

Witness Name: Joanne Elizabeth Hodson

Exhibits: JH/01 – JH/88

Dated: 2 September 2025

THE SOUTHPORT INQUIRY

FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF JOANNE HODSON HEADTEACHER, THE ACORNS SCHOOL LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

I, Joanne Elizabeth Hodson, will say as follows:

Introductory matters

1. This witness statement is made to assist the Southport Inquiry (the "Inquiry") with the matters set out in the Rule 9 Request dated 6 August 2025. I am providing this statement in my capacity as the Headteacher at The Acorns Schools ("Acorns"), Lancashire County Council ("LCC"), to explain Acorns' dealings with AR whilst he was a pupil at the school between October 2019 and April 2022.
2. Acorns is a Pupil Referral Unit ("PRU") which is an alternative education provision for children who are unable to attend mainstream school for various reasons. PRUs aim to provide a supportive environment where pupils can continue their education while addressing the issues that prevent them from thriving in a traditional school setting. Education delivery is tailored to each pupil to meet their Special Educational Care and Needs and there are currently around 100 pupils on the roll, with approximately 30-40 pupils currently on site each day. Those pupils deemed to be very high risk are taught off site. Other pupils may attend vocational provision. There are three terms per year, running from September to July. The school day commences at 09:00 and concludes at 14:30 with a 30-minute lunch break.

3. I am the current Headteacher at Acorns having been appointed on 15 July 2022. Prior to this, and from 2016, I was the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (“SENCO”) and Deputy Headteacher. From 2019, I stepped up as Acting Headteacher in the absence of former Headteacher, Jane Eccleston. During AR’s time at Acorns, I assumed the role of Acting Headteacher from 1 June 2019 to 31 October 2019, 28 September 2020 to 28 February 2021, and 7 June 2021 to 15 July 2022 when I was appointed as Headteacher.
4. As Deputy Headteacher, I was responsible for curriculum and quality of education across the school. This included ensuring that pupils were challenged academically and supported to achieve qualifications. I was responsible for the operational running of the school which included setting up educational provision during the Covid-19 pandemic. I was also expected to act as Headteacher in the absence of my predecessor Jane Eccleston. In addition to these roles, I was also the designated teacher for looked after children.
5. As SENCO I was responsible for carrying out assessments of pupils with Special Educational Needs (“SEN”) to identify their needs and monitor progress. This included:
 - a. Making requests for statutory assessment where appropriate and necessary;
 - b. Carrying out annual reviews for pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (“EHCP”);
 - c. Making referrals and liaising with professionals outside of the school – this could include psychologists, health and social care providers, speech and language therapists and occupational therapists; and
 - d. Providing advice, guidance and training to classroom teachers on supporting pupils with SEN.
6. As Headteacher I am the strategic leader of the school, driving the culture and ethos of the school. I am responsible for the safeguarding of all the pupils in our school and the safety of the staff. I lead school self-evaluation and development planning, working closely with governors, Senior Leadership Team and staff to ensure that plans are ambitious and regularly updated. I work with partner schools, the local authority and PRUs across Lancashire to ensure that we can respond to the wider and evolving strategic agenda as a school. Staff wellbeing and development is a priority as the nature

of the pupils in school has become more complex and challenging. I ensure that there are delegated responsibilities and distributed leadership in place, that all staff understand their roles and responsibilities and that they carry them out effectively.

7. Since 2008, I have held a Postgraduate Certificate in Education ("PGCE") in Secondary Mathematics leading to Qualified Teacher Status ("QTS"). In 2014, I completed a PGCE specialising in Special Educational Needs ("SEN") and Inclusion. This same year, in September, I started a teaching post at Acorns as Teacher of Mathematics. In 2016, I obtained the National Award for SEN Coordination ("NASENCO") which was a statutory requirement for all SENCOs appointed new to the role in England from September 2008. This has since been replaced by the National Professional Qualification ("NPQ") for SENCOs from September 2024. I achieved the National Professional Qualification for Headship ("NPQH") in 2024.

