

Witness Name: Sue Williams  
Statement No: 5  
Exhibits:  
Dated:

## THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

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### FIFTH WITNESS STATEMENT OF COMMANDER SUE WILLIAMS

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I, Commander Sue Williams, will say as follows:-

1. Until March 2018, I was the Borough Commander for Tower Hamlets Operational Command Unit. Between March 2018 and July 2019 I oversaw the merger of Hackney and Tower Hamlets Operational Command Units into the Central East Basic Command Unit (BCU) of the Metropolitan Police. In this role I was responsible for both boroughs. This merger was part of the MPS re-structuring of 32 borough commands to 12 BCUs. In February 2019 Central East BCU saw the merger of Child Abuse and Sexual Offence Command into the local safeguarding portfolio. From July 2019 to July 2020 I was Head of Safeguarding for the Metropolitan Police Service ('the MPS'). I am now a Detective Chief Superintendent in Professionalism.
2. I have previously made 4 statements, dated 29 November 2019, 21 January 2020, 23 March 2020 and 22 June 2020 in response to separate rule 9 requests. I make this statement pursuant to the rule 9 request from the Independent Inquiry on Child Sexual Abuse, dated 27 July 2020. The statement provides responses to follow-up questions which relate to the answers provided in my third witness statement, dated 23 March 2020. That statement should therefore be read in conjunction with this statement.
3. Given the scope of the rule 9 request, this witness statement has been compiled using information obtained from a number of sources within the MPS and is therefore not derived principally from my personal knowledge. This is the process I followed in responding to previous rule 9 requests in all my witness statements.
4. The information that follows comes from various teams within the MPS, some of which fall under the Professional Safeguarding business group for which I was until recently, head of. In particular, information has been provided by DCI Elbourn (who leads the Tower Hamlets co-located Exploitation Team) and her team. From the perspective of Central Specialist Crime business group DI Laura Hillier and DI Stephanie Dexter have also provided information around audits.

5. In this statement, I have referred to the paragraph number in my third statement, dated 23 March 2020, to which the follow-up question relates as follows: "Previous para. X". This is necessary to assist with the reading of the two statements in conjunction.

## **1 (a) PROBLEM PROFILING**

### **Previous para.8 – Pan-London Profile**

6. The Inquiry's original question to which the MPS responded with reference to a Pan-London Profile was as follows:

*Please provide any information held about the sexual exploitation risks to children in your area from data within a Regional CSE profile.*

7. The MPS do not operate in "regions" and therefore do not take data from "Regional profiles". Instead the MPS record and analyse collated data on sexual exploitation risks posed to children in a variety of ways, including monthly reports at borough and team level and wider annual reports/profiles. These products may focus solely on CSE or on wider exploitation or offence profiling. They may cover either the issues in individual BCU (of which there are 12 in the MPS) or across London (Pan-London).
8. My previous statements have referred to a Pan-London profile in which information on the risk of CSE across London, would be included. As at the date of my second statement (23 March 2020) the profile was in production and due for completion at the end of March 2020. Since that time and upon review of the data and the value such a profile would bring, the MPS have decided not to continue with completion of a Pan-London profile. Preliminary analysis of the data received showed that at the time of drafting the profile, the data was out of date and did not go into enough detail to be a useful aid for understanding the threat picture. Instead more current and focused information is collated and analysed from each BCU. This is believed to be more reflective of the true picture within each BCUs.
9. The products created by each BCU will be very much dictated by local priorities as well as resource management. Pan-London reporting and profiling is still undertaken but is less useful at looking in detail at specific boroughs. In respect of CSE, it can cover a variety of issues (eg. gangs, drugs, violence) or a snapshot on a specific area within CSE (eg CAWN analysis). Pan-London profiling is considered to be a useful way for the Organisation to understand the variety in the threat picture across London but will not assist with specific analysis. It therefore may not fully determine the resource and strategic needs in a particular area and based on their specific priorities.
10. With this in mind, a more useful and informative analysis will be found in BCU-specific profiles.
11. In respect of Tower Hamlets, a profile on Local Organised Crime, dated December 2019 covered CSE trends and risk factors (see pages 36-41 of the Profile, exhibited as SW/25).

#### **4 (a) MISSING CHILDREN**

##### **Previous para. 70 – Missing episode data**

12. As at the date of my third statement (23 March 2020) the number of total missing episodes (including repeat missing episodes) and how many missing children have been at risk of CSE over the last 2 years, was given as follows:
  - a. From February 2018 - January 2019 - 15,518 children shown as missing or absent on 57,892 occasions.
  - b. Over the same period, 918 of these individuals have had a pre-assessment report showing them at risk of CSE.
13. The above figures included a significant amount of repeat missing episodes, which the MPS do not hold separate data sets for.
14. Having reviewed those figures in order to provide an update on the total missing episodes to from January 2019 to date, it has been identified that the figures accounted for 2 years worth of data rather than 1 (2017-2019) and therefore should actually have read:
15.
  - a. From February 2018- January 2019 - 8,643 children shown as missing or absent on 31,811 occasions.
  - b. 845 of these individuals have had a pre assessment report showing them at risk of CSE
16. Updated figures from January 2020 to date are:
  - a. From January 2019 – June 2020 - 4889 children shown as missing or absent on 15377 occasions. This would indicate an amount of repeat missing episodes, totalling 10488.
  - b. Over the same period, 1852 of these individuals have had a pre-assessment report showing them at risk of CSE.

