

Witness Name: Nigel Minns

Statement No: 5

Dated 18 August 2020

THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

**FIFTH WITNESS STATEMENT OF NIGEL MINNS
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR, PEOPLE DIRECTORATE IN HIS
STATUTORY ROLE AS DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

I, Nigel Minns, will say as follows:-

1. I am Strategic Director at Warwickshire County Council (“the County”). My current post also includes the Statutory Director of Children Services and Adult Social Services’ responsibilities and line management of the Director of Public Health. This is the fifth witness statement that I have prepared in this matter. This witness statement addresses queries raised by IICSA in relation to an update since my last witness statement, and is in response to a Rule 9 statement request dated 27 July 2020.
2. **An update on the appointment of a nurse as part of the Child Exploitation and Missing Team as referred to in paragraph 3 of the witness statement of Mr Minns dated 12 March 2020 (WCC000363_001):** The Council has now advertised this post (with our provider partner, NHS) for the third time. The original advert coincided with the start of the COVID pandemic and the development of the nearby Nightingale Hospital. At that point all non-frontline post recruitment was frozen to ensure staff availability to respond to the expected crisis. In the second round of recruitment, the post was advertised, and candidates were shortlisted and interviewed, however none of

the candidates were considered suitable. The post is currently being advertised for a third time, with interviews scheduled for 11 September 2020.

3. **Information relating to the audit of CSE meetings that was due to be undertaken in 2020 to assess compliance as referred to in paragraph 15 of the witness statement of Mr Minns dated 12 March 2020 (WCC000363_003-004):** In terms of our auditing and Quality Assurance schedule, it is undoubtedly the case that the emergency response to the pandemic has impacted on this activity. The multiagency auditing approach within the now CE unit has developed, and since March 2020 there have been audits on eight cases conducted on a multiagency basis between the Council, Barnardos and Warwickshire Police. The audit of CSE/CE meetings is scheduled to proceed in autumn 2020 as wider business reinstatement develops.
4. A key multiagency Quality Assurance development is the introduction of formal partnership debriefing processes following a targeted Operation [NM/106]. The aim is to use the cycle of planning, experience, reflection, and analysis to share different perspectives on an operation and translate that learning into the future, to improve the efficacy of targeted operations and ensure the whole partnership approach and experience is shared to improve practice.
5. **An update on the figures referred to at paragraph 90 of WCC000236 relating to children who have been placed out of county between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020, and who have been identified as having a CSE concern:** Between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020, there were 49 Warwickshire Children Looked After placed out of county where a CSE concern was noted at some stage in their contact with the Council. The CSE concern was flagged at different stages and with different levels of concern during their contact with the Council, and may not have coincided with their being placed out of county (for some, the CSE concern may have arisen after being placed out of county). In some cases, placement out of county will mitigate specific risks from specific individuals.
6. **An update on the multi-agency audit programme that was due to commence in January 2020 as referred to in paragraph 141 of the witness statement of Mr Minns dated 12 March 2020 (WCC000363_024):** Please see paragraph 3. The audit

of CSE/CE meetings is scheduled to proceed in autumn 2020 as wider business reinstatement develops.

7. **Minutes from the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board CSE, Missing & Trafficking Sub Committee Group meetings that have not been provided to the Inquiry previously:** The Safeguarding Child Exploitation sub group has met in June and July 2020. A key focus of this work is to move the emphasis to the broader more modern interpretation of *Child Exploitation* as defined by the National Working Group, rather than the previous focus on Child Sexual Exploitation. The Operational Group has met in June 2020. Please find the minutes of these meetings exhibited to this statement [NM/107, NM/108 and NM/109].

8. **Minutes from the CSE Missing and Trafficking Operational Group meetings and Complex CSE Strategy meetings that have not been provided to the Inquiry previously:** Since the 1st March 2020, there have been four initial and two review Complex Strategy meetings in respect of CSE, which have involved 22 children in total. Please find the minutes of these meetings exhibited to this statement [NM/110, NM/111, NM/112 and NM/113].

9. **Any further evaluations or audits carried out in relation to the eight themes:** No further evaluations or audits have been carried out in relation to the eight themes.

The contents of this statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed : 

Dated 18 August 2020