

<p>1 Wednesday, 17 October 2018 2 (10.00 am) 3 THE CHAIR: Good morning, everyone, and welcome to Day 8 of 4 this public inquiry. Mr Livingston? 5 MR LIVINGSTON: Chair, I understand that Professor Evans is 6 stuck in traffic and is due to be here in about 7 10/15 minutes or so. I understand you are content to 8 start before that, as we have a busy day of evidence 9 ahead, and Professor Evans can catch up by looking at 10 the video or the transcript afterwards. Is that okay? 11 THE CHAIR: That's correct. 12 MR LIVINGSTON: Thank you, chair. If we can call 13 Margaret Stimpson via videolink, please. 14 MS MARGARET STIMPSON (sworn) 15 (Evidence given via videolink) 16 Examination by MR LIVINGSTON 17 MR LIVINGSTON: Thank you, Ms Stimpson. You should have 18 a statement which is yours at tab 1 of the bundle. The 19 reference for us is INQ002049. Ms Stimpson, was that 20 statement true, to the best of your knowledge, at the 21 time you signed it? 22 A. Yes, it was. 23 Q. Do you have any corrections that you need to make to the 24 statement? 25 A. Yes. A correction I would make is actually on the first</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 1</p>	<p>1 line, and that is that I was employed full time in 1967 2 until 2007. 3 Q. Thank you, Ms Stimpson. The panel have a copy of your 4 statement, and the whole statement is going to be 5 uploaded onto the website, but I am not going to take 6 you through every line in it. I am going to ask you 7 about some specific topics that have been sent out in 8 advance. 9 A. Okay. 10 Q. If I can start, Ms Stimpson, I am going to summarise 11 your professional background, which you set out in your 12 statement, and you can tell me if I have got anything 13 wrong. 14 You were employed, as you say, full time by the 15 county council from 1967 until 2007. You were then 16 a senior social worker from 1975 to 1987. You were 17 assistant area director from 1987 to 1992, and then from 18 1992 you were Children's Services manager, and that's 19 within the Newark district; is that right? 20 A. That's correct. 21 Q. Then following leaving employment, you have been 22 self-employed on a part-time basis and, during that, 23 you've been vice chair of the Fostering Panel, up until 24 2016, and you were also part of the Adoption Panel; is 25 that right?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 2</p>
<p>1 A. Yes, that's right. 2 Q. Since you left the council's employ and you have been 3 doing the work with the Fostering Panel and the 4 Adoption Panel, is that the only work relevant to 5 childcare you have done during that time? 6 A. No, it isn't. I have been commissioned by various other 7 agencies to do one-off pieces of work, generally 8 speaking: in disruption meetings; disciplinary 9 investigations. I have worked for other local 10 authorities and for other agencies for specific pieces 11 of work. 12 Q. Since December 2016, have you completely retired? 13 A. Yes, I have. 14 Q. Ms Stimpson, you talk from paragraph 10 of your 15 statement about the Fostering Panel in the 1990s. 16 During that time, is it correct that the Fostering Panel 17 was localised and all fostering services were localised 18 to each district? 19 A. Yes, that's right. 20 Q. So did each district have their own Fostering Panel -- 21 I appreciate it might have been called different things 22 at different times, but each district had their own 23 panel; is that right? 24 A. Yes, that's correct. 25 Q. Then, in 1992, that panel became the responsibility of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 3</p>	<p>1 the Children's Services manager, which was you; is that 2 right? 3 A. Yes. I had been a member of the Fostering Panel up 4 until that time, but I hadn't been responsible for it. 5 Q. So up until that time, you were a member in your role as 6 assistant area director or senior social worker? 7 A. Yes. 8 Q. During the time, at least from when you were Children's 9 Services manager from 1992, would you have expected all 10 allegations of sexual abuse against foster carers in 11 Newark to come before you, at least in some way? 12 A. Oh, yes. Yes, most certainly. Because I was also 13 responsible for the fostering team and for giving 14 supervision to the fostering team manager. 15 Q. The Fostering Panel, or whatever it was called during 16 this time, that was made up, you say, of team managers; 17 is that right? 18 A. Childcare team managers, so yes. 19 Q. Childcare team managers. Would that include those 20 managers who were responsible for the foster parents 21 coming before them? 22 A. Do you mean the supervising social workers who were part 23 of the fostering team or do you mean the manager? 24 Q. I mean the manager who is the manager of the supervising 25 social worker?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 4</p>

<p>1 A. Yes. Yes, that's -- yes, she would always be a part of 2 the team, a part of the Fostering Panel. 3 Q. During this period, during the 1990s, when the 4 Fostering Panel were considering deregistration -- is 5 that one of its functions during that time? 6 A. Yes. I'm having difficulty recalling (break in 7 transmission) exactly what the process was during that 8 time. Ultimately, the responsibility for registration 9 or termination of registration would be mine. Whether 10 or not that always went to the Fostering Panel or 11 whether there were times where that would have been 12 dealt with in discussion between myself and the team 13 manager, I really can't remember. 14 Q. We will come on to some specific examples. But during 15 that time, given that the panel was made up of team 16 managers, childcare team managers, and we know from your 17 statement that in the 2000s, late 2000s, that whole 18 system changed and you started having independent panel 19 members, do you think, during the 1990s, the 20 independence of the panel was compromised by being made 21 up of people who were actually involved in supervising 22 the foster carers. 23 A. Oh, yes, I'm sure that was the case. The panel was very 24 (break in transmission) and perhaps we hadn't given 25 a sufficient amount of thought to it. But the fostering</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 5</p>	<p>1 service itself evolved during the 1990s, as did many 2 other aspects of the service. 3 Q. Thank you. I am now going to come on to ask about a few 4 specific cases, but before I do, the inquiry heard last 5 week evidence, particularly from Rod Jones, that in the 6 late 1980s and early 1990s there was significant concern 7 about sexual abuse in foster care. For example, a carer 8 investigative abuse group was formed, there was 9 statistics showing that in a 12-month period in 1990 to 10 1991 there were 11 allegations of sexual abuse against 11 foster parents across the county. I know that's on 12 a larger scale than you were dealing with, but were you 13 aware of these significant concerns at this time? 14 A. The number surprises me, that there were 11, and of 15 course, from my point of view, I only really got the 16 snapshot of Newark, rather than to be seeing the whole 17 picture within the county as a whole. But I'm sure 18 I would have been aware of the concerns that there were 19 as identified by Rod Jones. 20 Q. So is it fair to say that, by 1992, at least, it was 21 very well known at a senior level, and possibly at 22 a junior level, that foster parents could commit sexual 23 abuse against the children in their care, and that was 24 a real issue that you needed to be alive to? 25 A. Absolutely, and I had personal experience of -- I think</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 6</p>
<p>1 the first foster carer that I knew of who was convicted 2 that we dealt with at Newark, I think was as early as 3 the 1980s. And that defined my professional stance 4 towards foster carers after that, because he had 5 significantly sexually abused a girl with whom he had 6 been entrusted. 7 Q. You say that guided your stance. How would you describe 8 that stance? 9 A. I wouldn't sit here and say I always believed the child 10 without giving that due consideration, but my 11 predisposition, in fact, has always been to believe the 12 child; not to always believe that the man who's been 13 accused of sexual abuse has done it, but children do not 14 tend to lie about such matters, and I learned that very 15 early on. So I was rarely sceptical about evidence that 16 was given to me thereafter by young people who made 17 allegations. 18 Q. We are going to jump around your statement a little bit, 19 because I am going to try and do it roughly in 20 chronological order so we can build a bit of a picture. 21 So if you can first go to paragraph 30 of your 22 statement, which is on page 6. 23 A. Yes. 24 Q. This is allegations against NO-F130. You say that you 25 don't remember anything in relation to this case, and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 7</p>	<p>1 you had no involvement in or knowledge of 2 the allegations until you chaired the case conference. 3 A. Yes. 4 Q. Ms Stimpson, as at 1992, what did chairing a case 5 conference into allegations of sexual abuse actually 6 involve? 7 A. In what way? 8 Q. What was your job? 9 A. My job was to ensure that the circumstances had been 10 properly investigated by the social workers; that the 11 issues had been addressed; and that the child who had 12 made the allegations was being protected. The case 13 conference would look at issues about whether or not the 14 young person was still at risk and their name should be 15 placed upon the Child Protection Register. 16 Q. That's a general point I wanted to ask about, because we 17 understand that, at least in the early part of 18 the 1990s, the Child Protection Register was understood 19 as something which children were placed on if they were 20 at home with their own families and they were seen to be 21 at risk. Did you see the Child Protection Register also 22 as something in which children who were actually in care 23 could be placed as well? 24 A. I can't see any reason why they shouldn't be placed on 25 the Child Protection Register. The important bit was,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 8</p>

<p>1 is this child or young person at significant risk of 2 abuse in the future? And it's the safeguarding that's 3 the important issue. Case conferences also covered – 4 there were two strands, really, to case conferences. 5 One was looking at the criminal side and what the police 6 had been able to undertake in terms of their 7 investigation; but that was separate from issues about 8 whether or not the Social Services Department could 9 investigate the circumstances of the child and ensure 10 protection, though they are the two strands which 11 normally you would try to draw together in a case 12 conference as chair and to make recommendations about 13 future actions, including actions relating to the 14 protection in the future.</p> <p>15 Q. With regard to F130, and we don't need to go to the 16 documents right now, I am just going to summarise what 17 the case was about, so this was a case conference 18 in June 1992, and in this case a child in foster care 19 with F130 disclosed to her social worker and to 20 ChildLine that she had been sexually abused by him, 21 including digital penetration and forced oral sex. 22 In the case conference, it was noted that Detective 23 Inspector Langstaff's personal opinion was that the 24 child had been abused by F130, but due to inadequate 25 evidence, he felt it would be difficult to bring about</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 9</p>	<p>1 a prosecution. 2 The case conference itself noted that it was felt 3 that something had occurred, but it was difficult to 4 establish what. 5 If we can turn to tab 7, and that's NSC000376, and 6 it is page 10, which you will see at the bottom 7 right-hand corner, Ms Stimpson, you will see at the 8 bottom under the heading "Registration", it's noted: 9 "... the conference did believe that A275 had 10 suffered child sexual abuse ..." 11 Then on the next page, under "Recommendations", it's 12 noted: 13 "Any contact A275 has with F130 and wife is to be 14 closely supervised." 15 If the conference thought that A275 had been abused, 16 why was any contact being allowed at all? 17 A. I really do not remember. 18 Q. Can you assist, at least in principle, with why or 19 whether contact would be allowed with a child who may 20 have been abused with the foster parent who is suspected 21 to have abused her? 22 A. Yes, I can, because in some instances, and it may well 23 be in this case, the child had lived within the family 24 for a number of years, and the contact with that family 25 was probably important – contact with the family, as</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 10</p>
<p>1 opposed to contact with the perpetrator. Therefore, it 2 would need to be closely supervised and managed. But 3 contact would not be against the child's will or wishes. 4 It would hopefully be in line with those wishes. That's 5 my view now. But I really can't say what my view was 6 then.</p> <p>7 Q. If we can turn to page 15 in the same tab, and if we can 8 bring that up on screen, please. This is a record from, 9 I think, probably just before email was being used and 10 things were being recorded on the management system, and 11 it refers to a message from you in September 1997, which 12 says that in your risk management capacity, you had 13 recently received some information of a claim being made 14 by this child, A275, about abuse by F130, so the same 15 issue five years later. Can you assist, what was your 16 risk management capacity in 1997? What does that mean? 17 A. I don't think that bit is from me. If you have a look 18 at that first paragraph, the eighth line down, which 19 says "the case is held by JA", it's signed "Pati", and 20 so that bit of the email is from Pati to me. So from – 21 Q. Then the next paragraph is you; is that right? 22 A. That's correct. 23 Q. My mistake, Ms Stimpson. The next paragraph notes that 24 F130 was an approved foster carer, he's not been used 25 since A275 was moved, and registration withdrawn.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 11</p>	<p>1 A. Yes. 2 Q. We didn't have any record in the previous documents of 3 a final decision being made, but can we assume from that 4 record that, following the allegations, the foster 5 parents' registration was in fact withdrawn? 6 A. Oh, yes. Yes. The normal practice would be for their 7 role as foster carers to be suspended when allegations 8 are made; for any remaining foster children in the 9 family to be removed, hopefully in a timely and 10 a planned manner, but they wouldn't be used in the 11 interim, until proper investigations had been made. 12 Q. I was going to come on to ask you this, but we can deal 13 with it now: you mention suspending the foster carers. 14 Obviously, it's easy to enough to understand with 15 a staff member that being suspended means they don't 16 come to work and therefore they don't have access to 17 children. With foster carers, obviously that's a bit 18 more difficult. What did suspending them mean? 19 A. It meant that no further placements would be made. 20 Q. If there was a current placement, would they be allowed 21 to maintain contact with that child? 22 A. I don't think that was the normal practice. I think 23 you've got to – again, protection of the child has to 24 come first, and the child's best interests. This is not 25 about foster carers' rights or wishes. It is about the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 12</p>

<p>1 child's wishes and feelings and ensuring their safety.</p> <p>2 Q. Ms Stimpson, we don't need to go to any documents about</p> <p>3 this point, but within this case and within this tab,</p> <p>4 there are references to annual foster carer reviews in</p> <p>5 the 1990s and 1991, and they refer to a perceived need</p> <p>6 for the foster parents to have sexual abuse training.</p> <p>7 Can you recall what sexual abuse training for foster</p> <p>8 parents would have meant in 1990/1991?</p> <p>9 A. No, I really can't. I wouldn't have been involved in</p> <p>10 that. It would have been arranged within the service,</p> <p>11 and I really can't answer that.</p> <p>12 Q. Given the --</p> <p>13 A. I wouldn't have been involved in it.</p> <p>14 Q. Of course you wouldn't have been involved, I understand,</p> <p>15 in doing the training, but given that you were</p> <p>16 responsible for the fostering service as a whole, do you</p> <p>17 remember whether training foster parents about dealing</p> <p>18 with sexually abused children or dealing with</p> <p>19 disclosures of sexual abuse, was that a prominent issue</p> <p>20 for you when you managed the fostering team in Newark?</p> <p>21 A. I can't remember. I really cannot remember. My</p> <p>22 recollection is that our knowledge and experience of</p> <p>23 sexual abuse was so limited, but the early 1990s were</p> <p>24 a time when awareness was emerging, and we were learning</p> <p>25 all the time about the propensity of some foster carers</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 13</p>	<p>1 and other people working with children, their propensity</p> <p>2 to abuse. So I can't remember to what degree and what</p> <p>3 level the training was in the early '90s. I suspect it</p> <p>4 was minimal. But that's how I feel, rather than what</p> <p>5 I remember.</p> <p>6 Q. We are going to move on to discuss another case, and</p> <p>7 that's of Douglas Vardy. You talk about this in your</p> <p>8 statement from paragraphs 26 to 27 and it is in your</p> <p>9 bundle at tab 5. You say in your statement that you</p> <p>10 recall little about this case. I am going to summarise</p> <p>11 again what the case is about, just for the benefit of</p> <p>12 the public. This was a case in which Douglas Vardy, who</p> <p>13 was a foster parent, was eventually convicted in 1992 of</p> <p>14 sexually abusing three girls in foster care who were</p> <p>15 placed with him and his wife.</p> <p>16 In this case, Ms Stimpson, the disclosure was made</p> <p>17 by one of the girls to her ex-foster mother. Do you</p> <p>18 recall, was that a common route for disclosure, in your</p> <p>19 experience?</p> <p>20 A. I don't think there was any route, any particular route,</p> <p>21 that I remember.</p> <p>22 Q. Ms Stimpson, you chaired the initial Child Protection</p> <p>23 Conference, which we don't need to go to right now, but</p> <p>24 for the benefit of the record, it will be published in</p> <p>25 full -- that's at NSC000351_006 to 011. Ms Stimpson, in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 14</p>
<p>1 that conference, it's noted that none of the three girls</p> <p>2 had disclosed to their social worker, despite being seen</p> <p>3 by those social workers outside the presence of</p> <p>4 the foster parents.</p> <p>5 Do you recall, was any consideration given as to</p> <p>6 what could be done to facilitate children feeling able</p> <p>7 to disclose to their social workers?</p> <p>8 A. I can't remember whether there was any consideration</p> <p>9 given to that or not. But I do remember that it was</p> <p>10 unusual for them to disclose directly to their social</p> <p>11 workers, and a sadness to many social workers, who</p> <p>12 considered that they had positive and good relationships</p> <p>13 with the young people involved, as I think the social</p> <p>14 worker in this case did.</p> <p>15 Q. Ms Stimpson, the conference also notes that, in relation</p> <p>16 to -- in fact, I think it would be useful to have this</p> <p>17 up on screen, so it is tab 5, and for you, Ms Stimpson,</p> <p>18 it is page 10. For the record, that's NSC000351_010.</p> <p>19 It is the paragraph right at the bottom here, it is</p> <p>20 noted:</p> <p>21 "A256 [who was one of the girls who had been abused]</p> <p>22 had been removed from her family because of abuse and</p> <p>23 had been abused in each of the three foster placements</p> <p>24 she had been placed in."</p> <p>25 By this stage, you were responsible for fostering</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 15</p>	<p>1 services in Newark and it is not immediately clear</p> <p>2 whether all of those placements were in Newark. Given</p> <p>3 how striking I think that passage might seem, do you</p> <p>4 recall, did this prompt any reflective thinking about</p> <p>5 what is going wrong here?</p> <p>6 A. Again, I can't take myself back there. I would hope</p> <p>7 that it would have prompted some reflective thinking,</p> <p>8 and these are not the only three girls who were placed</p> <p>9 into foster homes where abuse was perpetrated, and</p> <p>10 they'd already come from a home where they'd been</p> <p>11 sexually abused.</p> <p>12 What became clear, I think, over that time, was that</p> <p>13 children who have already been sexually abused appeared</p> <p>14 to be at a far higher risk of abuse within foster care,</p> <p>15 probably, and residential care, than a child who hadn't</p> <p>16 already been sexually abused. The reason for that,</p> <p>17 I don't know, but it certainly -- there was too much of</p> <p>18 a pattern for it not to go unnoticed or be taken</p> <p>19 seriously.</p> <p>20 Q. In terms of taking that seriously and noticing that, can</p> <p>21 you remember, was anything extra done in these cases to</p> <p>22 try to protect the girls or boys who were seen to be at</p> <p>23 higher risk?</p> <p>24 A. No, I can't remember. It's such a long time ago. It's</p> <p>25 so difficult to go back that far and to remember what</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 16</p>

<p>1 any -- any actions were taken as a consequence, and I'm 2 sorry about that.</p> <p>3 Q. Ms Stimpson, at this case conference, one of the things 4 that was recommended at the end was that the victims be 5 provided with appropriate advice regarding the position 6 if they wanted to make a claim against the local 7 authority and that the local authority would progress 8 their application for criminal injuries compensation.</p> <p>9 A. Yes.</p> <p>10 Q. Do you remember, were those outcomes quite common? The 11 reason I ask is, obviously it might be seen that the 12 authority might not want to encourage people to make 13 claims against them. How far did you deal with that 14 tension?</p> <p>15 A. I think there was a policy. I think it was a written 16 policy that children who had been abused whilst in care 17 were entitled to apply for CRIB claims. We normally had 18 a solicitor from the county's legal department. They 19 were always invited to case conferences. Unfortunately, 20 they weren't always able to attend. But they routinely 21 gave their advice at the end of a case conference about 22 whether or not claims should be made. Indeed, I think 23 they progressed them with the children or gave advice 24 how to progress them.</p> <p>25 So although you could see that the authority could</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 17</p>	<p>1 be heavily defended about matters of compensation, 2 I don't believe that they were, and certainly, as 3 a social worker, that would never have been a guiding 4 factor for me.</p> <p>5 Q. Ms Stimpson, if we turn over to page 12 in this tab, 6 this is the outcome letter which was sent by you to the 7 Vardys essentially saying that, following his 8 conviction, you were obliged to terminate their 9 registration.</p> <p>10 A. Yes.</p> <p>11 Q. I asked you about this in general before, but do you 12 remember, as at 1993, would that simply have been 13 a decision which you made following the conviction, or 14 would there have been a panel to sit, a meeting, at 15 which they had to consider that and decide?</p> <p>16 A. Without being able to remember, I'm fairly sure that it 17 would have been -- that would be my decision. I would 18 take it, and the letter would go off.</p> <p>19 Q. Thank you.</p> <p>20 A. I don't think it would be a panel decision.</p> <p>21 Q. We are going to move on to another case, which is 22 involving F111. You refer to this at paragraph 32 of 23 your statement. Again, I am going to summarise it.</p> <p>24 In March 1996, there were allegations of sexual 25 abuse against F111, who was a foster carer. A strategy</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 18</p>
<p>1 meeting, we know from the documents, noted that F111 and 2 his wife were well known and trusted, and that many 3 children had been placed with no previous concerns, but 4 following a joint investigation, including the 5 contacting of children previously fostered, F111 was 6 charged in September 1997 with unlawful sexual 7 intercourse and indecent assault, although that was 8 later discontinued.</p> <p>9 Ms Stimpson, you say in your statement that you had 10 no involvement in the investigation into the 11 allegations. Given that he was registered as a foster 12 parent within your district, can we take that to mean 13 that you had no personal involvement, but you would have 14 had supervisory responsibility?</p> <p>15 A. No. The complication here was, I believe, that number 16 F111 probably lived within the Mansfield district. The 17 investigations into the allegations which were made by 18 the young adult concerned also lived in the Mansfield 19 district, and, therefore, they took the lead in terms of 20 investigation, because the abuse would have also 21 happened within that district and not my own.</p> <p>22 As a result, and having read the case conference 23 minutes, the Mansfield district had the lead, and my 24 fostering officer, my team manager for fostering, 25 attended all the meetings which were involved relating</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 19</p>	<p>1 to the child. So I would be informed indirectly by the 2 team manager who'd attended. So I would have known what 3 was happening with F111, but wasn't directly part of 4 the investigations.</p> <p>5 Q. We don't need to go to this, Ms Stimpson, but there is 6 a document which is a report done by a social worker 7 called Adele Faulkner, which was done for the Family 8 Placement Panel, and, for the record, because that will 9 be published, it's at NSC000433_073 to 080.</p> <p>10 Ms Stimpson, Adele Faulkner concluded, at the conclusion 11 of her report, that real concerns remained about the 12 sexual abuse allegations, and the allegations had never 13 been withdrawn. She said that, in view of this, it 14 would therefore not be possible to consider placing 15 further foster children without taking unacceptable 16 risks.</p> <p>17 You then wrote the decision letter in August 1997, 18 which is at NSC000433_081. That's tab 9, Ms Stimpson, 19 if you need that.</p> <p>20 A. Yes.</p> <p>21 Q. If we can have that up on screen, please. Given the 22 division of responsibilities that you have mentioned, 23 and the fact it was across different districts, why 24 would it have been you writing the decision letter?</p> <p>25 A. Because the foster carers were used and registered</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 20</p>

<p>1 within my district. They happened to live in another 2 one, but that wasn't altogether unusual. Foster carers 3 could live anywhere but still be used and on the 4 register for Newark.</p> <p>5 Q. I'm going to read out a passage in your letter, and it 6 is from about the middle, where it says: 7 "In the end, the panel were left having to decide 8 whether the authority could place further children with 9 you knowing that there had been two allegations of 10 sexual abuse by two different girls, one of which had 11 been witnessed by a third girl. Obviously, since the 12 completion of the police investigation, we have no proof 13 either way that these events occurred, but we do know 14 that neither girl has withdrawn their statement and that 15 the allegations still stand. In these circumstances, we 16 have no alternative but to conclude that we are not able 17 to take any further risk in placing foster children with 18 you and the panel regretfully has withdrawn your 19 registration as foster carers." 20 If you were writing this letter, would that mean 21 that you chaired the Family Placement Panel who made the 22 decision? 23 A. Yes, it would.</p> <p>24 Q. Just to ask about the principle involved, it seems to be 25 that what is being said is that, where there's an</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 21</p>	<p>1 allegation, where it's not been withdrawn, and where 2 there is something else, so the fact that there was more 3 than one person making the allegation, that that was 4 essentially enough and that meant you couldn't take the 5 risk. Would you say that was a general principle that 6 you followed? 7 A. Yes, and I think it wouldn't have mattered -- although 8 my letter has referred to more than one girl making an 9 allegation, I like to think that, even if it had only 10 been one young person making an allegation that hadn't 11 been withdrawn and that couldn't be proved, which was 12 (break in transmission) in most cases, that I would 13 still have made the same decision. The fact that there 14 was three doesn't make any difference. One is enough.</p> <p>15 Q. It may be difficult to take your mind back 20 years to 16 1997, but do you remember, was that view, that 17 perspective on risk, one that was shared across your 18 colleagues? 19 A. My colleagues across the county or my colleagues within 20 Newark itself?</p> <p>21 Q. Both, if they are different? 22 A. I wouldn't know what the view was across the county. 23 I would like to think it was the same. But certainly 24 within Newark district the thinking would be the same.</p> <p>25 Q. I'm grateful. I'm going to move on to another case now,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 22</p>
<p>1 which is the case of F108. You refer to this at 2 paragraph 28 of your statement. Again, I'm going to 3 summarise it, Ms Stimpson. 4 In November 1994, a child disclosed that she had 5 been sexually abused by her foster father. Enquiries 6 were carried out and F108 denied the allegations. The 7 police said there was insufficient evidence to 8 prosecute, as it was the child's word against F108's, 9 and he was returned to his role as a residential social 10 worker, a role which he held at the same time as being 11 a foster parent, although, following the allegation, he 12 withdrew from fostering. 13 We will come to it in a minute, but in January 1997, 14 a reference was provided for him, and actually we can 15 turn to that now, so it is NSC000368_026. That's at 16 tab 6 of your bundle, Ms Stimpson. This was written by 17 Avril Jamson. She was a colleague of yours; is that 18 right? 19 A. That's correct.</p> <p>20 Q. I appreciate that it mentions that they were approved as 21 foster carers for Mansfield. I know you had some 22 involvement later on. 23 This reference mentions in the third paragraph that 24 allegations had been made against F108, but it says: 25 "The investigations were terminated as no substance</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 23</p>	<p>1 was found to the allegation. However, the trauma of 2 the investigation caused the family great distress, and 3 although F108 and wife had previously enjoyed fostering, 4 this experience left them feeling hurt and angry. They 5 decided to withdraw from fostering in April 1995." 6 Then it says: 7 "The department's confidence in F108 is reflected in 8 his continued employment at The Ridge Children's Home." 9 If we can turn over, then, Ms Stimpson, to the next 10 page, which is page 27, this is a file note about F108, 11 and it is a discussion had between you and somebody 12 else, I think it might be Marjorie Toward, but I can't 13 be quite sure, and it notes here, and this is in the 14 second paragraph, the middle of the way through. It 15 says: 16 "MS expressed concerns about the handling of this 17 case by Mansfield ... on looking at the file as she said 18 we wouldn't normally just close a case like that without 19 forming a view and from what she could see on the file 20 there was no reason to doubt the girl's evidence." 21 Given the reference to "handling of the case by 22 Mansfield (Avril)", can we take it that your concerns 23 were twofold: one, about the reference that was given; 24 and one about the failure to come to a decision either 25 way following the allegations?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 24</p>

