

THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Witness statement of Ian David Critchley

I Ian David Critchley will say as follows:-

1. I am Ian David Critchley, an Assistant Chief Constable in Merseyside Police. This is the 4th statement that I am making in relation to the Inquiry into Organised Networks, with particular reference to the St Helen's Borough in the County of Merseyside. This statement is made following a request for updates on matters discussed in previous statements, made by the Inquiry on 27 July 2020.

Current 'live' cases of child sexual exploitation, by Organised Networks in St Helens

2. I understand that the Inquiry is interested not only in historic matters but also interested in continuing activity by Organised Networks and how those matters are currently being investigated.
3. I have carefully considered the Inquiries definition that was set out in their letter of request of 27 July, and can inform the Inquiry that currently there are no open investigations in relation to child sexual exploitation by organised networks in the St Helen's Borough of Merseyside.

Child Abduction warning notices (CAWNS)

4. In my statement of 28 November 2019, I commented on the use of CAWNS as a disruption tool. I have now caused further analysis to be undertaken into their use.
5. I can say that the Public Protection Unit looked at the number of children that went missing from home during December 2019. There was a total of 1327 force wide and of those 23 were found in company with an adult and a CAWN was issued.
6. The 21 other opportunities to issue a CAWN were highlighted to the Missing Co-ordinators in each area; a review was carried out and where appropriate a CAWN issued. As a result, the Missing Co-ordinators now regularly check Compact to look for opportunities to issue CAWNS when a child has been found in company with an adult.
7. I found it interesting that this exercise highlighted that during previous interviews with missing children Police Officers were not probing the child enough on where they had been and with whom. As such, there was a communication to all staff to ensure they understood the importance of the Prevent interview, and gathering the relevant