

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-F5

Introduction

- 6.6 LA-F5 was employed by Lambeth between [DPA] 1988 and [DPA] 1992. He worked as a Senior Residential Care Officer ([DPA] 1988 to [DPA] 1988) and then as a Assistant Group Leader ([DPA] 1988 to [DPA] 1989) at South Vale. He went on to work at [DPA] as a social worker from [DPA] 1989 to [DPA] 1992.
- 6.7 On [DPA] 1992, LA-F5 was arrested as part of Operation Bell and was charged with one count of buggery against LA-A80. Les Paul was also charged during Operation Bell, however, was not charged in relation to offences against LA-A80.
- 6.8 LA-A80, a child in Lambeth's care, alleged that LA-F5 sexually abused him during his time at South Vale. It is not known exactly when this took place, however this would have occurred during LA-F5's employment at South Vale, which was between [DPA] [DPA] 1988 – [DPA] 1989. During Operation Bell, the investigation into child sexual abuse at South Vale, Estella Knight, Team Leader, confirmed that "LA-A80 and LA-F5 seemed very close, especially in the mornings." Olive Steel who also worked at South Vale for six months as an Assistant Unit Manager also confirmed the same information to the police.
- 6.9 On 11 May 1993, a trial took place at the Central Criminal Court and LA-A80 attended as a witness. Lambeth records state that the case was dismissed for lack of evidence after LA-A80 ceased to participate mid-way through the hearing under the stress of cross-examination. At the time LA-A80 was 12 years old. LA-A80 had special educational needs and learning difficulties.

LA-A80

- 6.10 LA-A80 was a child in the care of Lambeth born on [DPA] 1980. LA-A80 had [DPA] brothers and [DPA] sister.

- 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