6 (Pages 21 to 24)

<p>1 A. Yes. Yes, I was concerned. Again, I can't remember the 2 specific details of that discussion, which is 20 years 3 ago, but it felt very open-ended and, for him to return 4 immediately to his role in a residential care 5 establishment, didn't really match and didn't sit easily 6 with me.</p> <p>7 Q. Ms Stimpson, you have already told us about the approach 8 you took within Newark. Do you think that if this had 9 been a Newark case where there was an allegation that 10 hadn't been withdrawn and they denied it -- what do you 11 think -- I know it is difficult to be a bit reflective 12 and hypothetical about it, but what do you think should 13 have been done in those circumstances, in those very 14 bare circumstances?</p> <p>15 A. It is easy with the benefit of hindsight and from where 16 I sit now, but clearly there should have been a greater 17 investigation, certainly in terms of his role in 18 residential care and in relation to the girl. It felt 19 unfinished in terms of it being an investigation. He 20 was only on a temporary contract in his role as 21 a residential social worker. There are clearly 22 implications which I can see now -- I may not have seen 23 it then, I don't know, but there are clearly 24 implications for all the children at the residential 25 home to which he returned. So it wasn't only from the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 25</p>	<p>1 foster care aspect, but also from the point of view of 2 vulnerable children in residential care for whom he had 3 responsibility, and he was returned to that, and maybe 4 there should have been an investigation based upon what 5 he was doing with children in residential care as well, 6 but that's with the benefit of hindsight.</p> <p>7 Q. I appreciate that, Ms Stimpson. You have told us a bit 8 about the approach you took at the time, because there 9 are some documents we obviously have which show your 10 approach at the time. Do you think that that approach 11 was that, where there are allegations of sexual abuse, 12 a decision on the balance of probabilities needed to be 13 made?</p> <p>14 A. Absolutely.</p> <p>15 Q. So you think that the failure in this case was leaving 16 it hanging and essentially returning to work because 17 there was nothing that could be proven?</p> <p>18 A. Yes, it was unfinished business.</p> <p>19 Q. We know that actually your involvement here was that 20 there was a disciplinary process against F108 in the 21 late 1990s because he had failed to disclose criminal 22 convictions in relation to non-child sexual abuse 23 issues, and we know that in July 1999, following his 24 dismissal, there was a letter sent to the Department of 25 Health Consultancy Index asking for him to be placed on</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 26</p>
<p>1 the index, but the following year that request was 2 withdrawn because it was admitted that at no point had 3 a finding been made about the allegations of sexual 4 abuse.</p> <p>5 When you did the disciplinary, did you consider that 6 a decision should have been made about the previous 7 allegations as well as the failure to disclose criminal 8 convictions?</p> <p>9 A. Yes, I cannot remember anything about presenting the 10 disciplinary case. My recollection is so vague about 11 that, and it surprised me that I can remember so little, 12 because it would be so important in his life and it 13 would be significant in terms of my managerial position, 14 but I really cannot remember.</p> <p>15 I have a vague recollection of the outcome, and 16 these papers have reminded me that I did deal with it, 17 but in detail, I'm sorry, I really can't remember.</p> <p>18 Q. I'm going to come on to ask you very briefly about your 19 involvement in allegations against F93. This you deal 20 with at paragraph 25 of your statement. Again, I will 21 summarise what the case was about. This was a case in 22 which allegations were made in 2002 about sexual abuse 23 by F93 who had been a foster carer from 1979 to 1990. 24 The complainant said she didn't want the case to be 25 taken further, and, therefore, the police did not</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 27</p>	<p>1 proceed with the investigation, but the Social Services 2 Department proceeded with a sole agency enquiry, and 3 a series of strategy meetings were held, at least 4 a couple of which you attended.</p> <p>5 You say, Ms Stimpson, that you have no idea why you 6 were there, on reflection. Who was responsible for 7 deciding about who should attend strategy meetings?</p> <p>8 A. Normally, it would be in the district, the child 9 protection coordinator who was chairing would form 10 a view with whichever officer had been doing the 11 investigation.</p> <p>12 Having had time since I did my witness statement to 13 re-read this document, I think I was there because I had 14 a line management responsibility for the social worker 15 who'd done the investigation, and I think that must have 16 been the reason why I attended. But I'd never used the 17 foster carers and I didn't know anything about them.</p> <p>18 Q. We are going to come on to a couple of more recent 19 cases, about the time you were vice chair of 20 the Fostering Panel, and that was your role between 2008 21 and 2016. By this point, there was a county-wide 22 Fostering Panel; is that right?</p> <p>23 A. Yes, that's correct.</p> <p>24 Q. You were counted, you were described, as an independent 25 vice chair. Do you think that having been employed by</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 28</p>

<p>1 the county council for 30 years beforehand that you 2 could properly be said to be independent? 3 A. Yes, it was 40 years that I worked for the 4 county council. 5 Q. Sorry. 6 A. Yes, I do believe that I could be independent. It 7 wasn't a decision that I took lightly. I have never sat 8 back and not been able to challenge people or the 9 department itself when I was employed by them, and 10 I certainly wasn't going to sit back and not challenge 11 them at a point where I became completely independent, 12 and I felt independent and considered that I could 13 contribute to the development of a service of a high 14 standard in fostering, and that's what informed my 15 decision to become an independent member of 16 the county-wide panel. 17 Q. Ms Stimpson, you say at paragraph 14 of your statement 18 that you were sometimes frustrated by the role because 19 there were limited opportunities to influence social 20 work practice. Can you expand on that a little bit for 21 us? 22 A. I think probably, having been an operational manager for 23 the majority of my working life, and having direct 24 influence over social work practice, I was adjusting to 25 the role – to a different role, and having to recognise</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 29</p>	<p>1 that any issues that I had about the quality of practice 2 or the quality of decision making needed not to be done 3 directly with the workers in the service, but actually 4 with the children's service manager and the senior 5 officers responsible for the Fostering Panel. But I was 6 able to do that on more than one occasion, and where 7 I was unhappy with issues that had been presented to 8 panel, as vice chair, and normally with the chairperson, 9 we were able to express our concerns beyond the panel 10 itself and to go perhaps to the core of the department 11 rather than deal with it as part of a panel process. 12 Q. I am going to come on now to deal with one of the cases 13 that you dealt with in that role, which is the case 14 involving F165. You say, Ms Stimpson, at paragraph 31 15 of your statement that you remember this case as it was 16 a bit more recent. 17 A. Yes. 18 Q. You sat on the Fostering Panel in this case. I am going 19 to summarise it again. In August 2010, allegations were 20 made by a 12-year-old child in foster care that she had 21 been sexually abused by her foster father, F165. The 22 allegations were of sexual touching and digital 23 penetration. Multi-agency strategy meetings were held. 24 F165 denied the allegations, and they were suspended as 25 foster carers.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 30</p>
<p>1 In December 2010, a decision was made by the CPS, 2 the Crown Prosecution Service, not to prosecute. It 3 then came before you and your colleagues on the 4 Fostering Panel in June 2011. If we can turn to that, 5 it's at tab 14, NSC000541_001. 6 Just a couple of things on the first page. This 7 lists the panel members present. There are four people 8 described as independent panel members, one social 9 worker and one elected member of the council. Was that 10 a common makeup? Was that the usual makeup of 11 the Fostering Panel? 12 A. Sorry, will you hang on a minute? I'm not sure I have 13 got the right document. 14 Q. Of course. 15 A. Yes, thank you. Yes, there was an elected member there. 16 Certainly, at that time, I think it was a requirement 17 that elected members were members of panels, although 18 that was later changed. But, yes, they did contribute 19 at that time. They were regular members of panel. 20 Q. Ms Stimpson, the advice given at the bottom of that 21 page, which I will summarise, was that you, the panel, 22 had to consider whether the foster carers were suitable 23 to continue based on the best interests of the child, 24 and it said that your role was to make a recommendation, 25 bearing in mind the national minimum standards for</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 31</p>	<p>1 foster carers. 2 Is it correct that your role was to make the 3 recommendation, but you didn't have the decision-making 4 power? That was the agency decision maker who had that? 5 A. Panel members are always very clear that they make 6 recommendations, they're not responsible for the 7 decision. So you're correct. 8 Q. If we can turn to page 6 of this document, from the 9 bottom bullet point it gives your views on the case at 10 that stage. You talk about the denials from F165 and 11 say you were left with incredible doubts regarding his 12 honesty. Over the next page, it records you saying that 13 F165's relationship with A349 was probably improper, and 14 you felt there were risks involved in them continuing as 15 foster parents? 16 A. Yes. 17 Q. Your recommendation can also be found on this page, the 18 first bullet point at the bottom half of the page, it 19 says that you did not recommend reapproval, you were not 20 willing to disregard the allegations made by the 21 complainant, and the foster parents did not meet the 22 minimum standards in safeguarding children? 23 A. Yes. 24 Q. Was your perspective as a Fostering Panel member the 25 same in 2010 or 2011 as the perspective you told us</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 32</p>

<p>1 about from 1997, which was, if an allegation has been 2 made, even if it is denied, if it has not been 3 withdrawn, that's enough, there's too much risk? 4 A. Yes. 5 Q. When making this decision, the inquiry understands from 6 other evidence that's been seen that, countywide at this 7 stage, there were cases in which foster parents had been 8 reapproved and gone on to abuse children. Can you 9 remember, were you aware of that as an issue as at 2011? 10 A. No, I don't think I was. 11 Q. Ms Stimpson, in this case, the rest of the panel 12 unanimously agreed with you about deregistering, but the 13 foster parents appealed against that -- sorry, and the 14 decision was to deregister from the agency decision 15 maker. They appealed to the Independent Review 16 Mechanism. 17 You say that the panel would have been kept informed 18 of the actions of the local authority. How would that 19 happen? 20 A. Normally, the decisions of the agency decision maker 21 would be relayed at panel's next meeting. In this 22 instance, I do remember the agency decision maker -- 23 sorry, I have lost my train of thought. The panel were 24 routinely notified. I was always satisfied with that. 25 Q. Were you kept informed about what happened once the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 33</p>	<p>1 foster parents had appealed to the Independent Review 2 Mechanism? 3 A. Yes, I'm sure that we were, yes. 4 Q. In this case, as you will have seen from the documents, 5 Ms Stimpson, at least, the Independent Review Mechanism 6 in Birmingham recommended that the approval of 7 the foster parents should continue, so they came to an 8 opposite view from you and your colleagues, and they 9 said that there was no credible evidence of sexual abuse 10 having occurred and there were serious flaws in the 11 investigation. 12 Was there a tension between the approach taken by 13 you and your colleagues on the Fostering Panel and the 14 approach taken by the Independent Review Mechanism? 15 A. I don't know whether there was a tension between the 16 panel -- between the two panels, but I certainly would 17 take issue, having read the minutes, I think the IRM 18 appeared in that instance to be foster-carer-focused, as 19 opposed to child-focused, but that's my view. 20 Q. If we can go to tab 8, NSC000378_040, this is some 21 feedback given by the IRM to the fostering service 22 provider. There are a couple of points which I wanted 23 to check with you. First of all, in general, do you 24 remember, would this type of feedback come back to you 25 or just come back to the fostering service?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 34</p>
<p>1 A. I'm sorry, I can't remember, but I suspect it went to 2 the service and wasn't seen by the panel. 3 Q. The IRM say at the second-last bullet point: 4 "The panel was concerned at the fostering service 5 provider's approach that it can never be proved that 6 sexual allegations are unfounded." 7 Do you have any comment on that feedback? 8 A. Sorry, can you re-refer me to the -- 9 Q. Yes, it is the second-last bullet point on page 40? 10 A. Oh, yes, thank you. 11 Q. Essentially, it's the double negative. They are saying 12 that they are concerned that the fostering provider had 13 taken the view that no allegation could ever be 14 unfounded. Do you take issue with that? Do you have 15 any comment on that? 16 A. No, I don't have any comment. Sorry, will you give me 17 one minute just to try to absorb that, please? 18 Q. Of course. 19 A. It is a rather strange way of making a point, in terms 20 of its grammar. I can't really comment on it. I don't 21 properly understand what they are trying to say. 22 Q. Another of the findings -- or the feedback was that the 23 fostering service provider had focused on its own 24 self-interest and its desire to be completely risk 25 adverse. The final bullet point is that they failed in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 35</p>	<p>1 their duty of care to the carers. Do you think that's 2 a fair criticism? 3 A. I think, if they're saying that we have -- that, as 4 a panel, we had a desire to be risk averse, it's 5 absolutely right. We have a duty to make sure that 6 there are the absolute minimal risks when we are placing 7 children in foster homes and therefore it ought to be 8 risk averse. I don't see that as a criticism. Indeed, 9 it should be seen as a compliment. We should be trying 10 to ensure there is nil risk, never mind minimal risk. 11 So I find that a bit incredulous, really. 12 Q. I want to come on and ask you about one more foster 13 case. This isn't in your statement because the 14 documents were only sent to you afterwards, but they 15 should have been sent to you a couple of weeks ago, 16 hopefully. I will summarise the case, and then 17 hopefully you can help us with it. 18 This was another case which you dealt with as part 19 of the Fostering Panel, and it was one where the panel 20 had to consider whether two foster parents were suitable 21 for continued registration after a child in their care 22 had sexually abused another child in foster care with 23 another set of foster parents. Have you had a chance to 24 read some of the documents sent to you on that? 25 A. Yes. The documents were sent late, but, again, it was</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 36</p>

<p>1 the case, because it was recent enough, that I could 2 recall it reasonably easily. 3 Q. To summarise, the reason why this came before you was 4 that, essentially, it was considered that the foster 5 parents had been at fault in leaving the child in a room 6 alone with another child who was much younger than him 7 and when the child who carried out the abuse was known 8 to have displayed sexualised behaviour. 9 If we can turn, please, to tab 12, and that's 10 NSC001602_006, the text is very dense, I appreciate. In 11 the first paragraph, the chair of the meeting asked the 12 manager, the fostering team manager, whether there had 13 been meetings to look at how sexualised behaviour could 14 be managed, and Ms Bamkin, who was the fostering team 15 manager, said that she had asked for a meeting but this 16 had not happened, although there had been three strategy 17 meetings since, attended by all. 18 The minutes record -- it is unclear whether she said 19 it or the chair said it: 20 "Currently, fostering did not have a productive 21 relationship with Children's Services, whereas they used 22 to have a close relationship." 23 Can you enlighten us at all about what that refers 24 to? 25 A. No. I mean, I could only speculate, as you could, that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 37</p>	<p>1 their working together was sometimes disjointed or less 2 co-ordinated than one would like. 3 Q. On page 8 of this document, the first bullet point is 4 your recommendation and your reasons for it. 5 A. Yes. 6 Q. I'm not going to read it all out, because it is quite 7 long. But essentially, you stated that the incident was 8 unacceptable and entirely avoidable, and you were of 9 the view that there was a profound lack of judgment by 10 all the foster carers present, and those foster parents, 11 who were being deregistered, were in the best position 12 to understand their child's sexual feelings and his 13 urges, and therefore you came to the conclusion that you 14 couldn't recommend approval for the foster parents. 15 A. Mmm. 16 Q. You may be aware, Ms Stimpson, that one of the issues 17 that this investigation is dealing with is sexual abuse 18 between children and harmful sexual behaviour. 19 A. Yes. 20 Q. Was that something that you feel the fostering service 21 and the Fostering Panel was alive to at this time as 22 a significant concern? 23 A. Well, they were certainly alive to -- sorry, I'm getting 24 some feedback. Could you ask that question again now, 25 please?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 38</p>
<p>1 Q. Of course. 2 A. I'm sorry, I have had some sound difficulties here. 3 Q. That's okay. I will try again, if I remember my train 4 of thought. 5 I was asking whether you were alive, as 6 a Fostering Panel, to the risk of children in foster 7 care sexually abusing other children in foster care. 8 This is obviously one case you were dealing with, but do 9 you think there was an understanding of that as a real 10 risk in general? 11 A. It was highlighted by this case, but I don't remember 12 many cases being presented to panel which were similar. 13 I think this was probably the only one during my seven 14 or eight years on panel where we dealt with 15 child-on-child abuse. But, again, that might be my poor 16 memory, rather than it being accurate. 17 Q. Ms Stimpson, we have now looked at a number of cases 18 over, to be fair, a number of years, some of which you 19 were a senior social worker, some of which you were 20 assistant director, Children's Services manager and then 21 on the Fostering Panel. Do you think that when you were 22 Children's Services manager particularly, so in the 23 1990s, that sufficient attention was paid to the risk of 24 children in foster care being sexually abused by their 25 foster parents?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 39</p>	<p>1 A. That's very -- that's difficult to answer. No, I think 2 probably not. 3 Q. In hindsight even, can you help us with -- or on 4 reflection, can you help us with what more you think 5 might have been done at that time? 6 A. Sorry, would you repeat the question again for me, 7 please? 8 Q. Yes. On reflection, what more do you think you might 9 have done to greater protect children in foster care? 10 A. I don't know other -- this comes back to the issue of, 11 why don't they tell social workers, in whom they can 12 confide? I don't think I can answer that easily. There 13 is clearly -- there are clearly things that should be 14 done. Through everyone having a greater awareness about 15 sexual abuse of children, I began to learn, as time went 16 by, that you do have to believe the unbelievable and 17 think the unthinkable when it comes to dealing with 18 people and potential perpetrators. 19 I noticed the change in terms of the attitude of our 20 ways of dealing with children, that we need to enable 21 children to protect themselves. We didn't do that in 22 the early '90s. That evolved over time. Not only did 23 we decide to train foster carers or residential social 24 workers, but it was also about enabling children to 25 trust people and to disclose. I don't know how we</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 40</p>

<p>1 effectively do that.</p> <p>2 Q. Ms Stimpson, I want to come on to a couple of slightly</p> <p>3 different topics. One is with regard to</p> <p>4 Edwinstowe Hall.</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 Q. This was a children's home which you were responsible</p> <p>7 for in the 1990s.</p> <p>8 A. Yes.</p> <p>9 Q. In 2004, an investigation was conducted into events that</p> <p>10 had taken place there between the 1970s and the 1990s.</p> <p>11 It is just one particular point which I want to address</p> <p>12 with you. From the strategy meeting minutes, it's</p> <p>13 recorded that, in the '90s, there were allegations of</p> <p>14 child-on-child sexual abuse being made, and in fact it's</p> <p>15 noted that there were lots of concerns about</p> <p>16 child-on-child sexual abuse. This is reflected in an</p> <p>17 eventual report that was produced.</p> <p>18 Can you assist us with your recollection of, during</p> <p>19 that time, were you aware, as Children's Services</p> <p>20 manager, of the risk of children in care being sexually</p> <p>21 abused by other children in care?</p> <p>22 A. No, I wasn't.</p> <p>23 Q. Do you remember any cases actually coming before you,</p> <p>24 coming onto your desk?</p> <p>25 A. No, not at all.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 41</p>	<p>1 Q. When do you think that for you, as Children's Services</p> <p>2 manager, that issue started to emerge?</p> <p>3 A. I honestly don't know. It must have been -- I suppose</p> <p>4 it must have been the late '90s. There is no question</p> <p>5 that when I read the documents that have come to me as</p> <p>6 part of this investigation, that I was horrified by what</p> <p>7 I read, and I regret not knowing then what I know now in</p> <p>8 terms of what have might have been happening at</p> <p>9 Edwinstowe Hall. It's a sadness in many respects.</p> <p>10 Q. Ms Stimpson, the inquiry has heard evidence from other</p> <p>11 witnesses and from documents about really significant</p> <p>12 reports that were done into issues of child-on-child</p> <p>13 sexual abuse in 1988, in 1990, in 1991, in 1993. Can it</p> <p>14 be assumed from your evidence that none of that was fed</p> <p>15 back to you?</p> <p>16 A. No, that's absolutely right. I think one of the things</p> <p>17 that struck me when I read the documents was the failure</p> <p>18 by myself and by probably others within the organisation</p> <p>19 before me, the failure to see a whole picture that maybe</p> <p>20 a lot of individuals saw snippets of information, but no</p> <p>21 one person ever put everything together, and that's</p> <p>22 a real failing and that's a real regret of mine.</p> <p>23 Q. The final issue, Ms Stimpson, is something you address</p> <p>24 at paragraph 17 of your statement and that's about your</p> <p>25 impressions of Beechwood. You talk about visiting, as</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 42</p>
<p>1 a social worker, Enderleigh once and then undertaking</p> <p>2 reviews as a senior social worker. I am just going to</p> <p>3 read out some of that. You say that you admitted one</p> <p>4 person to Enderleigh as a social worker and none to</p> <p>5 Beechwood itself. This was in 1974. You say:</p> <p>6 "Enderleigh was a locked establishment, unlike any</p> <p>7 other home that I had known, and I was shaken by it at</p> <p>8 the time. I recalled the writing of Erving Goffman and</p> <p>9 perceived Enderleigh to be a total institution, as</p> <p>10 described by him. The home was rigid and</p> <p>11 depersonalising and it deprived young people of any</p> <p>12 control over their lives. The regime appeared punitive</p> <p>13 and uncompromising and as a staff group there was</p> <p>14 a distinct lack of care or warmth towards the young</p> <p>15 people. It was totally alien to anything that I had</p> <p>16 experienced before or since. I undertook reviews at</p> <p>17 Beechwood as a senior social worker. That</p> <p>18 establishment, too, was rigid, regimented, punitive and</p> <p>19 uncaring. It was difficult to work in partnership with</p> <p>20 the staff group because they were always in control. It</p> <p>21 was not easy because of that."</p> <p>22 With regard to your visits as a senior social</p> <p>23 worker, that would have been sometime between 1975 and</p> <p>24 1987; is that right?</p> <p>25 A. That's correct.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 43</p>	<p>1 Q. The reviews that you talk about undertaking, would that</p> <p>2 be reviews of children placed at Beechwood or reviews of</p> <p>3 Beechwood?</p> <p>4 A. It would be reviews of children who were placed at</p> <p>5 Beechwood, that would normally be remanded to Beechwood</p> <p>6 through the courts.</p> <p>7 Q. When you were conducting those reviews, presumably you</p> <p>8 would speak to the child about whom you were doing the</p> <p>9 review?</p> <p>10 A. I don't think we always spoke to the child in those</p> <p>11 days. I think the child's views would be represented by</p> <p>12 the social worker. Reviews at Beechwood, I remember</p> <p>13 being ushered into a nominated room where reviews would</p> <p>14 take place. So I never really saw Beechwood as a whole</p> <p>15 establishment anyway. But the child's views would be</p> <p>16 represented normally by the social worker and then the</p> <p>17 child would be invited into the review late on during</p> <p>18 the meeting.</p> <p>19 Q. What do you mean by "the staff were always in control"?</p> <p>20 What does that mean?</p> <p>21 A. This may be something to do with me, but I don't like</p> <p>22 going into locked establishments. I don't like --</p> <p>23 I don't like, as an adult, and as someone with authority</p> <p>24 at that time, I don't like walking into an establishment</p> <p>25 where somebody unlocks the door in order for me to get</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 44</p>

1 **in and locks the door once I'm inside and I can't get**
 2 **out without them letting me out. Even as an adult,**
 3 **I felt rendered -- not powerless exactly, but with**
 4 **a sense of having less power, and that's the kind of**
 5 **establishment Beechwood was, but that's the kind of way**
 6 **I perceive locked establishments anyway, so that might**
 7 **be my hangup.**
 8 Q. Given what you say about the staff being in control and
 9 not finding it easy to work with the staff, did you have
 10 any concerns about how this might be impacting on the
 11 residents who were actually at Beechwood?
 12 **A. I don't think I gave it enough thought. Again, I can't**
 13 **remember, but I suspect that I -- in terms of Beechwood**
 14 **itself and the young people who were remanded there,**
 15 **I didn't give sufficient thought to how they might be**
 16 **treated and dealt with. Again, it's something that**
 17 **I regret now.**
 18 MR LIVINGSTON: Ms Stimpson, I have no further questions for
 19 you, you will be happy to know. The chair and panel may
 20 have a couple of questions, so I will pass over to them
 21 to give them the opportunity.
 22 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, Mr Livingston.
 23 Questions by THE PANEL
 24 THE CHAIR: Ms Stimpson, might I ask you, with your many
 25 years of experience, about the assessment process for

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1 **applicants was always an important part of that process.**
 2 **I have no solutions, I have no idea, how you can**
 3 **identify people who are going to be totally safe.**
 4 **I wish I had, but I haven't.**
 5 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. Mr Frank?
 6 MR FRANK: Just one question, if I may. You mentioned as
 7 one way of assisting to reduce the risk that one way
 8 would be to enable children to protect themselves.
 9 **A. Yes.**
 10 MR FRANK: Can you help us as to whether you have any
 11 specific ideas as to how that might be achieved?
 12 **A. I'd have to give that a lot more thought than I think**
 13 **I can here. In an ideal world, children should be able**
 14 **to disclose to their social workers, but rarely do,**
 15 **because they see the perpetrator as being far more**
 16 **powerful than ever they are, and they are usually told**
 17 **that if they tell anybody about what's happened, they**
 18 **won't be believed because of ..., and the reality is, it**
 19 **is usually one child's word against an adult's word,**
 20 **that should be enough. I wish I could find ways of**
 21 **enabling them to tell, but I can't make any suggestions,**
 22 **and I'm sorry about that.**
 23 MR FRANK: Thank you.
 24 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Ms Stimpson. We have no further
 25 questions, thank you.

