn't seek to know other people there.**
 19 Q. You left that job after a year, didn't you?
 20 **A. Yes.**
 21 Q. Was there a particular reason, apart from wanting to
 22 move on, that you did leave at that time, associated
 23 with the job, I mean?
 24 **A. I wanted to go back to college, but also, too, I wanted**
 25 **to study, but also, too, I made some complaints when**

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1 Holly House was named as having dinner parties attended
 2 by other staff, external visitors and house parents.
 3 Did you see anything of that type going on, visitors
 4 coming into the homes unchecked, really, where alcohol
 5 was provided for children or others? Is that something
 6 that you were aware of in the year you were there?
 7 **A. No. Visitors were prohibited and, at times, parents**
 8 **would ring up wanting to come to visit. Sometimes they**
 9 **were dissuaded, sometimes they were allowed to attend.**
 10 Q. We also know, of course, in that period, we have
 11 William Hook, who is convicted of sexual offences, he is
 12 a house father there from 1970 to 1978; Patrick Grant is
 13 acquitted in 1978 and he moves to Southvale in 1980. So
 14 we know, at around the time you were there, sexual
 15 offences were being perpetrated against children. In
 16 terms of what you saw or observed, was that something
 17 that would have crossed your mind, as that young
 18 assistant house mother, that that was going on in
 19 Shirley Oaks or in some of the cottages or homes? What
 20 was your knowledge around that at that time?
 21 **A. It was very difficult because most house mothers stayed**
 22 **within their own homes. The only time we would meet**
 23 **others was when we went to pick children up from the**
 24 **school, which was on the complex. Because this whole**
 25 **complex was, for me, quite an unhealthy one. Everything**

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1 **I was leaving. I knew that probably the contract**
 2 **wouldn't have been renewed anyway. Because --**
 3 Q. So you went back to study at that point?
 4 **A. Yes.**
 5 Q. Sorry to move you on. Then you became a councillor,
 6 didn't you, in 1982?
 7 **A. Mmm-hmm.**
 8 Q. What was your motivation to become a councillor?
 9 **A. My motivation to become a councillor is that I wanted to**
 10 **give back something to society. I wanted to be**
 11 **a catalyst for change. I wanted to be a reformer,**
 12 **because, at that time, I was coming in after the Brixton**
 13 **riots, the year after the Brixton riots and the**
 14 **Scarman Report, and I felt that, as a black woman living**
 15 **in Lambeth -- Lambeth had no black councillors. It**
 16 **had -- for me, I saw very few black people in positions**
 17 **of authority in the borough, yet still there was a large**
 18 **proportion of people of Afro-Caribbean and African**
 19 **descent living in the borough and working in the**
 20 **borough.**
 21 Q. We know that you were a councillor between 1982 and you
 22 left in March 1986?
 23 **A. Yes, I did.**
 24 Q. You became, as it was known then, chairman of
 25 the Social Services Committee, and then, in 1986, you

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1 and 32 -- well, how many other members of the council?
 2 Can you remember exactly?
 3 **A. There were 32 of us. 32 of us were surcharged.**
 4 Q. Just dealing with that for the moment, that had the
 5 effect, didn't it, of many councillors leaving at once
 6 which must, do you think now, looking back, have
 7 impacted on councillors' ability to take forward the
 8 service and strategy for children for the period
 9 thereafter?
 10 **A. It would have had an impact because we -- part of**
 11 **the process -- all of the departments in the council**
 12 **developed reports. The senior officers, the directors,**
 13 **produced reports looking at the impact of the cuts and**
 14 **the -- in the budgets that would have had to be made,**
 15 **had we agreed a rate capping budget, and we had those,**
 16 **and against that backdrop, we had a situation where**
 17 **there was lots of youth disaffection, there was youth --**
 18 **high youth unemployment, there was an organisation which**
 19 **I felt hadn't had the benefit of the experience of**
 20 **the councillors that had been elected with a large**
 21 **mandate from the people of Lambeth to deliver services**
 22 **and to improve the quality of their lives.**
 23 Q. Looking back at that now, is there anything that you
 24 would have done differently, in terms of the position
 25 being arrived at that a number of you were disqualified

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1 **A. When I became chair of Social Services, I wanted to be**
 2 **a catalyst for change. I wanted to be a reformist,**
 3 **because I was an activist, and I understood what**
 4 **a proactive public policy was, and I also, too,**
 5 **understood how that public policy needed to be embedded**
 6 **right across areas of the service and how it had to be**
 7 **protected, but also, too, how you could champion it with**
 8 **new ideas and innovation.**
 9 **Therefore, I felt that it was necessary to be**
 10 **inclusive, to be inclusive in the sense of making sure**
 11 **that community members were co-opted onto committees,**
 12 **that they understood what was going on within the**
 13 **council, for me to have an open door in Social Services**
 14 **where people could reach me, where they could come and**
 15 **see me if they wanted to. I also, too, wanted to have**
 16 **an independent voice of the child, because we were --**
 17 Q. (Overspeaking) and you deal with that.
 18 **A. -- dealing with child sexual abuse, so I wanted to give**
 19 **children an independent voice. I also, too -- not just**
 20 **on committees, but also, too, in care. So there were**
 21 **a group of young people who came to me who wanted to**
 22 **have a conference about being in care. I supported them**
 23 **financially, to make sure that that happened. I also,**
 24 **too, wanted to make sure that the voice of the child was**
 25 **heard on our communities.**

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1 in 1986? If you had the chance again, would you rather
 2 have avoided that outcome?
 3 **A. Well, I'm not sure I would have avoided that outcome,**
 4 **because I was elected on a mandate to deliver services**
 5 **and to provide services to the people of Lambeth,**
 6 **services to improve the quality of their lives, not to**
 7 **go back to the status quo before Scarman because Scarman**
 8 **made lots of recommendations in relation to housing, in**
 9 **relation to jobs, in relation to ethnicity and**
 10 **diversity, and that cost money in relation to**
 11 **Social Services, in relation to the youth services, and**
 12 **that also, too, cost money. So with a reduced budget --**
 13 **I don't know how on earth, with a reduced budget of over**
 14 **£60 million, the council could have carried out its**
 15 **statutory duties, but also, too, its commitment to the**
 16 **electorate in Lambeth.**
 17 Q. When you were chair of Social Services, you say at
 18 paragraph 12 of your statement:
 19 "I do recollect initiating within my area of
 20 responsibility a number of reforms designed to give
 21 a voice to service users, including children and young
 22 people and local residents."
 23 Can you amplify that for us, please, how you wanted
 24 to be able to give a voice to service users and what
 25 that meant in practice?

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1 Q. Can I just ask you there, the unions, you say later in
 2 your statement, were, on occasion, actively hostile to
 3 decisions that challenged long-established methods of
 4 working and existing patterns of employment, and you
 5 say:
 6 "On occasion, in my view, they put the interests of
 7 their members above the interests of service users and
 8 the wider community."
 9 Can you elaborate briefly on that for us? What do
 10 you mean by that?
 11 **A. One example --**
 12 Q. (Overspeaking).
 13 **A. I can't hear you.**
 14 Q. It is paragraph 16 of your statement, if that helps?
 15 **A. Paragraph 16?**
 16 Q. Yes, 16, where you say:
 17 "The unions, on occasions, put the interests of
 18 their members above the interests of service users and
 19 the wider community."
 20 What do you mean by that?
 21 **A. What I meant by that is, and I will give you an example,**
 22 **and that will probably sum it up, is that, with the**
 23 **closure of Shirley Oaks, I wanted to close Shirley Oaks,**
 24 **I wanted to close Shirley Oaks for a number of reasons,**
 25 **because I had worked there, I had seen what it was,**

