

MoJ  
JONATHAN FRENCH  
Statement No: 2  
Dated: 19 July 2018

INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE (IICSA)  
CHILDREN IN CUSTODIAL INSTITUTIONS INVESTIGATION

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WITNESS STATEMENT OF  
JONATHAN FRENCH

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I, JONATHAN FRENCH, Governor of Medway STC, 41 Sir Evelyn Road,  
Rochester ME 1 3ND will STATE as follows:

1. I am duly authorised to make this statement on behalf of the Ministry of Justice to assist the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (the Inquiry).
2. I make this statement further to my statement dated 13 July 2018.
3. The contents of this statement are true to the best of my information and belief.
4. I make this statement in response to the evidence given by Sharron Rollinson to the Inquiry on 18 July 2018. Sharron was the Assistant LADO at Medway STC from March 2016 to April 2017. I worked with Sharron after I arrived as Governor of Medway STC in January 2017.



5. At Paragraph 10 of her statement provided to the Inquiry dated 28 June 2018, Sharron referred to BBC footage taken by an undercover reporter for the Panorama programme broadcast in January 2016. At paragraph 13 of her statement Sharron stated:

“The video footage I refer to above also showed staff having conversations in the smoking area of Medway STC during which they discussed assaulting young people outside of the view of the CCTV cameras, and how best to approach and assault young people without the matter being taken any further”.

6. When she gave evidence Sharron stated that she raised this footage of staff in the smoking area with me as a matter for concern and that I replied that it was “just staff letting off steam”.

7. I had many conversations with Sharron about the BBC footage. In particular I recall discussing with Sharron the part of the footage which involved an officer who discussed a restraint involving a young person with the Panorama journalist while being covertly filmed. This was footage from the smoking area.

8. For the avoidance of doubt the officer did not discuss or even mention assaulting any young people. The police had already viewed this footage and were not interested in pursuing a criminal investigation.



9. I did not tell Sharron that staff were just letting off steam. I took this footage very seriously indeed. The officer's comments, even though they did not describe an assault, were unprofessional. The officer did allude, although not explicitly, to blind spots in the CCTV coverage.
10. The officer in question was suspended and we conducted a formal disciplinary investigation into the matter. It was decided that there was insufficient evidence to formally charge the officer as there was no evidence of any assault having taken place. However, the officer was given formal advice and guidance about his conduct and this was placed on his personnel record.
11. When making this decision I was conscious of the fact that I did not have access to the full unedited footage of the conversation between the officer and the journalist.
12. We monitored the officer closely after reaching the decision. After a few months I concluded that he was not best suited to working with young people and I arranged for him to be transferred to an adult establishment where he has worked ever since and is doing well.
13. I believe that Sharron may have confused this footage of the officer in the smoking area with other parts of the BBC footage. At Paragraph 10 of her statement Sharron refers to footage of staff during induction training. This had been taken in September 2015 but it was not shared with me until April 2017.



14. The comments of the then training manager on the footage were particularly inappropriate. By the time I was shown the footage he was in a different role. However, I immediately suspended him and a disciplinary investigation was commenced. He was entirely remorseful and recognised his behaviours were unacceptable, but these typified the prevailing culture at the time. I considered it was inappropriate for him to remain at Medway and so he was moved to an adult prison and given a final written warning.
15. In light of the actions I took in response to viewing the BBC footage I take issue with Sharron's inference that nothing was done when she raised concerns about it with me, or that I did not take those concerns seriously

#### STATEMENT OF TRUTH

I believe the contents of this witness statement to be true.

Signed:

**DPA**

Dated        of July 2018

Name: JONATHAN FRENCH

Role        Governing Governor of Medway STC