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1 prospective foster carers, and whether you can say from
 2 the past or now that it is rigorous enough in attempting
 3 to identify abusive tendencies in prospective foster
 4 carers?
 5 **A. I think the fostering service in Nottinghamshire -- and**
 6 **I can only really speak based upon my experience in**
 7 **Nottinghamshire -- are rigorous in trying to assess**
 8 **foster carers and to ensure minimal risks. But I think,**
 9 **unless you have got reason to believe that people have**
 10 **a propensity to abuse, how do you know? How do they**
 11 **ever know? I felt this dilemma on the Fostering Panel.**
 12 **You can never be sure of anybody anymore, and that's my**
 13 **cynicism, perhaps, having dealt with these kind of**
 14 **situations. I don't know how they can reduce risks any**
 15 **more than they have done, in terms of their assessment**
 16 **processes.**
 17 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Again, can you help us with the ways
 18 currently that these issues might be explored in the
 19 fostering process? For example, attitudes to sexuality,
 20 childhood experience, et cetera?
 21 **A. I think childhood experiences have always been part of**
 22 **the assessment process when it comes to foster carers,**
 23 **and it certainly was early on, and I have talked about**
 24 **Foster Panels back in the late 1970s up to the 1990s,**
 25 **and taking the background history of foster carer**

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1 MR LIVINGSTON: Thank you, Ms Stimpson.
 2 (The witness withdrew)
 3 MR LIVINGSTON: Chair, can I invite you to break now until
 4 either 20 to or quarter to?
 5 THE CHAIR: I think it will need to be quarter to,
 6 Mr Livingston. Thank you very much.
 7 (11.27 am)
 8 (A short break)
 9 (11.48 am)
 10 MR SADD: Good morning, chair. The inquiry is now going to
 11 hear evidence from Philip Morgan. His statement is at
 12 INQ001810.
 13 MR DAVID PHILIP MORGAN (sworn)
 14 Examination by MR SADD
 15 MR SADD: Good morning, Mr Morgan. In front of you there
 16 I hope is your statement, in the first tab there.
 17 **A. Yes.**
 18 Q. If we go to the back of that statement, although it has
 19 been DP'Aed, as it were, do you recognise the writing at
 20 the back?
 21 **A. Yes.**
 22 Q. Is that your writing?
 23 **A. It is.**
 24 Q. At the time that you signed the statement, were you
 25 satisfied that it set out the truth, as far as you can

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<p>1 remember?</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. Are there any corrections in the statement that you want</p> <p>4 to make?</p> <p>5 A. I think there's a typing error, not necessarily in the</p> <p>6 statement, but in a document.</p> <p>7 Q. All right.</p> <p>8 A. In terms of a date.</p> <p>9 Q. We will come on to that.</p> <p>10 A. Yes.</p> <p>11 Q. It is right that you should know that your statement</p> <p>12 will be published over the next few days on the</p> <p>13 investigation website as part of the public account, as</p> <p>14 it were, of these proceedings.</p> <p>15 I am not going to take you through your statement</p> <p>16 line by line in the time that's been allotted. Rather,</p> <p>17 as I think you anticipate from your statement, I am</p> <p>18 going to take you to particular topics. I am going to</p> <p>19 concentrate, in the main, on the topic in relation to</p> <p>20 F77 and F76. You have provided a very, very detailed</p> <p>21 account of that. I will ask you to comment on documents</p> <p>22 on screen as we go through.</p> <p>23 The background to your career we can see set out in</p> <p>24 the first page of your statement, paragraphs 2 to 4.</p> <p>25 You worked in the county's fostering team from about</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 49</p>	<p>1 1991 until 2016; is that right?</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. Firstly, you worked as a social worker during the 1990s,</p> <p>4 and then, from 1999 onwards, as a fostering team manager</p> <p>5 based in Mansfield?</p> <p>6 A. Yes. I wasn't team manager throughout that time from</p> <p>7 1999. I went back to the fostering role for three</p> <p>8 months in the year 2000.</p> <p>9 Q. But, generally --</p> <p>10 A. Yes.</p> <p>11 Q. -- you were manager?</p> <p>12 A. Yes.</p> <p>13 Q. And it was in Mansfield?</p> <p>14 A. It was.</p> <p>15 Q. And you retired in 2016?</p> <p>16 A. Yes.</p> <p>17 Q. As fostering team manager, your core role was managing</p> <p>18 approved foster carers, as well as recruiting and</p> <p>19 assessing prospective carers; is that right?</p> <p>20 A. Yes.</p> <p>21 Q. If we go to paragraph 6, please, you set out there that,</p> <p>22 prior to 2000, fostering was managed separately in each</p> <p>23 district, and then it became centralised around 2000,</p> <p>24 and each district had its own Fostering Panel. That was</p> <p>25 before 2000?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 50</p>
<p>1 A. Yes, I think so. Around about 2000.</p> <p>2 Q. During your time as a fostering social worker during the</p> <p>3 1990s, were you involved in the assessment of</p> <p>4 prospective foster carers?</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 Q. From your view, did the process of assessment change in</p> <p>7 the time that you were involved in fostering?</p> <p>8 A. I don't think it did.</p> <p>9 Q. From the 1990s until 2016, it remained relatively the</p> <p>10 same?</p> <p>11 A. No, sorry. I, as a -- as a worker in fostering, carried</p> <p>12 out assessments in the 1990s. Certainly the framework</p> <p>13 of assessment changed in about 2000, but I didn't carry</p> <p>14 out assessments under the new framework, I managed them.</p> <p>15 Q. Understood. You refer to a Fostering Panel. We have</p> <p>16 just heard some evidence from Ms Stimpson about that.</p> <p>17 I don't think, in those circumstances, you need to</p> <p>18 explain what it is or who it was made up of. Although,</p> <p>19 in the case of Mansfield, the Mansfield area, who would</p> <p>20 the Fostering Panel have been made up of?</p> <p>21 A. It would have been made up of the service manager</p> <p>22 responsible for fostering.</p> <p>23 Q. Within Mansfield?</p> <p>24 A. Yes. The team manager within Mansfield, I think another</p> <p>25 childcare team manager from Mansfield, I believe</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 51</p>	<p>1 a social worker from Mansfield -- not from the fostering</p> <p>2 team, from one of the children's fieldwork teams -- and</p> <p>3 also, at one point, a foster carer as well, a former</p> <p>4 foster carer. Briefly, I recall a residential team</p> <p>5 manager briefly being on panel.</p> <p>6 Q. Generally speaking, then, Mr Morgan, could the panel</p> <p>7 conclude that the members of the fostering panel would</p> <p>8 have been known to each other quite well?</p> <p>9 A. Yes.</p> <p>10 Q. Can we go to paragraphs 13 to 14, please. You say that</p> <p>11 in 1999/2000, the role of supervising social worker was</p> <p>12 defined, with the emphasis on formal supervision of</p> <p>13 foster carers.</p> <p>14 At paragraph 14, please, this is where you set this</p> <p>15 out.</p> <p>16 A. Yes. Had you planned to ask me about assessment of</p> <p>17 foster carers --</p> <p>18 Q. I'm going to get --</p> <p>19 A. Sorry.</p> <p>20 Q. I will get there, don't worry. At paragraph 14, you say</p> <p>21 it was understood in fostering that the welfare of</p> <p>22 the child was paramount?</p> <p>23 A. Yes.</p> <p>24 Q. And that support for foster carers was geared to</p> <p>25 promoting good outcomes for children. Do you see that?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 52</p>

<p>1 It's four lines up from the bottom of paragraph 14?</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. Can you help with, what was the consequence of defining</p> <p>4 the role, as it were, of the supervising social worker?</p> <p>5 A. I think the definition of the role, as set out in the UK</p> <p>6 standards of foster care, that certainly was something</p> <p>7 that we tried to constantly refer to, and it was --</p> <p>8 I think we tried to make sure that we adhered to that</p> <p>9 role.</p> <p>10 Q. Up until then, what was the system of supervision in</p> <p>11 place?</p> <p>12 A. What we didn't have -- we didn't have, I don't think,</p> <p>13 a regular standard of frequency of visiting, and I think</p> <p>14 one of the changes that was brought in, that we should</p> <p>15 aim to carry out monthly visits, and also there</p> <p>16 weren't -- it was much less prescriptive about the</p> <p>17 content of supervision.</p> <p>18 There used to be a Foster Care Association pamphlet</p> <p>19 about the social worker's visit, and on the cover of</p> <p>20 that pamphlet it showed a cup of tea.</p> <p>21 It wasn't an expectation, I don't think -- it wasn't</p> <p>22 viewed as a professional supervision, in the same way</p> <p>23 that it would be viewed as supervision of a worker,</p> <p>24 a social worker.</p> <p>25 Q. So the cup of tea is suggesting a cosy chat with the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 53</p>	<p>1 foster carer?</p> <p>2 A. It always struck me as -- it struck me as ironic that</p> <p>3 that was the image that was depicted on the Foster</p> <p>4 Carers' Association pamphlet.</p> <p>5 Q. But was that your experience -- sorry, go on.</p> <p>6 A. I would think that those pamphlets -- that obviously</p> <p>7 would have been phased out. The world did change quite</p> <p>8 rapidly after 2000. But I think -- there certainly was</p> <p>9 a change of emphasis, and that's reflected in the title</p> <p>10 of the role. Before 2000, workers were known as support</p> <p>11 workers or link workers, and that title changed. So</p> <p>12 certainly the emphasis changed.</p> <p>13 Q. After 2000, how often would reviews of current foster</p> <p>14 carers be carried out?</p> <p>15 A. Reviews would be carried out annually.</p> <p>16 Q. Would you take part in those reviews?</p> <p>17 A. In Nottinghamshire, in 2000, it was only the first</p> <p>18 annual -- and it's still the case now, I think, only the</p> <p>19 first annual review goes back to the Fostering Panel.</p> <p>20 The second review subsequently, unless there are</p> <p>21 concerns, which would be referred back to the</p> <p>22 Fostering Panel, reviews subsequently are carried out by</p> <p>23 the fostering team managers.</p> <p>24 Q. So you would get involved?</p> <p>25 A. You would get involved --</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 54</p>
<p>1 Q. No, I'm talking about you, Mr Morgan. Did you get</p> <p>2 involved in those assessments?</p> <p>3 A. I got involved, but the reviews before Jayne Austin</p> <p>4 became the service manager were paper exercises. So my</p> <p>5 involvement then would be reading the file, in terms of</p> <p>6 what had occurred over the last year, initially; perhaps</p> <p>7 reading -- or reviewing any information I had about</p> <p>8 children. But it was a paper exercise. Whereas, when</p> <p>9 Jayne Austin came in, she felt it needed to be more</p> <p>10 meaningful than that, and that we should actually have</p> <p>11 a meeting with foster carers.</p> <p>12 Q. When you talk about the paper exercise, you mean it was</p> <p>13 conducted in your room without the foster carers there?</p> <p>14 A. Yes. The file would be put through to the team manager,</p> <p>15 the team manager would read it and make recommendations,</p> <p>16 and it would be passed on to the fostering service</p> <p>17 manager as well, but essentially, they would be just</p> <p>18 looking at the file and what was contained in the</p> <p>19 reports.</p> <p>20 Q. So you wouldn't have the opportunity to interrogate the</p> <p>21 file?</p> <p>22 A. You would have the opportunity to interrogate the file,</p> <p>23 yes.</p> <p>24 Q. Sorry, my question was a negative one: you wouldn't have</p> <p>25 that opportunity because you didn't have the foster</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 55</p>	<p>1 carers with you?</p> <p>2 A. You wouldn't have the opportunity to interrogate the</p> <p>3 foster carers.</p> <p>4 Q. No, all right. As at 2001, when the national minimum</p> <p>5 standards came into practice, can you tell us whether or</p> <p>6 not, at that point, all current foster carers were</p> <p>7 reassessed to see whether they met the standards?</p> <p>8 A. No, they were not.</p> <p>9 Q. From paragraphs 10 to 11, you say that the theme of</p> <p>10 caring for children "As if they were our own", which the</p> <p>11 inquiry has heard about, only came to fostering a decade</p> <p>12 or so later, in the early 2000s, under the new brand of</p> <p>13 "corporate parenting", is the phrase that you use. What</p> <p>14 do you want the inquiry to understand about that? This</p> <p>15 is paragraph 10.</p> <p>16 A. I think I'm just saying that that's -- I think it was</p> <p>17 the same -- it seemed to be the same message being</p> <p>18 repeated ten years later, and certainly corporate</p> <p>19 parenting became the theme at that time.</p> <p>20 Q. You say this directly in relation to fostering, whereas</p> <p>21 before there hadn't been that. You say that fostering</p> <p>22 was incorporated in the idea of corporate parenting?</p> <p>23 A. I think that -- I'm not sure to what extent the message</p> <p>24 of "Strong enough to care" was retained over time. We</p> <p>25 were aware of it at the time it came out.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 56</p>

<p>1 Q. Paragraphs 28 to 29, please. Although we are not going 2 to go into the F89 case in any detail, you note that you 3 attended strategy meetings following allegations against 4 F89, a foster father. At paragraph 29, you say you 5 attended three strategy meetings but their usefulness 6 was curtailed by the absence of the police, the social 7 worker and the team manager. Do you have that? 8 A. Yes. 9 Q. That's in the second line there. 10 A. Yes. 11 Q. Did strategy meetings often lack full multi-agency 12 input? 13 A. I think it varied. I think in this case the police did 14 turn up at the first meeting, but then not at subsequent 15 meetings. So I think it varied. 16 Q. If not everybody who should have done was present at 17 meetings, did that hamper their ability to investigate 18 allegations -- that is, the meeting's ability to 19 investigate allegations? 20 A. I think it hampered the meeting's abilities to form 21 a coherent plan of action together. 22 Q. Would decisions nonetheless be taken? 23 A. I think, in that case, the chair attempted to take those 24 decisions. 25 Q. But from your experience of attending, I imagine, many</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 57</p>	<p>1 such meetings, were decisions taken in the absence of 2 all the relevant parties? 3 A. That case in particular seemed to be unfortunate. 4 Q. I'm asking you generally. General application. Were 5 decisions taken in the absence of significant parties at 6 those meetings? 7 A. I don't really know. Can I just double back on 8 something, please? Your comments about the role of 9 the supervising social worker and the role changing, and 10 I said the change of emphasis, I think I would want to 11 say that the child or young person would probably very 12 much perceive the fostering worker as being there for 13 the foster carers, whereas they had their own social 14 worker. I think that would be -- that might even be 15 explained to children and young people in those terms: 16 "This is our social worker. Your social worker who you 17 should speak to is so and so". 18 Q. What do you want the panel to draw from that 19 observation, Mr Morgan? 20 A. I guess I would like the panel to draw from that 21 observation that fostering workers were clear their 22 primary responsibility was to the child, but the child 23 might not really understand that that social worker was 24 there for them. 25 Q. I now want us to look in some detail at the case in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 58</p>
<p>1 relation to F77 and F76. This you begin to discuss at 2 paragraph 34 of your statement, page 9, please. This is 3 in relation to the 2000 assessment, and, very briefly, 4 for the benefit of the public, this is a case of abuse 5 in foster care which eventually led to the conviction of 6 F77 in 2012 for offences against two girls in his care. 7 An internal practice review carried out by 8 Peter Maddocks in 2012 identified significant concerns 9 about responses to previous disclosures. You talk about 10 that internal practice review in some detail later in 11 your statement. 12 A. Yes. 13 Q. It emerged, following the decisions that were taken in 14 2000, that some allegations had been made in 1995 by 15 A265, who alleged that F77 had played with his penis 16 in November 1995. At paragraph 34, you say you were not 17 informed of this at the time by Mrs Middleton, 18 Chris Middleton, who was the supervising social worker 19 for F77 and F76. It is right to say factually you 20 weren't team manager at that point. You became team 21 manager in 1999. You say you were a colleague of hers: 22 "... we did not work in the same office. 23 Information about carers was shared across the team case 24 by case on a need-to-know basis." 25 What would be a need-to-know basis, for instance, in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 59</p>	<p>1 relation to this fostering couple? 2 A. I think that if there was a recognised allegation of 3 abuse against a foster carer, I think that is something 4 that would probably come to the attention of the whole 5 team. 6 Q. By "recognised allegation", what does "recognised" mean? 7 A. It seems to me, on reading these files, that these -- 8 that one or two earlier concerns in the 1990s do not 9 seem to have been taken or recognised as allegations. 10 Q. So it is not whether or not the allegations were true or 11 there were misgivings about the allegations, it's about 12 the fact of the allegations that you determined was 13 something that should be recognised. Is that right? 14 A. Sorry, I'm not sure I understand. 15 Q. So allegations are made by a child. The decision as to 16 the consequence of those allegations is then looked at. 17 But is it the fact of the allegations themselves that is 18 the subject of being recognised and shared amongst 19 social workers? 20 A. Yes, I think so. I think social workers receive 21 reports. It is then whether that is picked up on and 22 recognised by whoever receives that as an allegation and 23 discussed then with a manager as an allegation. 24 Q. When we come, in a very short moment, to look at the 25 meetings that were held in 2000, by that time you were</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 60</p>

<p>1 the fostering team manager?</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. You were the line manager for Mrs Middleton. Is that</p> <p>4 right?</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 Q. Would you have expected, in those circumstances, to have</p> <p>7 been told about the 1995 allegations?</p> <p>8 A. I would have expected to have been told of any previous</p> <p>9 allegations.</p> <p>10 Q. So that includes the 1995 allegations?</p> <p>11 A. Yes.</p> <p>12 Q. So allegations were made in 2000 by A200 in relation to</p> <p>13 F77. You managed, as you say at paragraph 35, the</p> <p>14 fostering service's response to those allegations. You</p> <p>15 tell the inquiry that you would have said at the first</p> <p>16 strategy meeting that the meeting should keep an open</p> <p>17 mind because strategy meetings are about sharing</p> <p>18 information and planning, not exercising judgment or</p> <p>19 reaching conclusions. Could we have up on screen,</p> <p>20 please, NSC000434 -- that's tab 4 in your bundle,</p> <p>21 Mr Morgan. We are going to go to page 2, please. On</p> <p>22 page 2, you say in the penultimate paragraph at the</p> <p>23 bottom there:</p> <p>24 "Mr Morgan commented that an open mind had been kept</p> <p>25 about what NO-A200 was saying as it had been a concern</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 61</p>	<p>1 that NO-A200 may fabricate an allegation regarding his</p> <p>2 foster carers."</p> <p>3 This suggests that, ordinarily, the presumption was</p> <p>4 to accept disclosure by a foster child at face value,</p> <p>5 but here you were saying, "We should step back from</p> <p>6 that"?</p> <p>7 A. Yes, I think so.</p> <p>8 Q. Was it the presumption in your team as at 2000 that,</p> <p>9 where allegations were made, the assumption was that</p> <p>10 they should be believed?</p> <p>11 A. I don't think it was the assumption that you should</p> <p>12 always believe the child. I think it was more that we</p> <p>13 should have an open mind if allegations are made.</p> <p>14 Q. So by "open mind" as you use the phrase there, and you</p> <p>15 have just used it now, do you mean that the approach</p> <p>16 should have been a sceptical one towards the child's</p> <p>17 allegations?</p> <p>18 A. No.</p> <p>19 Q. So what do you mean by "open mind"?</p> <p>20 A. I suppose precisely that. It should be more even-handed</p> <p>21 and more open to considering that the abuse or may not</p> <p>22 have occurred.</p> <p>23 Q. In what sense was the reference to A200 fabricating, to</p> <p>24 use the expression you use, an allegation keeping an</p> <p>25 open mind at the outset of a meeting?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 62</p>
<p>1 A. That statement there obviously looks very contradictory.</p> <p>2 In this particular case, what we'd had was that the</p> <p>3 child had been threatening to make allegations against</p> <p>4 the foster carer, and that undermined the credibility,</p> <p>5 a bit, of the allegation when it did come.</p> <p>6 Q. What we do know subsequently is that allegation was</p> <p>7 never retracted by the child?</p> <p>8 A. Yes.</p> <p>9 Q. Would such a comment as we see recorded in the notes not</p> <p>10 risk the child's allegation being prejudiced from the</p> <p>11 outset?</p> <p>12 A. It could have that danger, yes.</p> <p>13 Q. Were you alive to the very thing that you have already</p> <p>14 told us about in your statement about, "The welfare of</p> <p>15 the child was paramount and that support to foster</p> <p>16 carers was geared to promoting good outcomes for</p> <p>17 children". If that risk in what you were saying at the</p> <p>18 outset of that meeting was such as to prejudice an open</p> <p>19 mind in relation to the child's allegation, wasn't that</p> <p>20 something that could be criticised?</p> <p>21 A. We could leave ourselves open to that criticism --</p> <p>22 Q. I'm asking in relation to you, Mr Morgan, on this</p> <p>23 occasion, rather than "we". So you are making that.</p> <p>24 You are recorded as doing that. What's your reflection</p> <p>25 now?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 63</p>	<p>1 A. I'm recorded as doing that because we had to consider</p> <p>2 the relevant background and facts and the events leading</p> <p>3 up to the allegation, and it did influence my judgment.</p> <p>4 Q. Can we go to internal page 7 of that document. There,</p> <p>5 the second paragraph, just to help you, Mr Morgan, you</p> <p>6 say and repeat:</p> <p>7 "Mr Morgan felt that an open mind needed to be kept</p> <p>8 as the allegation may have been fabricated. Part of</p> <p>9 NO-A200's allegation regarding NO-A201 could be quickly</p> <p>10 investigated and dismissed. Mr Morgan felt that four</p> <p>11 incidents of concern in the time that NO-F76 and NO-F77</p> <p>12 had been fostering was 'not bad going'."</p> <p>13 What did you want the panel meeting to infer from it</p> <p>14 not being bad going? I think they had been foster</p> <p>15 carers since 1988; is that right?</p> <p>16 A. Yes. The clearest thing I remember from that meeting is</p> <p>17 making that remark and those words coming out of my</p> <p>18 mouth and thinking, "What have I just said here?"</p> <p>19 I knew that those words would be in the panel -- sure</p> <p>20 those words were in the panel minutes at the time and</p> <p>21 I'm not surprised they're being brought up here. It was</p> <p>22 a very clumsy remark.</p> <p>23 Q. What were you trying to say?</p> <p>24 A. What I was trying to say was that, in the course of</p> <p>25 12 years of fostering, it would not be out of the norm</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 64</p>

<p>1 for foster carers to be the subject of complaints.</p> <p>2 Q. Can you remember, at this distance, what those four</p> <p>3 incidents of concern were?</p> <p>4 A. The concerns related, I think, primarily to physical</p> <p>5 abuse. Of those four concerns, none related to sexual</p> <p>6 abuse.</p> <p>7 Q. Where would these concerns have been recorded so that</p> <p>8 you were aware of them?</p> <p>9 A. The concerns would have been recorded on the carer's</p> <p>10 files, but I was going there on the four incidents of</p> <p>11 concern that were recorded in the fostering worker's</p> <p>12 reports to that meeting.</p> <p>13 Q. Could one infer from that that your practice in</p> <p>14 a meeting such as this was not to go back to the file</p> <p>15 itself but to rely on the foster support worker's</p> <p>16 report?</p> <p>17 A. Yes. The fostering worker knew this family well, so</p> <p>18 I didn't see the need to go back to look at the files.</p> <p>19 Also --</p> <p>20 Q. May I interrupt you there before you go on?</p> <p>21 A. Sorry.</p> <p>22 Q. That's all right.</p> <p>23 Knowing the family well, wasn't that something you</p> <p>24 needed to interrogate?</p> <p>25 A. Yes, and especially so with hindsight.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 65</p>	<p>1 Q. I'm thinking of the time.</p> <p>2 A. Right. I didn't feel the need to interrogate that at</p> <p>3 the time, and in part because I had attended the</p> <p>4 Mansfield District Family Placement Panel in June 1999,</p> <p>5 and this was the panel at which the adoption team</p> <p>6 manager had said what exceptional carers the carers</p> <p>7 were.</p> <p>8 So the inherited knowledge that I had in June 1999</p> <p>9 was that these were not just adequate carers, but</p> <p>10 exceptional carers. That was also the view I inherited</p> <p>11 from my predecessor as team manager.</p> <p>12 So later on, I go to form my own views, but</p> <p>13 certainly at that time, I was going with the inherited,</p> <p>14 declared views of team managers I respected and the</p> <p>15 views of the fostering worker.</p> <p>16 Q. We then move on to the second meeting that's convened,</p> <p>17 February 2000. This starts at NSC000434, page 11, still</p> <p>18 in tab 4. Set out there are the views of those taking</p> <p>19 part in the meeting: Ollerton Social Services Office,</p> <p>20 the police and Nottingham City Social Services. We go,</p> <p>21 please, to pages 14 and 15. First looking at 14, we can</p> <p>22 see there's a contribution from Mansfield</p> <p>23 Social Services from a Ms Swift, Katie Swift, is that</p> <p>24 right?</p> <p>25 A. No. Kathy Swift was the chair -- she was actually from</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 66</p>
<p>1 Newark Social Services, and she chaired the meeting</p> <p>2 I think and managed the investigation into the child</p> <p>3 protection allegations.</p> <p>4 Q. We see there conclusions from Newark Social Services.</p> <p>5 Do you have that? That's page 14. At the bottom of</p> <p>6 the page:</p> <p>7 "Mr Webster referred to his report. He outlined</p> <p>8 that A200 is known to lie and has lied during the course</p> <p>9 of the investigation. However, he has been adamant that</p> <p>10 NO-F77 touched his 'willy' and has not retraced the</p> <p>11 allegation despite having the opportunity to do so.</p> <p>12 NO-A200 may have lied on numerous other occasions and</p> <p>13 during this investigation. However, Mr Webster felt</p> <p>14 that he could not ignore what NO-A200 has said, even</p> <p>15 though he was aware that it may have damaging</p> <p>16 consequences for NO-F77 and NO-F76."</p> <p>17 We then go to page 15, please, and we can see at the</p> <p>18 top of the page "Discussion" and then we have under</p> <p>19 "Mansfield Social Services pointed out the following" --</p> <p>20 do you have that?</p> <p>21 A. Yes.</p> <p>22 Q. We have the first bullet point there which says:</p> <p>23 "There have been no similar allegations regarding</p> <p>24 F77 and F76 over the 11 years that they have fostered."</p> <p>25 Pausing there, that was wrong?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 67</p>	<p>1 A. Yes.</p> <p>2 Q. "There is continued involvement with those children and</p> <p>3 no disclosure has been made from them. Mansfield were</p> <p>4 of the firm belief that nothing happened with NO-A200."</p> <p>5 Coming in a moment to the question arising out of</p> <p>6 that, you say, without needing to go back to your</p> <p>7 statement, that you had responsibility to exercise</p> <p>8 judgment on the truthfulness of the allegations. By</p> <p>9 "you", do you mean those attending the meeting? This is</p> <p>10 at paragraph 36 of your statement.</p> <p>11 A. Paragraph 36 of my statement?</p> <p>12 Q. Yes. You say:</p> <p>13 "It was our responsibility to exercise a judgment on</p> <p>14 the truthfulness of the allegations."</p> <p>15 A. By that, I meant that I had to make the recommendation</p> <p>16 to Fostering Panel about the continuing suitability of</p> <p>17 the carers, so, yes, I had that responsibility.</p> <p>18 Obviously, I had the responsibility for making the</p> <p>19 recommendation, and I would have discussed the</p> <p>20 recommendation I was making with the fostering service</p> <p>21 manager.</p> <p>22 Q. Going back, please, to NSC000434_015 and to the various</p> <p>23 bullet points set out there:</p> <p>24 "NO-A200 has been discredited during this</p> <p>25 investigation ..."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 68</p>

