

Witness Name: Evan Jones

Statement No.: 1

Exhibits:

Dated: 10/2/20

THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Witness Statement of Evan Jones

I, Evan Jones , will say as follows:-

1) Background

St Giles Trust currently provides some services in Tower Hamlets that do not come into contact with victims of CSE, but up to last year we did provide some relevant services:

- LEAP PRU
St Giles provided some support in the Pupil Referral Unit where there were some children affected by CSE
- Exploitation Team
St Giles provided staff as part of the Children's Services led Exploitation Team where some of the clients were victims of CSE as well as CCE

Both of these projects have now closed and the case notes have been passed to Tower Hamlets, which limits our ability to respond to your questions.

- 2) We were aware of cases of CSE in Tower Hamlets but could not rank it as an issue. Our organisational focus is on violence, so we tend to see more of that. I would not say we have noticed more or less CSE in Tower Hamlets than in the other boroughs where we work.
- 3) In the services that encountered children who were victims of CSE St Giles' role would have been:
- Providing a support worker – St Giles staff generally have lived experience and are seen by their clients as relatable and approachable, so often receive disclosures so are well placed to provide support
 - Working closely with the statutory agency responsible

The question of whether the abuser was part of a network did not affect client's eligibility for the service and was not something we actively monitored.

We do not have precise information as we have passed our case notes to the borough.

- 4) I believe St Giles worked with one group of girls where there was a suspicion that there were multiple abusers. The cases were referred to us by the Exploitation Team (part of Children's Services) so we would not have needed to notify or escalate.
- 5) In terms of partnership working in the borough St Giles' role was to deliver support services focusing on gangs, CCE and youth violence in the borough, contracted by the council, working alongside statutory services
Whilst working in the borough we identified some poor practice in one team in relation to information sharing and our recommendation is that partner agencies need to be consulted prior to sharing disclosures with parents and others
- 6) Our organisational focus is not on CSE, but in our work on CCE, principally county lines, we see quite a lot of CSE that is carried out as a part of the CCE, and more rarely we see deliberate and planned CSE activities carried out for profit, such as pimping. We are aware that county lines networks are flexible and can be involved in more than drug dealing so are looking for evidence that they are moving into organised CSE, but so far haven't seen many examples. We work with CCE across England and Wales so these comments don't relate specifically to Tower Hamlets.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed: _____ **DPA** _____

Dated: _____ 28/2/20 _____