Previous statement to Merseyside Police

8. On 19 August 2024, I provided a witness statement to Merseyside Police regarding my involvement and contact with AR in my role as Headteacher (and formerly Acting Headteacher and SENCO lead) at Acorns between October 2019 and April 2022 [Exhibit JH/01 – MERP000509]. Having reviewed this statement, I can confirm that it is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief. However, this statement was provided to assist the Prosecution in criminal proceedings against AR and is not a full reflection of AR's time at the Acorns or of the issues arising during that period.
9. I provide the below further information, in addition to that which is contained in my police statement, to assist the Inquiry in providing a detailed and chronological factual narrative concerning my involvement with AR during the relevant period. This is with reference to the chronologies prepared by Acorns [Exhibit JH/02 – LCC001345] and [Exhibit JH/03 – LCC001580] and the CPOMS record [Exhibit JH/04 – LL001346]. I have also had the benefit of reviewing the documents provided by Acorns to the Inquiry in addition to the documents provided as part of the Rule 9 Request dated 6 August 2025.

AR's enrolment at Acorns

10. AR was enlisted on the enrolment at Acorns on 17 October 2019 having been permanently excluded from The Range High School ("The Range") on 10 October 2019.

AR's referral was received via email via the Pupil Access Team ("PAT") at LCC on 14 October 2019 [Exhibit JH/05 – LCC001370]. This is the normal operating procedure for any pupil who has been permanently excluded from schools within the LCC area.

11. PAT provided a copy of as follows:

- a. AR's Permanent Exclusion Notice detailing the reason for AR's exclusion, that being that he had admitted to bringing a knife into school on ten occasions and that he had the intention to "*stab someone*". The Notice goes on to state, "*There was a significant lack of emotion and awareness with regards to [AR] carrying a knife, and the implications in using one and risk posed to himself and the school community.*" [Exhibit JH/06 – LCC001394]
- b. Alternative and Complimentary Education and Residential Services ("ACERS") request for tuition out of school [Exhibit JH/07 – LCC001373].
- c. Letter from The Range to AR's parents advising of AR's permanent exclusion and making alternative arrangements for AR to continue in education [Exhibit JH/08 – LCC001372].

12. On 17 October 2019, Acorns received a further email from PAT [Exhibit JH/09 – LCC001374] enclosing a letter from Alder Hey Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services ("CAMHS") dated 12 October 2019 and sent to David Cregeen, Designated Safeguarding Lead ("DSL") at The Range [Exhibit JH/10 – LCC001368]. CAMHS had considered a referral made by Mr Cregeen on 10 October 2019 and suggested AR be signposted to the Targeted Youth Prevention Team. They advised that his file would be closed to their service.

13. On the same date, AR was formally enrolled at Acorns and attended an admissions meeting at the school with myself and his parents, Alphonse and Laeticia. This proved to be a memorable meeting. Where a pupil has been excluded from another education setting, I will typically ask them about the exclusion, not least to try and get a sense of the pupil's degree of contrition. During the meeting, I asked AR why he had brought a knife into The Range. He looked me in the eyes and said, "*to use it*". This is the only time in my career that a pupil has said this to me or behaved in a manner so devoid of any remorse. What also surprised me was that AR's parents did not flinch at this comment.

His comment was said without emotion and there appeared to be no accountability for his actions which concerned me.

14. AR's parents were of the view that he was a "good boy" who never did anything wrong and that any issues with his behaviour were someone else's fault. Their attitude was reflected by AR. Their perception was that the Acorns was a school for naughty children and that AR should not have been placed there. From the outset there was clearly a great sense of injustice over what had happened to AR at The Range and AR's father would, in particular, promote the view that AR was the victim and that he was being unfairly punished by being placed at Acorns. This was a strongly held view which AR also subscribed to, and which was being reinforced by his parents.
15. In my first meeting with AR and his parents it seemed apparent to me that he may be on the spectrum for Autism Spectrum Disorder ("ASD"). I asked AR's parents whether he had been assessed for ASD and AR's father advised that he would take him to the GP to get a referral to Alder Hey CAMHS. In fact, the records indicate that the school were advised that AR had a GP appointment for this purpose on 18 October 2019.
16. This may have been a miscommunication, but AR's father did not ultimately take AR to the GP as he later advised that he thought that Acorns would be making the referral. Perhaps there was a language barrier although AR's father spoke English well and was very articulate. On reflection, I did not appreciate at the time that AR's parents may not have necessarily understood what had been agreed in relation to the referral and that they were under the impression that Acorns would be actioning this with AR's GP. I am not sure whether AR attended the GP on 18 October 2019 and the reason for the appointment. He did not attend admissions that day as he had permission to attend a GP appointment.
17. AR's presentation during the admissions meeting, and the comment he had made in relation to his intention to use a knife, indicated to me that he was very different to our pupil cohort. My impression was that he absolutely meant the comment he had made. I was concerned about his risk as I shall go on to explain. His presentation was one of the most unusual I had ever seen in a pupil, and it was a priority to have him referred for an ASD assessment. My initial assessment was that he was displaying clear traits of ASD, although I am an educator, not a clinician, and I am unable to make any diagnosis. AR was academically capable but his social and emotional needs would present barriers to

