

Witness Name: Annie Hudson

Statement No.: 4

Exhibits: 76

Dated: 17.06.2020

THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

FOURTH WITNESS STATEMENT OF ANNIE HUDSON

I, **ANNIE HUDSON**, former Strategic Director of Lambeth Children's Services will say as follows:-

- 1.1. I was employed by Lambeth Council as the Strategic Director for Children's Services from May 2016 until March 2020. I retain responsibility as the authority's corporate witness for Lambeth's response to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) in the light of my now extensive knowledge and involvement in the work relating to the Inquiry. As Strategic Director, I held the statutory director of children's services role for Lambeth Council. A new Strategic Director, Merlin Joseph, has been in post since the end of March 2020.
- 1.2. I make this statement on behalf of Lambeth Council in response to a request made by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse ('IICSA') for a statement in respect of **South Vale Assessment Centre**.
- 1.3. This statement should be read in conjunction with all the statements submitted on behalf of Lambeth in respect of the Inquiry, but primarily my first statement dated 9 December 2019 (herein referred to as the 'corporate statement'). Where relevant, I have referred to the section, paragraph and page number of this statement.

LA-A464

- 5.99 LA-A464 was a child in the care of Lambeth who was born on DPA 1967.
- 5.100 On DPA 1981 at the age of 13, LA-A464 was placed in the care of Lambeth at South Vale for a month from DPA 1981 until DPA 1981. On DPA 1981, LA-A464 was discharged from South Vale and the care of Lambeth and he returned home because *“he had family support.”* This was LA-A464 only time in care throughout his life.
- 5.101 On 5 October 2014, LA-A464 made allegations of sexual abuse against Patrick Grant. In his statement to the police LA-A464 disclosed that on one unknown occasion Patrick Grant sexually abused him in his room. He stated that a boy named Child who was 15 or 16 years of age had entered the room and challenged Patrick Grant, asking him what he was doing to LA-A464 in the middle of the act.
- 5.102 Patrick Grant told Child to leave and left the room himself saying to LA-A464 that *“we’ll do it another time”*. LA-A464 believed that Patrick Grant was the head of South Vale at the time. We understand that shortly after this incident LA-A464 left South Vale.
- 5.103 LA-A464 made a further statement to the police on 1 October 2015 setting out to whom he had disclosed the experiences he had in care. He recalled talking to his sister Sibling and his mother (now deceased) whilst he was in care at South Vale. He could not recall any exact conversation that he had with his sister or his mother, but he stated that it was *“discussed openly and they both knew what was going on in the home”* in terms of his *“experiences with Les Paul and Patrick Grant.”*
- 5.104 Although there were no known investigations internally or criminally into the allegations LA-A464 made, Lambeth is aware that LA-A464 acted as a prosecution witness in relation to the bad character application against Patrick Grant in his criminal trial in 2019.

- 6.21 As a result of these allegations, one of the 'Actions' outlined as a result of the planning meeting amongst other things was *"Disciplinary action and a police prosecution to be progressed against the named member of staff."*
- 6.22 LA-F5 resigned from his position as a social worker at [DPA] on [DPA] [DPA] 1992. The circumstances surrounding LA-F5's resignation are unknown but it should be noted that this was a matter of days after LA-A80 made the allegations of abuse against LA-F5.
- 6.23 It does not appear that any internal investigation was undertaken by Lambeth or a disciplinary hearing was held in respect of LA-F5 and the allegations made against him by LA-A80, but at some unknown point the allegations were referred to the police leading to a criminal investigation and trial.
- 6.24 Following the allegations, in October 1992, LA-F5 was arrested and charged with sexual offences against children. At his trial on 11 May 1993, LA-A80 was called to provide evidence. LA-A80 found giving evidence extremely distressing and ceased to participate mid-way through being questioned. The judge ordered that there be an acquittal. This led to Charlie Elliott (Team Manager) later expressing his concern about the manner in which LA-A80 was cross-examined to Inspector Ian Gordon in a memo on 13 May 1993 after the trial against LA-F5 had *'collapsed.'* Charlie Elliott also noted the *"extreme disappointment"* felt at the outcome of the trial. [AH4-6/1; LAMXXXXXX; pg. 1]
- 6.25 It has not been possible to confirm what support was provided to LA-A80 throughout the trial though Charlie Elliott's memo does indicate that some Lambeth professionals responsible for LA-A80's care were concerned about how the trial had progressed and its effect on him.
- 6.26 The first mention of support provided to LA-A80 following the allegations was of social worker Edward Sinnott writing to Dr Peter Loader from the Department of Child Psychiatry at St Thomas' Hospital on 4 May 1993 asking him to see LA-A80 following a sudden deterioration in behaviour after his disclosures. Lambeth does not hold a

made by LA-A30 and LA-A31, or indeed the disclosure made by the child about having become pregnant and that LA F-14 was the father.

6.69 LA-F14 continued to be employed for a further two years after the first of those allegations. The response of the Council to the allegations is unclear, however a CHILE file records that LA-F14 was removed from 'direct work' with children at South Vale following allegations being made against him. This probably indicates that he was restricted to administrative work, as it is known that he was moved to an administrative role at [DPA] in 1992. If there was insufficient evidence to dismiss a member of staff, moving them to duties that did not involve direct contact with children was seen at that time as a safer alternative. However, in LA-F14's case he was quickly allowed to return to a position where he had direct contact with children through his role as a Residential social worker at [Care Home]. This was clearly extremely inappropriate and a profound failure by the Council to understand and execute its responsibilities to protect and safeguard children.

LA-F8

Introduction

6.70 LA-F8 was directly employed by [LA-F205] to work at South Vale. Staff there witnessed concerning behaviour between LA-F8 and the child, LA-A71, at the home. This led to a disciplinary and police investigation in 1992/3 which I discuss further below.

Employment

6.71 LA-F8 was a Children's Residential Care Officer at [Care Home] from [DPA] 1987 to [DPA] 1988. Following the closure of [Care Home], on 29 September 1988 he was redeployed to South Vale. He then worked as a Team Leader from [DPA] 1989 until [DPA] 1991. LA-F8 then worked as a social worker in the Adoption and Fostering Team. [AH4-6/7; LAM000162; pg. 2]