

**WITNESS STATEMENT**

Criminal Procedure Rules, r27.2; Criminal Justice Act 1967, s.9; Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, s.5b

Statement of: SIMPSON, MARILYN

Age if under 18: OVER 18 (if over 18 insert 'over 18') Occupation: GENERAL ADVISER

This statement (consisting of 5 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

Signature: M C SIMPSON

Date: 16/06/2015

Tick if witness evidence is visually recorded  (supply witness details on rear)

Further to my statements dated 8<sup>th</sup> October 2014 and 16<sup>th</sup> October 2014. I have been asked to review them and comment on some of the issues I have raised. I have previously stated that when I took up my post in late 1990 I frequently visited Knowl View School as my role as Special Needs Advisor. It was clear to me that there were problems in the school highlighted by the lack of pupils attending. It was a neglected school with poor quality education in it. Had it been properly run it would have been full of pupils and a vibrant environment given that it was in Rochdale.

I could not understand why Principal Psychologist Richard FLAMMER was sending children with special needs to schools outside the district as this was more expensive. From my experience in Special Education at this time I raised questions in order to establish exactly what was happening or not happening in the school.

I remember asking questions and addressing them in person to people in professional and managerial positions. I spoke to Cliff BENTLEY, Diana CAVANAGH, Richard FLAMMER, Mary MOFFAT and the head teacher. At this time it was an acting head Brett ANDREWS. I never got a definitive answer to my questions and this went on from my arrival until meetings started taking place as a result of the Rod HILTON incident. By the time these meetings took place it was March 1991. Some of the questions I asked were "why were pupil numbers so low", "why are children being sent out of the area", "when did someone in authority last visit the school". I did make a record of several of my conversations with these individuals and what was said. The only answers I was given were that 'discussions taking place. I remember feeling very puzzled by the lack of response. I kept revisiting the school. I should add that

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during this period I was not made aware of any allegations of sexual offences other than the Rod HILTON incident.

I am aware that at the time all decisions that were made involving the future of Knowl View School were made by approval of local politicians and council leaders. This seemed to be the norm in Rochdale. There was a positive aspect to this in that politicians took an interest, but the negative effect was that the council ruled and it created political infighting which was detrimental to the children of the school, in terms of finance and decision making. The council leader at this time was Richard FARNELL who was succeeded by Paul ROWAN. I have been asked about an incident where Harry WILD held a meeting with Diana CAVANAGH on 14<sup>th</sup> September 1994. I have been shown a copy of exhibit RC/10/C which are handwritten notes of the meeting. It would appear that I had objected to Harry WILD appointing a head teacher. I do not recall this event but, had I had reason to object to an appointment of a head teacher I would voice my opinion.

I have been asked about a meeting that took place on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1991 in which I was in attendance. This was the first of a number of meetings in respect of Knowl View School. From the date of this meeting, Diana CAVANAGH's intervention and the appointment of a teacher Steve BRADSHAW things began to happen and things changed dramatically for the better. I recall there were two police officers representing Greater Manchester Police at this meeting but I do not remember them attending other meetings. There was an advisor for special needs appointed before me in 1990 who would have dealt with Knowl View School. I think she was called Wendy. Some members of staff were dismissed during my appointment. These were for reasons of incompetence, lack of training etc, but some of them were victims of the state of the school.

When Diana CAVANAGH convened the meeting in 1991 I was instructed to hand in all my notes I had made about Knowl View School.

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Statement of: SIMPSON, MARILYN

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Page 3 of 3

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