learning. He had never been assessed for an EHCP so there was no background in terms of educational assessment and support at the point of his referral to Acorns. I felt it was important to put all those things in place. My understanding was that the teachers at The Range had no concerns in relation to AR's cognitive ability and his learning in the classroom. He had however made some concerning comments whilst at The Range along the lines of, "that's how teachers get murdered".

18. I sent an email to all Acorns staff on 17 October 2019 advising as follows [Exhibit JH/11 – LCC001411]:

"We had a new admission this morning, [AR]. He is year 9 perm ex from Range High School in Formby.

The reason for exclusion is that he took a knife into school on more than one occasion, with the intent to use it. His target was a pupil that he didn't like. When talking about this [AR] was emotionless and made no eye contact, he was not agitated when discussing it. School only discovered that he had been bringing in a knife when he rang Childline, who informed the police.

He is being referred to CAMHS for ASD assessment, so we will need to observe him closely and keep logs. He understands that he will be wanded and his coat searched every time he comes into the building.

Mum and Dad are both professional people and want to support [AR] and us in any way possible. They want him to do well academically. Mum reported that Range used detention as a sanction with [AR], but this didn't work and had the opposite effect.

He will start in admissions on Monday 28th October, as he had a medical appointment tomorrow.

Any questions, please ask."

Initial assessment of AR

19. AR started at Acorns on 28 October 2019 following the half term break. He was initially on a two-hour timetable which increased to four hours in November 2019 and a full day in December 2019.
20. His initial assessments were conducted by Jill Ellison, Willow Keyworker and member of the Pastoral Team, and included:
- a. Dyscalculia Screening [Exhibit JH/12 – LCC001437] and [Exhibit JH/13 – LCC001438];
 - b. Cognitive Abilities Test (“CAT”) [Exhibit JH/14 – LCC001436] and [Exhibit JH/15 – LCC000007];
 - c. Social Emotional Wellbeing (“SEW”) Assessment [Exhibit JH/16 – LCC001430] and [Exhibit JH/17 – LCC001431], which was updated in November 2019 following a further SEW assessment on 20 November 2019 [Exhibit JH/18 – LCC001432], [Exhibit JH/19 – LCC001439] and [Exhibit JH/20 – LCC001414];
 - d. AR’s One Page Profile [Exhibit JH/21 – LCC000384] and
 - e. AR’s admission diary [Exhibit JH/22 – LCC001434], which was updated on 20 November 2019 [Exhibit JH/23 – LCC001433].
21. By 31 October 2019, AR was assessed as being ready to join Willow group and was introduced to the pupils, his tutor and key worker on Friday 1 November 2019. He started officially in Willow group, initially on a two-hour timetable, on Monday 4 November 2019 [Exhibit JH/24 – LCC000718]. In an email from Mrs Ellison to all Acorns staff on the morning of 4 November 2019, she advised that AR would be joining Willow group that morning for two hours and *“that he struggles with confidence and is under a lot of pressure at home. He doesn’t have friends inside or outside of school but can be quite chatty during lesson...He is a clever lad but does struggle a little and won’t ask for help.”* [Exhibit JH/25 – LCC001428].
22. By 11 November 2019, AR’s timetable was increased from two hours to four hours [Exhibit JH/26 – LCC000714]. Sharon Evans, Lead Teacher of English, discussed this with AR’s father and a letter was sent home. On 15 November 2019, Miss Evans further

advised AR's father that his timetable would be increasing so that he would remain in school for lunch, leaving at 1:00pm [Exhibit JH/27 – LCC000716].