##### **Previous paras.78 – Children placed out of area**

17. My third statement detailed the number of Tower Hamlet's children placed out of area following identification of a risk of CSE between March 2018 to March 2019, as being 6, with a further 2 children placed outside the borough over the course of February 2020. Since that date and at the time of this statement, there have been a further 3

children placed outside the area of Tower Hamlets by the local authority. They are: CS-B1130 (DOB DPA 2005), CS-B1131 (DOB DPA 2004), both placed in DPA and CS-B1132 (DOB DPA 2005) placed in Area A

#### Previous para. 79 – Missing Operational Group Meeting

18. My previous statements have exhibited the minutes of MOG meetings which took place in May 2018, July 2018 and Sept 2018-end March 2019. It did not exhibit the minutes from April, June or August 2018 as they could not be located and it is believed the meetings did not take place during these months. I cannot now say why this was the case.
19. Since March 2019 there have been monthly MOG meetings, however enquiries reveal the local authority do not hold any formal minutes of these meetings. The reason for this is not known by the MPS.

### **8 AUDIT, REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT**

#### Previous para.88-95 – audits and reviews

20. Since January 2020 the Dedicated Inspection Team (DIT) have conducted a further round of inspections of CSE cases being handled by Central East Basic Command, into which Tower Hamlets falls. These inspections took place during June and August 2020.
21. The team conduct their inspections via dip-sampling 8 cases at random. Within that dip-sample completed in June, there were 3 cases relating to Tower Hamlets. Unfortunately, due to reduced staffing levels the Tower Hamlets investigations were not inspected at that time and on that occasion only the 5 cases belonging to Hackney borough were audited.
22. In light of that and in response to this request, the DIT completed 6 further CSE audits relating to Tower Hamlets in August 2020. The information has been shared with the Borough Command Unit.
23. The findings and conclusions are found in the reports, exhibited as **SW/26**, however in summary the results are as follows:

Good = 16% (1 case)

Areas for improvement = 34% (2 cases)

Inadequate = 50% (3 cases)

Audit No.	Case Reference	Case Type	BCU	Reviewer	Case Grading	Sup. Grading	What policing sector was the main contributing factor to the failings in this case?	What policing sector was the main contributing factor to the positive work in this case?
CE-1	4233539/19	CSE	CE	SD / EU	areas of improvement	4	CSE	CSE
CE-2	4233837/19	CSE	CE	JC	inadequate	5	CSE	CSE
CE-3	4233841/19	CSE	CE	LB	inadequate	5	CSE	Sapphire / VAPT
CE-4	4201490/20	CSE	CE	LB	inadequate	4	CSE	schools officer
CE-5	4204187/20	CSE	CE	LB	good	3	N/A	CSE
CE-6	4209618/20	CSE	CE	LB	areas of improvement	3	CSE	CSE

24. As a result of these audits, officers working on those cases deemed requiring improvement or inadequate have been put in touch with/"buddied" with officers in other BCU's who often perform well in audits. The aim of this is to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and encourage critical-thinking around how to get the best outcomes in an investigation.
25. In order to target areas identified for improvement in those cases audited and support the implementation of those improvements, the MPS Central Specialist Crime (CSC) unit is planning to collaborate with teams in Tower Hamlets in early September to provide this support. Going forward, CSC will set up monthly dial-in sessions for officers (DS and DI rank) to share best practice, areas of concern and learning and to provide a platform for CSC to update borough officers on CSE trends and development. The first session will take place on 15 September 2020.
26. In addition to the DIT reviews, the MPS Central Specialist Crime unit undertook an audit review of all open CSE cases in Tower Hamlets. The relevant statistics are as follows:
- a. There were 20 cases relating to CSE/with CSE flags attached
  - b. 11 were closed; 8 were ongoing
  - c. 1 of the ongoing cases was restricted and therefore the audit team were not permitted access to that case. The restriction could have been placed on the file for any number of reasons but the basic principle is that it is restricted because the details of the case are sensitive and therefor for limited access.
  - d. Of the 7 accessible and ongoing cases reviewed, 3 resulted in no recommendations being made; 4 resulted in recommendation being made.
27. Copies of the reviewer's observations and recommendations can be exhibited if necessary.
28. On a more local level, audits have been introduced by the MPS Data Quality Ethics and Assurance Board (DQEAB) to look at how BCUs and Operational Command Units (OCUs) are performing in particular areas.

29. The purpose of the DQEAB is to quality assure the BCUs work on safeguarding through a series of monthly health checks in which investigations are dip sampled and reviewed by a performance analyst to assist with the identification of risk areas, good practice and organisational learning. This information is then fed back to practitioners in the subject matter to identify individuals, teams or thematic issues in need of recognition and/or further support.
30. This is a new process where areas of safeguarding are being reviewed locally. CSE will be the focus in October 2020.

**Previous para.96 – Tower Hamlets “Health Checks”**

31. The Exploitation Team conduct local “health checks” on their own cases as a way of monitoring the effectiveness of their processes and/or identify areas for improvement. A copy of the spreadsheet detailing the cases of the health checks conducted between August 2019 and March 2020 was exhibited to my third statement as SW/22.
32. Since that time the Exploitation Team Detective Inspector (DI) has continued to conduct the “health checks”; intermittently, however the spreadsheet has not been updated as they are no longer used as they were only a dip sample of cases. Instead the DI now chairs a multiagency meeting for both Tower Hamlets and Hackney partners and at which specific cases are discussed. Those cases are reviewed by the DI on the CRIS system, with updates being made directly onto the relevant CRIS.

**POLICE OPERATIONS RELATING TO CSE**

33. There are currently no live police operations relating to child sexual exploitation by organised networks in Tower Hamlets.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**DPA**

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

*1<sup>st</sup> September 2020*

SW1

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**LIST OF EXHIBITS**

Paragraph no	Exhibit no	Exhibit
11	SW/25	CE Profile on Local Organised Crime, Dec 2019
23	SW/26	6x DIT Audit Reports for Tower Hamlets, Aug 2020