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<p>1 I thought it was too far out of the borough, I felt that 2 Lambeth's children needed to be closer to the community 3 in the borough. It was an expensive operation. It was 4 not cost effective in terms of its delivery to the 5 children of the borough. The children weren't 6 necessarily benefiting from that institution. I felt 7 that I had to push through that closure. 8 I made a case for the closure at the committee, my 9 Social Services Committee, and I was supported by that. 10 I made a case to the council, and I was supported by 11 that, to bring that forward, because it was something 12 that was lurking in the background before I became 13 a councillor, and it was not implemented, and I was 14 hell-bent on implementing that closure. 15 So there was a consultation process with the unions, 16 with staff, in the residential sector, and the unions 17 didn't like the idea that I was closing that service 18 because they felt that it was impinging on the jobs of 19 their members. 20 There was a strategy developed as to how workers 21 would be disseminated in other areas of the service 22 around the borough and in other establishments, but they 23 weren't having any of that, and they decided that they 24 would strike, and they made it very, very difficult 25 because, for me, I felt it was improving -- we were</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 85</p>	<p>1 looking at improving the quality of care of those 2 children, and it wasn't about political expediency, it 3 wasn't about union connections, it was about people who 4 were paid employees of the council delivering the 5 service, making sure that the service impacted on the 6 young people that they were meant to be caring for, and 7 that we looked at innovative ways of working with 8 children in the future. 9 Q. Sorry to cut you off there, but when that discussion 10 happened, we have seen reference in 1998, looking back 11 at the closure of homes, to discussion about whether 12 there was sexualised behaviour of children. Was that 13 anything as a phrase that you came across or understood 14 to be a concern around children in Shirley Oaks? I'm 15 not asking you to comment on any specific case or 16 anything, just the generality of that statement, 17 "sexualised behaviour of children". Was that something, 18 as a phrase, that you had heard of in the context of 19 Shirley Oaks at the time? 20 A. No, it wasn't, because it didn't exist in the home that 21 I was part of, and I have never mixed with anyone who 22 told me that they had such an experience or knew of 23 anything in relation to sexual abuse or -- et cetera. 24 Q. Your concern around the treatment of children was the 25 emotional neglect that you have described at the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 86</p>
<p>1 beginning of your evidence today? 2 A. Yes. 3 Q. Let me ask you then about Social Services Subcommittee 4 and its role, and you deal with that at paragraph 13 5 onwards in your statement. The role of the subcommittee 6 you express, you felt, was there to challenge, to 7 discuss strategy, and for interaction with the officers, 8 wasn't it? 9 A. My role -- I saw my role as chair of Social Services as 10 one of challenge, as one of developing services, but 11 also, too, as one of oversight. So, for me, my main 12 role was oversight and challenge and delivery and 13 implementation. So there were areas for me that I felt 14 was important for me to drive home to officers. 15 Q. We asked you, indeed, to look at some of the decisions 16 made, and we don't expect you to remember, of course, 17 with the passage of time, the details of cases, but as 18 an example, you were asked to look at a case where you 19 used a casting vote not to approve the adoption of 20 a child where the mother was in custody. Now, again, 21 you can't comment in detail on that case, but the 22 decisions for you around that, what were the 23 decision-making qualities around that? 24 A. Because I haven't been provided with any information 25 that actually would have helped me to give you an answer</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 87</p>	<p>1 in relation to why I had arrived at that decision, it's 2 very difficult for me to explain, but all I can say to 3 you is that every decision that I have made as the chair 4 of Social Services on any committee in relation to 5 children was done with the best interests of 6 the children and the children's interests were always 7 paramount for me. 8 Q. Indeed, for you, the principle of trying, where 9 possible, to rehabilitate with family members was 10 important, wasn't it? 11 A. Rehabilitation was very important for me because I felt 12 that it was better to have the child rehabilitated with 13 its natural parent and to support and facilitate the 14 process that allowed that to happen. 15 Q. Some of the evidence that's been read in suggests 16 that -- Ms Pauline Lawrence talks about the unions and 17 you potentially holding sway, et cetera. If we look at 18 the Tyra Henry report, we can actually see the 19 statistics, actually, about how the subcommittee 20 operated, because I think you gave evidence, didn't you, 21 to the Tyra Henry inquiry? 22 A. Yes, I did. 23 Q. Can I ask, Mr Hyde, to have LAM028613_138-139. We see 24 at paragraph 3 the report writer says: 25 "Throughout the period we are concerned with</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 88</p>

<p>1 Lambeth's Social Services Committee had a Cases 2 Subcommittee which was empowered, among other things, to 3 act in connection with matters concerning individual 4 children in care." 5 If we go to the bottom of page 139, we see the 6 report refers to David Pope giving evidence and he gave 7 evidence that from 1982 to 1986 -- if we could have the 8 next page, Mr Hyde, which is 140. He gave evidence that 9 "From 1982 to 1986, of 326 cases presented to the 10 subcommittee, officers' recommendations were not 11 accepted in nine cases. This is hardly a picture of 12 excessive interventionism." 13 Lady Boateng, this supports the suggestion that, far 14 from being overinvolved and overturning decisions, they 15 look to be the statistics. Does that look right to you, 16 when you see them recorded there? 17 A. Yes, they were the statistics, because I took my role as 18 chair of Social Services quite seriously. It wasn't 19 a role of rubber stamping. It wasn't a role of spending 20 one hour in a committee. Because we were dealing with 21 very difficult cases that needed to be heard quite 22 thoroughly. I expected thorough reports, I expected 23 reports that were in a position -- which allowed me and 24 my members to be in a position to make an informed 25 decision at every level. Sometimes those decisions came</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 89</p>	<p>1 into conflict with the social workers because they 2 expected members to rubber stamp, especially when, 3 sometimes, we don't have enough information placed 4 before us, sometimes when they, themselves, can't 5 explain why they had come to the conclusion that they 6 came to. 7 I might be accused of grilling and being hard on 8 individuals, but that was the role of oversight, that 9 was the role of challenge, that was the role of somebody 10 who was prepared to battle for what one felt was right. 11 Q. Pausing there, can we have page 141 and page 142 of 12 the document, the Tyra Henry report. We see 13 Sir Stephen Sedley's recommendations there go further to 14 say: 15 "A formal channel needs to be created and maintained 16 from social workers through the central directorate to 17 the Social Services Committee and its Cases Subcommittee 18 for the resolution of difficulties which cannot be 19 overcome at area level and for the reconsideration of 20 problems affecting individual children's safety or 21 well-being which are particularly complicated or 22 intractable." 23 So the recommendation and discussion around 24 maintaining active and interventionist Cases 25 Subcommittee; do you see that?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 90</p>
<p>1 A. Yes. Because sometimes there were times when we could 2 have intervened, there were times when we could have 3 probably been more proactive, but because -- we were 4 only allowed to deal with the cases that were placed in 5 front of us by the officers, we couldn't deal with cases 6 that weren't placed before us, so therefore -- 7 Q. Sorry, Lady Boateng, I'm not rushing but I'm moving us 8 along because we have a lot to go through. If we hear 9 the Cases Subcommittee was too involved or you were too 10 interventionist, indeed this would appear to suggest the 11 reverse, if anything, in that only nine recommendations 12 have, in fact, been overturned by you or your committee? 13 A. Yes, and they would have been informed decisions taken 14 with the information that we had placed in front of us. 15 Q. On that position of information placed in front of you, 16 again, you don't have all the case records or files, so 17 I'm asking you to deal with this as a point of 18 principle. You were looking, on one occasion, about 19 whether one of our core participants -- sorry, one of 20 our ciphred individuals, LA-A23, should have been 21 removed from secure accommodation. If you were asked to 22 look at that, would you have been given all of the care 23 files and everything that was relevant to that decision, 24 or not? Would you just be given a report or summary? 25 A. Very often, you would be given a report with</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 91</p>	<p>1 a recommendation. 2 Q. So you wouldn't automatically see all the discussions, 3 all the assessments forensically, what had been said to 4 whom about the child? You would get the top line, as it 5 were? 6 A. No. In the Cases Subcommittee, sometimes we have social 7 workers come to present the cases themselves. 8 Q. Paragraph 18 of your statement, please. You set out you 9 established a rota of visits which gave all members of 10 the Social Services Committee an opportunity to visit 11 and familiarise themselves with the establishments and 12 projects about which they were receiving reports and 13 making decisions. Do you know how many of your fellow 14 councillors took that on? Did you ever have discussions 15 with them about visiting homes, or not really? 16 A. Yes, because in the committee, members would return to 17 make commentary in relation to the homes that they had 18 visited. So if they saw something that disturbed them, 19 then they would either raise that with me or the 20 director or they would mention it at the committee 21 itself. 22 Q. Which homes did you visit yourself? 23 A. When I became chair of Social Services, I was quite keen 24 to visit all of the establishments in the borough, not 25 necessarily children's services, but adult services,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 92</p>

1 services for the mentally challenged, services which
 2 were supported by us in the community, voluntary sector
 3 organisations, and I would -- and (inaudible) as well.
 4 I would always go with the director in tow, or the
 5 assistant director, depending on which service I was
 6 visiting. So if I was visiting children's homes, it
 7 would probably be the director and the assistant
 8 director who had responsibility. **Thelma Lavender for
 9 our children's services.**
 10 Q. You would go with her, with Thelma Lavender?
 11 **A. I never went to a home on my own. I think the only time
 12 I went to a home on my own was when I took
 13 Nelson Mandela's daughter and her husband to visit one
 14 of our children's homes, because I was looking after her
 15 at the time in London and I felt it would be a good
 16 boost for the children to have the daughter of
 17 Nelson Mandela in their presence, and that's the only
 18 time that I actually went, and that was informed --
 19 I informed the authorities and everyone knew about that.**
 20 Q. In terms of our case study homes, we know you obviously
 21 worked in Shirley Oaks, but Southvale, Angell Road,
 22 Monkton Street, or Ivy House, might you have visited any
 23 of those homes or can't you remember with the passage of
 24 time?
 25 **A. I can't remember all the homes I visited over the**

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1 **drag the Director of Social Services to Southwark to
 2 discuss a member of staff's application form to
 3 Southwark. It doesn't make sense, and it certainly
 4 doesn't make sense -- a useful -- it doesn't make sense
 5 and it wasn't a good way of using my time.**
 6 Q. To be clear, the inquiry knows that Mr Carroll's
 7 disciplinary was in August 1986 -- July 1986. By then,
 8 was his knowledge -- it was knowledge -- Lambeth's
 9 knowledge of the conviction. By then, you had left
 10 working and ceased being part of Lambeth Council; that's
 11 right?
 12 **A. I left Lambeth Council in March 1986, and I think
 13 Mr Carroll's application forms were well after I had
 14 left the council. So I can't understand why I would be
 15 linked to supporting his application, when I hadn't even
 16 lived in the borough -- after probably April 1987, I had
 17 probably left the borough. So there was no need for me
 18 to associate myself with anything to do with
 19 Social Services. When I left, that was the end of it.
 20 I was surcharged and I wasn't allowed to participate in
 21 any area of local government.**
 22 Q. In terms of any potential improper lobbying on behalf of
 23 foster carers by councillors, were you, when you were at
 24 the Social Services Committee, ever in support of an
 25 application to foster in that way, or lobbying on behalf