Incidents at Acorns

23. AR had not been at the Acorns for very long when issues started to emerge with his behaviour. During AR's time at Acorns, the school recorded several incidents involving AR displaying aggressive behaviour, targeting specific pupils and staff members, conducting concerning online searches and intimating that he was being bullied. In outlining the key incidents below, I have relied upon the chronologies prepared by Acorns [Exhibit JH/02 – LCC001345] and [Exhibit JH/03 – LCC001580], and the CPOMS Record [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346].

15 November 2019

24. On 15 November 2019, AR was found to be searching school shootings in America on the computer during an ICT lesson [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.71]. When ICT Teacher, Stephanie Heaton, asked him to stop he tried to engage in discussion about the topic.

25. Miss Evans contacted AR's father to inform him of the incident and to ask him to reinforce to AR that this was an inappropriate use of the internet during school. An update was requested in relation to AR's referral to CAMHS for an ASD assessment and AR's father stated that he was waiting for Acorns to make the referral.

26. AR's father called back a few minutes later and informed Miss Evans that AR had copied the behaviour of another student and had clicked on a hyperlink to a news article. Mrs Martindale, School Business Manager, was present during the call and advised AR's father that a copy of AR's browsing history would be obtained and an update provided once this information was available. Over time I found that AR's father would often attempt to justify, excuse, or to mitigate what the school would regard as unacceptable behaviour.

Referral to Lancashire CAMHS

27. On 20 November 2019, I made a referral to Lancashire CAMHS via email attaching a referral form [Exhibit JH/28 – LCC001416] and [Exhibit JH/29 – LCC000775]. I updated the form on 21 November 2019 to include the details for AR's GP.
28. I detailed in the referral that AR had been permanently excluded from mainstream high school having targeted another pupil and having taken a knife into school on several occasions with the stated intention to use it. I highlighted that AR had been found to be searching school shootings in America online on 15 November 2019 and that his father had suggested that he was influenced to do so by another pupil, which there was no evidence to support. AR had also stated that he was being targeted by another pupil at Acorns and had referred to this being "*like the boy at the other school*".
29. In terms of AR's presenting difficulties, I provided as follows, and requested that he be assessed for ASD:
- *"There was significant lack of emotion and awareness with regards to AR carrying a knife, implications in using one and the risk posed to himself and the school community.*
 - *Poor social interaction and communication with teachers or peers in school.*
 - *No social interaction or friends outside of school. He is not involved in any gangs or inappropriate associations.*
 - *Cannot make eye contact at all.*
 - *Rigid and inflexible thinking patterns."*
30. On 21 November 2019, Wendy Briody, Mental Health Practitioner at Lancashire CAMHS, advised that they could not accept a referral for AR due to his GP being based in Sefton [Exhibit JH/30 – LCC001421]. I spoke with Ms Briody at length on the telephone regarding my safeguarding concerns in relation to AR and the need for him to be assessed for ASD having also been rejected by Alder Hey CAMHS. As you might imagine this was a frustrating response, not least because the Alder Hey referral was rejected as AR had a Lancashire postcode. It was clear that AR was very unusual, and we were concerned by his behaviour and wanted to ensure that he was appropriately supported by other services.

31. Given the response from Lancashire CAMHS, I contacted Dawn Meakin, Primary Mental Health Worker at Lancashire CAMHS, via email on 22 November 2019 [Exhibit JH/30 – LCC001421]. I explained as follows:

"I really need some help with a referral for a young man who is presenting to us as ASD, we need to refer him onto this pathway.

He was involved in an incident at his mainstream school, whereby he disclosed to Childline that he had brought a knife into school on more than one occasion, with the intention of using it on another learner. His high school stated that "There was significant lack of emotion and awareness with regards to [AR]...carrying a knife, implications in using one and the risk poised to himself and the school community". I asked him about the incident at his admissions meeting and he was monotone, emotionless and very matter of fact about his intentions.