<p>1 And: 2 "... has made 'threats' against people ... 3 "[He] was overheard to tell NO-A201 that he had been 4 touched by F77 and that NO-A201 should say the same. 5 "[He] has received a 'good pay-off' for lying. The 6 current allegation is similar to the one made ... last 7 year and is a 'copycat' investigation. 8 "[The] allegation could be a way of 'acting out' and 9 expressing his feelings. 10 "A200 has taunted and laughed at NO-F77 and is 11 enjoying the situation. His allegation has had a lot of 12 consequences and power." 13 That was a view that you and your team gave and was 14 noted in the meeting; is that right? 15 A. Those were the views of Mrs Middleton, but I gave weight 16 to those views. 17 Q. Then we go over the page, please, and we see from 18 Nottingham City Council there is the attendance there of 19 Helen Blackman at the meeting. Helen Blackman, at that 20 point, was team manager for Nottingham City Social 21 Services Department. She says at the top of page 16 -- 22 there is reference there to: 23 "A200 maintains that he has been touched and until 24 he says it did not happen there will always remain an 25 element of doubt. Ms Blackman felt there was nothing to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 69</p>	<p>1 discount A200's allegation as she saw it." 2 Was that a position that Mansfield took? 3 A. No. 4 Q. Do you think it was a fairer position to take, on 5 reflection? 6 A. Not necessarily. I think the other workers were taking 7 their decision -- sorry, their position, without any 8 knowledge of the history of the foster carers. I think 9 our responsibility, at the end of an inconclusive 10 investigation, was to try and judge and reach 11 a recommendation. I don't think that we -- I don't 12 think it was the practice in our team at the time that 13 if there is an inconclusive allegation, that must -- and 14 if the allegation is not retracted, then those carers 15 should be deregistered. 16 Q. That wasn't the practice, you say? 17 A. I don't think it was, no. 18 Q. Can we then move on, please, to the report that you and 19 Mrs Middleton prepared for the Fostering Panel. 20 A. Yes. 21 Q. This starts at page 26 of NSC000434. We note at 22 page 28, the third paragraph, reference is made to: 23 "The foster carers were accustomed to A200 lying 24 from the start and this continued throughout the 25 placement and they could usually tell when he was not</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 70</p>
<p>1 telling the truth." 2 Then we go over the page to page 32, two pages on, 3 where you set out conclusions and opinions of 4 the fostering worker, and you say -- or the report, 5 I should say, says, two paragraphs up from the bottom: 6 "Research into why children in foster placements 7 make allegations has shown that there is a long care 8 history, child in their early teens and children known 9 to fantasise are common factors." 10 You signed off this report? 11 A. Yes. 12 Q. Is this research that you were familiar with at the 13 time? 14 A. I think it comes from a foster care -- National Foster 15 Care Association book that came out in about 2000 around 16 safe caring. 17 Q. Sorry, my question to you was, was this an assumption 18 that you supported? 19 A. I was aware from the volume on safe caring that it 20 speaks -- there's a chapter there about allegations 21 against foster carers, and within that there is 22 a section that says foster children may make false 23 allegations, and it goes on to say, "these may be for 24 the following kinds of reasons ..." 25 So, yes, that's what that is based on.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 71</p>	<p>1 Q. So were you using the research to explain why A200 had 2 made the allegations? In essence, were you suggesting 3 that he was a fantasist? 4 A. I don't think we were necessarily using that. I think 5 we were using it to give that -- to convey that children 6 can make allegations, can make false allegations. 7 Q. Understood. Looking at page 33, please, three 8 paragraphs up from the bottom, the text says as follows: 9 "If F77 and F76 are not reapproved, we have to say 10 to new applicants that if a child makes an allegation, 11 it cannot be judged on probabilities, however 12 convincing, but the allegation will stand unless the 13 child retracts." 14 Clearly, that was a position that you thought was 15 a poor one? 16 A. That was Mrs Middleton's view. 17 Q. You signed the report, so it was a view you shared? 18 A. I didn't particularly share what she was saying in terms 19 of that, but if I signed the report, I'm associated with 20 that. 21 Q. Page 34, just to be clear, and so you don't think I'm 22 taking any false point, we can see there that there is 23 your signature, even though there's the DPA. 24 A. Yes. 25 Q. So would the panel be entitled to conclude that you'd</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 72</p>

<p>1 read this and approved it?</p> <p>2 A. I'd certainly read it and approved it and had input into</p> <p>3 it, yes.</p> <p>4 Q. But that view is not one that you share, the one I have</p> <p>5 just taken you to?</p> <p>6 A. That is very much -- I know that Mrs Middleton was very</p> <p>7 concerned about -- I think she was concerned about the</p> <p>8 impact on any new applicants to fostering. I didn't</p> <p>9 share that to the same degree.</p> <p>10 Q. Do you think this was used in the report as a means of</p> <p>11 persuading the Fostering Panel that F77 and F76</p> <p>12 shouldn't be deregistered?</p> <p>13 A. It was one argument.</p> <p>14 Q. You then come to sit on the panel, as we learn later.</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. Was there any sense of conflict in that role? You have</p> <p>17 signed this report. It is a report that is clearly</p> <p>18 saying -- at the very end, it says:</p> <p>19 "I have no doubt that F77 did not abuse A200 and</p> <p>20 would strongly recommend that they be reapproved as</p> <p>21 foster carers."</p> <p>22 Wasn't there a conflict in your signing that and</p> <p>23 sitting on the panel that was deciding whether or not</p> <p>24 those foster carers should be deregistered?</p> <p>25 A. Yes, it seems so now. I didn't actually remember that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 73</p>	<p>1 I'd had a vote -- when I wrote my statement, I didn't</p> <p>2 remember that I'd had a vote, but when I looked back,</p> <p>3 I saw I was one of the people that voted. It was only,</p> <p>4 I think, for -- this would have been changed soon</p> <p>5 afterwards, but at that time, and I'd only briefly</p> <p>6 become team manager, team managers sat on the panel and</p> <p>7 did vote on work that they recommended.</p> <p>8 Q. That affirmation, "I have no doubt that F77 did not</p> <p>9 abuse A200", that sort of certainty in a case like this,</p> <p>10 was it ever appropriate?</p> <p>11 A. Probably not.</p> <p>12 Q. The Fostering Panel itself met, as I have already</p> <p>13 mentioned, Mr Morgan, on 14 March. You were there as</p> <p>14 team manager and minute taker.</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. This was a district Fostering Panel in Mansfield.</p> <p>17 Presumably it changed, as I think you have just</p> <p>18 mentioned, in 2000 -- is that right?</p> <p>19 A. Yes.</p> <p>20 Q. Or thereabouts. You say, as you have already confirmed,</p> <p>21 at paragraphs 39 and 40, that you were one of the four</p> <p>22 voting panel members.</p> <p>23 A. Yes.</p> <p>24 Q. We have already looked at the possibility of conflict</p> <p>25 which you accept would have arisen, I think. Is that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 74</p>
<p>1 fair?</p> <p>2 A. Yes, the child protection investigation had been</p> <p>3 referred to another district to give more independence</p> <p>4 to that investigation. It may have been better, with</p> <p>5 hindsight, if the actual reapproval -- the question of</p> <p>6 reapproval had been referred to another district panel</p> <p>7 as well.</p> <p>8 Q. Reading the meeting minutes, no reference is made to the</p> <p>9 opposing views of the city fostering team, for instance,</p> <p>10 or the Newark fostering team, which we have looked at</p> <p>11 together a moment ago. Why were those views not placed</p> <p>12 before the panel?</p> <p>13 A. I thought that our report did refer to the difference in</p> <p>14 views between Mansfield and other districts. I was</p> <p>15 surprised -- when I looked at the papers for the panel,</p> <p>16 I was surprised that the panel hadn't received the full</p> <p>17 minutes of the case conference. I did check, I think,</p> <p>18 with Clive Harrison, the service manager, as to what</p> <p>19 should we submit to the panel, should we submit those</p> <p>20 minutes. I seem to recall he said, "No, submit the</p> <p>21 report to the panel rather than the minutes of</p> <p>22 the strategy meeting". That may have been to do with</p> <p>23 his reading of the procedures at the time and whether</p> <p>24 that meeting had been primarily around the young person</p> <p>25 rather than the foster carers.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 75</p>	<p>1 Q. At page 41, please, of NSC000434, the panel summarise</p> <p>2 their views, including your colleague, Sue Ounsworth,</p> <p>3 four paragraphs up:</p> <p>4 "[She] felt strongly that [they] should continue.</p> <p>5 She believed that if F77 was an abuser, he would have</p> <p>6 targeted other children over the years and there is no</p> <p>7 evidence of this."</p> <p>8 That assumes that children would have disclosed. Do</p> <p>9 you agree with that rationale?</p> <p>10 A. No.</p> <p>11 Q. Can you remember if you expressed an opposing view?</p> <p>12 A. I'm not sure I would have disagreed with it so readily</p> <p>13 then. It wasn't simply a case of believing the carers</p> <p>14 and not believing the child. I think the fact that</p> <p>15 other children said that the child in question had told</p> <p>16 them to lie undermined his story.</p> <p>17 Q. You're reported as saying, Mr Morgan, just below that</p> <p>18 paragraph:</p> <p>19 "Phil Morgan agreed that F77 and F76 should be</p> <p>20 reapproved despite A200 not retracting his allegation.</p> <p>21 He believes that the [foster carers] do not present</p> <p>22 a risk to children on the evidence provided."</p> <p>23 What was the basis upon which it could be concluded</p> <p>24 that F77 did not present a possible risk? Is it simply</p> <p>25 the views of their support worker?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 76</p>

<p>1 A. No, I think it was based on the views as well of other 2 social workers. Their reports were given a lot of 3 weight. 4 Q. The general impression that we have, reading these 5 records together, and the conclusions reached by your 6 colleagues on the panel, is that indicative of 7 the approach generally taken by the Mansfield fostering 8 team at the time, that particular emphasis should be 9 given on the history of the foster carers? 10 A. I don't think it's indicative of the general approach of 11 the team, but I think that procedures then, and 12 subsequently, say that if we have unresolved 13 allegations, it is our responsibility to try and 14 exercise a judgment, and that judgment would be informed 15 by the record of the foster carers. 16 Q. As at 2000, Mr Morgan, could the panel have recommended 17 that F77 and F76 be reassessed? 18 A. They could have made that recommendation, but it wasn't 19 something that we considered as a possibility or didn't 20 enter our minds that that would be a useful thing to do. 21 Q. But the panel took the decision, didn't it -- 22 A. Yes. 23 Q. -- that they should be given some training on sexual 24 abuse? That's right, isn't it? 25 A. Yes. I think so, yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 77</p>	<p>1 Q. The issue of being reassessed effectively was met by 2 having them retrained. Is that how you understand it? 3 A. Well, we didn't consider the issue of them being 4 reassessed, but we did consider the need for some 5 additional training. 6 Q. Can we go, please, to 2012. This is paragraphs 41 to 44 7 of your statement. In 2012, new allegations were made 8 against F77 after he'd been seen by another foster carer 9 exposing himself to a young girl in a shed. There then 10 followed further allegations. The police and Children's 11 Social Care carried out an investigation. You are 12 recorded as stating that the chair in the 2000 panel 13 meeting had concluded that A200's account had not been 14 accepted because he had persuaded others to lie. 15 If we go to that panel meeting, and I ought to say 16 that this document will be loaded onto the website, this 17 is NSC000434, this time page 41. This is looking back 18 at what Clive Harrison says in 2000. This is the 19 penultimate paragraph: 20 "Clive Harrison concluded that there is a trace of 21 concern as NO-A200 has not retracted his allegation but 22 felt that on balance [these] were very good foster 23 carers and on the whole have acted appropriately." 24 We then go to your account given in the minutes. 25 Bear with me a moment. At page 44, please, second</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 78</p>
<p>1 paragraph, this is you giving your account to the panel 2 at that stage. We can see in the second paragraph three 3 lines up from the bottom: 4 "The chair concluded ..." 5 That is, Mr Harrison: 6 "... that A200's account had not been accepted in 7 the end because he was thought to have tried to coerce 8 the two other boys to tell lies to support it." 9 That's a different version of what was minuted. Do 10 you accept that? 11 A. They are different, yes. 12 Q. Why is it that you might have changed that account to 13 this panel in 2012? 14 A. I think this account was my recollection. 15 Q. You didn't look back at the minutes? 16 A. I can't remember. 17 Q. We read that there was a multi-agency meeting in 18 relation to the 2012 allegations and then a police and 19 social care investigation planning meeting. Can you 20 help, why wasn't the investigation in 2012 a section 47 21 meeting from the outset? If you need confirmation of 22 that, you go to page 51, please, of this document, which 23 I am reminded will be uploaded in its entirety, I ought 24 to have said. 25 A. I don't know, is the answer to that.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 79</p>	<p>1 Q. At the meeting in November 2012, Mr Morgan, you advised 2 that the foster carers had been "highly regarded by 3 social workers who worked with them" and this was one of 4 the reasons why the allegations were not believed. Do 5 you think that was a problematic perspective to take 6 about allegations of sexual abuse, namely, that if 7 someone was such a good foster carer, they couldn't 8 sexually abuse children? 9 A. I don't think we did -- you are carrying -- you are not 10 saying -- I wouldn't rule out the possibility that any 11 foster carer could abuse a child. 12 Q. But would you accept from me that the gravamen of 13 the evidence that we have read in the records suggests 14 that the fact that they were considered to be good 15 foster carers in effect trumped the position of 16 the child making allegations of sexual abuse? 17 A. I think in 2000 it did. 18 Q. Mr Morgan, F77 was charged on four offences, including 19 in relation to A200, although this was subsequently 20 dropped. In 2014, F77 pleaded guilty on two counts of 21 indecent assault, and he was sentenced to eight months' 22 imprisonment. In the final strategy meeting, reference 23 is made to the internal practice review by 24 Peter Maddocks, which you discuss at length, looking 25 into what had taken place in 2000. The minutes note:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 80</p>

<p>1 "Mr Morgan did state that the review had the benefit 2 of hindsight and the knowledge of what had occurred. 3 People involved at the time did not have that 4 information. However, things had been missed in the 5 1990s and there were at least two reports of boys in the 6 care of F77 and F76 saying that F77 had played with 7 their willies. There was nothing to say that this had 8 been investigated any further. Had this been known in 9 2000, the recommendation to continue fostering would not 10 have been made." 11 You say this at paragraph 44 of your statement. 12 When did the information about the previous allegations 13 of sexual abuse come to light? 14 A. I think they were identified either within workers who 15 were drawing up the chronology of concerns around the 16 foster carers, and I think Mr Maddocks had use of that 17 in drawing up his report. At the time of one of 18 the strategy meetings -- was it November 2013? -- we had 19 not yet received that chronology of concerns. 20 Q. You also presented the case to the Fostering Panel 21 whilst F77 was still awaiting trial. If we go, please, 22 to page 114 of NSC000434, please, and paragraph 1.3 -- 23 in fact, I should say, just looking at the top there, 24 paragraph 1.2, there's the confirmation, if workers had 25 known, they wouldn't have made the recommendation.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 81</p>	<p>1 Then you say at 1.3: 2 "In 2000, a number of workers who placed children 3 there reported that they couldn't believe the 4 allegations and didn't think the abuse could possibly 5 have occurred. In the 1990s [you add], generally, 6 carers were very highly thought of and thoughts were 7 that this couldn't have happened. This may in part be 8 why nobody acted upon what those previous allegations 9 [were]." 10 There is a word missing there. Was this view that 11 you set out at 1.3 the prevalent view among the 12 fostering support team that you managed? 13 A. I think -- I don't know about the prevalent view. 14 I think the fact that the carers were highly thought of 15 had a bearing in terms of how matters were dealt with in 16 2000 and also social workers' thoughts were that this 17 couldn't have happened, and I think it was because of 18 the esteem in which the carers were held. 19 Q. My question to you is directed more generally. 20 I understand in relation to these two that that was the 21 approach, but in relation to the general approach 22 adopted by the support team, where foster carers were 23 held in high regard, was that in effect -- it is 24 a question I have already posed previously -- the common 25 view held by support workers, that abuse is to be</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 82</p>
<p>1 doubted? 2 A. No, I don't think it was. I'm surmising there, I think, 3 why the earlier reports in the 1990s don't seem to have 4 been acted upon. 5 Q. From paragraph 45 onwards of your statement, please, 6 Mr Morgan, you discuss the internal practice review 7 carried out by Peter Maddocks in September 2012. This 8 was commissioned by Steve Edwards, the service director 9 of social care, to identify whether any risk posed by 10 F77 could or should have been identified earlier to see 11 what lessons should be learnt and any recommendation. 12 The report sets out in detail entries in the records. 13 With regard to the report, you say that it was made 14 clear that the findings were regarded at the highest 15 level as extremely concerning. Was there ever any 16 suggestion of disciplinary action being taken against 17 you or others following the report? 18 A. I think -- I understood there was consideration of that. 19 Q. But you had no knowledge of what then happened to that? 20 A. No. 21 Q. It is important to add that you weren't disciplined as 22 a result of this? 23 A. That's right. 24 Q. You say that you were shown the report in advance of 25 a meeting but you didn't receive a copy. You have now</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 83</p>	<p>1 had a chance to read it. You say you see it as 2 a damning indictment of your team's work and of 3 the fostering service. 4 Given what you say to me about you didn't think this 5 was a prevalent view that I have described to you that, 6 where there are good foster carers, that is going to 7 trump allegations that are doubted made by a child, why 8 do you see the report generally as an indictment of your 9 team? 10 A. Because, in part -- you can't take his disclaimer that 11 this is not to criticise the practice of any workers. 12 If his conclusions are correct -- his conclusions are 13 correct in terms of that the wrong decision was taken in 14 2000 because the wrong recommendation was made to the 15 Fostering Panel. We were not aware of those previous 16 reports regarding F77. That is correct. But he also 17 makes conclusions about the foster carers, F76 and F77, 18 and clearly decides they were not fit people to be 19 foster carers. 20 The thread of his argument is that there was 21 a defensive alliance around those foster carers, and he 22 only really refers to the supervising social worker 23 having that defensive alliance. But if that conclusion 24 is correct, that wouldn't be just a criticism of 25 the supervising social workers, it would be a criticism</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 84</p>

<p>1 of the managers as well and, even wider than that, it 2 would be, and was, taken as a criticism of the fostering 3 service in 2012 when the report was received, even 4 though I think the faults and errors date back to events 5 in the 1990s. 6 Q. At paragraph 45, please, Mr Morgan -- this is page 11 of 7 your statement -- having said that the "findings were 8 regarded at the highest level," over the page you say it 9 was a damning indictment of your team's work, which we 10 have just discussed: 11 "The IPR findings were accepted by our service 12 director." 13 That's four lines down. Then you say this: 14 "I struggled with this uncritical acceptance ..." 15 Why do you consider the acceptance of the IPR 16 findings to have been uncritical? 17 A. Because I think it was automatic that this is what we 18 do. If we commission an IPR, its views are accepted and 19 acted upon. 20 Q. At paragraph 47, you say that you had missed at the time 21 a critical finding in the report that Ms Middleton had 22 declared there were no previous allegations of sexual 23 abuse. We have been through that. You don't need to go 24 to this, but at NSC000003, which will be updated in its 25 entirety on the website, at pages 30 to 31:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 85</p>	<p>1 "Mr Maddocks acknowledges that, at 2000, there was 2 not the same level of knowledge and insight about the 3 behaviour of adults who sexually abuse children or 4 barriers to that", and he concludes that, "there was 5 a high level of professional conduct, but 'not an 6 appropriate level of professional detachment and 7 rigour'. 8 Do you agree with that? 9 A. I agree with that now. 10 Q. What rigour was used in 2000 to test the suitability of 11 the foster carers? 12 A. We considered the reports of placing workers. We 13 considered the views of knowledgeable team managers. 14 Q. He says this at paragraph 30 of his report. He says he 15 notes, "a general mind-set that appears to have 16 prevailed is that foster carers such as F77 and F76 will 17 face allegations because of the history and behaviour of 18 children placed with them." 19 So it comes with the territory that allegations will 20 be made and that that was the assumption by your 21 fostering team at the time. How do you respond to that? 22 A. I would say that there is an element of that, a practice 23 which Mr Maddocks identified, of marking -- identifying 24 on foster carers' files that there could be a known risk 25 of allegations leaves us open to that charge.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 86</p>
<p>1 Q. Just to be clear, I think this is something we have 2 already discussed together, but do you recognise that at 3 the 2000 meeting only one side of the debate was put 4 before the panel? 5 A. I would recognise that, you're right, the views of 6 the workers in Mansfield were presented and the 7 judgments, apart from by the fostering service manager, 8 were made by workers from Mansfield. In that sense, we 9 were more -- rather, the constitution of the panel was 10 probably -- combined too many -- of too many people who 11 were close to each other's work and weren't sufficiently 12 detached and independent from the carers and the workers 13 submitting the reports. 14 Q. I think it is right that you told the inquiry at the 15 outset that the constitution of that panel was the 16 regular sort of constitution, it was made up of those 17 office holders? 18 A. I think previously, certainly in the 1990s, the 19 fostering team manager would have sat on panel and 20 submitted work that included their recommendations. 21 Q. My question was more directed to the fact that these 22 were people who knew each other, who worked closely with 23 each other and got to know each other's views very well? 24 A. Yes, I think that is a factor, and probably one danger 25 is that, often, the work that we submitted -- a problem</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 87</p>	<p>1 was that certain panel members may have too much respect 2 for us as colleagues and perhaps not enough independent 3 scrutiny. 4 Q. Would you accept, though, that the whole tenor of 5 the panel meeting was geared towards disbelieving the 6 allegations and supporting the foster parents? 7 A. I think that the slant of the evidence was that way. 8 Although we were -- I tried to make an evidence-based 9 decision in my recommendation. But certainly I declared 10 my views before the panel. 11 I do know that it was a very long panel, and I do 12 know that Clive Harrison struggled with that decision 13 and declared that to me afterwards. 14 Q. In paragraphs 53 to 54 of your statement, you set out 15 the positive aspects noted in the reports on the carers. 16 At paragraphs 55 to 56, you say that you find 17 Mr Maddocks' report "totally void of balance" and you go 18 on to set out the reasons why, including the fact that 19 you were the only team manager in 1999. Do you think 20 that the Maddocks report, in those circumstances, was 21 unnecessary? 22 A. No, I think an internal practice review was desirable. 23 I think whenever a foster carer has sexually abused 24 a child -- and this was known at that time -- then 25 I think it's desirable, there needs to be a thorough</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 88</p>

<p>1 inquiry into that.</p> <p>2 Q. At paragraph 63, please, Mr Morgan, you say:</p> <p>3 "I don't know what consideration was given to [his]</p> <p>4 Mr Maddocks' six recommendations because the findings of</p> <p>5 his report in one regard seem so perverse. This</p> <p>6 limited" --</p> <p>7 A. That was my view. I don't know if it was shared by</p> <p>8 other people. I think my managers were certainly</p> <p>9 stunned by the report.</p> <p>10 Q. You say:</p> <p>11 "This limited its application as a learning tool</p> <p>12 across the service."</p> <p>13 You referred a moment ago to his use of the phrase</p> <p>14 "defensive alliance" or a defensive attitude.</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. Do you think your view of the report as so perverse is</p> <p>17 a reflection of the very defensive attitude that he</p> <p>18 describes?</p> <p>19 A. I appreciate that what I am saying will present as</p> <p>20 defensive. But I felt in 2000 that I was trying to</p> <p>21 exercise an evidence-based judgment.</p> <p>22 Q. Before I come on to another case, I want to go to the</p> <p>23 case of F165. I want to go to the case of</p> <p>24 Patrick Gallagher. This you deal with at paragraphs 17</p> <p>25 to 21. The inquiry already knows the background to the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 89</p>	<p>1 Gallagher case, to the number of boys that he abused and</p> <p>2 to his eventual conviction and sentence to prison. At</p> <p>3 paragraph 17, you tell the inquiry that you took over</p> <p>4 the management of Mr and Mrs Gallagher in 1999 to 2000,</p> <p>5 and you were involved in the Fostering Panel's decision</p> <p>6 to deregister the Gallaghers in 2006, following a report</p> <p>7 that he'd watched pornography with his child. You say</p> <p>8 at paragraph 18 that Children's Social Care carried out</p> <p>9 some safeguarding work in relation to children with whom</p> <p>10 Patrick Gallagher had contact. That's five lines up</p> <p>11 from the bottom on page 4 of your statement. Do you</p> <p>12 have that?</p> <p>13 A. Yes.</p> <p>14 Q. Do you think that at that stage, Mr Morgan, the</p> <p>15 fostering service should have considered a wider</p> <p>16 investigation into other children who had been fostered</p> <p>17 with Patrick Gallagher?</p> <p>18 A. It is clear, when you look at the minutes of</p> <p>19 the strategy meeting then, we had no idea how dangerous</p> <p>20 Patrick Gallagher was. I think in the minutes the chair</p> <p>21 did invite our opinions of what had occurred and whether</p> <p>22 Gallagher presented wider risks to children, but I think</p> <p>23 then the chair actually -- I think the responses were</p> <p>24 that it didn't appear that he presented wider risks to</p> <p>25 children. He was allowed to get away with presenting</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 90</p>
<p>1 himself as somebody who had been a fool, allowing to be</p> <p>2 caught watching pornography.</p> <p>3 Q. It would have been known to you, as the fostering team</p> <p>4 manager, that the Gallaghers took children on respite;</p> <p>5 is that right?</p> <p>6 A. Yes.</p> <p>7 Q. So short term?</p> <p>8 A. Yes.</p> <p>9 Q. And that they had been doing so for a long period of</p> <p>10 time, since I think 1988 as well. So they had fostered</p> <p>11 a good number of children over that period?</p> <p>12 A. Yes.</p> <p>13 Q. You would have been aware of that?</p> <p>14 A. Yes. I think they'd fostered a number of children,</p> <p>15 offering respite care. Earlier in their fostering</p> <p>16 careers, they had essentially one long-term foster</p> <p>17 placement.</p> <p>18 Q. But this was a child, who had sat in the room while</p> <p>19 Mr Gallagher was watching the pornography, who was on</p> <p>20 respite care?</p> <p>21 A. Yes.</p> <p>22 Q. Can you explain, again, the rationale for not seeking to</p> <p>23 investigate what would have occurred or whether other</p> <p>24 children who had had respite care with Patrick Gallagher</p> <p>25 had anything to say?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 91</p>	<p>1 A. I think there was some investigation of that. Social</p> <p>2 workers did follow up and interview other children who</p> <p>3 had been for respite.</p> <p>4 MR SADD: Chair, I am conscious of the time. We are nearly</p> <p>5 at 1.00 pm. I have some questions from core</p> <p>6 participants to put, and, really, a further ten minutes,</p> <p>7 I'm afraid.</p> <p>8 THE CHAIR: Yes, we will continue for a further ten minutes.</p> <p>9 MR SADD: Thank you very much.</p> <p>10 Mr Morgan, at paragraph 21 of your statement, you</p> <p>11 say that the Serious Case Review into the Gallagher case</p> <p>12 was generally positive and identified areas of good</p> <p>13 practice. One of the things identified by the SCR was</p> <p>14 the Gallaghers had been reluctant to take up training</p> <p>15 opportunities or participate in support activities, and</p> <p>16 the SCR notes:</p> <p>17 "It is not apparent that there was sufficient</p> <p>18 challenge of the foster carers in their support or</p> <p>19 supervision when issues arose about their practice.</p> <p>20 Their uninformed practices, such as bathing routines,</p> <p>21 were insufficiently challenged and explored. They were</p> <p>22 allowed to repeatedly avoid training opportunities or to</p> <p>23 not participate in foster carer support groups."</p> <p>24 Mr Morgan, was there a substantial change in</p> <p>25 expectations around this issue between the Gallaghers'</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 92</p>