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1 **passage of time, but I know, at some stage, I would have
 2 visited quite a lot of homes.**
 3 Q. Did you know Michael or June Carroll? Michael Carroll
 4 was at Angell Road?
 5 **A. I didn't really know Michael Carroll or his wife.
 6 I didn't really familiarise myself with spouses or
 7 partners of people who worked for Social Services.**
 8 Q. Did you ever know, while you were at Lambeth, that
 9 Michael Carroll had a schedule 1 conviction for sexually
 10 assaulting a child?
 11 **A. No. It was never, ever drawn to my attention, and
 12 I wouldn't have known because I don't involve myself in
 13 the process of the human resource process unless
 14 I really had to.**
 15 Q. The inquiry has heard evidence this morning from
 16 a witness suggesting that you had a meeting with
 17 Southwark Social Services in which Michael Carroll's
 18 application to foster two children was discussed and
 19 pressure was being put on Southwark Social Services in
 20 relation to that application. Is that a meeting that
 21 you recognise or have ever been part of?
 22 **A. I have never been a part of any meeting which discussed
 23 Michael Carroll or his wife or any other application for
 24 fostering and adoption from any member of staff of
 25 Lambeth. I find it quite absurd. Because I would not**

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1 of any foster carer in any context? Is that something
 2 you would do as a councillor?
 3 **A. I would never lobby, because it would have been
 4 a conflict of interest, and therefore it would be
 5 totally wrong for me to do that.**
 6 Q. What was the role, do you know, of the Lambeth Fostering
 7 Association? What was its role and remit? I ask
 8 because, could individuals, via that association around
 9 placements or generally, have been lobbying for various
 10 positions for foster carers or not?
 11 **A. I wouldn't know because I wasn't involved at that level
 12 in those organisations.**
 13 Q. In terms of any meeting -- I don't want to go into
 14 detail with it, but with Southwark Social Services, do
 15 you remember in your statement you speak of one time
 16 when you went to Southwark to discuss a Lambeth child
 17 and an allegation of sexual abuse in relation to that
 18 child? I don't want to go into the details of the case,
 19 but that's the only time you remember having a heated
 20 meeting within Southwark?
 21 **A. Yes. That emanated from my role as a member of
 22 the Secure Accommodation Review Board. I was a member
 23 of that, which was a national board that reviewed secure
 24 accommodation cases across Britain. We went to visit
 25 one of the homes -- I think it was Orchard Lodge --**

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<p>1 which was run by Southwark Social Services, and I was 2 talking to one of the young people there, because we 3 would talk to the young people, especially those young 4 people who were in all different cares. 5 So, for me, I was interested in the children from 6 Lambeth who were in that establishment. So I was 7 approached by a child who mentioned that something had 8 happened to him. I raised it with the director. 9 Q. Thank you. I want to ask you now about Ivy House, 10 which, of course, is a Lambeth home. We know from 11 various documents, and the inquiry has heard, the chair 12 and panel have heard, there was an investigation, 13 a first investigation, into an allegation LA-A26 made 14 about sexual abuse in Ivy House Home, and the parents 15 weren't happy with that investigation, and you were 16 contacted. Can you confirm you both spoke to and dealt 17 with the parents and secured a second management 18 investigation that the inquiry has heard about, 19 a thorough investigation by a panel with experts; is 20 that right? 21 A. Yes. The first I heard of this case, no-one in the 22 department had brought it to my attention, and certainly 23 it was never brought to the attention of any other 24 member that I know of, including Stephen Bubb, who had 25 responsibility for homes, children's homes, and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 97</p>	<p>1 I instituted that inquiry because after the parent came 2 to me, I was quite distressed at what I had heard, and 3 I spoke to the director and I asked him to take action, 4 and the action was to look at the matter and to find out 5 whether it was necessary to suspend the individual 6 because I wasn't happy that the individual was still 7 working within the department. 8 Q. Indeed, we have seen a memo where David Pope tells you, 9 in a telephone conversation, that the individual has 10 been suspended; is that what you were told at the time? 11 A. And he then confirmed that the individual was suspended. 12 Q. He may, in fact, have been on so-called special leave. 13 As far as you were concerned, is there a difference 14 between being suspended and special leave, or were you 15 more concerned that the person wasn't at the home while 16 the investigation was going on? 17 A. Well, I was concerned that the person should not have 18 been at the home. I wasn't interested in whether it was 19 called a special leave or suspended, because obviously 20 within each department of the council, they have their 21 way in which they deal with these matters from a human 22 resources position. But I was quite clear that he 23 should have been removed from his post and not had 24 anything to do with the home whatsoever. 25 Q. Can I ask you now to deal with items from 31 onwards in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 98</p>
<p>1 your statement. You speak there or refer to a policy 2 known as, later on, the same-race placement policy dated 3 after when you ceased to be chair but building on the 4 work earlier on when you had oversight of 5 Lambeth Council policy in this regard. You set out at 6 paragraph 33 what you were concerned about for children 7 in care in terms of their ethnic identity and culture 8 being ignored. When it came to placing children in 9 foster care or in adoption, what was your concern, 10 insofar as possible, for black children? 11 A. My concern was that it was important for the black child 12 to have an experience which allowed it to function in 13 the fact that it had to live in a racist society. 14 Q. In terms of looking for families, what did that require 15 from the families, in terms of understanding and an 16 approach to looking after a child? 17 A. The approach was that Lambeth would seek to recruit 18 a number of black foster and adoptive parents, because 19 it wasn't the case in the past, certainly not before 20 I was chair of Social Services, and it was quite 21 imperative that in a borough of such racial – with such 22 racial diversity, that we look at how we can use the 23 black family as a resource for the black child. 24 Q. You were still saying, weren't you, that it had to be in 25 the best interests of the child, that it was one of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 99</p>	<p>1 a number of factors. If you look at paragraph 36, how 2 would you describe looking at the child's best interests 3 overall? 4 A. It isn't about what I think; it's about what many 5 inquiries – the Scarman, the Tyra Henry report, the 6 Race Relations Act of 1971, they all bore out the 7 importance of black children having a cultural – their 8 own cultural identity being respected and reinforced so 9 that they, themselves, develop the life skills that 10 allows them to deal with living in a racist society. 11 You cannot get that from a white family. It's important 12 that we tried, at least, to engage as many black parents 13 as possible, not in the sense that one wanted to keep 14 the children languishing in care, but because it was 15 important to prevent any further damage from later on 16 down the line, especially when you were dealing with 17 children who were already in care who were already 18 subjected to damage, to allow them to have some form of 19 stability within their own social and cultural 20 environment. 21 Q. If it was the case that some children were in 22 residential care for a long period of time, that was 23 nothing to do with the implementation of this policy, 24 where it was simply getting a greater range of foster 25 carers to be available potentially in the interests of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 100</p>

1 each child; is that the position?
 2 **A. Yes, and it was also, too, the fact that -- there's no**
 3 **denying that black children were more harder to place.**
 4 **Every local authority in this country still finds it**
 5 **difficult to place black children, and it's a sort of --**
 6 **it's a very difficult balance, but it's actually**
 7 **providing that balance that allows you to weigh up what**
 8 **is in the best interests of the child, but also, too,**
 9 **what is in the best interests of the child's personality**
 10 **and its long-term interests and developing itself as an**
 11 **adult worthy of manoeuvring and managing itself in the**
 12 **sort of society that we live in, and one sees that today**
 13 **with the present situation that we have seen over the**
 14 **past weeks.**
 15 MS LANGDALE: Thank you. I have no further questions. The
 16 chair and panel may have.
 17 **A. Thank you.**
 18 THE CHAIR: Thank you. I will ask my colleagues.
 19 Ms Sharpling?
 20 MS SHARPLING: No, nothing from me, thank you very much.
 21 THE CHAIR: Mr Frank?
 22 MR FRANK: No, thank you.
 23 THE CHAIR: And Sir Malcolm?
 24 PROF SIR MALCOLM EVANS: No, thank you.
 25 THE CHAIR: I'd like to thank the witness. We have no

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1 chief executive at Lambeth Council?
 2 **A. I joined in March 1995 and I left in February 2000.**
 3 Q. You set out at paragraph 22 what the role of the CEO
 4 involves. We see there you speak firstly of appointing
 5 a managing senior team of directors. I'm going to ask
 6 to relate this specifically to Lambeth now. So, as far
 7 as you were concerned, when you first became chief
 8 executive, it's the case, isn't it, that you had
 9 a Director of Social Services, David Pope?
 10 **A. Mmm-hmm. That's correct.**
 11 Q. You had an environment director, Paul Duffield; yes?
 12 **A. That's right.**
 13 Q. But no education, housing, finance or law director?
 14 **A. That's correct.**
 15 Q. So there was no lawyer involved for Lambeth Council at
 16 that time?
 17 **A. No. There would have been assistants who were in the**
 18 **legal team, but there was no director of law at that**
 19 **time, until we recruited a new director at the beginning**
 20 **of 1996.**
 21 Q. So one of your first roles was to fill those posts,
 22 which you did by 1996?
 23 **A. That's correct. It was obviously the most urgent and**
 24 **pressing task. Lambeth is an organisation of 10,000**
 25 **people then, a turnover of 900 million, and it had no**