The mainstream school referred him to CAMHS at Alder Hey, but they have turned him down and directed him towards a scheme aimed at anti-social behaviour and gangs.

[Link to Targeted Youth Prevention Team web page]

[AR] does not socialise or go out of the family home in the evenings or at weekends. He has no friends and is certainly not involved in any gangs. I do not believe that he meets the criteria for referral to this service.

We now have serious safeguarding concerns with regard to [AR]...He is fixating on another student in his class and is saying that he is bossing him around and bullying him. Staff are being vigilant but have seen no evidence of this. Dad has contacted school to raise his concerns that [AR]...is being targeted "like the other boy in the other school!"

During his ICT lesson [AR] was searching school shootings in America. Dad was informed of this, but then rang back and said it was untrue.

I need some help, please. Where do I turn to next?"

32. Ms Meakin responded on 25 November 2019 suggesting that I contact the Community Cohesion (Hate Crime and Diversity) Team based in Preston who may be able to offer some advice and support to professionals at Acorns. She provided me with the contact details for Ashley Gibson of the Diversity Unit, Police Operating Unit.
33. Also on 21 November 2019, I contacted David Cregeen at The Range to advise that I had serious safeguarding concerns in relation to AR [Exhibit JH/31 – LCC001415]. I wanted to better understand their experiences with AR, and I requested further information in respect of the events leading up to AR's exclusion from The Range having not at this stage received any documentation from The Range other than the aforementioned Permanent Exclusion Notice and Alder Hey CAMHS letter.
34. Mr Cregeen responded on 22 November 2019 attaching as follows:
- a. The Range High School Safeguarding Reporting Form [Exhibit JH/32 – **LCC000378**]
 - b. Single point of access child and adolescent mental health services referral form to Alder Hey CAMHS dated 10 October 2019 [Exhibit JH/33 – **LCC000377**] and
 - c. Information received by The Range from PC 4658 Alex McNamee of Lancashire Police on 7 October 2019 regarding AR's contact with Childline and their referral to the police [Exhibit JH/34 – **LCC000002**]
35. Also on 22 November 2019, I spoke with the Duty Clinician at Alder Hey CAMHS regarding the referral for AR and was advised as to how to make this referral. This culminated in my email to Community Paediatrics of the same date [Exhibit JH/35 – LCC001417] to which I attached my original referral to Lancashire CAMHS.
36. In addition, I contacted Claudia Aldersley at Parenting 2000 to query whether she was meeting with AR on a regular basis [Exhibit JH/36 – LCC001419]. Ms Aldersley responded on 25 November 2019 to advise that she had been seeing AR for counselling since May 2019, his father having commissioned Parenting 2000s service whilst AR was on the NHS waiting list. She confirmed that AR was part of their Sunshine and Showers project allowing free access to therapeutic services and that she was continuing to work with him on a fortnightly basis. I forwarded Ms Aldersley's response to Julie Hamill, Community Support Worker Children's Social Care who went on to share it with Anna

Jameson, who at the time was a Social Worker in Lancashire Children's Services Duty and Assessment Team.

22 November 2019

37. On 22 November 2019, AR was reported by Acorns staff to have been looking at a website concerning health and safety equipment during a lesson. He was seen to be looking at Nunchucks and was asked by teacher Stephen Baker to refrain from doing so and to continue with his work, which he did [Exhibit JH/02 – LCC001345, pg.7-8] and [Exhibit JH/03 – LCC001580, pg. 4]

26 November 2019

38. On 26 November 2019, I sent an email to Mrs Low, Mr Baker, Mr McCann and Miss Holcroft, copying in Miss Cutts, Miss Evans, Mrs Lewis and Ms Murphy, advising that Ms Murphy was in the process of updating AR's Risk Assessment [Exhibit JH/37 – LCC001424]. I directed them to where the relevant documents were saved and advised that they be *"very vigilant in your lessons, especially when using blades of any kind or any sharp tools. It is extremely important that any implements are counted out and back in again."*

39. A copy of AR's Pupil Risk Assessment Profile which was periodically updated in November and December 2019, July and November 2020, April 2021 and February 2022 can be seen at [Exhibit JH/38 – LCC000707]. I go on later in my statement to address the assessment of AR's risk whilst he was a pupil at Acorns.