<p>1 resignation in 2006 and the report in 2011? Did 2 anything change? 3 A. In terms of what, sorry? 4 Q. In terms of greater scrutiny and challenge to foster 5 carers who wouldn't take up training opportunities? 6 A. I think that -- I'm not really sure on that. 7 Q. Do you think the safeguarding lessons from the Gallagher 8 case were properly identified in the Serious Case 9 Review? 10 A. No, I think they were probably not. I think, to some 11 extent, Social Care got off the hook. I don't think we 12 actually acknowledged that we had failed those children 13 that were placed with Mr Gallagher. I would want to 14 say -- I would want to apologise to any person who was 15 harmed by Mr Gallagher or any other foster carer I've 16 worked with. 17 Q. Do you think it was the place of the SCR to do exactly 18 what you have just done, or would that have better come 19 from Social Services? 20 A. I think the SCR seemed to state that because there was 21 no disclosure before 2010, there was no opportunity to 22 detect Mr Gallagher's criminal abuse. But I don't 23 really think -- and that may have been the case, but it 24 seems inadequate to say there was no disclosure from the 25 young people. We should have been acknowledging that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 93</p>	<p>1 the safeguarding service around those children failed 2 them and that fostering failed because they were in our 3 care, but also, there was a wider failure terms of, why 4 didn't we pick up that seven children were sexually 5 abused over a period of time between the ages of 8 and 6 14, so they were verbal children, and there was no 7 suspicion of that? I think, as council's statement at 8 the time said, there was no practice deficiencies and no 9 children were left knowingly unsafe. 10 Q. Can we go next, please, to paragraph 65, where you deal 11 with the reference that you provided for Andris Logins 12 for "Faith in families". The document that will be 13 uploaded on the website in its entirety is NTP000235. 14 We don't need to see that document. You say that you 15 provided this reference. You say that the reference 16 related purely to his work as a temporary agency worker 17 in your team in 2000 and that you had no knowledge of 18 his employment history. 19 Mr Morgan, at the point that you agreed to provide 20 the reference, were you aware that Mr Logins would be 21 working with children in his new role? 22 A. Yes, I think so. 23 Q. In those circumstances, the panel would want to know why 24 it is that you agreed to provide a reference for him, 25 without having complete knowledge of his employment</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 94</p>
<p>1 history, and, in particular, whether he'd been subject 2 to any disciplinary proceedings? 3 A. I think I made it clear in my reference that my 4 reference only amounted to the period of his work in my 5 team, and that was the extent on which I could comment. 6 Q. The suggestion, or the implication, from what you say is 7 that it was for Logins to divulge his disciplinary 8 history to you. But do you think, on reflection, 9 looking back, that you had a responsibility to enquire 10 further into that history before you wrote that 11 reference? 12 A. That didn't occur to me at the time. 13 Q. Can we then go, finally, and swiftly, if I am able to do 14 so, Mr Morgan, to the case involving F165. This is 15 something you deal with at paragraphs 22 to 27 of your 16 statement. In August 2010, allegations were made by 17 a 12-year-old in foster care that she had been sexually 18 abused by her foster father, F165. The allegations were 19 of sexual touching and digital penetration. 20 Multi-agency strategy meetings were held. F165 denied 21 the allegations. He and his wife were suspended as 22 foster carers and in December 2010 a decision was made 23 by the CPS not to prosecute. The Fostering Panel met to 24 consider the matter in June 2011 and recommended that 25 F165 be deregistered and the agency decision maker</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 95</p>	<p>1 agreed. 2 Mr Morgan, in light of the F77 case, was there an 3 unofficial policy that where investigations of alleged 4 sexual abuse were inconclusive, the fostering service by 5 this time would err on the side of caution and recommend 6 deregistration? So had there been a shift? 7 A. I think this is -- sorry. There'd certainly been 8 a shift in my position. Less so with F77 because those 9 reports came out later. But I was managing this case at 10 the same time I was managing the case relating to 11 Patrick Gallagher. So I would have attended -- 12 I learned about Patrick Gallagher's abuse 13 in December 2011. At the same time, I was managing the 14 allegations -- we had the case conference about this 15 carer. And also, the Fostering Panel would have come 16 in June -- whatever year it was, in the June, a month 17 after Patrick Gallagher had been sentenced. So you 18 could certainly conclude that my practice had changed. 19 Q. We know that F165 then appealed to the Independent 20 Review Mechanism Panel, and that the panel pressed you 21 about the reliability of the complainant and seemed to 22 place, from reading the record, significant weight on 23 previous untrue allegations. 24 In your view, do you think the IRM took the correct 25 approach?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 96</p>

<p>1 A. I think they were probably too foster-carer-focused. 2 Obviously the foster carers were part of that process, 3 they gave evidence, so it was a very different hearing 4 to safeguarding hearings. 5 Q. The IRM, as you know, found that the fostering service 6 had refused approval based on the department's best 7 interests, as they described it -- 8 A. Yes. 9 Q. -- rather than their duty of care to F165 as carers. Do 10 you feel that the IRM focused sufficiently on the best 11 interests of the children that might have been placed 12 with F165? 13 A. I don't think they did consider any risks to future 14 children placed. I think they did see it as the 15 department taking a "safety first" stance. 16 Q. Do you think there was a tension, as a result, between 17 the approach of the fostering service, on the one hand, 18 and the IRM in general? 19 A. Yes. 20 Q. Did that then have an effect on your decision making, in 21 relation to foster carers against whom allegations were 22 being made? 23 A. Did the IRM have an effect? 24 Q. Yes, their decision in this case, for instance. 25 A. I'm trying to think if I had any subsequent allegations</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 97</p>	<p>1 after that. I don't know that the IRM would have 2 changed my views. After my experience of managing 3 Patrick Gallagher and F77, my approach would be much 4 more risk focused. 5 Q. In your dealings with the IRM, please, Mr Morgan, do you 6 feel that they were sufficiently qualified and trained 7 to assess whether allegations met the threshold for 8 deregistration? 9 A. I don't know. I was surprised by comments of some panel 10 members because there was -- somebody said, "Isn't 11 somebody innocent until proven guilty?" So I don't 12 think they seemed to fully understand the dilemmas that 13 we have in terms of reaching recommendations after 14 unresolved cases of sexual abuse. 15 Q. The IRM found that the foster parents should be 16 reinstated, and the agency decision maker wrote 17 confirming that decision and that further training and 18 careful action was required. Did you feel uneasy about 19 this reinstatement? 20 A. Yes, yes. 21 Q. You were team manager, still, at that point? 22 A. Yes. 23 Q. How did that affect your approach to these foster 24 carers? 25 A. I remember going out to interview them and discussing</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 98</p>
<p>1 with them whether they wanted to continue to foster the 2 department. It was quite a difficult interview, because 3 they were wanting some reassurances and they were 4 wanting to ask me if I believed in the allegations that 5 had been made, and I was still in -- I remain in 6 a position of doubt about those allegations. 7 MR SADD: Mr Morgan, you have been very patient with me. 8 Thank you very much. Those are my questions. But there 9 may be some questions from the panel. 10 THE CHAIR: No, we have no questions. Thank you very much, 11 Mr Morgan. 12 (The witness withdrew) 13 MR SADD: Chair, that concludes this witness's evidence. 14 Subject to your views, chair, should we return again at 15 2.00 pm, or 2.15 pm? What would suit you? 16 THE CHAIR: We will make it 2.00 pm. 17 (1.15 pm) 18 (The short adjournment) 19 (2.00 pm) 20 MR LIVINGSTON: Good afternoon, chair and panel. We are now 21 going to call Mark Cope to give evidence via videolink. 22 MR MARK COPE (affirmed) 23 (Evidence given via videolink) 24 Examination by MR LIVINGSTON 25 MR LIVINGSTON: You have provided a statement to the inquiry</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 99</p>	<p>1 which should be at tab 1 of the bundle in front of you. 2 Do you have that? 3 A. Yes. 4 Q. I am mostly going to be referring to this statement, so 5 if you keep that close by. 6 For the record, the reference for that statement is 7 INQ002618. 8 Mr Cope, was this statement true, to the best of 9 your knowledge, at the time you signed it? 10 A. Yes, to the best of my knowledge, yes. 11 Q. I understand there are a few very small corrections that 12 you wanted to make? 13 A. That's correct. 14 Q. Just some small issues. If we can go through them very 15 quickly, at paragraph 3, you say: 16 "I am a qualified social worker." 17 What's the correct position? 18 A. I'm actually a qualified education social worker. 19 Q. Thank you. You say at paragraph 4 that you worked as 20 a team leader at the council as a residential social 21 worker in foster homes. What's the correct word that 22 should be there? 23 A. It's "in children's homes" or "Beechwood", yes. 24 Q. Finally, at paragraph 25, you said here in the second 25 sentence, you used the word "riots"?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 100</p>

<p>1 A. Yes. 2 Q. I understand you wanted to amend that? 3 A. That's correct, yes. 4 Q. What would you like to amend "riots" to? 5 A. I forget what it said now. Basically, it was -- can 6 I just check? It was poor behaviour, basically. "Riot" 7 was very strong and emotive. It wasn't like that at 8 all. 9 Q. Thank you, Mr Cope. Just to let you know, the panel 10 have a copy of your statement in front of them and the 11 statement will be published in full on the web site, but 12 we are not going to go through every word and every 13 line. I am just going to take you to specific topics, 14 okay? 15 A. Yes. 16 Q. First of all, you start in your statement setting out 17 your roles at Beechwood from paragraph 5. It is correct 18 that you have worked at Beechwood on three different 19 occasions; is that right? 20 A. That's correct. 21 Q. Firstly, as a trainee police officer for about four 22 weeks in 1974; is that right? 23 A. That's correct, yes. 24 Q. You say you were aged 18 at the time? 25 A. That's right.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 101</p>	<p>1 Q. Only a year older than some of the residents? 2 A. That's right. 3 Q. How were you put forward for this role? 4 A. It was a thing that the Nottinghamshire Combined 5 Constabulary expected people to do, a one-month 6 attachment to Beechwood or Enderleigh. It was -- female 7 trainee officers did the Enderleigh home, and male did 8 the Beechwood, and I was one of the Beechwood ones. It 9 was an ongoing thing that happened every month. I think 10 there was a police cadet went there every month. 11 Q. Do you remember how long that scheme continued for, 12 given -- you may have seen whilst you were at Beechwood? 13 A. I think it only continued for about another year. 14 Q. I presume that when you carried out this role, you had 15 no experience of working with vulnerable children at 16 that stage? 17 A. None whatsoever. 18 Q. Had you had any training in working with children at 19 that stage? 20 A. No, not at all. Not at all. 21 Q. During this time, you say that in the four weeks you 22 were essentially acting as a de facto residential social 23 worker? 24 A. That's right. 25 Q. Were you supervised by the police or by the homes</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 102</p>
<p>1 manager or neither or both? 2 A. It was the homes manager, really. You know, I was just 3 told to sort of turn up for certain shifts and, whoever 4 the shift leader was, just to follow what they would say 5 to do, which was what I did. 6 Q. At paragraph 9 of your statement, Mr Cope, you say that, 7 given your closeness in age to some of the residents, it 8 was difficult to assert your authority. How did you try 9 to do so? 10 A. It was more a case of, because I was only 18, I felt 11 like I was -- there was very little difference in my 12 age, and it was just -- sometimes I didn't put my 13 authority over, it was actually left to other staff that 14 would sort of come in and support me. 15 There was one particular occasion where the -- 16 I would call him the alpha male of the group, had 17 deliberately pushed me over. I wanted to stand up and, 18 you know, defend myself, but another member of staff 19 said, "Just leave it. Leave it", and I did, and I began 20 to realise that, you know, I was being goaded and I'd 21 just got to watch my step. Because the actual residents 22 knew that I was a trainee police officer, so I was fair 23 game for them, really. 24 Q. During your second stint at Beechwood, that started 25 around February/March 1976; is that right?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 103</p>	<p>1 A. Yes. 2 Q. So presumably, by that stage, you'd chosen to go down 3 the social worker route, rather than the police route? 4 A. That's right, yes. 5 Q. For that role, do you recall what the application 6 process involved? 7 A. Yes. I remember that what happened -- when I actually 8 left Beechwood as a cadet at the end of the four weeks, 9 I'd expressed my interest in becoming a residential 10 social worker, and I spoke to a couple of people at 11 Beechwood, and I then got a phone call -- I can't 12 remember, sometime after, and I believe it was from the 13 unit leader telling me that they were advertising jobs 14 in the local Nottingham paper, and I checked that out, 15 and I think there were seven posts being advertised, and 16 I just applied for one in writing. I got the 17 application form and, you know, and went on from there, 18 really. 19 Q. Were you interviewed for the role? Do you remember? 20 A. I was. Yes, I was, yes. 21 Q. Presumably, at that point, you had your experience of 22 the four weeks as a trainee police officer, but 23 presumably you still had no training or qualifications? 24 A. No, none at all. 25 Q. That lasted for about seven to eight years, and then you</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 104</p>

<p>1 began your third period in 1986, and that lasted for 2 about nine or ten years; is that right? 3 A. Yes, I believe that's right, yes. 4 Q. During these 18 or so years, your role -- was that as 5 a residential social worker or a residential support 6 worker? 7 A. No, a residential social worker. I was -- even though 8 I was unqualified, I was still classed as a residential 9 social worker. 10 Q. During that role, your main task would be to supervise 11 the children from the start to the end of the day; is 12 that right? 13 A. Yes, that's right, yes. 14 Q. During the 20 or so years, just under that, you were at 15 Beechwood, did you receive any training or 16 qualifications at any time? 17 A. No. The only thing that the authority actually sent me 18 on was basic in-service training, which happened at -- 19 I forget what it was. It was somewhere on Forest Road 20 in Nottingham. But it was just a one-day release thing 21 for a few weeks. It didn't last long, and it was just 22 the basics of what's expected of a residential social 23 worker, but there was nothing -- no sort of formal 24 training about, you know, looking after childcare or 25 behaviour or anything like that.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 105</p>	<p>1 Q. So there was no specific training on anything such as 2 dealing with children who had been abused or vulnerable 3 children? 4 A. No. No. 5 Q. Because the inquiry has seen other documents talking 6 about training in the late 1980s and early 1990s, do you 7 know, is the reason that you weren't getting training 8 because, at that time, you were seen to be quite 9 experienced because you'd been there for a while, or is 10 it -- 11 A. I had, yes. It was almost as if experience far 12 outweighed qualification. 13 Q. Moving on to talk about the Beechwood units and how that 14 evolved, you talk about this at paragraphs 23 to 27 of 15 your statement. 16 A. Yes. 17 Q. You say that when you first joined, there was just one 18 unit, which was simply called "Beechwood". Is it right 19 that that unit later became renamed as the Lindens, and 20 then Beechwood became the name for the whole complex? 21 A. That's correct, yes. Yes. It was actually known as 22 Beechwood Remand Home at that time. 23 Q. From about 1976, there were three units making up the 24 complex, which was Lindens, Redcot and Enderleigh; is 25 that right?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 106</p>
<p>1 A. Yes, that's correct. 2 Q. Then over time, that changed. We understand that 3 Enderleigh closed down, and then, in the late 4 1980s/early 1990s, one of the other units stopped 5 functioning as well. Does that accord with your 6 recollection? 7 A. It does, but I don't think -- when the actual unit 8 closed, I don't think I was employed there at that time. 9 But I do know that that's what happened, yes. 10 Q. You worked at the Lindens for most of your time at 11 Beechwood; is that right? 12 A. I did. I worked at both Lindens and Redcot, but most of 13 my time was probably at Lindens. 14 Q. Was your specific job title -- were you specifically 15 assigned to one unit or were you a residential social 16 worker at Beechwood and you worked at one or the other? 17 A. Your employment was actually at Beechwood in the 18 Beechwood complex, but you could have been moved from 19 one to another, and often that did happen, if there was 20 staff sickness or anything like that, and there was one 21 unit that was overstaffed, then you could be moved to 22 the other unit to help fill in the gaps. 23 Q. Would that just happen on a sort of informal basis? 24 A. Yes. 25 Q. Would that include Enderleigh as well?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 107</p>	<p>1 A. No. I never actually worked at Enderleigh. 2 Q. Did staff who were working at Enderleigh ever fill in 3 shifts at Redcot and Lindens; do you remember? 4 A. No, not that I remember. I don't think they did. 5 Q. In terms of the children who were resident, you say at 6 paragraph 25 that the girls at Enderleigh didn't often 7 mix with the other children because it was difficult to 8 control the residents, but you say that this eventually 9 changed and there was more mixing. 10 A. Yes. 11 Q. Was that when the function of Redcot changed to become 12 a mixed unit? 13 A. Yeah. I mean, when -- at one point, Lindens and Redcot 14 were both all boys and Enderleigh was the girls' 15 section. Every now and again, we tried -- I think one 16 time we had a sports day where we included all three 17 units. We had a disco, as I said, and we included all. 18 But it tended to be that the boys tended to get -- 19 I don't know whether it's -- they just got silly and 20 they would show off in front of the girls, and that's 21 when their behaviour seemed to get worse. So it wasn't 22 always good to sort of mix the two units -- mix the 23 units. 24 Q. You say that when you initially joined, residents didn't 25 remain at Beechwood for a very long time. You say it</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 108</p>

<p>1 was about 8 to 20 weeks, so that's about two to five 2 months. 3 A. Yes. 4 Q. Did that sort of length of stay change significantly 5 during the 20 years you were employed, or did it stay 6 roughly the same? 7 A. No, it did. I think that the reason why -- when I first 8 started, the shortness -- because children were usually 9 remanded to the care of the local authority for either 10 three-week reports, six-week reports or it could have 11 been 12-week reports. We never knew. Each magistrate 12 would remand for a different period of court reports. 13 Q. Mr Cope, you say at paragraph 27, you describe Beechwood 14 as a "holding unit". What did you perceive the function 15 of Beechwood to be for the residents there? Was it just 16 to contain them? Is that what the panel should 17 understand? 18 A. Yes. Can I expand on that? 19 Q. Yes, please do. 20 A. I think, like I've just said, when children were 21 admitted to Beechwood initially, it was usually from the 22 courts and it was usually for the purpose of seeking 23 court reports to look at where the final destination, so 24 to speak, of that child would be, and it would -- at 25 that point, it would either be: return home; it would be</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 109</p>	<p>1 to give them a full section 1 care order; or it could 2 be -- it was a detention centre, or even Borstal. There 3 were several, but it was always one of those or -- or, 4 sorry, a children's home or a CHE, which was a community 5 home with education. 6 Q. We understand that Beechwood at one point started being 7 called a community home with education. At that point, 8 did the function change? We understand that happened in 9 the late 1980s. Do you remember that? 10 A. No, I don't -- I don't remember that, because -- the 11 only changes I knew was, it went from Beechwood Remand 12 Home to Beechwood Observation and Assessment Centre. 13 That's the change that I remember. I don't remember it 14 ever being called a CHE. 15 Q. Do you think there was broadly an ethos at the home that 16 staff should contain children rather than care for them, 17 or do you think there was any ethos about actually 18 caring for the children as well? 19 A. I think -- I don't think that just came from the staff. 20 I think that also came from the authority. I think that 21 when children arrived at Beechwood, if you admitted 22 a child, you would never know where that child would be 23 coming from. It could have been at short notice. And 24 also, I think Beechwood had a reputation that was put in 25 place so that if a children's home or any other</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 110</p>
<p>1 establishment had a really problem child, they would 2 just send them to Beechwood. I think that's where 3 Beechwood got its reputation from, as being, you know, 4 yeah, a non-caring place. 5 Q. Can I build on that? You say that Beechwood had this 6 reputation that was developed almost as a deterrent for 7 children who might behave badly in other homes. Did 8 staff work to make Beechwood as unpleasant as possible 9 in order to make it seem like a punishment, or was that 10 something else? 11 A. No. I would say not. I don't think that was the idea 12 at all. It's certainly not the idea that I got. 13 Because at one point, the staff had actually -- 14 residential social workers had actually got together and 15 were actually sort of wanting to -- looking at taking 16 industrial action at the way that the children were 17 being sent to Beechwood that were problematic, and we 18 felt that, because we did have other children that had 19 come from, I don't know, maybe -- at that point, we 20 probably had things like nonschool attenders, voluntary 21 care orders, it wasn't fair that we would put them all 22 under the same roof. So it was really difficult. 23 Q. One small point is, you say at paragraph 22 that on an 24 average shift there were three to four staff members for 25 21 boys. Presumably, that's in each unit. Did that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 111</p>	<p>1 sort of ratio of 1:7 or between 1:7 and 1:5, did that 2 stay roughly the same throughout your time there, or did 3 it change? 4 A. It roughly stayed the same, but there were times when 5 I actually worked in the unit with just two staff. 6 Q. Including you? 7 A. Including me, yes. Of course, if the phone rang, or 8 anything like that, that was one member of staff out in 9 the unit with 21 children. 10 Q. You come on to say, when you are talking about the 11 environment at Beechwood, that the staff, or some staff, 12 saw Beechwood as a dumping ground for difficult 13 children. How do you think that this perception or this 14 environment affected the children themselves? 15 A. I think it had a massive effect, because I also did some 16 work working with the emergency duty team and one of my 17 roles in that -- sorry, one of the things I had to do in 18 that role was to collect children that had absconded 19 from other children's homes and return them back to the 20 respective children's home. Often they would talk to me 21 and say, "You don't think they'll send me to Beechwood? 22 You don't think they'll send me to Beechwood?", and I'd 23 go, "No, no, no", and I was trying to reassure them, 24 "It's not that bad anyway. It's just the reputation 25 it's got". But I genuinely did not think it was the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 112</p>

<p>1 aim -- you know, it would set out to make it like that. 2 I think the transition from remand home to observation 3 and assessment was a really difficult transition, and 4 I think people just couldn't forget the change in role, 5 it was very difficult.</p> <p>6 Q. Mr Cope, on reflection, you may be aware the inquiry has 7 heard a large number of allegations of sexual and 8 physical abuse in relation to Beechwood, and you've just 9 said that children from other homes frankly were scared 10 of being sent to Beechwood. Do you think that one of 11 the reasons that they might have been scared is that 12 they had heard that they might be sexually or physically 13 abused?</p> <p>14 A. I certainly know that they thought they were going to be 15 physically abused. I wouldn't have said -- maybe two or 16 three that I actually personally spoke to, they would 17 talk about being beaten up when they got there, and 18 things like that. But, no, none of them mentioned 19 anything about sexual abuse.</p> <p>20 Q. You come on in your statement, Mr Cope, at paragraph 32, 21 to say that some staff members were physically assaulted 22 by children on a regular basis. You also say that 23 children would be severely reprimanded if they went to 24 the shops alone, for example. Would that severe 25 reprimand include physical chastisement?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 113</p>	<p>1 A. No, not at all. No. It would mainly be things like -- 2 they used to call it "grounding", where they weren't 3 allowed out at all, not on activities, and that was the 4 sort of thing, weren't allowed to spend their pocket 5 money for a week, or something like that. But there was 6 never any physical chastisement, certainly not while 7 I was there. I'm not denying it didn't happen, but 8 certainly on the shifts that I worked, there was nothing 9 like that at all.</p> <p>10 Q. The inquiry has heard a large number of accounts from 11 children who were beaten up by staff, and you say that 12 you didn't see this. There are also accounts that 13 children were encouraged or forced to fight each other. 14 Did you ever see that?</p> <p>15 A. No. I can confirm that there were boxing matches. We 16 had two people who were qualified to do boxing training. 17 Certainly when I was there, there was never any child 18 forced to fight. It was just a case of, did they want 19 to do it, did they not want to do it. I don't remember 20 anything where a child was forced to box, not at all.</p> <p>21 Q. The accounts from former residents, Mr Cope, suggest 22 that the environment at Beechwood was overall a violent 23 and hostile one. Do you think that that's a fair 24 recollection?</p> <p>25 A. I would say it was hostile. I wouldn't say it was</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 114</p>
<p>1 violent. I would say it was hostile. It was -- on 2 a regular basis, you know, there were -- children would 3 assault each other. You know, young children did -- I 4 mean, I personally have been assaulted on more than one 5 occasion. You know, you had to expect it because a lot 6 of these children were sort of really troubled children, 7 and, you know, it went with the territory, you know. It 8 was just one of those things.</p> <p>9 Q. At paragraphs 33 to 34, you say that the environment 10 changed over time. You say that initially it was a bit 11 of a punitive environment, but by the late 1980s, the 12 regime was far more relaxed, with an atmosphere of 13 mutual trust and respect. But you also say that, at 14 this time, the children were supervised at all times. 15 How do you reconcile those two things, of a more relaxed 16 environment with constant supervision?</p> <p>17 A. I think constant supervision was difficult at any time 18 because, like we have just said, if you had one member 19 of staff to seven children, it was almost impossible to 20 sort of ensure that, you know, each child had got 21 somebody to -- so it wasn't easy. It wasn't easy at 22 all, and I can't guarantee that something -- you know, 23 something didn't happen. In other words, that staff 24 weren't supervising children all the time.</p> <p>25 Q. The inquiry heard evidence last week from Jim Fenwick,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 115</p>	<p>1 the former superintendent, that in unit meetings there 2 was regular discussion about the need to use sympathy 3 and empathy with residents. Is that something you 4 remember?</p> <p>5 A. No, not at all, no. No.</p> <p>6 Q. Mr Cope, the inquiry has seen a report which is from 7 2011 but looking back at Beechwood in the late 1980s, 8 and it was written by a man called Alan Hassell who 9 worked for the NSPCC, and that report is going to be 10 uploaded to the website in due course. But that refers, 11 on the basis of records reviewed, to Beechwood, but 12 particularly the Lindens, being a very violent place in 13 the late 1980s, with almost daily occurrences of 14 violence.</p> <p>15 Do you have any comment on that observation?</p> <p>16 A. No. I wouldn't have said -- I would have said that, 17 yes, there were altercations on a daily basis. There is 18 no doubt about that.</p> <p>19 I think the thing that springs to mind is -- and 20 I am probably jumping the gun here -- one of the things 21 that never happened -- nobody was ever taught restraint, 22 and that was the thing. If a child blew up, then, 23 you know, they had to be restrained, and none of us had 24 had any form of restraint training. None whatsoever.</p> <p>25 Q. Do you think that in the absence of that training,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 116</p>