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1 further questions.
 2 **A. Thank you, chair.**
 3 **(The witness withdrew)**
 4 MS LANGDALE: Chair, is this a convenient moment to break
 5 until 3.00 pm?
 6 (2.46 pm)
 7 (A short break)
 8 (3.00 pm)
 9 MS LANGDALE: Chair, may I call the next witness, please.
 10 DAME HEATHER RABBATTS (affirmed)
 11 Examination by MS LANGDALE
 12 MS LANGDALE: Can you give us your name, please?
 13 **A. Heather Rabbatts.**
 14 Q. You have helpfully prepared for the inquiry a statement
 15 dated 24 June 2020. Do you have that statement near
 16 you?
 17 **A. I do.**
 18 Q. Can you confirm for us, please, that the contents are
 19 true and accurate, as far as you're concerned?
 20 **A. I do.**
 21 Q. A number of questions arising from it, if I may. Can we
 22 begin, please, at paragraph 22, when you speak about
 23 what the role of chief executive entails. Over what
 24 period of time were you the chief executive of
 25 Lambeth Council? What were the dates that you were

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1 **senior leadership across crucial areas of service**
 2 **delivery and at the corporate centre, and we began**
 3 **a process to recruit a high-calibre team, which was one**
 4 **of the absolute requirements to bring in a much greater**
 5 **capacity of leadership in the organisation, and, as**
 6 **Elizabeth Appleby noted in her report, there was nobody**
 7 **internally in the organisation who could possibly step**
 8 **up to these challenges.**
 9 Q. You set out, at paragraph 22, your role was to set
 10 a vision and direction for the whole of the organisation
 11 in line with the council's strategic direction to be
 12 able to envision the organisation as a whole. Do you
 13 see that?
 14 **A. Yes.**
 15 Q. How were you, as a chief executive, equipped to do that?
 16 How reliant are you on each individual director and how
 17 do you see the organisation as a whole?
 18 **A. So when I arrived, it was very unusual because I didn't**
 19 **have a chief officer team. But, clearly, the**
 20 **organisation had to urgently attend to a whole series of**
 21 **demanding issues. So what we did was to work with the**
 22 **managers and directors I had, with middle managers,**
 23 **talking to people, working with politicians, to come up**
 24 **with an approach that I felt would help to turn Lambeth**
 25 **away from the spiral of decline and absolutely turn it**

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1 forwards to progress. So my approach was very much to
 2 work with as many people as I could, both inside the
 3 council, people receiving services, to come up with that
 4 vision, to come up with an approach and a strategy which
 5 would, as I say, attend to some of the very pressing
 6 issues that Lambeth was facing at that time.
 7 Q. When you talk about working with politicians to evolve
 8 strategic direction of the council, what politicians are
 9 you talking about?
 10 A. So in 1994, Lambeth, which had historically been
 11 a Labour-run authority for many, many decades, became
 12 a hung authority. There was no power sharing between
 13 the Labour group, the Liberal Democrats or the
 14 Conservatives, so I had three leaders. There was no
 15 power-sharing agreement, but there was a way of working
 16 that we devised across all of those political parties,
 17 and so I worked with the three leaders and, indeed, some
 18 of the leading spokespeople across different service
 19 areas, to try to put in place what I felt were the
 20 proper parameters between politicians and the executive
 21 and also to begin to look at how we addressed the
 22 strategic ambitions of the authority and how they could
 23 be translated into executive action.
 24 Q. How much harder was that with the hung council?
 25 A. It was very hard. It was really difficult, because

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1 unlawfully. It wasn't collecting its rates. It had
 2 huge numbers of public interest reports because it did
 3 not abide by the requirements of a public service
 4 organisation, and that was very much inspired by the
 5 politicians during that time and also, in particular, an
 6 ideological view that there should be a system of
 7 tripartite government, or local government, which meant
 8 that the trade unions were heavily involved and there
 9 was a real undermining of any sense of managerial
 10 leadership or managerial authority.
 11 So people weren't disciplined. If you did try and
 12 discipline anybody, there would be a grievance, there
 13 would be an IT, and there were hundreds of ITs
 14 outstanding, huge absence levels. So there was
 15 a breakdown, a fundamental breakdown, in managerial
 16 authority in Lambeth, and that had been driven out of,
 17 as I say, the ideological framework and the political
 18 interference that had gone prior to my involvement.
 19 Q. When you say "ITs", you mean industrial tribunal
 20 hearings?
 21 A. I do mean industrial tribunal hearings.
 22 Q. You refer in your statement to how trade unions, in
 23 effect, substantially undermined managerial authority.
 24 Do you mean in the way that workers' rights were
 25 implemented or challenged, or ...?

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1 you're trying all the time to ensure that you can get
 2 a sense of consensus so that you can work constructively
 3 with the democratically elected councillors but also
 4 absolutely impressing upon them the urgency that we had
 5 to really approach what was a damning report by
 6 Elizabeth Appleby in terms of what needed to be done.
 7 I think one of my remarks would be that, in terms of
 8 those leaders who were new councillors to the authority,
 9 there was a very much enlightened attitude. There were
 10 some councillors who were involved in Lambeth who came
 11 from some of the previous decades, and they took more
 12 work to bring on site.
 13 Q. Were councillors paid at that time or still unpaid,
 14 apart from expenses?
 15 A. No, they were still unpaid apart from expenses.
 16 Q. When did that change? Do you know when that changed?
 17 A. Gosh, that doesn't change until after I've left, I'm
 18 pretty certain until after I've left local government.
 19 Q. Did you feel at that time politics got in the way of
 20 delivering services or decisions that should be made for
 21 those receiving services?
 22 A. I think Elizabeth Appleby's analysis is hugely accurate
 23 and really shines a light on what was decades of
 24 political mismanagement. This had gone on for over
 25 20 years. Lambeth was behaving, in many ways,

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1 A. I think if a manager tried to take discipline action or
 2 tried to challenge, for example, the very high levels of
 3 sickness absence, he would be met, or she would be met,
 4 by trade union representatives. They would be involved
 5 in grievances, you'd get bogged down in bureaucracy.
 6 Those trade unions had access to the politicians, and it
 7 would be that management was very much cowed, I believe.
 8 There was an atmosphere of fear of people being bullied
 9 and harassed so that there was a failure to act when
 10 faced with a service failure.
 11 Q. You say in your statement you had a five-year contract,
 12 and you made it clear from the outset you did not want
 13 to seek a longer term. Why was that?
 14 A. I knew, when I went into Lambeth, having been a chief
 15 exec of two previous local authorities, that this was
 16 going to be the toughest and most demanding role I'd
 17 ever taken. I think, when you go into an organisation,
 18 particularly as a change agent, which is what I was
 19 recruited to do, to try and turn an organisation that
 20 many people believed was beyond redemption and to try
 21 and turn it around, that that, in my view, was going to
 22 take at least five years, and also to bring on board
 23 a chief officer team who I felt could succeed me once
 24 I left. But I knew how tough it was going to be and the
 25 energy required to get Lambeth turned around was one