40. On the same date, I also received emails from Miss Walsh (Pastoral Team, Acorns) regarding a pupil at Acorns suggesting that another pupil had been bullying AR [Exhibit JH/39 – LCC001425] and [Exhibit JH/40 – LCC001426]. The pupil in question asked AR whether he had reported him for bullying and AR denied doing so.

27-28 November 2019

41. On 27 November 2019, AR attended a school trip to Chester Zoo. The following day, Mrs Low sent an email to all Acorns staff advising that the trip was a huge success with no reported issues in relation to AR [Exhibit JH/41 – LCC001427].

29 November 2019

42. On 29 November 2019, Stephanie Heaton reported that AR had refused to sit down at the start of the lesson and was “*walking up and down near his seat punching his hand hard*” [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.71], [Exhibit JH/02 – LCC001345, pg. 8] and [Exhibit JH/03 – LCC001580, pg. 5] The CPOMS Record goes on to detail as follows:

“[AR] was told to stop as he would hurt himself. He then sat down and started to work with SM [Sharon Murphy] very reluctantly. SM was trying to give him ideas how to promote his business and one suggestion was to tell people that his business was new to the area. He insisted that this would not be good because people would think he would kill them as they did not know him. He said that people don’t trust others they don’t know in case they get murdered. He was regularly out of his seat and then he walked to the highest part of the ceiling, jumped up and punched a laminate hanging from it very hard”.

43. I asked Ms Murphy to contact AR’s father to inform him of the incident and Sharon Evans was tasked with arranging a review meeting regarding AR’s behaviour as a matter of urgency.

3 December 2019

44. On 3 December 2019, and during an art lesson, AR was working with oil pastel colouring in Call of Duty images. He commented, “*Why can we have these with guns but can’t look at guns on the internet*”, and then said, “*can we have a picture of a severed head then*”. This was recorded by Stephen Baker on CPOMS [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.71]. It was also reported on CPOMS by Anthony McCann that AR had been discussing videos of people hurting themselves with another pupil and had been graphic in his language when describing what would happen if a drill broke and a bit of it flew off and killed someone [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.70].

45. On the same date, I placed an action on CPOMS for Sharon Murphy to arrange an emergency review meeting with AR’s parents. I was becoming increasingly concerned and I also confirmed that I would make contact with the police officer who was involved in the earlier incident at The Range in October 2019. At 2:22pm, I emailed PC McNamee

copying in Mrs Lewis, Miss Evans and Lucy Parkinson of Early Help [Exhibit JH/42 – LCC001404]. I copied the details across from CPOMS in relation to the incidents involving AR on 15 and 29 November, and 3 December 2019, and requested urgent contact.

46. Also on 3 December 2019, Janet Lewis telephoned the Children and Family Wellbeing Service (“CFW”) to discuss concerns regarding AR’s behaviour and to seek advice pre making a Prevent referral. Where Acorns are considering making a Prevent referral, the first port of call is to seek advice from Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (“MASH”) as to whether a referral should be made. In this instance, Targeted Youth Prevention had been recommended by Alder Hey CAMHS, a referral to which also needed input from MASH.

47. Mrs Lewis was advised by CFW to contact MASH. She attempted to contact Matt Chipchase at MASH who was off sick. At the time, Mr Chipchase was Acorns’ central contact within MASH and all correspondence would go via him. Having been unable to speak with Mr Chipchase, Mrs Lewis emailed LCC Children and Young People referrals advising that she had attempted to contact Mr Chipchase, noting that AR fell between two local authorities and required a referral to Sefton on Targeted Youth Prevention where his GP was based [Exhibit JH/42 – LCC001404]. An email was also sent to Alder Hey CAMHS to advise of the additional concerns in relation to AR [Exhibit JH/03 – LCC001580, pg.4].

