

Witness Name: Philip Owen  
Statement No: 2  
Exhibits: -  
Dated: 19.11.2018

## THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

---

### Witness Statement of COUNCILLOR PHILIP OWEN Nottinghamshire County Council

---

I, **COUNCILLOR PHILIP OWEN**, will say as follows:-

1. **My name is Philip Owen** and I am the Lead Member for Children's Services ("LMCS") at Nottinghamshire County Council ("the County"). This is my second Witness Statement that I have produced for the Inquiry and this statement is produced to a) correct a number of minor inaccuracies arising from the evidence of the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018 and b) respond to matters asked by the Inquiry to follow up on.

#### Children Missing from Home and Care

2. In evidence I was asked about *INQ002632*, a County committee report dated 17 September 2018, which provided key priorities for children missing from home and care. One of the identified priorities was to: "*Develop early intervention strategies that will reduce the numbers of missing children having multiple missing occurrences.*"
3. I was asked by Mr Frank about progress in developing early intervention strategies and I stated that there would be action plan presented back to the committee, which I expected would be within the next 2-3 months. The Inquiry have asked me to confirm when this will be presented to the committee and to share a copy of the action plan.
4. The recommendation of the report was that the committee "agrees to receive six-monthly reports to provide an overview of the work to address the threat of Child Sexual Exploitation and Children Missing from Home and Care in Nottinghamshire." As such a six-monthly update report is due to be presented back to the Children and Young People's Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019, as detailed in the Committee's Work

Programme. The report will be available on the County's public website five clear working days in advance of this date.

### **Rota Visits**

5. As stated in my first witness statement I have been involved in Member rota visits to children's homes. In this statement I wish to clarify that Member rota visits are not the same as Regulation 44 visits, which are mandated by the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015. There is no legal requirement, statutory or otherwise, for Member rota visits to take place. I personally have not undertaken rota visits since I became the LMCS in May 2017.
6. I said in evidence that I was committed that in the next 3-6 months that the County will introduce unannounced Member rota visits at times when children are present in the homes. However, given that there is no statutory basis or requirement for such visits by Members, the County is taking this as an opportunity to conduct a departmental review of Member rota visit arrangements.

### **Training**

7. In evidence I was asked about new Member training, which I interpreted as training for Members undertaking rota visits. In relation to wider new Member training, the County has a Councillor Induction and Development programme. A copy of the most recent 2017 induction programme is exhibited as *PO09*.

### **Serious Incident Notifications**

8. In evidence I stated that I didn't recall having received an Ofsted serious incident notification in relation to the sexual abuse of a child in care. I wish to clarify that I do not directly receive copies of serious incident notifications, however I am briefed by officers as outlined in my first witness statement *INQ002628*.
9. As stated in evidence, the County has recently introduced a procedure for notifying elected members of relevant incidents *INQ002630* to formalise these arrangements.

Appeals Sub-Committee

10. I was asked about Members' involvement in employment appeals. To clarify the County's current procedure, the Appeals Sub-Committee has not existed since May 2017. Since then Corporate Directors review appeals against dismissal cases for cases other than those in their own department. Therefore all staffing matters including dismissal and appeals are officer decisions; members do not have a role in the disciplinary process.

This statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief

Name

**DPA**

Councillor Philip Owen

Dated

19<sup>th</sup> November 2018