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<p>1 that I felt I could do for five years and then it would 2 require a new, fresh set of legs, if you like, and 3 a different leader going forward. 4 Q. You say your objective was to bring about sufficient 5 change to stem the downward spiral of decline and chaos 6 and set Lambeth on an organisational path to recovery. 7 You say that was substantially achieved. Can I just 8 unpack what you mean by "achievement", because we have 9 heard, and we will discuss later, that in children's 10 services there were still massive problems and, of 11 course, they went into special measures shortly after 12 you left as chief executive. So when you say 13 "substantially achieve", what do you mean, 14 "organisational path to recovery being substantially 15 achieved", paragraph 23? 16 A. So I think that what I'm particularly referring to -- 17 and of course we will, as you say, come on to 18 Social Services shortly. I was chief executive of 19 a multifunctional, multiservice organisation, so I had 20 accountability, of course, across all of the areas of 21 Lambeth, as well as how Lambeth faced into its 22 partnerships with health, with police, with the private 23 sector, all of which were non-existent when I arrived. 24 I think, as my statement later on cites, across many of 25 the areas -- so we had huge numbers of schools in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 109</p>	<p>1 special measures, for example. When I first arrived, it 2 looked like education would be taken away from the local 3 authority's responsibility. By the time I left, we did 4 not have schools in special measures. 5 The district auditor, in their reports, given that 6 accounts hadn't been reconciled for many years, was 7 charting steady progress, and we were making, I think, 8 real improvements in terms of many of the other facets 9 of local authorities' responsibility, in housing, in 10 education, at the corporate centre and I think much 11 better partnership working with our colleagues in 12 health, with police, and of course the private sector, 13 where we began major regeneration. The private sector 14 wouldn't even talk to Lambeth when I arrived. 15 Q. You also set up, didn't you, a corporate antifraud team 16 dealing with fraud being committed, especially in 17 housing benefit, et cetera, so you were also dealing 18 with that? 19 A. Yes. In terms of the Appleby Report, she particularly 20 cites the appalling mess and the scale of fraud that was 21 taking place. As one of my first measures, I brought 22 in -- I put in place a corporate antifraud team, which 23 reported directly to me, and that began an intensive 24 programme of identifying fraud, dealing with it, as well 25 as putting in place preventative measures, and housing</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 110</p>
<p>1 benefit was a major area of concern. The district 2 auditor had highlighted those concerns in many reports 3 and we began that programme of dealing with that and it 4 led to, you know, huge savings of over 18 million in 5 housing benefit fraud, it also led to prosecutions, 6 including prosecutions of a few councillors. 7 Q. Can I ask you now about the relationship with the 8 police, because, of course, in terms of child protection 9 and working together, a local authority's relationship 10 with the police is really important? 11 A. Yes. 12 Q. In your time at Lambeth, how do you say -- I will come 13 to talk about Middleton and CHILE later. What was the 14 relationship, what did it look like? Where were the 15 points of contact and how did it seem to be working, as 16 far as you were concerned, on the ground, when you got 17 there? 18 A. So there were three borough commanders in Lambeth as 19 well as, obviously, a relationship to senior levels of 20 the Metropolitan Police. That's particularly because 21 Lambeth was the murder capital of the country. There 22 were huge concerns around drugs and it had one of 23 the highest young offending rates again in the country. 24 I think it is also fair to say that, when I arrived, 25 there was suspicion by many councillors towards the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 111</p>	<p>1 police. There wasn't a constructive working 2 relationship with the police. It was, again, an area 3 that had been part of this ideological positioning of 4 historic Labour councillors, and so I remember in my 5 early days meeting with the borough commanders to begin 6 to talk about how we could work on issues like community 7 safety and building a different relationship to ensure 8 that there was respect on both sides, as well as how we 9 could improve the working relationships that are 10 absolutely required between a local authority and 11 policing, not just in child protection but across the 12 myriad other issues that we were also trying to deal 13 with. 14 Q. At paragraph 74 of your statement, you set out the major 15 crisis in the community care budget, which was overspent 16 by mid year, corrected that by the end of the financial 17 year, and you move on to say that David Pope worked to 18 secure these reductions, but the overspend in the adult 19 care budget was something from which he could not 20 recover nor, given some of the issues, did he wish to 21 remain. You describe there, was there a loss of 22 confidence in David Pope by senior members at this time? 23 A. Yes, there was. I mean, to have your community care 24 budget basically fully committed -- I think this issue 25 came up in my first four months -- obviously was</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 112</p>

1 absolutely shocking that it occurred. But given
 2 Lambeth's history of not really having any grips on its
 3 finances, it may be one shouldn't have been so
 4 surprised. But, clearly, this was a huge issue. We're
 5 trying to deal with putting in place major reductions so
 6 that there isn't a council tax increase the following
 7 year, which was a political priority shared across all
 8 the parties, and then we have this crisis in adult care.
 9 So we have to focus on what is required to bring the
 10 Social Services budget back into line, and that involves
 11 real reductions. As I mentioned in my statement, that
 12 involved talking to home carers and telling them that
 13 they had to no longer provide services to people who
 14 could make their cups of tea, who were 70, but they
 15 would have to not do that and it would be on those who
 16 were more frail and in their 80s. So it was a real --
 17 the real impact of rationing was huge. There was
 18 obviously a crisis of confidence in David Pope. He
 19 worked hard to try and do what he could, but that crisis
 20 was such that it was agreed that he would leave the
 21 authority.

22 Q. A severance package was negotiated, you say, and he was
 23 also provided with a reference, wasn't he,
 24 in February 1996? Did you provide that reference or do
 25 you not know who provided that?

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1 instantly thrown into crisis. So I have no recollection
 2 of reading the Clough Report in that first few years.
 3 I think what was important was not -- as Appleby said,
 4 not to keep looking back at inquiries but to try to deal
 5 with the issues in hand, and that of course meant
 6 dealing with adult care and all of the frailties that
 7 were across all of the departments.

8 Q. With that in mind, did you read the Harris Report, which
 9 predated your approval?

10 A. The Harris report is referenced in a Central Services,
 11 I think, Committee report, which goes in
 12 about June 1995, and at that point I had looked at that.
 13 Subsequently, I looked at the Harris Report. It also
 14 had been raised by Councillor Anna Tapsell --

15 Q. Shall I take the chronology with you? It looks as
 16 though you wrote a report to Central Services Committee
 17 in July 1995, in which you had said, effectively, there
 18 is no evidence that staff had supported the exchange of
 19 pornographic videos -- sorry, there was no evidence to
 20 support that staff had done that. Were you relying on
 21 what Elizabeth Appleby QC had said in her report?

22 A. I was relying both on Elizabeth Appleby and, in fact,
 23 that there had been a previous report that had said that
 24 there was no evidence and that the housing officers who
 25 had been suspended -- I think one had been dismissed and

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1 A. It would have been a mix between myself and, I suspect,
 2 the legal team, because this would all have been part of
 3 the package that would have been agreed on his
 4 departure. At that time, as I said, in terms of
 5 the particular issues, the overspend, because of
 6 Lambeth's frailty and its financial systems, you
 7 couldn't attribute fault to him in that regard and no
 8 other matters had been drawn to my attention.

9 Q. Would a reference have referred to the fact that he had
 10 kept a schedule 1 offender in post? Would that have
 11 been referred within the reference?

12 A. It wouldn't have been referred in the reference because
 13 (a) I was not aware of that; (b) obviously, when we look
 14 at the Clough Report, this goes back to an issue in
 15 1986, and there is no recommendation in that
 16 Clough Report against David Pope and at that point
 17 Carroll is given a final warning.

18 Q. When did you read the Clough Report? Have you ever read
 19 the Clough Report, I should say?

20 A. I do not remember reading the Clough Report on my
 21 arrival. Obviously it predated me by a few years.
 22 I think it's really important to sort of flag that, you
 23 know, when I arrived in Lambeth, not only was there this
 24 overwhelming chaos, there was no induction pack, many
 25 papers had been shredded prior to my arrival and I was

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1 the others had been brought back into work.

2 Q. So it was your understanding that the earlier report had
 3 found no evidence at all as well?

4 A. That there was no evidence to continue to pursue the
 5 matter. Police had been alerted, and that is obviously
 6 a comment I make back to Anna Tapsell. What was
 7 important, I think, in terms of the Harris Report, and
 8 this is picked up in terms of the whole issues of
 9 culture in Lambeth, is the sense of fear and sexism and
 10 racism that was found in housing which went to the
 11 culture of Lambeth, and that was true not just in
 12 housing but across the organisation. That's why we had
 13 to really focus on changing that culture and
 14 re-introducing a set of values that holds an
 15 organisation, which is a public service organisation,
 16 together.

17 Q. Dealing with Ms Tapsell's email. She emails you
 18 in August 1995, asking if you were aware of evidence of
 19 pornographic material being passed within the housing
 20 directorate and referring to her receiving information
 21 that, over the weekend, pornographic material had been
 22 received. You respond in another email a few days later
 23 to say that you are aware that the material received
 24 comprises a photograph of a partly-clothed woman with
 25 a contact telephone on the reverse of the photograph and