4 December 2019

48. Further concerns in relation to AR’s behaviour during lessons were logged on CPOMS on 4 December 2019 [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.68-70]. I spoke with Sharon Evans about the possibility of an additional member of staff being added to practical lessons with AR such as Design and Technology, Food, and Science in order to support his monitoring during these periods. A review meeting with his parents was to be arranged as a matter of urgency to discuss how additional support and monitoring could be put in place given concerns around his recent behaviour [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.70]. Mrs Evans spoke with AR’s father and arranged a meeting for 5 December 2019. Contact was made with Lucy Parkinson at Early Help to advise of the emergency review meeting and it was confirmed that a representative from Early Help would attend.

49. PC McNamee responded to my email of the previous day stating that AR's "*behaviour certainly seems quite concerning*". He confirmed that he had made referrals to the relevant services when he was dealing with AR but that he did not have any further information about any intervention received. I responded as follows [Exhibit JH/43 – LCC001408]:

"[AR] has an early help worker, Lucy Parkinson. She is aware of the latest incidents, but has been unable to contact his family. We have also been able to make recent telephone contact. Lucy has been trying to find out if there is an existing CAF in Sefton, but without success.

Range High School referred [AR] to CAMHs at Alder Hey, but they turned the referral down and recommended a referral to Sefton Targeted Youth. It looks like this referral was never made, so Mrs Lewis has contacted our MASH team to see if they can refer him there.

I tried to refer to Lancashire CAMHs, but they turned the referral down as he has a Sefton GP, so I have re-referred him to Alder Hey. I'm awaiting a decision by them, but given they turned him down last time, I'm not holding out much hope.

He has been attending a service called Project 2000 in Southport, and they say that Dad has signed up to some parenting interventions starting in January. I have no other details of this.

I am concerned about the escalation of what he is saying and his perception that he is being targeted by another learner in our school "just like the other boy".

Is there anything else we should be doing? I really worried that with a West Lancs address and a Sefton GP, he is going to fall between the cracks. We are concerned there is potential for a serious incident, if we can't access the right support.

Thank you for your help"

50. Also on 4 December 2019, PC 554 Paul Harrison of the Community Safety Team (West Lancs) emailed Acorns to advise that Lucy Parkinson had been in touch regarding the concerns in relation to AR. He suggested that a referral be made to MASH as a matter of

urgency so the appropriate referrals could be made to the police and other agencies [Exhibit JH/44 – LCC001406].

5 December 2019

51. Mrs Lewis responded to PC Harrison on the morning of 5 December 2019 to advise that she had tried to refer AR to MASH on 3 December 2019 but was awaiting a response. Further advice was requested as well as confirmation as to whether PC Harrison would be attending the emergency review meeting planned for that day [Exhibit JH/45 – LANC000061] and [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.69]. PC Harrison later confirmed that he had been advised not to attend the meeting as the information provided around AR's behaviour was "*of a higher risk than community safety to deal with.*" [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.69].

52. An emergency review meeting was held which I cover in detail later in my statement along with the subsequent first referral to Prevent on 5 December 2019.

6 December 2019

53. A response from Jenny Ashton, MASH Education Officer, was received at 9:25am on 6 December 2019 which I set out later in my statement. On the same date, Jane Eccleston spoke with AR's father who alleged that Acorns were apportioning blame to AR for the recent incidents in school, stating that AR was a "*good boy*". Mrs Eccleston advised that the purpose of raising concerns was to ensure that AR and all other pupils and staff were appropriately safeguarded and that it would be negligent for staff not to be concerned following the reason for AR's exclusion from The Range. She notified AR's father that a referral to Prevent had been made and the reasons why. She also confirmed that a team around the family ("TAF") meeting had been scheduled for 13 December 2019 at Acorns to allow the opportunity to discuss the issues around AR in more detail and with other agencies present. [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.67].

54. Following the Prevent referral the day earlier, Prevent telephoned Mrs Lewis to request that the referral be completed again "due to too many attachments being forwarded for the Police to go through." Mrs Lewis actioned as requested [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.67].

9 December 2019

55. During a Design and Technology lesson on 9 December 2019, AR attempted to access the internet. When he realised that his access had been blocked, he tried to override the settings to allow him access [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.67].

10 December 2019

56. On 10 December 2019, AR again tried to access the internet and adjust the settings to override the block that had been put in place. In another lesson, he made a comment about “*hating*” Stephanie Heaton and was pulled up on his comments about her by another pupil. This escalated to the other pupil grabbing AR and pulling his jumper to which AR retaliated by kicking the other pupil [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.66].