<p>1 attempting to use restraint could actually be seen as 2 being physically violent to a male resident or a female 3 resident? 4 A. Yes. 5 Q. At paragraph 35 of your statement, you say that staff 6 were expected to use the logbook and incident sheets. 7 Did this happen in practice? Did all staff actually use 8 them? 9 A. No, I don't think all staff did. But to me, it was 10 a record of what had happened, what you'd done, how 11 you'd dealt with something, so it should have been. But 12 if staff chose not to, it was an easy way of getting out 13 of doing it. So I cannot guarantee that a member of 14 staff didn't have an altercation with a child and that 15 they didn't write in the incident sheet. I think a lot 16 of that happened. 17 Q. You say that the detailed notes which were kept were 18 mostly negative comments about the children. Why do you 19 think that staff didn't record positive comments? Is 20 that because there wouldn't be an incident to record? 21 A. I think you're correct, yeah. I think that probably 22 would have been the ethos there. You know, the incident 23 sheets were purely and simply used for a negative thing. 24 You know, it's -- I also admit there were times when 25 I personally would put something -- I remember when</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 117</p>	<p>1 a mother came to visit a child that had not seen the 2 child for a long time, and I wrote an incident sheet 3 about that because, you know, it was a significant 4 change in what was happening in that child's life. So 5 it was there, but if other people chose to use it for 6 that, you couldn't guarantee. 7 Q. Going to the end of your statement, because you talk 8 about the environment again there at paragraphs 75 to 76 9 and 77, actually, at paragraph 76, you say that children 10 had very dysfunctional families most of the time, and 11 clearly felt unloved and isolated, presumably prior to 12 coming into care and then during. Do you think that 13 Beechwood made them feel loved and cared for? 14 A. No, I just don't think there was a substitute for it. 15 I mean, we tried our best -- I personally tried my best, 16 and I know a lot of staff did, but I don't think we 17 could ever be a substitute for, you know, a loving 18 family sort of thing. It's not possible. 19 Q. At paragraph 77, you say that most of the time, it did 20 not feel like you were dealing with humans, but, rather, 21 objects. What impact do you think this had on the 22 children? 23 A. A terrible effect, a terrible impact, yeah, yeah. It 24 was -- I think sort of the way that Beechwood was 25 managed, you were almost made to feel that they were</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 118</p>
<p>1 objects, and so -- if we had an admission coming in and 2 somebody would come in like, "Oh, we've got one coming 3 in that's done for burglary", it was never -- you know, 4 it was never any other thing, it was always this 5 objective, what their offence had been. So that's what 6 they were admitted on and that's what they were 7 considered for. And, yeah, that was right through 8 Beechwood, I believe, that we never actually saw an 9 individual child, it was what they'd done wrong. 10 Q. Is it fair to assume, then, that the children were seen 11 as challenges or problems that needed to be dealt with 12 rather than vulnerable children that needed to be 13 helped? 14 A. Yes, yes, definitely, because -- it was like 15 I previously said, you know, you've actually got other 16 children's homes that are threatening their children 17 with Beechwood. Beechwood clearly becomes a deterrent 18 not to misbehave, so when you do misbehave, you're 19 automatically assumed to be a problem and you're shipped 20 out of the children's home to Beechwood. We couldn't 21 have expected the children to get any other message than 22 that, really. 23 Q. Going on to a different topic, Mr Cope, back to 24 paragraph 36 of your statement, you say that where 25 a child was admitted having previously been sexually</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 119</p>	<p>1 abused or having been accused of sexually abusing other 2 children, members of staff would usually be alerted to 3 this. How would that work? 4 A. Again, it would usually be word of mouth. There would 5 very rarely be something in writing. If a child had 6 been to court, then the court paper would come back on 7 the remand paper, so there would be an offence on there, 8 but in terms of who the child was, or anything like 9 that, we didn't know. 10 There have actually also been times where a child 11 was admitted and when I've asked, you know, what the 12 child was being admitted for, they have just said, "He's 13 in for reports", and I'd say, "Well, what for?", and 14 I wouldn't actually get to know, and it wasn't until 15 probably two or three days later that I'd know why that 16 child was being admitted and that's happened on more 17 than one occasion. 18 Q. You say that there was an unwritten, but known, policy 19 that perpetrators of sexual abuse and victims of sexual 20 abuse would be kept apart. Firstly, how did that become 21 known, if it was unwritten? 22 A. For obvious reasons, I would have thought, certainly 23 from my point of view. Again, I remember on one 24 occasion we actually had a lad that was brought in on 25 a place of safety during the Broxtowe Inquiry and we'd</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 120</p>

1 **actually got children that had abused other children and**
 2 **we weren't aware of what the lad coming in from Broxtowe**
 3 **affair had done wrong. So we wouldn't have known**
 4 **anything.**
 5 **If we'd been given the information, then I think**
 6 **obviously what you do, you're just trying to -- you**
 7 **know, to be honest, it should never have happened. We**
 8 **should never have had perpetrators and victims in the**
 9 **same place. Why it happened, I do not know, but it did**
 10 **and it was horrendous.**
 11 Q. You say that one of the things you would try and do
 12 would be to ensure, for example, that they weren't in
 13 the same bedroom.
 14 **A. Yes.**
 15 Q. I just want to check, does that mean that perpetrators
 16 and victims of sexual abuse wouldn't be in the same
 17 bedroom or that two perpetrators of sexual abuse
 18 wouldn't be in the same bedroom or both?
 19 **A. The problem we had at Lindens was, there was no**
 20 **single-occupancy rooms at all. They were all**
 21 **multi-occupancy. So you couldn't possibly have one**
 22 **child -- so if you'd got a perpetrator in, you couldn't**
 23 **possibly put him in a room on his own, so you had to put**
 24 **him in with other children, and there's where your**
 25 **difficulties were. Again, disgusting, but ...**

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1 **horrified.**
 2 Q. If the child didn't have a social worker when they were
 3 admitted, would any steps be taken to try and ensure
 4 they had some external support?
 5 **A. Oh, yeah. If -- as soon as we knew -- a good example**
 6 **would be, say, if a child came in through the emergency**
 7 **duty team at the weekend. On the Monday morning, we**
 8 **would be straight on to the area office to say, "We have**
 9 **admitted a child who needs a social worker allocated",**
 10 **and it would usually happen fairly quick.**
 11 Q. I'm going to come on to now ask you about a few specific
 12 individuals. First of all, looking at Colin Wallace.
 13 You deal with this at paragraphs 38 to 41 of your
 14 statement.
 15 At paragraph 38, you say more broadly that in
 16 relation to any concerns you had, you say:
 17 "I, for the most part, reported these to my seniors
 18 immediately."
 19 What do you mean by "for the most part"?
 20 **A. If I felt that I'd got something that was really**
 21 **concerning me or worrying me -- it was difficult -- when**
 22 **you're a 20-year-old person and you're trying to tell**
 23 **somebody something and they sort of say, "Oh, it's**
 24 **nothing to do with you, keep out of it", you become**
 25 **intimidated and you sort of question your own validity.**

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1 Q. One of the things you say, Mr Cope, is that some of
 2 the children would be admitted without a social worker
 3 or without having a social worker at that time. Can we
 4 take that to mean that because this was their first
 5 involvement in a care setting, that they didn't have
 6 a social worker right at the start and then that would
 7 change, or what should we understand?
 8 **A. It could be that they didn't have a social worker at**
 9 **that point and they would be allocated one maybe at the**
 10 **next area officers' meeting, but there were also times**
 11 **when -- if my memory serves me right, if a child came in**
 12 **under a section 2 voluntary care order where the parent**
 13 **could actually place the child in care voluntarily,**
 14 **there wasn't always a social worker assigned to that**
 15 **child at that point anyway. It would just be the**
 16 **parent, you know. And that could be for anything.**
 17 **I mean, we had children admitted voluntarily for**
 18 **nonschool attendance. One particular parent had put**
 19 **a child in care because he was misbehaving at home and**
 20 **he felt -- the parent felt that, you know, a few weeks**
 21 **in a children's home would sort him out.**
 22 Q. Would you or staff at Beechwood be forced to take
 23 whomever was admitted whether it was for a serious
 24 offence or missing school?
 25 **A. Yes, yes. We were horrified at that. Yes, we were**

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1 **So when I say "for the most part", it was if I thought**
 2 **I was going to be taken serious. But if I felt that**
 3 **something was -- like the Wallace affair, I instantly**
 4 **reported it. You know, I saw that through on more than**
 5 **one occasion.**
 6 Q. Can you describe with Colin Wallace how your concerns
 7 about him arose?
 8 **A. I just happened to be -- by accident, I was in what we**
 9 **call the middle block, it was called. It's where the**
 10 **education unit was. I was picking something up from**
 11 **there and I happened to see -- I'll think of her name --**
 12 **A533 putting a note into Wallace's top box, and once**
 13 **she'd gone, I went and inspected the note. If memory**
 14 **serves me right, it was talking about meeting up.**
 15 **I went to see Ken Rigby, who gave evidence of this as**
 16 **well, and he said, "Put the note back, and we'll keep an**
 17 **eye on it". Now, I don't know whether anybody spoke to**
 18 **Wallace at the time, but I certainly made people aware.**
 19 **Then I think it was about -- it may have been a week**
 20 **later, when I was on duty, on early shift, and Wallace**
 21 **was coming on the afternoon shift, the same thing**
 22 **happened again, and, again, I reported it to Ken Rigby**
 23 **and it was taken out of my hands from then on.**
 24 Q. I just want to dive into that a little bit. So your
 25 concerns about them meeting up, being frank about it,

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1 what were your concerns?
 2 **A. Well, she was a 13- or 14-year-old resident and he was**
 3 **a 20-year-old supposedly professional male member of**
 4 **staff. You just wouldn't do it. You know, it's abuse.**
 5 Q. Were you concerned -- or do you remember being concerned
 6 that there was a sexual relationship going on?
 7 **A. Yes. Yes.**
 8 Q. Mr Rigby gave evidence last week, and I just want to
 9 summarise what he said about this. He said that he
 10 doesn't recall you telling him about a note, but he says
 11 that if you had told him, he would have gone to fetch it
 12 himself. He says that he very much doubts that he said,
 13 "We should keep an eye on them", and he says that he
 14 referred the matter to Mr Saul, when he found out about
 15 it. Do you have any comment on Mr Rigby's evidence?
 16 **A. That's not true. I definitely did take the note to him.**
 17 **He read it and advised me to put it back and he gave me**
 18 **the reasons why he wanted me to put it back as well.**
 19 Q. Can I interrupt you there, Mr Cope? Sorry, you say he
 20 gave you the reasons why he wanted you to put it back.
 21 For use of a crude term, was this essentially trying to
 22 entrap Mr Wallace? Were you trying to see if he'd do
 23 anything further and catch him?
 24 **A. No. I think what it was, I think it was a case of, he**
 25 **was trying to say, is it the fact that this girl has got**

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1 had anyone confronted Colin Wallace himself about the
 2 allegations?
 3 **A. I don't know. I wanted to speak to him, but I was told**
 4 **not to. I wanted to speak to him, to say, you know,**
 5 **"What's going off here? Is this true?" I think at that**
 6 **point I was just the same grade as Wallace, so, I mean,**
 7 **it shouldn't have come from me anyway, it should have**
 8 **come from a manager. But as a work colleague -- at that**
 9 **point, up until then, a respected work colleague,**
 10 **I would have wanted to say, "What's going on? What are**
 11 **you doing?", you know, but, no, I was told not to do**
 12 **that, not to talk to him.**
 13 Q. In your statement that you gave to the police, which we
 14 don't need to turn to right now, you talk about this
 15 case as well. You say that you received a call from the
 16 new children's home that the girl had been moved to,
 17 saying that she had gone missing, and you told them to
 18 check Colin Wallace's home address. Is that right?
 19 **A. Yeah. What it was, I was actually in a meeting,**
 20 **I believe, and a member of staff came to the meeting and**
 21 **said, "Can I have a word with you urgently?" I went out**
 22 **and I was told that the children's home had said that**
 23 **the girl had gone missing, had she turned up at**
 24 **Beechwood, which they thought she might do, or could**
 25 **they suggest anywhere else, and that's when I said, "Try**

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1 **a crush on Mr Wallace and it's just a one-off thing, or**
 2 **is it the fact that this is an ongoing relationship, and**
 3 **I didn't know. As I say, I couldn't sort of -- I would**
 4 **never have dared sort of override what he was saying.**
 5 **So I would have just done it, you know.**
 6 **But it didn't seem that long after that things moved**
 7 **along. It was a short time after that he was arrested**
 8 **or they moved the girl.**
 9 Q. I was going to come on to that, Mr Cope. So the girl
 10 who was involved, the victim of the abuse, was moved to
 11 another children's home, and you say that this was
 12 within a mile of Colin Wallace's home address?
 13 **A. That's right.**
 14 Q. You questioned senior management about this. What was
 15 their response when you questioned them about that?
 16 **A. They just told me it was the only vacant place, that it**
 17 **was all down to the admissions office and it was where**
 18 **there was a vacant place. I mean, I was absolutely**
 19 **stunned that we'd sort of played right into his hands,**
 20 **really, by moving her to where we did.**
 21 Q. Was it common to move people who were the victims of
 22 abuse? Was there any sort of policy of doing so?
 23 **A. I have never known it before, actually, and I have never**
 24 **known it after, either.**
 25 Q. Do you know, had anyone -- at the time she was moved,

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1 **Colin Wallace's home address", and I believe that was**
 2 **then passed on by the home to the police, and, you know,**
 3 **history is what happened, really.**
 4 Q. Did you report that conversation, where you told them to
 5 check Mr Wallace's home address, to a senior member of
 6 staff?
 7 **A. I did, yes. Yes.**
 8 Q. Was that to Mr Rigby or to Mr Saul?
 9 **A. I can't remember which one it was. I think it may have**
 10 **been Saul. But it was straight away. I actually**
 11 **dismissed myself from the meeting and went to -- I think**
 12 **it was Mr Saul, but I'm sure I went -- I went straight**
 13 **from the meeting and told him.**
 14 Q. You say in your statement that you understand that the
 15 girl was found in Mr Wallace's address; is that right?
 16 **A. That came through -- that was through -- I won't say**
 17 **idle gossip, but it wasn't an official notification that**
 18 **we'd been told that she had been found there. It was**
 19 **just the fact that I'd heard -- because I think I'd gone**
 20 **off duty and it wasn't until I came back, probably three**
 21 **days later, and that's what I was told, but I don't know**
 22 **where that information came from. I couldn't tell you.**
 23 Q. Mr Cope, we know from the documents that Colin Wallace
 24 was 25, the girl was about 13 or 14. The inquiry has
 25 also heard other accounts from former residents at

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<p>1 Beechwood that they were also sexually abused by 2 Colin Wallace, including one former resident who said 3 that she was sure that other staff knew what was going 4 on. Were you aware of any other concerns in relation to 5 Wallace and other residents? 6 A. No, not at all. If I had have been, I'd have reported 7 it. 8 Q. Once the girl had been found and once this incident had 9 happened, we know that Colin Wallace was dismissed, but 10 were you aware of any investigation that was conducted 11 into it? 12 A. No, none at all. It just went completely cold. Once 13 the girl had been moved and he'd been dismissed, I knew 14 nothing -- I don't think any of us knew anything about 15 what was happening. 16 Q. Was there any discussion even amongst staff members, 17 even amongst junior staff members like yourself, about 18 whether there might be other girls who had been abused 19 by Wallace? 20 A. No, no, we thought it -- as I say, initially, we thought 21 that the girl was infatuated with Wallace, and that 22 was -- but then I began to -- like I said to you 23 previously, I began to realise that it wasn't just that, 24 you know, but I had no evidence or no suspicions that 25 he -- you know, he'd been the same with any of the other</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 129</p>	<p>1 girls. But I'm not saying it's not possible. Yeah. 2 Q. Were you told by the staff that Mr Wallace had been 3 convicted and imprisoned? 4 A. No, I actually read it in the newspaper. 5 Q. You say at paragraph 41 of your statement that Wallace 6 was a brilliant member of staff and so his actions were 7 a shock to you. The inquiry has heard a number of 8 accounts along these lines, where social workers are 9 surprised that someone who was a very good member of 10 staff, or seemed to be a very good member of staff, or 11 seemed to be a very good foster parent would commit 12 sexual abuse. Was that something which you realised 13 from that point on might be a risk? 14 A. Are you actually saying that, you know, I -- because 15 I thought he was a brilliant member of staff, that he 16 wouldn't abuse children? Is that what you are saying 17 or ...? 18 Q. You say that you were surprised, because he was 19 a brilliant member of staff, that he abused children. 20 What's the link between being a good social worker 21 and -- I mean, I suppose it might seem obvious. 22 A. I think he was -- he seemed to get on well with the 23 children, he was always -- you know, he was always on 24 time, he was a good worker, everything was positive. 25 You couldn't think of anything negative about him.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 130</p>
<p>1 I think when I did discover what he was doing, yeah, it 2 then made me think, well, you know, people like this 3 don't have it written on their forehead what they're 4 going to do. You know, it could be anybody, anywhere 5 and it was a shock to me that he'd done it. I did not 6 expect it at all. 7 Q. I'm going to go on to discuss F204. He was a senior 8 member of staff. His name is redacted. 9 A. Yes. 10 Q. You say in your statement that you had concerns about 11 him because he wanted to supervise children at shower 12 time and he would watch children in the shower. You say 13 that after two to three times of this happening you 14 approached Jim Saul, as you felt very uncomfortable. 15 You go on to say that Mr Saul's response was that F204 16 is a salt of the earth and wouldn't harm a fly and that 17 you should get on and do your job. How did that 18 response make you feel about reporting people in the 19 future? 20 A. It made me feel small, it made me feel -- you know, 21 again, I was questioning was I right, you know, should 22 I have been -- you know, examined what he was doing in 23 that way? Yeah, it made me feel -- it certainly made me 24 feel that I didn't want to, or I shouldn't, report 25 anybody again. Again, hindsight is an amazing thing,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 131</p>	<p>1 because I suspected something then and clearly things 2 turned out to be the way they were and, you know, I've 3 got to carry that, that that happened, and I wasn't 4 forceful enough or I wasn't -- but when you've got a man 5 who is a major, as Mr Saul was, almost pushing me down 6 and just saying, "Just get on with your job, lad", it's 7 almost a case of, "Don't interfere with what other 8 people are doing, you sort yourself out", and it was 9 a putdown, it really was a putdown. 10 Q. You will probably have seen, Mr Cope, from some of 11 the documents that were sent to you, that F204 went on 12 to a senior role at another children's home, and he was 13 eventually given a final written warning for things, 14 including showering children and watching them in 15 silence to belittle them. Would you want to make any 16 comment about that? 17 A. Well, it was the same pattern that I'd observed. 18 Because what he did, he was very clever at it -- sorry, 19 not clever, let me rephrase that, not clever. He was 20 very sort of -- he covered his tracks really well, 21 because -- I can't explain it. The bathroom where he 22 supervised had a little point where you could look 23 through to the bathroom and actually see children 24 showering. Well, if ever I was on that wing supervising 25 showers, I would come back so that the children had got</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 132</p>

1 privacy. He didn't do that. He stood forward and made
 2 sure he could see them. His excuse was that he wanted
 3 to make sure there was no bullying going on or there was
 4 nobody sort of messing around or things like that. You
 5 didn't need to do that, and that was my thought.
 6 So when I found out where he'd gone to be in the
 7 children's home and that happened again, yeah, it fitted
 8 in with the pattern that he was seen to be doing at
 9 Beechwood.
 10 Q. Can the inquiry understand that staff at Beechwood were
 11 told to supervise children in the showers but weren't
 12 told to watch them in the showers?
 13 A. Absolutely, yeah. It was just supervision of -- you
 14 would be outside of the room, let's put it that way.
 15 You wouldn't be inside the room and you shouldn't be
 16 inside the room, but he chose to be. He was the only
 17 man, I believe -- certainly, you know, when I was
 18 working, he was the only man I knew who actually did
 19 that. I didn't know of anybody else who did that.
 20 Q. On reflection, Mr Cope, given what transpired when he
 21 moved on to a different children's home, do you think
 22 you should have told somebody else, as well as Mr Saul?
 23 A. Yeah, definitely. Yes. I certainly do. As I say,
 24 again, hindsight is an amazing thing, but when you're
 25 sort of 20-odd years of age -- and I'm not using that as

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1 a failure to sort of -- the management didn't support
 2 staff in the -- you know, their observations. I mean,
 3 we were the members of staff that were working with the
 4 children and we were working -- they were in the middle
 5 block and not knowing anything. So I mean, I just felt,
 6 like, as I say, I wasn't taken serious.
 7 My observation about Pick was before my observation
 8 about 204, and obviously it was 204 that I reported Pick
 9 to. So I reported Pick to 204, who told me that, and it
 10 wasn't until I then worked with 204 and realised what he
 11 was like with the children in the showers. I didn't
 12 know whether these two had got something -- whether
 13 there was something happening there or what, but -- so
 14 204 defended Pick, and maybe, you know, a suspicious
 15 mind could say, "Well, had they got -- were they in
 16 something together?" I don't know, but it did make me
 17 wonder.
 18 Q. Moving on to talk about Andris Logins, you say in your
 19 statement at paragraphs 52 to 53 that you feel guilty
 20 about missing any wrongdoing by him. You remember him
 21 being overly touchy-feely with the girl residents,
 22 including sitting with them on his knee, but you say
 23 that you didn't report him, as you had no clear evidence
 24 of wrongdoing. Could you not have reported that he was
 25 being touchy-feely with residents and having them

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1 an excuse, because there is no excuse, but, yes, I would
 2 definitely wish I'd have pushed it even further.
 3 Q. Just to clarify one thing, Mr Cope, it was my mistake,
 4 when I was asking you about Colin Wallace, I misquoted
 5 to you what you said in your statement. You said he was
 6 a brilliant member of staff so his actions were a shock
 7 to you, and I said "surprise" rather than "shock". I'm
 8 just asked to clarify that for the record.
 9 A. Right. Yes. Yes.
 10 Q. I am going to come on now to talk about Barrie Pick. He
 11 is someone whom you say you had concerns about because
 12 you thought that he seemed to be attracted to younger
 13 children. Is that right?
 14 A. That's correct, yes.
 15 Q. You say that you tried to raise this with your manager,
 16 who was F204?
 17 A. That's right.
 18 Q. And his response was that Pick was a married man and you
 19 should not worry yourself with that?
 20 A. That's correct. Yes, yes.
 21 Q. Do you think that within the management at Beechwood at
 22 that time there was a culture of coverup or evasion or
 23 failing to take things seriously?
 24 A. I think certain individuals, there was a coverup, and
 25 I think overall there was definitely, you know,

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1 sitting on his knee?
 2 A. That behaviour was witnessed by everybody -- management
 3 and everybody -- so it wasn't something that
 4 I personally had seen. It was almost classed as his way
 5 of working with the children. He would actually come on
 6 duty in, like, a flaunty way and say, "Hello, girls,
 7 Andy's back", and it was just things like that, and I'd
 8 just think, oh. That was actually done in front of
 9 management and anybody else who was around. He didn't
 10 hide what he was doing. So I don't know. Yeah, it's
 11 a difficult one.
 12 Q. Mr Cope, given what is understood at least now about how
 13 children can be groomed, do you think that the behaviour
 14 that you observed Logins engaging with, with girls at
 15 the home, could that be described as grooming behaviour?
 16 A. Yes, I realise it could have been now, yes.
 17 Q. I am going to come on now to discuss F29. You address
 18 him at paragraphs 55 to 58, and you say that you recall
 19 him having a passion for boys' choir music and say that
 20 he used to have a visit occasionally from a young man
 21 from abroad. If you can remember, when you say "a young
 22 man from abroad", do you mean a child or do you mean
 23 a young adult?
 24 A. No, he looked about, I would say, between, I don't know,
 25 17 -- 16/17/18, he looked about that age, and because of

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1 where F29 resided, above the unit, he had to come in
 2 through the front door. So he was on display when he
 3 came in. So everybody knew who he was bringing in with
 4 him.
 5 So it was quite obvious that, you know, this lad --
 6 because there was no other way into his flat other than
 7 through the front door. So, again, everybody noticed it
 8 and people commented and said, "Oh, that's a bit
 9 strange", but, as I say, he was not a child. I would
 10 have said he was a young adult.
 11 Q. You may be aware, Mr Cope, that the inquiry has heard
 12 and there have been a large number of allegations of
 13 sexual abuse made against F29. The police have received
 14 allegations from 33 former residents, ranging from
 15 watching in the showers to groping and all the way up to
 16 rape. Bearing in mind what you have told us about these
 17 visits, and bearing in mind your own observations about
 18 other members of staff, did you have concerns at the
 19 time about F29 and his behaviour with residents at
 20 Beechwood?
 21 A. No, I didn't, and, again, that's a shock to me as well,
 22 because I didn't suspect anything at all. I didn't
 23 think -- you know, I mean, you talk about groping and
 24 things. That certainly didn't happen, I feel, whilst he
 25 was in eyesight of staff. The thing I mentioned in my

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1 they'd all say, "Freddie, Freddie, Freddie", that's what
 2 they referred to it as. In the end, I had to draw lots,
 3 because there were -- I would say about eight children,
 4 but maybe ten at the most, could play this game, so
 5 I had to draw lots because there were probably about
 6 15 of the boys would want to play it, so that's how
 7 I knew it was popular.
 8 The other thing is, when the game was playing, I, on
 9 one occasion, was in the room next door playing table
 10 tennis, and the actual mat, you know, when they were
 11 dobbed or caught, that they stood on actually was at the
 12 side of the window that looked into the room where I was
 13 playing table tennis. So, you know, on the occasion
 14 that I was there on that, I didn't notice anything of
 15 that at all. Nothing whatsoever. And, as I say, it was
 16 such a popular game, I don't know.
 17 Q. Mr Cope, later on in your statement, from paragraph 61,
 18 you say that staff were not allowed to speak to anyone
 19 else beyond their immediate superior. We don't need to
 20 go to the documents themselves, but the inquiry has seen
 21 a very lengthy policy and procedure guide from 1978
 22 which specifically says that if a staff member thinks
 23 that a report will be ignored by the officer in charge
 24 or the report is about the officer in charge, that it's
 25 their duty to communicate the full details of that

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1 statement, the only thing I could think of was that,
 2 because his flat was where it was, the entrance to his
 3 flat was actually on the landing where the boys'
 4 bedrooms were, so he'd got easy access to the bedrooms
 5 from his flat, and that was -- I don't know. That was
 6 a possibility.
 7 Q. Were you aware of him taking child residents up to his
 8 flat?
 9 A. No, not at all. No.
 10 MR LIVINGSTON: Chair, I have got about another five minutes
 11 to go. Is it okay to carry on for now?
 12 THE CHAIR: Yes.
 13 MR LIVINGSTON: Thank you.
 14 Mr Cope, one brief thing: you talk in your statement
 15 about F2, and you mention that he would play a game with
 16 children, which was a little bit like hide and seek, and
 17 you say that the children loved the game. Now, the
 18 inquiry has heard evidence from former residents who say
 19 that they were beaten up during this game. How did you
 20 come to the view that they loved it?
 21 A. Because when I offered it as a -- if you bear in mind,
 22 you've got 21 children in a unit, it's a freezing cold
 23 evening, there is nowhere to go, nothing to do, so we
 24 had to occupy the children in the unit. The activities,
 25 I would say, "What do anybody want to do tonight?", and

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1 concern to the divisional director.
 2 Do you remember, did you ever see this policy and
 3 procedure guide? It was about 160 pages?
 4 A. Yeah, it was referred to by a few members of staff as
 5 "War and Peace", because it was so thick, but, yeah,
 6 I saw it, and we were told at staff meetings, "Try to
 7 familiarise yourself with the content of this whenever
 8 you get a chance". Well, I will be perfectly honest
 9 with you. There was never a chance. Beechwood, when
 10 you started work to when you finished, you never got
 11 a chance to sit and read through a policy document of
 12 that size. I have seen, you know, the document that's
 13 shown where members of staff are supposed to sign to say
 14 they have seen that. I don't remember seeing that bit
 15 and I don't remember signing it either. I'm not saying
 16 I didn't, I just don't remember it at all.
 17 Q. So why did you think that you couldn't report to anyone
 18 beyond your immediate superior?
 19 A. Because we had -- I think we had -- I'm not allowed to
 20 say a name, I know, but we had an adviser that used to
 21 come into Beechwood, and she would never, ever come into
 22 the unit, she would always go into the administration
 23 block to see either the principal or the deputy or the
 24 assistant. She would never, ever come into the unit.
 25 So it felt to us like she was off bounds. You know, if