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<p>1 two sheets of photocopied information concerning videos 2 and telephone lines. You say you forwarded that 3 material for the police for their consideration. so any 4 material that she had heard of being received, you had 5 followed up to see what that was, had you? 6 A. I can't remember the background detail to this email, 7 but clearly there was follow-up and I obviously must 8 have had some discussions which led to this email being 9 sent to Councillor Tapsell, and, as I have said, then 10 referred -- referred this matter to the police. 11 Q. In terms of the relationship with the police, clearly 12 the police are investigating criminal investigations. 13 A. Yes. 14 Q. For the council, were there other issues, as you have 15 said, surrounding sexism or generally behaviour of staff 16 between each other? Did you think there was something 17 to investigate from the tone of those emails within the 18 council itself? 19 A. I think, in terms of dealing with issues around racism 20 and sexism and the sense of fear that's referenced in 21 the Harris Report in housing and certainly my experience 22 when I went into Lambeth, in terms of the culture and 23 the lack of managerial grip, it was an issue for us, as 24 senior officers, and for councillors to address. 25 I don't think those are issues around criminal</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 117</p>	<p>1 investigation. 2 Clearly, some of the concerns around the allegations 3 that had been made by Councillor Tapsell were -- 4 warranted the police to be involved, but they didn't 5 find any evidence. 6 Q. Paragraph 111. You say: 7 "Prior to 1998, my main concern with the 8 Social Services department was budgetary performance, 9 upon which I achieved a significant measure of success, 10 such that, by the end of the 1996 financial year, the 11 Social Services department budget was balanced." 12 How was that achieved? What measures brought that 13 about? 14 A. So, as I have just mentioned, in the summer of 1995, the 15 early summer, we had this huge crisis in adult care. We 16 embarked on a major set of budgetary reductions and 17 further rationing of services so that we pulled that 18 budget back into alignment by the end of that year. 19 That was whole range of different initiatives to try and 20 claw back what was an inordinate -- a very challenging 21 situation. 22 By May 1996, we have appointed a new executive 23 Director of Social Services, who obviously is then 24 really sighted and charged with the task of turning 25 around that department, as indeed the other chief</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 118</p>
<p>1 officers I brought in, in terms of education, housing, 2 et cetera. 3 Q. You say that it is in autumn 1998 that you became aware 4 of the circumstances of Michael Carroll's arrest and 5 allegations made against him. In fact, there's a note 6 that the inquiry has seen, June 1998, a briefing note to 7 the chair of Social Services leader and cc'ing yourself, 8 from a Dr Goldie, setting that out. But either way, you 9 say it was around then, June/autumn, that you were 10 clearly aware of the allegations that were being made 11 against him, and you say: 12 "Prior to that point, Social Services department and 13 the children and the families division had given me no 14 undue cause for concern." 15 Pausing there, and my question now is knowing what 16 we know about where children's services were at that 17 point, 1995, when you come in, we know there's a lack of 18 designated social workers and there's an inability to 19 adhere to statutory inspection requirements and a local 20 authority apparently unable to bring about change. Just 21 translating that for a moment, no social workers for 22 children or allocated social workers means no 23 conversations with the children in care, not knowing 24 what's going on with children in care, so very 25 high-level knowledge that there weren't social workers</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 119</p>	<p>1 for children. 1994, we know that the decisions are 2 being made to close the remaining few homes, 3 acknowledging residential homes no longer meet the needs 4 of children, and that's inevitably going to push into 5 foster care and alternative placements and 6 rehabilitation assessments and the like. 1999, we know 7 Lambeth was relying heavily on the independent sector to 8 supplement what was then a struggling in-house foster 9 service. These unallocated cases in Lambeth in the 10 1980s and 1990s particularly suggest that there can't 11 have been sufficiently appropriately qualified field 12 social workers to make sure that all children in foster 13 placements would have had appropriate oversight. So 14 that's where we are at. 15 No child in Lambeth, we know, can be safe with that 16 overview. Of course, December 2000, the SSI report 17 looks at issues of unallocated cases remaining, 18 et cetera, and vetting. 19 So when you say prior to that point hadn't given you 20 undue cause for concern, was there nothing that had, in 21 children's services, put that together for you in the 22 way I just have to set out what an unsafe picture this 23 was for children? 24 A. I think -- let me just sort of take a step back. 25 Lambeth is this organisation which is multi-functional,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 120</p>

<p>1 multi-service in a huge state of crisis across every 2 level, and within that is Social Services. I absolutely 3 was aware that Social Services was in a very fragile 4 state, and when I arrived, as I have said, David Pope 5 was my one of two standing directors. 6 He was, at that time, working to ensure that the 7 previous SSI inspection was being acted upon, as far as 8 conversations with me, but of course that all gets 9 overshadowed by the adult care crisis that takes us 10 through the rest of that year. 11 When I appoint Celia Pyke-Lees as the Director of 12 Social Services, who is a person of significant standing 13 in Social Services, had a very long track record of 14 being a director and in particular areas of children's 15 services and child protection, she was very clear about 16 what she then had to grapple with when she came into 17 office. 18 So I had -- what I was trying to do -- I'm not 19 a statutory Director of Social Services; it absolutely 20 required that professional leadership -- was to bring in 21 a calibre of somebody who could absolutely take what had 22 been a service that we know was in a very fragile state 23 and really drive through the actions to comply with SSI 24 reports and, indeed, the changing modes of operation in 25 terms of child protection as various reports were being</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 121</p>	<p>1 issued further by government. 2 So what we were trying to do was absolutely then 3 focus the work in terms of child protection and adult 4 services, and in terms of social workers, Lambeth, 5 because of its reputation, had really two challenges. 6 It had the highest number of unqualified social workers, 7 it also had huge levels of absence and churn, and to 8 turn that around requires that stability of leadership 9 from your statutory director, so that when you get good 10 social workers, you can keep them, and if you have 11 underperforming social workers, you can deal with it, 12 but also you can recruit social workers to deal with 13 that caseload, and that's what Celia Pyke-Lees was then 14 trying to do when she arrived. 15 Q. Social Services Inspectorate. What was your 16 relationship with them, as chief executive? We know 17 they're conducting inspections. The inquiry is 18 examining what they are finding and what they are doing 19 and of course they finally end up in special measures. 20 Were they coming and telling you, as the chief 21 executive, "This is all going on. You need to be 22 worried about this"? What was their relationship with 23 you? 24 A. No, and I think -- I reference this in my statement, as 25 does Barratt in his independent inquiry. So the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 122</p>
<p>1 1996/1997 SSI report does not flag any major concerns 2 corporately at that point. I do not recall having 3 bilateral meetings with the SSI. The SSI has 4 a relationship with the statutory director, and that 5 report suggests that the new executive director, the new 6 team, were trying to implement the changes that were 7 required to bring Social Services up to speed. So it 8 didn't ring any alarm bells, and you could only be 9 a chief executive in terms of this role and in terms of 10 this authority if you've got a level of trust of your 11 chief officers that they are driving through the change 12 and you have obviously oversight methods to ensure that 13 you can verify that, both external as well as internal. 14 At that point, there was nothing to alert me to the 15 fact that the new executive director was not making 16 progress on their improvement plan that had been put in 17 place. 18 Q. How often are you cc'd to emails or correspondence? 19 Because it happens, doesn't it, where institutions send 20 information and cc. Does that happen regularly for 21 a chief executive? Would you have been informed in that 22 way? 23 A. I think the relationship with the SSI, (a), changed in 24 1998 when we obviously started to deal -- when I get 25 involved particularly with this issue linked to Carroll.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 123</p>	<p>1 I think it's also worth remembering that -- I think it 2 is in 2002 that children's services and adult services 3 are split by the Department of Health, because it's 4 recognised it's an unmanageable remit, and also that 5 children's services are placed much closer to the 6 corporate centre going forward. I think that's been 7 a hugely important step, because, for a chief executive, 8 you just were that distant from the services and, as 9 I said, you relied on your district auditor, you relied 10 on alarms being rung for you by SSI or your performance 11 management system. And nothing was coming to me at that 12 stage to say that these weren't being attended to, and 13 I think, once we had the issues in 1998, and when you 14 look at the management plan that I put in place, one of 15 the things I do is to say that there should be 16 a children's first audit team which is located at the 17 corporate centre, so that a chief executive can have 18 more eyes on this in the future, and also that the SSI 19 had to have a much closer relationship with the 20 corporate centre than it had historically. 21 I think that's changed post 2002, as I've said, but 22 that was not the case in that 1995/96 period. 23 Q. The action plan, the management action plan, you 24 produced, didn't you, on 29 January 1999? 25 A. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 124</p>

1 Q. That was over a year, wasn't it -- well, June 1998,
 2 autumn 1998, when you firmly knew about (inaudible). Do
 3 you think that took too long to formulate? What would
 4 you say about that?
 5 **A. I think, here we are, faced with this awful crisis in**
 6 **children and families. The assistant director is**
 7 **suspended. The director has gone. We are literally**
 8 **trying to hold this service together by our fingernails**
 9 **and we are trying to deal with the daily issues that are**
 10 **beseating those managers and indeed myself.**
 11 **In working through that action plan and coming up**
 12 **with something as comprehensive as that required work**
 13 **with the SSI, with colleagues, within Social Services as**
 14 **well as, of course, with our partners.**
 15 **I think that that -- that's why it took that amount**
 16 **of time, and not least because most of our daily focus**
 17 **was just trying to hold this service together, and**
 18 **I think that the plan that was finally devised was one**
 19 **that was comprehensive. It tried to anticipate some of**
 20 **the issues that the Barratt Report would raise, so that**
 21 **we could try and put in place additional safety for**
 22 **child protection going forward and which would drive the**
 23 **best possible practice that, at that time, we could**
 24 **devise and come up with.**
 25 Q. A key issue arising from the Barratt Report, of course,

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1 **statement attests to, we had meetings to begin to say**
 2 **this was a fundamentally unacceptable practice and that**
 3 **had to change, and there were some managers, and they're**
 4 **referred to in my witness statement, and in the**
 5 **exhibits, such as Eric de Mello, who is one of**
 6 **the people who helped put around change.**
 7 **We put in the antifraud team. They looked at the**
 8 **records. They were wholly inadequate. It wasn't that**
 9 **police checks weren't necessarily done, it was they did**
 10 **not -- they weren't recorded.**
 11 **We fast tracked the checks because, at that point,**
 12 **there was a six-month lag time with the police, and**
 13 **I think the number of foster carers reduced from**
 14 **something like 240 to 160.**
 15 **So that was, I think, one of the clearest examples**
 16 **I can give of how suddenly you're faced with this**
 17 **crisis, you put in place a check, and then you act on**
 18 **it, and I think -- Lambeth had many, many inquiries. It**
 19 **had more public interest reports, but nothing changed,**
 20 **and this was about saying, "We have to act, we have to**
 21 **change", and that's one of the reasons why getting**
 22 **a comprehensive management action plan takes time,**
 23 **because the people you're reliant upon, in terms of**
 24 **crafting that and drafting that, are also the people who**
 25 **are trying to attend to children's safety then.**

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1 the failure to record police checks, wasn't it, around
 2 foster families or individual foster carers, with a very
 3 real effect for children placed in homes where they
 4 hadn't been undertaken. You refer to how third-tier
 5 officers were important in ensuring the effectiveness
 6 around police checks. Can you expand on that for us?
 7 What do you say about how that was functioning in
 8 Lambeth?
 9 **A. When I start to -- I think as Barratt says in his**
 10 **report, once I get involved, I am trying to take a firm**
 11 **grip of this issue. It becomes clear to me, and**
 12 **Pamela Rowe was a third-tier manager, she was not an**
 13 **assistant director. I promoted her into an acting**
 14 **position because she absolutely demonstrated to me that**
 15 **she had a real sense of understanding and insight on**
 16 **child protection. The issue of police checks was**
 17 **flagged in our meetings and that's when I sent in the**
 18 **corporate antifraud team that we talked about at the**
 19 **beginning of this session to look at what was being**
 20 **done.**
 21 **I communicate the fact that we are doing that to the**
 22 **Social Services Inspectorate in a letter to Jo Cleary,**
 23 **which is, again, in my witness statement, to say what it**
 24 **is that we now need to do. All those third-tier**
 25 **managers that you refer to, again, as my witness**

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1 Q. That is the point, isn't it: the serial inquiry
 2 syndrome, if you are not acting on any of the findings
 3 or any of the comments made, isn't working, is it, for
 4 a council?
 5 **A. It absolutely isn't.**
 6 Q. If I can just cut across you there, you refer to -- we
 7 know that the audit that Eric de Mello appoints
 8 Diane Edwards to undertake, the audit of the foster care
 9 records, shows that by the time she'd reached the letter
 10 C, she'd raised exception reports to 35 per cent of them
 11 with issues such as foster carers who failed to reveal
 12 convictions which were later recorded on a file but no
 13 action apparently taken about the implications for
 14 fostering. So this was really serious, wasn't it?
 15 **A. It was hugely serious. I mean, I was distressed,**
 16 **I couldn't believe that something as basic as that**
 17 **practice should have been absent. As a consequence of**
 18 **actually going in, looking at it, removing some of those**
 19 **foster carers, three area managers were dismissed, and**
 20 **that's about taking action. That's not just about**
 21 **receiving a report and not doing anything, that's about**
 22 **saying -- and we obviously put -- we put the audit in,**
 23 **we found it, we addressed it, we reported it to the SSI,**
 24 **and area managers that were not doing what they should**
 25 **be doing, and required to do legally, were dismissed.**

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1 And I think that that is a really -- that's
 2 a significant point, because that was not how Lambeth
 3 historically had behaved. It would receive reports and
 4 there was no accountability.
 5 I was -- one of the things that struck me in Lambeth
 6 is that you could be an assistant director, you could be
 7 a very senior manager and you could come and say, "There
 8 are all these issues and concerns I have", across many
 9 other services I'm referencing, as well as
 10 Social Services, as if it wasn't to do with you, and
 11 I would say, "But you are a senior manager. What are
 12 you doing?", and I absolutely made it explicit that you
 13 couldn't abdicate responsibility, that you had to face
 14 up to it.
 15 Q. Accountability is really important, isn't it? The chair
 16 and panel listen to everyone giving evidence. Obviously
 17 a key feature is, what's their role? How are they
 18 accountable? As a chief executive, how do you feel?
 19 Where is your accountability for what this inquiry is
 20 learning all the time about the level of abuse, child
 21 sexual abuse, going on in Lambeth over decades, what do
 22 you say about your own accountability and the role of
 23 chief executive for that?
 24 A. As you say, I was chief exec between 1995 and 2000, and
 25 so, in terms of the poor practices that you have -- we

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1 Lambeth, who reports into a steering committee of senior
 2 police, the SSI, and the police inquiry, Middleton, and
 3 their remit is to look at the issues of child abuse from
 4 1974 through to 1990.
 5 Q. Pausing there, what was your role in Middleton? The
 6 inquiry is going to hear from many people about
 7 Middleton and CHILE. Your role. Tell us your role?
 8 A. So my role is, as, obviously, the issue of John Carroll
 9 is raised with me and the concerns that other children
 10 would have been abused back in the '80s at that time,
 11 how do we ensure that we have survivors come forward to
 12 tell their stories? We know that there was great -- we
 13 knew there was great concern by survivors that
 14 previously they'd obviously, as you again have cited,
 15 may have raised their concerns with Lambeth
 16 Social Services and they have not been heard, and
 17 because of that I brought in Helen Kenwood, I think with
 18 the advice from the SSI who helped source her, as one of
 19 the leading people in the country who could then set up
 20 a trusted space with independent social workers so that
 21 she had that autonomy -- I didn't know who she was
 22 seeing, I didn't know who the police were going to be
 23 investigating, so that it could be this area where
 24 survivors could come and feel wholly reassured that they
 25 were -- their confidentiality would be maintained.

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1 have been talking about in Social Services and some of
 2 the failures in Social Services, then, as chief
 3 executive with overall responsibility, then of course
 4 I take responsibility. I was also responsible for
 5 education, for housing, for finance, for its overall
 6 functioning as a local authority. But I would also say
 7 that you have a statutory Director of Social Services
 8 who is accountable to the Department of Health which
 9 requires really specialist skills, and, basically, for
 10 most of the time I was in Lambeth, we could not
 11 stabilise the leadership of Social Services, and I think
 12 that was key and I think that, as Barratt also attests
 13 to, and positively affirms, is where responsibility, he
 14 felt, lay and what I tried to do to address the
 15 situation from the time it came absolutely to my
 16 attention to the day I left.
 17 Q. What about Middleton now? Tell us about the inquiry,
 18 the Middleton Inquiry, and how you saw that fitting in,
 19 what the role of Middleton was?
 20 A. There are two aspects here. There is what is called
 21 CHILE, and that was led by Helen Kenwood, and CHILE was
 22 the local authority's part of the Middleton Inquiry.
 23 Middleton is made up of two segments. It's made up of
 24 Helen Kenwood leading a specialist team of social
 25 workers, who is independent, who was autonomous from

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1 Q. Can I just ask you three or four questions arising from
 2 that, just briefly?
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. Did you have a role -- you have a role -- in who was
 5 interviewed in Middleton or how their names were
 6 recorded on the HOLMES system?
 7 A. No, and absolutely not. That was part of
 8 the structuring of it from the outset. It was
 9 independent, it was autonomous. There was -- my
 10 assistant chief exec would help. If there were any
 11 resources that Helen Kenwood needed, he would help
 12 supply her with those resources, but she ran it, and
 13 that was what was so important, and she worked with the
 14 police around, obviously, the testimonies of those
 15 complainants and their pursuit then of offenders and
 16 their bringing prosecutions to the CPS.
 17 Q. So following on from that, did you know when or how the
 18 police shifted their focus within Middleton, in terms of
 19 what they were looking at? That wasn't for you?
 20 A. No. It had a separate steering group -- it's mentioned
 21 in the reports of Middleton -- to our Policy and
 22 Resources Committee. It was -- the governance structure
 23 was wholly designed to ensure that it had integrity and
 24 autonomy from the local authority which, as you say, had
 25 a history of not listening to children.

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1 **What I was trying to do with our role, in terms of**
 2 **the local authority's role, in CHILE was to ensure that**
 3 **that's what we could reassure survivors about. It was**
 4 **obviously for the police, in terms of criminal**
 5 **investigations, for them to resource those**
 6 **investigations.**
 7 Q. Were you involved in police briefing notes on media
 8 strategy? Would that have involved you in any way?
 9 **A. I don't have any recollection of that.**
 10 Q. In terms of Operation Trawler and the removal of
 11 DI Driscoll, we know DI Driscoll was removed from
 12 Operation Trawler. Do you have any recollection now
 13 about how that arose or whether it was as a consequence
 14 of any conversation with you?
 15 **A. I don't really have a recollection about this. I've**
 16 **never met Mr Driscoll. He's never met me. There is --**
 17 **as you are aware the assistant director in**
 18 **Social Services, Nigel Goldie, alerts in a conversation,**
 19 **he says with me, that names have been revealed, which is**
 20 **contrary to the protocols that I just was alluding to in**
 21 **the rest of my statement, and that this gave rise to**
 22 **that concern being raised with the police. That would**
 23 **be absolutely the right thing to be done, because we**
 24 **were absolutely trying to safeguard CHILE and -- in**
 25 **terms of any revelations of any names.**

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1 **we had all been crystal clear that that was not what**
 2 **should happen, then my reaction would have been to have**
 3 **raised that concern with the police. How the police**
 4 **dealt with it would be down to them because, obviously,**
 5 **the Metropolitan Police are the employer of this police**
 6 **officer, and in the letter that is in the exhibits, they**
 7 **clearly dealt with it informally.**
 8 Q. Did you speak to the police, either DS Gargini about
 9 it -- can you remember if you spoke to him about it?
 10 **A. I don't remember. I know that DI Gargini, who was put**
 11 **in charge of Middleton, would have, you know, I'm sure,**
 12 **come to see me to update me, not in terms of any of**
 13 **the specifics but in terms of how the investigations and**
 14 **the nature of the work with CHILE were operating, and it**
 15 **may have been in the course of that that that was**
 16 **mentioned. But I don't have any recollection.**
 17 **I mean, I'm talking to hundreds, you know, of**
 18 **people, and you're asking me about a conversation**
 19 **22 years ago where probably this -- Mr Driscoll's name**
 20 **might be mentioned twice to me, maybe.**
 21 Q. So you don't remember having a conversation with anyone
 22 from SSI -- Paul Clark or Jo Cleary or anything like
 23 that?
 24 **A. It may have come up with the SSI, in terms of the fact**
 25 **that names have been mentioned in meetings where there**