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<p>1 you had anything to say, you would say it to Saul or 2 Rigby or whoever, but you were not encouraged -- in 3 fact, not encouraged, you would be told off if you were 4 to try to make contact with the homes adviser. 5 Q. Do you think that inability to report higher up the 6 chain might have allowed abuse to occur at Beechwood? 7 A. Yes, definitely. Yes. 8 Q. Coming on to a couple of final points, you talk from 9 paragraphs 65 to 68 about sexual behaviour between 10 residents, and you say you weren't aware of any sexual 11 abuse between the residents themselves, although you did 12 suspect sexual behaviour, and you refer to one 13 relationship you were aware of between residents, but 14 say that it was not necessarily something you could 15 report as there was no evidence of it whilst they were 16 on the premises. 17 Mr Cope, one question that comes from one of 18 the core participants to the inquiry, D47, is whether 19 you were aware of underage pregnancies at Beechwood and 20 whether that was not sufficient evidence? 21 A. I wasn't aware -- I think we did have a girl that was 22 pregnant, yeah. I remember -- I honestly can't give you 23 any detail, but I do remember we did have a girl that 24 was pregnant and underage, but I cannot give you the 25 detail of that.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 141</p>	<p>1 Q. Can you recall whether that would have prompted concerns 2 that she must have been the victim of abuse, or might 3 have been the victim of abuse? 4 A. I would have thought -- it should have done, yes. Yes. 5 But I don't know -- yeah. Is there any correlation 6 between the bit that you have talked about, where there 7 was a relationship between the two residents? 8 Q. Well, I suppose what you say is that you couldn't report 9 because there was no evidence of anything actually 10 happening, and I suppose the suggestion is that if 11 somebody was pregnant, then that might be evidence that 12 they were engaging in underage sex? 13 A. I did actually report it to the child -- the boy's 14 social worker and I also reported it to, I think it 15 was -- I can't remember whether it was the girl's 16 mother, but I did report it to the social worker and the 17 mother. But the boy's mother was just quite open about 18 it. She wasn't concerned by it. 19 Q. Mr Cope, one final question: at paragraph 73 of your 20 statement, you talk about the sexual exploitation of 21 residents outside of Beechwood. You refer to one child 22 as a known sex worker. Did staff do anything to protect 23 this child from being sexually exploited outside of 24 Beechwood? 25 A. No, because he came to us -- initially, we didn't know</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 142</p>
<p>1 why -- well, again, you know, basic residential social 2 workers were aware of why he had been admitted. It was 3 only after a while that we realised that he had been the 4 victim of exploitation. We were not -- there was 5 nothing else -- we just had to sort of work with him as 6 any of the other residents. But it was only when he 7 absconded and he'd been gone for quite some time that we 8 realised -- that obviously the suspicions were that, you 9 know, this had happened again. But when he came back, 10 we didn't do anything different. You know, I'm the one 11 who fetched him back from London. We didn't do anything 12 different to sort of protect him. 13 Q. Do you think that that, at least in retrospect, was 14 a failure? 15 A. Oh, definitely, yes. Yeah. Yes. 16 MR LIVINGSTON: Thank you, Mr Cope. I have no further 17 questions, you will be happy to know. The panel may 18 have one or two questions for you. 19 THE CHAIR: No, we have no questions. Thank you very much, 20 Mr Cope. 21 MR LIVINGSTON: Thank you, Mr Cope. The videolink will be 22 cut shortly. Thank you. 23 A. Thank you. 24 (The witness withdrew) 25 MR LIVINGSTON: I suggest we now break until 3.25 pm, if</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 143</p>	<p>1 that is okay. 2 THE CHAIR: Thank you. 3 (3.09 pm) 4 (A short break) 5 (3.25 pm) 6 MR SADD: Chair, we now go to the evidence of 7 Helen Blackman. Her statement is at INQ001981. 8 MS HELEN CLAIRE BLACKMAN (sworn) 9 Examination by MR SADD 10 MR SADD: Ms Blackman, how do you like to be referred to -- 11 Miss, Ms or Mrs? 12 A. Ms. 13 Q. Can we go, please, to the last page of your statement, 14 it's page 27. We see a date there, 3 August 2018. 15 A signature has been overwritten. Do you remember 16 signing your statement? 17 A. I do. 18 Q. At the time that you signed it, were you satisfied that 19 the contents were true, as far as you could remember? 20 A. Yes. 21 Q. You have had an opportunity to re-read it since then? 22 A. I have. 23 Q. Your statement will be published over the next few days 24 on the investigation website. I think there are one or 25 two corrections that you would want to make. If we go</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 144</p>

<p>1 to paragraph 5.24, the penultimate line there, it's 2 something actually that I picked up and I didn't warn 3 you about: 4 "From the records that I reviewed, I know that 5 I ensured ..." 6 That should, I think, be NO-A342 as opposed to F162. 7 A. Correct. 8 Q. If we go to paragraph 5.30, please, six lines down, you 9 say: 10 "I did visit A432." 11 That's an obvious typo. It should be -- 12 A. Correct. 13 Q. -- A342. Then at paragraph 5.34, you say in the first 14 line: 15 "I have been asked by the county ..." 16 I think what you mean to say there is "by the 17 inquiry"; is that right? 18 A. Correct. 19 Q. The panel have a copy of your statement, so they know of 20 its entirety, but I'm not going to go through every 21 line. I'm not going to go through all the narrative. 22 I am going to identify specific issues. And I will be 23 asking you to comment on documents which we will be 24 bringing up on screen. 25 You detail, from paragraphs 2.1 to 2.11, your roles,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 145</p>	<p>1 and I am going to simply summarise that. You qualified 2 as a social worker, you have worked in Children's 3 Services for 29 years, you have worked for both county 4 and city councils, you started as a social worker for 5 Children in Need, then in care, becoming a team manager, 6 then area service manager, then head of service and now 7 you're director of children's integrated services. Is 8 that right? 9 A. Correct. I was a service manager and I was also 10 a social worker for children in child protection as 11 well. 12 Q. Forgive me. 13 A. It's okay. 14 Q. Thank you for that correction. How long have you been 15 director of children's integrated services? 16 A. I was director of children's safeguarding 17 from January 2013 and then we integrated Early Help and 18 Specialist Services, Child Protection Services, as two 19 directorates in 2015. 20 Q. I think it is right that, since January 2013 as well, 21 you have been responsible for fostering and adoption 22 services? 23 A. Correct. 24 Q. Paragraph 2.8, please. You talk there about the 25 notifiable incident process which was introduced</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 146</p>
<p>1 in June 2011. You speak there of the process requiring 2 that significant concerns with regard to children are 3 reported to you. What is the threshold, please, for 4 significant concerns? 5 A. It would be if there was a very serious incident where 6 a child was gravely injured or hurt; in the event of 7 a child dying. That might not be a child in care, but 8 a child in community. 9 Q. Does it include the sexual abuse of the child? 10 A. Not all cases of children being sexually abused, because 11 about 8 per cent of the children that we act to protect 12 are sexually abused across -- in a given year. So all 13 of those incidents wouldn't be reported to me directly. 14 But people would inform me if something serious happened 15 to a child in care, absolutely. 16 Q. And something serious happening to a child in care would 17 include the allegations of sexual abuse of a child in 18 care? 19 A. Yes. 20 Q. The phrase "notifiable incident" and "significant 21 concerns", both of those are statutory phrases; is that 22 right? 23 A. Correct, but this isn't part of a statutory process. So 24 our statutory notifications to Ofsted follow the 25 guidance that we have to follow, but this was a process</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 147</p>	<p>1 that was started in 2011 by the then DCS, who is now our 2 chief executive, to ensure that he and the director were 3 always aware when something very grave had occurred, 4 because we have -- we might be working at any one time 5 with some 4,000 children across the city. We serve 6 60,000 children in Nottingham City. So he wanted to 7 have a line of sight to things that might happen to 8 children that would then affect other children in 9 schools, that would affect our communities, and that 10 was -- we did do briefings before 2011, when grave 11 things happened, but that was a process that started 12 then, so that he would be aware. He would be able also 13 to inform ward councillors, because obviously they have 14 concern for their citizens and they are also corporate 15 parents. 16 Q. Ms Blackman, it is one thing having a process in place; 17 it is another thing reacting to that process? 18 A. Absolutely. 19 Q. What steps are taken to evaluate how efficient this 20 notifiable incident process has been? 21 A. The process exists to ensure that people are aware. So, 22 for example, when I'm notified of something happening, 23 our internal notification process will include a risk 24 assessment, an action plan. So it isn't just saying, 25 "Something terrible has happened"; it's saying,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 148</p>

<p>1 "Something terrible has happened to this particular 2 child. These are the risks. This is what we are doing 3 about it". So for my part, I am accountable for those 4 front-line services and for the safety and welfare of 5 children. It allows me to be alert, also to look at the 6 steps that are being taken to protect a particular 7 child. If I am satisfied, that's fine, the work 8 continues. Because it doesn't replace statutory duties 9 and front-line, day-to-day social work.</p> <p>10 Q. They run alongside?</p> <p>11 A. Well, they occur, as they should do, in the normal 12 running of a social work and protection service. But it 13 means that if I might have some questions, I might add 14 further scrutiny, or it might mean that I directly 15 follow up on what's happened to an individual child.</p> <p>16 Q. I was just going to ask you that. Is there 17 a reporting-back process that you are engaged in, so 18 that it's one thing, again, setting out what should be 19 done. Do you follow that up, personally?</p> <p>20 A. Absolutely. We are an open-plan office, so I'm sat with 21 all of my heads of service, service managers, 22 Independent Reviewing Service come in and out, I have my 23 senior officers all sat on one level on a floor, so 24 I can go and ask people, on a day-to-day basis, what's 25 happening.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 149</p>	<p>1 Q. Ms Blackman, this is a process that's been introduced 2 since June 2011. How would concerns prior to June 2011 3 be escalated, the sorts of concerns we are talking about 4 here, the significant concerns, which you say would 5 include the sexual abuse of children in residential 6 foster care?</p> <p>7 A. Well, I was a head of service, acting head of service, 8 from 2008. At that point, we would have completed 9 a briefing for a more senior officer if something 10 happened. When I was a service manager, I would have 11 emailed or discussed in my one-to-one meeting with my 12 head of service or my line managers what was happening 13 to individual children. But the DCS, in 2011, felt that 14 he wanted a much clearer process. I helped to develop 15 that process --</p> <p>16 Q. DCS being Director of Children's Services?</p> <p>17 A. Director of Children's Services, who was Ian Curryer. 18 He is now the chief executive in Nottingham City. But 19 he wanted a much more robust process that does pretty 20 much what you have said. It is not enough to know. 21 What's important is to know and to know what's 22 happening.</p> <p>23 Q. Prior to 2011, would the Director of Safeguarding have 24 had input into operational responses to concerns about 25 allegations of sexual abuse of children in care?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 150</p>
<p>1 A. I obviously wasn't in a senior management position, but 2 I would have expected that to be the case.</p> <p>3 Q. In paragraph 2.11, please, this is where you tell the 4 inquiry about your being appointed to have 5 responsibility for fostering and adoption services. Can 6 you explain how your role within fostering and adoption 7 sits within your directorate? How do the two marry up?</p> <p>8 A. Well, fostering and adoption sits beneath one of my 9 heads of service. Managing a fostering and adoption 10 service, you have a number of statutory 11 responsibilities. They include operating in line with 12 regulation, ensuring that foster carers are 13 appropriately recruited and trained -- they are two 14 separate things, fostering and adoption are very 15 different.</p> <p>16 So in terms of fostering, it is meeting the 17 responsibilities to be able to run a fostering agency. 18 At my level, as director, my role includes something 19 called the agency decision maker. So when any 20 assessments are undertaken and training of people who 21 are prepared to become foster carers, those people are 22 not approved as foster carers until they are presented 23 to a panel. That panel has a certain constituency which 24 is set down in statute, and they have to consider very 25 thoroughly the medical, the assessment, the training,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 151</p>	<p>1 a number of factors. At the end of that panel, they 2 then make a recommendation, and then the agency decision 3 maker, who has to be a senior accountable officer, then 4 has to read all of those papers, those checks, and make 5 a decision about whether to approve those people as 6 foster carers.</p> <p>7 In terms of adoption, there's a similar process, but 8 it includes the matching of children to potential 9 adopters, and then both processes have a process for 10 deregistration of carers.</p> <p>11 Q. Indeed, the panel has already seen the agency decision 12 maker's role in decisions made by the Independent 13 Review Panel, where people challenge decisions of 14 the Foster Panels. So they are alert to that.</p> <p>15 You say at the bottom of page 3 -- this is still 16 2.11. It is four lines up, please: 17 "As indicated elsewhere ..." 18 Do you have that?</p> <p>19 A. Yes.</p> <p>20 Q. "As indicated elsewhere in this statement, my role is to 21 provide scrutiny and challenge where necessary rather 22 than to manage the response to such allegations." 23 What does that role mean?</p> <p>24 A. In terms of providing scrutiny and challenge?</p> <p>25 Q. Scrutiny and challenge. What happens in practice?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 152</p>

<p>1 A. I think being a senior accountable officer makes you 2 responsible and gives you duties to ensure that the 3 system operates safely. What it doesn't do is equip you 4 to make all day-to-day decisions in relation to 5 individual children, because you don't have a full frame 6 of reference, you don't meet people involved in 7 individual cases, and operating your accountability does 8 not mean taking over and making unilateral decisions 9 about children. It means making sure that you have safe 10 professional people who are undertaking those 11 responsibilities, and when, in the case of 12 the notifiable incidents, something occurs which is 13 extraordinary or extremely concerning, then looking at 14 that and asking more questions sometimes.</p> <p>15 Sometimes I will receive information about something 16 happening and I will see that all of the professional 17 people, and not just internal people -- the multi-agency 18 around an individual child are undertaking diligent, 19 professional work that looks completely adequate to me. 20 If I see something unusual or concerning, then I would 21 go and ask people about it. I am always acutely 22 conscious that I am in a position of accountability, but 23 that also makes me quite powerful, and it would be 24 inappropriate for me to influence individual cases 25 without thinking through the consequences, so I will</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 153</p>	<p>1 often send challenge back for people to take to the 2 appropriate meetings.</p> <p>3 Q. As a matter of interest, when was the last time you 4 challenged a decision or an approach taken to a child in 5 care?</p> <p>6 A. That's a sudden question. I get involved in so many 7 individual pieces of work. I don't know whether it's 8 particularly challenged, I have taken a particular 9 interest in -- probably about three or four weeks ago, 10 I have met with a foster carer of a child who is in 11 a very precarious situation in relation to child sexual 12 exploitation. I have talked to the foster carer, in the 13 hope that she would not offer a really short-term 14 placement for this child. She was an emergency 15 placement. I spoke to her about keeping this child, 16 because she's a very, very good foster carer and this 17 child is very vulnerable. She has kept the child. She 18 and the child went to court and have spoken to the judge 19 and agreed the child could stay locally. I followed up 20 in relation to what's happening with her about two weeks 21 ago.</p> <p>22 About six weeks ago, I went to visit a child in care 23 who has had some very difficult life experiences in 24 a number of placements, because she is finding things 25 very difficult and has had to move a number of times, so</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 154</p>
<p>1 we have brought her into an internal unit. I went to 2 meet her. I saw her probably a week later at our 3 celebration event. I have escalated the fact she's not 4 back into school yet. I have chased up --</p> <p>5 Q. So it is something -- you take challenge seriously and 6 you have taken --</p> <p>7 A. Of course. Of course.</p> <p>8 Q. 3.1, please. Here you detail in general terms -- by 9 saying "in general terms", I don't mean to be dismissive 10 in any way, but you are setting out general approach -- 11 the response to allegations of child sexual abuse. You 12 refer a third of the way down the page, "I have always 13 responded proactively". Do you have that?</p> <p>14 A. Is it in 3.1?</p> <p>15 Q. 3.1.</p> <p>16 A. Yes.</p> <p>17 Q. "... and taken my duty to protect children as my utmost 18 priority. Working as a social worker, I visited 19 children in care and took them out of their placement." 20 At the time that you were working in the field, if 21 I can put it in that way, was seeing children on their 22 own a statutory requirement?</p> <p>23 A. I'm not certain, but I would say that I was a social 24 worker within the county, it was an expectation that you 25 would ensure that you had appropriate access to children</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 155</p>	<p>1 and "appropriate access" means seeing a child in 2 circumstances that would allow them to be able to speak 3 freely, which means seeing them without their carers.</p> <p>4 Q. We have heard accounts of foster carers insisting that 5 the child stay with them in the presence of the social 6 worker. Did you ever encounter that attitude?</p> <p>7 A. I have, in my career, had times where people have felt 8 incredibly protective of children. So whilst that might 9 sound, in the context of this inquiry, like a foster 10 carer who was trying to stop a child from speaking, 11 there are thousands of foster carers who have cared for 12 children who feel protective when they have a change of 13 social worker and want to ensure that that child isn't 14 exposed to lots of strangers. I have had that 15 experience. I would arrange to see a child instead at 16 school with a teacher that the child knew, and I would 17 establish a relationship with the child so that a carer 18 felt that it was safe for me to talk to a child on my 19 own. Just because I'm a social worker, people want to 20 protect a child they are caring for from stress, but 21 I would not have allowed a carer to stop me from seeing 22 a child on my own once I had gone through those steps.</p> <p>23 Q. You talk of it being an expectation of the department. 24 Was that expectation set out in any policy?</p> <p>25 A. We had policy books. I believe they were yellow books.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 156</p>

<p>1 They were very clear. Probably about 12 volumes. There 2 would have been -- there were policies on everything. 3 Q. Were there any checks in place to see whether the child 4 had been seen on their own with each visit? How was 5 that followed up? 6 A. When I started my career, it was a paper-based system so 7 we would write, and children's records were very 8 precious and private and they would be kept in locked 9 cabinets. The world is so very different now because we 10 are an electronic system. Records are still precious 11 and kept private, but the system can count now, and 12 I have reports in my role that tell me whether children 13 have been visited. 14 At that point in time, the checks that would have 15 been undertaken would have been audits, and that audits 16 a sampling of work. So an officer not associated with 17 the line management of a case would have gone around and 18 selected a number of files across the system and looked 19 to see whether children were -- they wouldn't have just 20 looked to see whether they were being visited. They 21 would have assessed what was happening with each of 22 those children. 23 Q. Presumably, it would have formed part of the social 24 worker's supervision, going through those files? 25 A. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 157</p>	<p>1 Q. But not necessarily? 2 A. Right. 3 Q. Paragraph 3.6, please. You touch on here, as you do 4 elsewhere, but we will look at it specifically in this 5 paragraph, in relation to child sexual exploitation. 6 Just a series of questions here. At the moment, does 7 the city council have inter-agency policies on child 8 sexual exploitation? 9 A. We do, within our safeguarding procedures. 10 Q. Are these disseminated through residential homes? 11 A. They are. 12 Q. Is there a coordinator in each home responsible for CSE? 13 A. In each children's home? 14 Q. Yes. 15 A. No, because we don't operate a large model of children's 16 homes. We operate small group homes, which means that 17 our children live generally, too, in a much smaller care 18 setting. But what we have across our system is, we have 19 one coordinator, who looks at all of our young people 20 that are at risk of CSE and works across our whole 21 system, the benefit being consistency. 22 Q. Paragraph 4.1. You were invited to comment on any 23 involvement with ongoing police operations, and you say 24 there: 25 "I have not been directly involved with the police</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 158</p>
<p>1 investigations into historical child sexual abuse." 2 You refer there to Daybreak, Xeres and Equinox. You 3 talk also of how your role has been affected by the 4 recent police operations. Is that affected in 5 a positive way? 6 A. The recent police operations, the learning that's 7 emerged and the briefings that we have had have been 8 incredibly sad and moving, and offered us lots of 9 opportunities to reflect on our day-to-day practice. 10 Q. "Reflecting on day-to-day practice" may be a convenient 11 phrase -- I don't mean to be rude about it, but some 12 people listening may think that? 13 A. No, I can give you an example. 14 Q. What happens in practice? You say things have been 15 taken up in practice; is that right? 16 A. Absolutely. There's been -- all the time, we are trying 17 to improve our system. So we improve our system in 18 relation to audits, in relation to learning that's 19 emerging, and some of the areas that are concerning in 20 relation to the historical claims that have come forward 21 are things that have been addressed and changed by 22 statutory processes over periods of time. 23 So there are things that happen now that didn't 24 happen in the '80s and didn't happen in the '90s, but to 25 give you an example --</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 159</p>	<p>1 Q. I am going to be rude. Can I ask -- 2 A. Sorry. 3 Q. No, no, give the example, if you can make it as brief as 4 possible. 5 A. Okay. We have been undertaking an audit in relation to 6 children in care, and this may sound disconnected but 7 it's related to the trauma. So when you think about the 8 trauma of people who have survived some of the tragedies 9 that they have, we are looking not only at how well 10 children are cared for, but whether children are loved 11 and who loves our children. I would say that has become 12 an important element in thinking about -- not just in 13 keeping children safe, but our job is to not only act 14 when children tell us that things have happened to them 15 but to provide the opportunities for children to tell 16 us, but also to have the emotional intelligence in our 17 system that means that we can see that we care for 18 children well, and caring for children well is not about 19 just keeping them in functional placements, it is about 20 making sure that our children have people who love them 21 and that our children are connected to -- some of 22 the things that have emerged for me out of probably 23 the information in running up to here is how children 24 are disconnected sometimes from networks, and that might 25 be networks in school, if they have to move, it might be</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 160</p>

<p>1 networks in their wider family, and trying to be a much 2 more responsive, intelligent system that is emotionally 3 aware and cares about the whole child. I'm sorry, that 4 was long. 5 Q. Can we then go to some of the specific cases you were 6 invited to address. The first one that we are going to 7 look at together is that of Steven Carlisle. You deal 8 with this at paragraphs 5.1 to 5.6 of your statement, 9 pages 12 to 13. The document that we will be looking at 10 together and will be uploaded on the website in its 11 entirety, but we may just go to a few of those pages, is 12 NSC000507. This is a document that follows through the 13 response to the case of Steven Carlisle. Very briefly, 14 this is a case in 1989 when, as you say, you had 15 recently started as a newly qualified social worker. 16 You met with Steven Carlisle, a residential social 17 worker at Woodnook. You were the allocated social 18 worker for NO-A592 and Steven Carlisle was her care 19 worker at the home. You met at Woodnook with A592. She 20 tells you after the meeting that a younger child, A119, 21 had confided in her the night before that 22 Steven Carlisle had been abusing him. You recorded the 23 disclosure and the steps that you took, and, indeed, 24 that record can be found at pages 31 to 33 of 25 the document on screen.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 161</p>	<p>1 You set out in that document, and in your statement, 2 the steps that you took. You took A592 to the area 3 office. The officer in charge of Woodnook, Jean Miller, 4 then arrived with A119. Carlisle was charged and 5 subsequently pleaded guilty to three counts of indecent 6 assault and was sent to prison. 7 At the time of the encounter with Carlisle and A592, 8 which you set out at paragraph 5.2, you say this -- this 9 is a third of the way up from the bottom of that 10 paragraph, where it starts, "I wanted to collect 11 NO-A119". Do you have that? 12 A. Yes. 13 Q. "I wanted to collect NO-A119 too, but felt this would 14 alert Mr Carlisle. That said, my recollection is that 15 another worker travelled to the home, which was five 16 minutes' drive away from our office and removed 17 NO-A119." 18 The thought process that you have there that you 19 tell the inquiry about, that you felt you shouldn't 20 remove A119 because you were worried this would alert 21 Mr Carlisle, didn't that have the effect of placing A119 22 at greater risk? 23 A. No, I don't believe that it did at all. It was unusual 24 to take a child immediately on the making of 25 a disclosure. So the first child I spoke to did not</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 162</p>
<p>1 come to me and make a disclosure. She behaved in a way 2 that, as a social worker, I was disturbed about. 3 I spent time talking to her to try and find out what was 4 wrong. She didn't tell me what was wrong. She told me 5 that she couldn't tell me what was wrong, which 6 obviously meant there was something seriously amiss. 7 I talked to her. I managed to get her to tell me. 8 When she told me -- when we know that something has 9 happened to a child, particularly in sexual abuse, 10 there's a lot of research which has gone into the 11 procedures that we follow, which mean that, generally, 12 we would have a strategy meeting. It is very important, 13 when you interview a child about sexual abuse, that you 14 do that in a considered and careful way, that you do it 15 in a way that is likely to allow that child to tell you. 16 There are restrictions on us about leading children. We 17 have to create conditions that help children to tell so 18 that we can protect and keep them safe and allow us to 19 gather evidence. 20 On that occasion, I took the child with me because 21 I felt there was something wrong with Mr Carlisle. 22 I hadn't met him before. He behaved in a way that made 23 me concerned about him, which is why I worked with that 24 child. I took her because I felt that she would not be 25 able to contain what she had told me and that that would</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 163</p>	<p>1 tip him off and that that would place the children at 2 risk. 3 If I had taken 119 prematurely, as a really young 4 child, bundled him into my car not knowing me and driven 5 him away, I do not believe for one moment that would 6 have allowed him to speak. 7 What I did was, I took my child. I made sure 8 someone went for him immediately who knew him and 9 brought him. It was really unusual to act in such an 10 emergency response to child sexual abuse. It didn't 11 follow procedure. But it was the right thing to do 12 because that individual, that man, had been abusing 13 children for a very long time and it hadn't come out at 14 that point and over the next weeks, few days and weeks, 15 lots of other people came forward, and that little boy 16 was so brave to speak as he did, and my child, to speak 17 up, she was very young as well, and they were both very 18 frightened. 19 Q. Indeed, you provide -- there's an account in 20 handwritten, manuscript, at pages 31 to 33 of NSC000507 21 of just what you have described, of taking the girl into 22 your car, of her being able to disclose, and then the 23 actions that were then taken, and your explanation of 24 that. 25 In the same document, between pages 11 and 24 of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 164</p>

<p>1 507, there is a detailed account of A112's reaction. We 2 learn from that account, and it is provided by the 3 officer in charge, it sets out how the child making the 4 disclosure was assaulted by other children at the home 5 because Steven Carlisle was very popular, how he then 6 retracted his allegations, of how the child asked if he 7 could write to Steven Carlisle to ask if he was all 8 right and how he wanted to remain friends with him. 9 You have already given the account of how you felt 10 uneasy with Steven Carlisle in the presence of A592. 11 You say, and you have mentioned it just a moment 12 ago, Ms Blackman, that no-one criticised you for acting 13 in this way -- that is, as you have just described. Why 14 might they have done so? 15 A. Because, as I explained to you, when you are trying to 16 gather evidence on child sexual abuse, it is extremely 17 complicated to ensure you create circumstances in which 18 children can talk and, when they talk, that you can 19 gather evidence which is going to be successful in 20 bringing adults to prosecution. We know that the 21 criminal justice system is very difficult to navigate in 22 successful outcomes in prosecutions, and your 23 responsibility is always to protect a child, first and 24 foremost, but to protect a child and other children, you 25 have to bring dangerous people to justice, and to do</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 165</p>	<p>1 that, you have to follow some of those processes. 2 Processes themselves are almost irrelevant. They are 3 structures that help us to try to make the right 4 decisions. So you don't follow it because it is the 5 process, you follow it because it is the pathway that 6 will get you the answer that you need. 7 So I did something which was unusual, but I was well 8 supported by my managers. 9 Q. Did anyone suggest afterwards that you had acted 10 irresponsibly? 11 A. No. 12 Q. At 5.4, please, you describe the court process and 13 Carlisle pleading guilty, and you say that -- this is 14 two-thirds of the way down, where you can see, "NO-A119 15 was profoundly distressed ..." 16 Do you have that? 17 A. Yes. 18 Q. "... because we had wanted to [say] what had happened to 19 him [in court]." 20 But you say the prosecution wanted to protect him 21 and get a conviction. You say this in the last sentence 22 of that paragraph: 23 "I felt that if they had been asked [that is the 24 children], the children would have wanted to give 25 evidence regarding the full nature of the abuse that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 166</p>
<p>1 they had experienced, even if no prosecution was 2 achieved." 3 You go on to say in paragraph 5.5: 4 "I learnt a lesson that day, which was that you 5 should not take a child's right to have their say away 6 simply because you are trying to protect them. A119's 7 anguish was disturbing. I believe that he had felt so 8 powerless and the court process did nothing to restore 9 his sense of control or justice." 10 Is there any more explanation that you need to give 11 to that? What do you want the panel to understand by 12 "you shouldn't take a child's right to have their say 13 away simply because you [want] to protect them"? 14 A. Nothing, particularly. It's just that I think I learned 15 that children need to be included in decisions that are 16 made about them. It doesn't mean that you do exactly 17 what a child asks you to do, because we have 18 responsibilities, as adults, to act in their best 19 interests. I think the Crown Prosecution Service did 20 their best to try to secure a conviction, but I sat in 21 that court with probably about -- outside that court for 22 about ten children waiting to give evidence, and that 23 little boy howled when they came out and told him that 24 he couldn't give evidence, and it was an incredibly 25 distressing situation for him. It certainly affects all</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 167</p>	<p>1 the practice that I'm involved with today, is to make 2 sure that we ensure that children have a voice in what's 3 happening to them and to try to always do that. 4 Q. That includes in the criminal court process, does it? 5 A. Absolutely. 6 Q. Can we go on, please, then, to paragraph 5.8, where you 7 deal with NO-F116 and NO-F117. 8 The background to this case -- I should say you deal 9 with this between paragraphs 5.8 and 5.20. F116 and 10 F117 had fostered for 20 years, having been given group 11 home status. The panel is already aware of that. In 12 1993, NO-A126 and NO-A112 made allegations of sexual 13 abuse against F116 and F117. You were the allocated 14 social worker to both children and to one other child. 15 The investigation, we read, raised several issues. 16 There are notes available from the four strategy 17 meetings from April to October 1993, which you attended. 18 This is to be found at tab 2, and the document is 19 NSC000432. Again, the document will be uploaded on the 20 website in its entirety, but we are just going to look 21 at one or two pages. 22 Can we go to page 6 of the account of the police 23 investigation. There we read at the top of the page: 24 "Difficulties in interviewing children. Some of 25 the children refusing to be interviewed."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 168</p>

<p>1 Then we read: 2 "Some social workers being resistant to children 3 being interviewed." 4 It then turns out that the police were able to 5 interview three. The CPS then advised that the case 6 couldn't be taken forward. What would have been the 7 basis for social workers refusing children to whom they 8 had been allocated being interviewed by the police? 9 A. I believe this section is talking about earlier 10 investigations, so before I became a social worker, 11 a considerable number of years before I knew the 12 children. So the police were reporting that they had 13 undertaken an investigation about physical injuries. 14 I would only be guessing. It seems unusual to me. I'm 15 surprised by it. But I can't comment on it because 16 I didn't know anyone involved in that. 17 Q. Then further down that same page, we see: 18 "Issues raised: 19 "Why [a particular child] had waited until recently 20 to talk about sexual abuse ..." 21 In that first main paragraph: 22 "One of the children had not told about being 23 sexually abused by the foster parents as she believed 24 that [name redacted] would have told her to 'put the 25 matter behind her'."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 169</p>	<p>1 Was the reported attitude of the foster carers to 2 that disclosure one that you were familiar with? 3 A. I don't know who -- I'm sorry, I don't know who she 4 would have said would have told her to put it behind 5 her. I mean, she was still a very young child at this 6 point. 7 Q. It's more recent foster carer -- 8 A. Is it the last foster carer she had before she went into 9 the residential home. 10 Q. It says: 11 "Carol Bailey noted that A126 had told her that she 12 had not told [name redacted] ..." 13 And then we have in brackets: 14 "... (the more recent foster carer) about being 15 sexually abused as she believed that ..." 16 A. Oh, that's right. I have caught up. I remember. So 17 they left the foster carers, 116 and 117, after going 18 for respite and some information coming out that 19 suggested lots of the children had been physically 20 abused. They went to a new foster carer. I didn't work 21 with the children for very long when they had that 22 foster carer. I took them from that foster home to the 23 residential unit. I took them because -- I became their 24 social worker, they were still very young, but to make 25 an assessment about whether they could be placed for</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 170</p>
<p>1 adoption. They were very young children but they were 2 quite old to be placed for adoption with the history 3 they had. So they were about 10 and 11 at that point. 4 The foster carer they had, that foster carer was 5 struggling to cope with their behaviours. They had some 6 sexualised behaviour -- 7 Q. I'm going to interrupt you, if I may. 8 A. So she might well have been -- they may have thought 9 that the foster carer would be unsympathetic. 10 Q. All right. Thank you. We are going to go on to page 11 11 of that document. This is where there was a unanimous 12 view -- this is two-thirds of the way down -- of all 13 present that the foster carers should be prosecuted. 14 This was in the light of the CPS having decided not to 15 take the case forward. The decision was that the view 16 of those at the meeting should be passed on to the CPS 17 for them to reconsider, and you discuss this at 18 paragraph 5.16 of your statement. 19 Had the CPS been approached in this way before in 20 cases that you'd been involved in, where they'd made 21 a decision that they couldn't prosecute or weren't going 22 to prosecute, and here you have a strategy meeting in 23 which the police are involved and in which 24 Social Services are involved, saying, "Would you look at 25 this again and reconsider your decision?"?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 171</p>	<p>1 A. This was the first situation that I had been in like 2 that. I thought it was the right decision. It was the 3 decision that we all felt at the meeting, and it was 4 taken forward with the CPS to ask them to reconsider 5 formally. I have known that we have contacted the CPS 6 before. I wouldn't say that it happens very regularly. 7 Q. Can we then go, please, to allegations in relation to 8 F162. This is at page 16 of your statement, paragraph 9 5.21. The relevant documents are at tabs 5 and 7 of 10 your bundle and they are to be found at NSC000473 and 11 NSC000438. 12 You were the social worker to NO-A342 -- 13 A. Yes. 14 Q. -- in 1993, when, aged 15, she disclosed that NO-F162, 15 a male residential social worker, was making sexually 16 suggestive remarks to her about sex and attempted 17 inappropriate physical contact with her. 18 F162 was suspended but resigned before a full 19 disciplinary hearing could take place. You say that his 20 grooming came in the wake of A342's precare history of 21 being sexually abused by an adult over many years. You 22 give the inquiry an account of the work and support that 23 you tried to give A342. 24 At 5.23 of your statement, you say that she was 25 vulnerable, young and bright and "a deeply hurt child</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 172</p>

<p>1 whose experiences made her try to control aspects of her 2 life". At 5.23, you describe how you protested against 3 A342 being moved from a children's home when she'd 4 established good relationships with staff but where 5 other children were afraid of her and she was moved 6 nonetheless. 7 Was there any difference, or is there any 8 difference, I should say, then and now, as to how the 9 approach would be taken to a child with such 10 vulnerabilities? Here you describe her having to be 11 moved essentially because she was thought to be a bully 12 of other children, but you say that that undid all the 13 good work that had been established with the adults in 14 the home. How would that now be addressed? 15 A. I think it's still incredibly difficult. When you have 16 two children whose needs clash and one child who may be 17 bullying another child, you have the responsibility for 18 the child who is being victimised and we try always not 19 to move a child who has been victimised by another 20 child. But a child who has harmed another child in many 21 circumstances is responding to trauma and really complex 22 life experiences themselves. You have duties towards 23 both of those children. 24 The way in which we would manage that is, we would 25 always try to protect and care for both of those</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 173</p>	<p>1 children well and safely. That might mean that if, for 2 instance, one child sexually abused another child, that 3 might mean one child has to move, but it means that we 4 would invest financial resources in additional staffing, 5 we would put in more night-awake staff and we would try 6 to work directly with those children to reduce those 7 risks, but some of those risks are really difficult to 8 manage and our responsibility is to keep children safe. 9 Q. Given the time allowed, I am going to move now to a case 10 that the inquiry heard a lot of evidence about this 11 morning. This is F77. It is just one particular issue. 12 F77, you attended a series of strategy meetings in 2000. 13 This related to an allegation made by a child where 14 there was a division of opinion there. You say at one 15 point -- this is paragraph 5.33: 16 "The fact that A200 did not always tell the truth 17 was not a reason to disbelieve him." 18 You explain why that is the case: 19 "Others felt that, because he had lied in the past, 20 he was not to be trusted about this allegation." 21 Was the reaction, from your experience, a common one 22 amongst professionals, the one that you experienced in 23 2000? 24 A. That's a really difficult question. I think there were 25 lots of professionals that would have taken the same</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 174</p>
<p>1 position that I did, because what we know and what we 2 would learn in our social work training is that the most 3 vulnerable children are the children that have had some 4 of the most overwhelming experiences and may not have 5 always been accurate or truthful in some of the things 6 that they have said. Sometimes children are very 7 confused and traumatised and they are the children that 8 really dangerous people will target. So you cannot 9 assume, because a child has not told the truth about 10 something previously, that they are not telling the 11 truth about something that they are talking to you about 12 on a given day. 13 I was in a meeting where a number of adults knew 14 those carers and felt that they had no other allegations 15 and were people that they trusted. I didn't agree. 16 I didn't know the little boy particularly well at that 17 point in time, but I read his file, and he'd been there 18 a long time. It didn't seem to me logical that he was 19 lying erroneously. It just didn't. 20 Q. The question I am asked to put to you by one of 21 the representatives of the core participants -- this is 22 in relation to 5.36, please, and it is towards the end 23 of that paragraph, where you're recounting allegations 24 made of assault by F76 as opposed to F77. You say 25 there:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 175</p>	<p>1 "A planned rather than reactive response seemed 2 appropriate, given the assessment of the local team 3 manager." 4 In what circumstances would the decision be taken to 5 make a reactive move of a child who has made allegations 6 of abuse in foster care as opposed to a planned one? 7 A. If a child had an incident where -- this incident, 8 looking at the incident, appeared to be that he'd said 9 that the foster carer had grabbed him, that they'd had 10 a conflict, and he had no marks, the foster carer was 11 saying that she was struggling to care for him. That 12 did not appear to pose an immediate risk to him. It 13 appeared that that foster home was breaking down. But 14 moving him just to the first foster home that could be 15 found, or not a good match for him, would have more 16 implications because it might mean that he would have 17 had to move again to a better-matched foster carer. So 18 you have to balance the likelihood of immediate risk to 19 a child against making sure that you -- when a child 20 moves from one foster home to another, it is not a small 21 event. That is an event which has a major impact on 22 children in care. They lose their friends, they lose 23 their bed, they lose where they live, they lose 24 everything, and they are disconnected from everything. 25 Those steps themselves are big. They look small, but</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 176</p>

<p>1 they are really enormous things to do to a child. You 2 have to try and find the right home for a child. 3 We would not leave a child somewhere with an adult 4 that was likely to hit or harm them because we couldn't 5 find a good match. We would have moved the child. But 6 in that situation, I could see why somebody would have 7 said, waiting a day or two to try to find a home -- that 8 little boy went into a residential environment from 9 a foster home ultimately, and that was not a good move. 10 MR SADD: Ms Blackman, I am just going to pause there 11 a moment. Chair, I am conscious now that we are at 12 4.14 pm. There are two further core participant 13 questions, and then Ms Gallagher is going to be 14 asking -- are you happy if I carry on? 15 THE CHAIR: Yes. 16 MR SADD: Thank you. The next question I am going to ask 17 you is in relation to the consequences for 18 Social Services staff who fail to report abuse. What 19 would happen, for example, if a staff member or manager 20 had failed to report abuse in a timely manner? What 21 would happen today to that individual and the department 22 then found that out? 23 A. Social workers are registered professionals. There is 24 a code of conduct and expectations, professional 25 expectations as well as organisational ones. We expect</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 177</p>	<p>1 people to act to protect children. 2 If somebody had failed to report something that left 3 a child at risk, then there would be an investigation, 4 and, ultimately, that could lead to a disciplinary 5 process, it could lead to someone being sacked. 6 When I say it could, there would be an analysis of 7 the circumstances, and an evaluation of what happened 8 and of the evidence, of course. If somebody was then 9 removed from their position, we also take steps with the 10 HCPC, who register social workers, to ensure that 11 someone can't leave one local authority and then bounce 12 on to another local authority. So we hold people to 13 account. 14 Q. Without going into the detail of any particular case, 15 have you had to do that recently? 16 A. I have -- we have written, Nottingham City, to complain 17 when the HCPC didn't take action against a member of 18 staff we sacked. They subsequently reviewed that 19 decision and struck that person off the register, 20 because we have a duty not just to Nottingham City's 21 children, but to children across the country. 22 Q. Finally in relation to the questions I am asked to put 23 to you, this is -- you deal at paragraphs 3.21 and then 24 at 6.1 and 6.3 -- this is -- you have been asked to look 25 at the Assessment of Sexual Harm Panel. There you talk</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 178</p>
<p>1 about ASHA, as I am going to call it, and you also 2 discuss the MASE. 3 A. Which we call "the MASE". 4 Q. Multi-agency -- 5 A. Sexual exploitation. 6 Q. And you chair MASE? 7 A. I do. 8 Q. I am asked to ask you, do you think it would allow for 9 greater coordination if you had a role in ASHA as well 10 as in MASE? 11 A. No. But having an oversight of what happens at 12 ASHA Panel and -- so I recently have met with ASHA Panel 13 members and I've reviewed some of the case notes of 14 the young people that they have considered, and that 15 allows me some oversight. 16 What I have is my child sexual exploitation 17 coordinator takes a role of also looking at return 18 interviews for missing children and she chairs the 19 ASHA Panel and she's a qualified social worker with no 20 line management responsibility for individual children's 21 cases. That allows some very good coordination between 22 each of those panels. 23 Chairing MASE means that I review all of 24 the children who are suffering or at risk of child 25 sexual exploitation each month and then I chair a panel</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 179</p>	<p>1 that reviews in a multi-agency setting for three hours 2 once a month as well. So they are big commitments. The 3 time commitment -- the reason that I take that 4 operational role is because it gives me a really good 5 line of sight in terms of how our policies are acted 6 upon to safeguard children, how services work together 7 and the welfare and protection of individual children. 8 MR SADD: I'm sorry for the canter through my questions, but 9 thank you for your patience. You will now be asked some 10 more questions. Thank you. 11 Examination by MS GALLAGHER 12 MS GALLAGHER: Thank you, Ms Blackman. Mr Sadd has just 13 referred to a "canter". I have got permission to ask 14 you questions on three topics in six minutes, so it will 15 be rather quick. 16 A. Okay. 17 Q. So if I interrupt you and move you on, it is just 18 because of the time limit. I am asking these questions 19 on behalf of 46 victims and survivors of abuse, just 20 three short topics. 21 The first matter I want to ask you about is your 22 previous roles and one role in particular. At page 30 23 of your statement, you set out in exhibit 1 the various 24 roles that you did previously, and one of those was head 25 of service neighbourhood fieldwork?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 180</p>

<p>1 A. Correct. 2 Q. From May 2008 to January 2013? 3 A. Correct. 4 Q. It says there: 5 "I was responsible for the full range of statutory 6 social work. I had three children's services managers 7 reporting to me." 8 Is that right? 9 A. Correct. 10 Q. Later in your statement, at paragraph 3.7, you describe 11 that as effectively the head of service for children's 12 social care. 13 A. Yes. 14 Q. Is that, in current currency, what you call it? 15 A. Yes. 16 Q. Did that role include responsibility for children in the 17 care of Nottingham City Council who were placed outside 18 the city limits? 19 A. For a percentage of that time, yes. We established 20 a dedicated children in care service during that period 21 and a different head of service was responsible. 22 Q. So was that later in the period? 23 A. That was later, towards the end of the period. 24 Q. Do you know roughly when? 25 A. It would have been around 2010.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 181</p>	<p>1 Q. Thank you. The reason I ask is because, at the time 2 that you have referred to being responsible for children 3 in the care of Nottingham City Council who were outside 4 the city limits, so who weren't children across the 5 city, to use the phrase you used with Mr Sadd earlier, 6 at that time, D6 was in your care, who gave evidence on 7 Day 5. Have you had the opportunity to hear or see his 8 evidence? 9 A. I listened to an audio transcript at the time, and 10 I have read the transcript. 11 Q. So he was a child in the care of your authority, placed 12 many hundreds of miles away in the Isle of Wight at the 13 time. You will be aware from reading it that he gave 14 evidence to the inquiry on Day 5 saying that he rarely 15 saw a social worker from Nottingham City Council? 16 A. Yes. 17 Q. And that he said social workers kept changing all the 18 time? 19 A. Yes. 20 Q. He also said: 21 "Regarding our social workers, it became sporadic. 22 The Isle of Wight is not an easy place to get to. The 23 council found it difficult to spare someone, spare the 24 resources and the social worker to attend meetings on 25 the Isle of Wight and it was often cancelled due to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 182</p>
<p>1 staff shortages." 2 You have read that? 3 A. I've read that, yes. 4 Q. Was that, Ms Blackman, appropriate support for 5 a looked-after child in the care of Nottingham City 6 Council under your watch at that time? 7 A. No, it was not. 8 Q. If his social workers kept chopping and changing and he 9 rarely saw a social worker at that time, were you 10 surprised to hear that he said, "I never felt as though 11 there was a social worker who I could speak to about 12 what happened to me"? 13 A. I'm not at all surprised and I am desperately sorry for 14 him. 15 Q. Thank you. One other issue about that period in the 16 Isle of Wight. Paragraph 3.17 of your statement refers 17 to section 47 investigations being conducted where 18 appropriate. In paragraph 3.16, you describe what must 19 happen where staff receive information that a child, to 20 use your phrase, may have been sexually abused. Do you 21 accept, as a matter of principle, that when it becomes 22 known that a foster carer has abused or may have abused 23 some children in his or her care, there is an obvious 24 question arising about whether other children in that 25 foster carer's care may also have been abused?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 183</p>	<p>1 A. Yes. 2 Q. So bearing that in mind, what is your current view, on 3 reflection, about the evidence D6 gave that, although he 4 was removed from his foster home in 2009 following 5 historic allegations made by others against the foster 6 father, there was no section 47 investigation because he 7 was deemed not to be an immediate risk and there was no 8 other wider investigation? What's your view on that? 9 A. My understanding of that period, and I haven't directly 10 line managed his case, so I've -- we are currently 11 reviewing, in light of his statement, his experience. 12 My DCS, my Director of Children's Services, has asked us 13 to undertake a thorough review. 14 Q. It may be something we have to revisit next week, if 15 that's the position. 16 A. Yes. But my understanding is, in that period, he was 17 allocated an independent social worker, a more local 18 social worker. So when I took over in 2008, it was 19 around May -- it was May/June 2008 -- 20 Q. Yes. 21 A. -- we had a significant staffing crisis. I brought in 22 additional agency staff. We brought in an agency team. 23 And we commissioned some local social work service for 24 him to ensure he did have appropriate visits. 25 Q. Yes, he gave evidence about that social worker last</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 184</p>

<p>1 week.</p> <p>2 A. That social worker undertook some challenge to the case</p> <p>3 and to work with him. My understanding is that they had</p> <p>4 strategy discussions and meetings in relation to the</p> <p>5 protection concerns following the allegations --</p> <p>6 Q. But Ms Blackman --</p> <p>7 A. -- of the adopted children of that foster carer.</p> <p>8 Q. -- we have seen the records that have been provided, and</p> <p>9 it sounds from the description that you have given as if</p> <p>10 there is a mismatch between what we have seen and your</p> <p>11 description.</p> <p>12 A. Okay.</p> <p>13 Q. So it may be that for now we can't explore it further,</p> <p>14 particularly given the time.</p> <p>15 Could I ask you this: as a matter of principle,</p> <p>16 leaving aside D6's situation, do you accept that steps</p> <p>17 should be taken to ascertain whether a child like D6 may</p> <p>18 have been abused prior to being removed from a home</p> <p>19 where Social Services are made aware of allegations from</p> <p>20 other children or indeed adults?</p> <p>21 A. Absolutely.</p> <p>22 Q. Thank you. So the second topic, which I can take quite</p> <p>23 quickly, concerns your current role. So I have asked to</p> <p>24 put on screen NCC000277, please, which is an organogram.</p> <p>25 So that's you over on the left, "Helen Blackman"?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 185</p>	<p>1 A. Correct.</p> <p>2 Q. Could we make that a little larger? It looks as if you</p> <p>3 have six columns below you. So are they six people who</p> <p>4 report up to you?</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 Q. Second from the left, we see Steve Comb?</p> <p>7 A. Yes.</p> <p>8 Q. Who reports to you? Could I just ask, if you look down</p> <p>9 that column, can you see underneath "Steve Comb" it says</p> <p>10 "1+ leaving care team"?</p> <p>11 A. Yes.</p> <p>12 Q. Can you see a little further down "9.5 personal</p> <p>13 advisers". Do you see that?</p> <p>14 A. Correct.</p> <p>15 Q. Are they personal advisers within the leaving care</p> <p>16 scheme?</p> <p>17 A. They are.</p> <p>18 Q. Are they personal advisers who report to Steve Comb?</p> <p>19 A. They are.</p> <p>20 Q. Who then reports to you?</p> <p>21 A. Correct.</p> <p>22 Q. And ultimately to Alison Michalska?</p> <p>23 A. Correct.</p> <p>24 Q. Could you assist us with this: personal advisers and</p> <p>25 pathway plans were introduced, weren't they, in 2000, by</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 186</p>
<p>1 amendment to the Children Act 1989 to improve the life</p> <p>2 chances of care leavers?</p> <p>3 A. Yes.</p> <p>4 Q. Isn't the idea, Ms Blackman, that a personal adviser is</p> <p>5 supposed to be a go-between between the young person and</p> <p>6 the local authority? They are supposed to be an</p> <p>7 independent advocate for the young person. Do you</p> <p>8 accept that?</p> <p>9 A. No.</p> <p>10 Q. You don't accept that?</p> <p>11 A. They are not supposed to be independent. The local</p> <p>12 authority have a duty to provide a personal adviser. So</p> <p>13 we employ a team of personal advisers to satisfy that</p> <p>14 duty that we have, and they then work to ensure that</p> <p>15 that care leaver has appropriate services and that their</p> <p>16 pathway plan continues into adulthood to offer them</p> <p>17 support.</p> <p>18 Q. Ms Blackman, I think we have a very large difference of</p> <p>19 opinion on this.</p> <p>20 A. Okay.</p> <p>21 Q. Are you aware of the criticisms from the courts over the</p> <p>22 past decade and a half, starting with the Caerphilly</p> <p>23 case in 2005, of local authorities who view personal</p> <p>24 advisers in the way you have just described --</p> <p>25 A. No, I'm not.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 187</p>	<p>1 Q. -- rather than independent?</p> <p>2 A. No, I'm not.</p> <p>3 Q. Are you aware, indeed, of criticisms of your very</p> <p>4 council in the case of G for not complying with its</p> <p>5 leaving care duties and ensuring independence of</p> <p>6 personal advisers and adequate pathway plans in 2008?</p> <p>7 A. I'm aware of the criticisms in relation to G in the</p> <p>8 responses to her as a parent and in the care</p> <p>9 proceedings.</p> <p>10 Q. But your view is, independence isn't a critical feature</p> <p>11 of the personal adviser?</p> <p>12 A. That's not my understanding. My understanding is it is</p> <p>13 a statutory responsibility for us to provide them.</p> <p>14 Q. So you don't accept that a personal adviser is unable to</p> <p>15 do their job effectively if not independent of</p> <p>16 Social Services?</p> <p>17 A. Well, we have independent reviewing officers that are</p> <p>18 a statutory function --</p> <p>19 Q. Well, independent reviewing officers are quite</p> <p>20 different.</p> <p>21 A. -- but they still work for local authorities. So</p> <p>22 I think people can work for local authorities and still</p> <p>23 provide a different level of support and challenge and</p> <p>24 scrutiny.</p> <p>25 Q. Ms Blackman, what I put to you is that those</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 188</p>

1 9.5 personal advisers that we have seen in the chart
 2 cannot perform the role as described in the cases since
 3 2005 because they don't have independence because they
 4 are line managed by Mr Combe and then by you?
 5 **A. Correct.**
 6 Q. Their salary comes from you?
 7 **A. It does.**
 8 Q. Their pensions come from you?
 9 **A. It does.**
 10 Q. That inevitably means they can't perform that role. You
 11 are aware of the criticisms D6 made of his personal
 12 adviser for precisely this reason?
 13 **A. I'm aware that D6 believes his personal adviser should**
 14 **be independent.**
 15 Q. I'm grateful. Finally, given the time, I will take this
 16 very quickly, just a couple of questions. The last
 17 issue just concerns a matter you have raised in
 18 paragraph 3.4 of your statement where you refer to
 19 recent initiatives such as the independent advocacy role
 20 and independent reviewing officers, IROs, as protective
 21 factors, safeguards for children in care?
 22 **A. Yes.**
 23 Q. I am not going to ask you anything about IROs, we will
 24 explore that with a different witness, but could I ask
 25 you, in relation to independent advocates, it is right,

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1 any questions of Ms Blackman?
 2 THE CHAIR: No, we have no questions. Thank you very much.
 3 **A. I'm sorry, I appreciate that it has been long, but**
 4 **I just would like to say that I am so desperately sorry**
 5 **for everyone that I have heard give evidence and that**
 6 **I appreciate that this affects everyone's whole life.**
 7 **Thank you.**
 8 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, Ms Blackman.
 9 MR SADD: Chair, that concludes today's evidence.
 10 THE CHAIR: Indeed. We will reconvene tomorrow at 10.00 am.
 11 Thank you.
 12 (4.30 pm)
 13 (The hearing was adjourned to
 14 Thursday, 18 October 2018 at 10.00 am)
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1 isn't it, Ms Blackman, that children are only entitled
 2 to independent advocates in very particular
 3 circumstances?
 4 **A. That's not correct, no.**
 5 Q. Do you want to tell me the circumstances in which you
 6 think they are entitled to them?
 7 **A. If a young person needs an independent advocate or wants**
 8 **one, then our Independent Advocacy Service, who are the**
 9 **Children's Society, are willing to look at that and to**
 10 **meet with that child.**
 11 Q. So statutorily, the position is, under the Children Act
 12 1989, that children in care are only entitled to
 13 independent advocates in very restricted circumstances?
 14 **A. We don't provide statutory minimums.**
 15 Q. You do it more broadly than that?
 16 **A. Of course.**
 17 Q. Given the time, I think what we will need to do is
 18 explore that with Ms Michalska, because I am told it's
 19 time. But that is a matter we will have to take up with
 20 Ms Michalska, because I think, again, we have a mismatch
 21 between your description and the experience of my
 22 clients.
 23 **A. Of course.**
 24 MS GALLAGHER: Thank you.
 25 MR SADD: Chair, I wonder if you or your panel members have

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