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1 **It was, as you're aware with an exhibit to my**
 2 **statement, responded to by the Metropolitan Police.**
 3 **Whether a letter was written on my behalf, I don't know,**
 4 **I don't recollect, or indeed whether it came from**
 5 **Social Services, but the important point was that**
 6 **I don't think there's any dispute that names were**
 7 **referenced in a way that they shouldn't have been done,**
 8 **and my involvement, according to other assertions, was**
 9 **to ensure that our protocols and our confidentiality**
 10 **were maintained to safeguard -- and to ensure that**
 11 **survivors felt that they could still come forward.**
 12 **CHILE saw something like 200 survivors and**
 13 **counselled many more, and this -- the last thing one**
 14 **wanted was suddenly there was a sense of names being out**
 15 **there in a way that was wholly inappropriate. That's**
 16 **what I was trying to safeguard, according to this**
 17 **assertion and -- from Dr Goldie, and I think that's**
 18 **exactly what would have needed to have been done.**
 19 Q. Just unpacking that, then, you don't have an active
 20 memory of telephoning anyone about DI Driscoll giving
 21 names. You don't remember. But you think it would have
 22 been the right thing that he was stopped from doing that
 23 because it breached protocols?
 24 **A. I think, if a senior assistant director came to me with**
 25 **the fact that names had been revealed in a meeting where**

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1 **would have been other social workers there. Paul Clark**
 2 **was a senior inspector from the SSI who we seconded to**
 3 **work in Lambeth to help support the driving through the**
 4 **reforms, where certainly I had felt having somebody from**
 5 **the SSI could help make some of our action planning much**
 6 **more robust. So there may have been.**
 7 **But this was about safeguarding confidentiality.**
 8 **Issues about policing and how these investigations were**
 9 **progressed were obviously matters for the**
 10 **Metropolitan Police.**
 11 Q. Celia Pyke-Lees finally or Denis O'Connor. Can you
 12 remember?
 13 **A. Celia Pyke-Lees probably had gone by then because she**
 14 **leaves in May, I think. But I don't remember.**
 15 Q. And Denis O'Connor? You don't remember there?
 16 **A. No, I worked with Denis O'Connor in terms of reducing**
 17 **young offending rates, because they were particularly**
 18 **high and Lambeth was a pilot authority. But I have no**
 19 **other recollection, no.**
 20 Q. In terms of the Barratt Inquiry now, were all files, as
 21 far as you're aware, that Mr Barratt required for the
 22 purposes of that investigation supplied to him? Was
 23 there co-operation from Lambeth with that inquiry?
 24 **A. Certainly there was full co-operation from myself, and**
 25 **obviously from Helen Kenwood, and all that he required.**

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1 I think it's also fair to say that, if you looked at
 2 Lambeth not only in this area but I think it's
 3 referenced even in the Harris Report, the whole filing
 4 and maintenance of records was extremely poor, and that,
 5 of course, belies the fact that Lambeth just
 6 fundamentally didn't work in terms of process, in terms
 7 of proper maintenance of files.
 8 One of the things that Helen Kenwood did was
 9 actually to assemble the files of all the children who
 10 had been in care during those decades and create a new
 11 archive, which is what she did.
 12 So I think, as far as getting the files to
 13 Mr Barratt, they would have absolutely -- he would have
 14 got as much as could be obtained, but the chaos in
 15 Lambeth would have meant that I'm sure some files might
 16 well not have been available.
 17 Q. In terms of any corruption or the influence of
 18 Freemasonry, in your time at Lambeth, were you concerned
 19 about secret organisations or lack of transparency
 20 arising perhaps because of Freemason membership or any
 21 other corruption or network?
 22 A. This was an issue that had been referenced in the
 23 Appleby Report. It certainly had been very strongly
 24 held rumours and concerns in the '80s. It was not
 25 something that came to me in my five years that I was at

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1 First Audit Team, as I think I mentioned earlier on, was
 2 to give the corporate centre a real sense of what was
 3 happening between the stated policy intention and
 4 practice on the ground, and the Children's Advocacy
 5 Project was exactly that, so that children's voice --
 6 children had to come first and their voice had to be
 7 heard, and that was going to be supported by the
 8 Children's Society, ie, bringing external organisations
 9 in to help drive improvement for the future.
 10 MS LANGDALE: Thank you. I have no further questions.
 11 Chair?
 12 Questions from THE PANEL
 13 THE CHAIR: Just one question from me, concerning the
 14 circumstances you picked up when you came into post.
 15 Have you a view on where the burden of responsibility
 16 lay for the huge troubles in Social Services? Was it
 17 with elected members or was it senior officers or a bit
 18 of both?
 19 A. I think what Appleby cites over the decades was very
 20 much laid at the door of political mismanagement.
 21 I think it corroded and eroded a culture and, as
 22 I've said, with the trade unions undermined managerial
 23 authority. So there became a sort of unholy collusion,
 24 I think, in failure between management executives, trade
 25 unions and the politicians at that time, and when

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1 Lambeth and therefore there was nothing specific.
 2 As I've said, I think what I was trying to do was to
 3 reshape the culture of the organisation so the
 4 principles, the Nolan principles, the sense of public
 5 ethics and public values were re-introduced into Lambeth
 6 so that it understood not only responsibility and
 7 accountability, but also to be in service to our
 8 objectives, both statutory and in terms of to our
 9 communities and to those who were vulnerable.
 10 Q. We haven't had a chance, Dame Heather, but one of your
 11 responses to the outcome of the Barratt Report was to
 12 produce an action plan, and you introduced additional
 13 safeguards in the form of a children's advocacy service
 14 to canvass and better represent the views of children in
 15 care, the Children's First Commission and the Children
 16 First Audit Team. In the few moments we have got, can
 17 you just amplify something about that development,
 18 please?
 19 A. What was important about those three interventions was
 20 because I realised we had to ensure that children had
 21 a voice and that there were other mechanisms that would
 22 give you a lens into what was happening in child
 23 protection. So they were absolutely about increasing
 24 transparency, accountability and ensuring that there was
 25 this place of trust for children, and the Children's

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1 I arrived, that's what I was trying to address. I think
 2 we did make, with many, many others, efforts. We
 3 stopped that culture and we started to turn that around.
 4 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Ms Sharpling?
 5 MS SHARPLING: Thank you, chair. Thank you, Dame Heather.
 6 Just one question of detail from me. You talked about
 7 the amount of data that you might receive from SSI and
 8 from the auditor. But I wondered whether your corporate
 9 performance system ever threw up any clues as to what
 10 was going on in the Social Services department,
 11 particularly with regard to child protection?
 12 A. So we absolutely put in place, as you have said,
 13 performance management, which echoed the SSI's
 14 objectives and performance indicators, and, as I said,
 15 the 1996/97 report was suggesting that there was
 16 progress being made.
 17 Whilst there were clearly weaknesses, and they would
 18 have been replicated in the performance management
 19 system, what we were then looking at is, over this next
 20 year, are we going to see improvements.
 21 So I then had a tool by which I would then judge
 22 with the executive director, on an annual basis, whether
 23 it was getting better, and, unfortunately, as we have
 24 said, the crisis in Social Services overwhelmed that
 25 executive director and that led to the interventions

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1 **that we have talked about.**
 2 THE CHAIR: Mr Frank?
 3 MR FRANK: No, thank you.
 4 THE CHAIR: Sir Malcolm?
 5 PROF SIR MALCOLM EVANS: No, thank you.
 6 THE CHAIR: Thank you.
 7 MS LANGDALE: Chair, can I raise one more question with the
 8 witness before she leaves? My apologies.
 9 THE CHAIR: Go ahead.
 10 MS LANGDALE: Dame Heather, just one memo. Can you hear me,
 11 Dame Heather?
 12 **A. Yes.**
 13 Q. A memo dated 14 February to you from Helen Kenwood,
 14 14 February 2000. When did you actually leave in 2000?
 15 **A. I think I left by the end of February, and if that's the**
 16 **Helen Kenwood email about -- or memo about a concern**
 17 **linked to Wales, then I think I annotated that note**
 18 **saying it was something that the executive -- new**
 19 **executive director needed to be apprised of, as did the**
 20 **new acting chief exec because I was --**
 21 Q. Helen Kenwood is giving evidence. There is a memo here
 22 from Helen Kenwood to you querying Lambeth payments in
 23 excess of £130,000 for placements in North Wales, but
 24 you're not the person that would have followed up on
 25 that and we need to deal with that with other witnesses?

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1 **A. That's correct.**
 2 MS LANGDALE: Thank you, Dame Heather. Thank you, chair,
 3 that's all of the questions from me.
 4 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Dame Heather.
 5 **A. Thank you.**
 6 **(The witness withdrew)**
 7 THE CHAIR: That concludes our business today. Thank you.
 8 (4.00 pm)
 9 (The hearing was adjourned to
 10 Wednesday, 8 July 2020 at 10.30 am)
 11
 12
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