57. There were other incidents of concerning behaviour on 10 December 2019 as recorded on CPOMS [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.65-67]. I contacted AR’s father to discuss the incidents, and he confirmed that he would speak to AR about his behaviour.

11 December 2019

58. On the morning of 11 December 2019, Acorns’ School Business Manager, Ashley Martindale, received a call from Avacab Taxis who stated that on arrival at AR’s home address, the driver had witnessed AR getting into another ‘All Whites’ taxi. Miss Martindale spoke with AR’s father who was unaware that this taxi had been arranged, and it was explained that the school had not arranged for this either. Miss Martindale waited for the ‘All Whites’ taxi to arrive at school as he wanted to discuss with the driver what had happened. When the taxi did not arrive, Miss Martindale contacted ‘All Whites’ who advised that they could not share any information due to data protection.

59. Jane Eccleston also spoke with AR’s father who stated he did not know why AR had got into a different taxi. AR’s father contacted ‘All Whites’ who also advised that they could not reveal who had made the booking but that it had been made from AR’s phone the previous afternoon. A decision was made to contact the police via 101 to alert them of AR’s risk given his history at The Range in October 2019. Miss Martindale contacted Lancashire Police who advised Acorns to contact The Range in case AR showed up there. Jane Eccleston did as advised.

60. A further call was received from AR's father who informed Jane Eccleston that he had been contacted by The Range who had confirmed AR was on premises and Merseyside Police were in attendance. David Cregeen telephoned Mrs Eccleston shortly following this and provided the following information:

"[AR] came to the school with a modified hockey stick and knife. He intended to kill a male pupil with the hockey stick and if that...did not work, use the knife. The individual concerned was absent from school. Instead he assaulted a different pupil. Witnessed by members of staff. [AR] was arrested for assault and possession of the knife (section 47 assault). There was a lack of emotion from [AR]. Father displayed a lack of emotion despite [AR] in handcuffs and in the custody of the police. Statements to be taken from staff re what they had witnessed."

61. Mr Cregeen also advised that he considered there to have been "a drastic change in [AR's] personality in the months preceding his exclusion". He also stated that issues had been raised with AR's parents about his behaviour in several classes and with different teachers. AR's view was that "staff were having a go at him". Mrs Eccleston confirmed that Acorns had been experiencing similar issues with AR. Mr Cregeen determined the concerns in relation to AR to be at Level 4 however Children's Social Services deemed them to be at Early Help level (Level 2).

62. At approximately midday, PC Paul Harrison visited Acorns and confirmed that AR had been conveyed to St Anne's Police Station where he would be interviewed. He confirmed that Wellbeing, Prevention and Early Help Services ("WPEHS") had been notified of the incident and that the TAF meeting due to go ahead on 13 December 2019 would likely be cancelled. Mrs Eccleston requested that the school be kept up to date as matters progressed and that until any further information had been received, AR would not be allowed onto school premises until a full risk assessment had been conducted.

63. The above incident is captured on CPOMS at [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.63-64].

64. Following the events of 11 December 2019, Lucy Parkinson of Early Help contacted the school on 13 December 2019 to confirm that AR and his family had been referred to Children's Social Services and that Anna Jameson was the Social Worker overseeing the assessment. The plan was for an assessment to be completed by 2 January 2020, the delay being due to the Christmas break [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.63]. Also on

13 December 2019, Alder Hey CAMHS contacted Acorns to confirm that they had been asked to see AR as a matter of urgency by the Criminal Justice Mental Health Team.

65. From mid-November 2019 to the incident at The Range on 11 December 2019, there was a clear escalation in AR's behaviour. He appeared to have a growing sense of injustice towards those in authority and in particular towards The Range whom he blamed for his transfer to Acorns. I recall having a gut feeling that something terrible was going to happen. I would describe it as a visceral sense of dread. Acorns staff could see that AR's behaviour was escalating however I did not feel that our concerns were being listened to by other agencies and AR's father would always seek to minimise our concerns.

17 December 2019

66. A multi-agency strategy meeting took place on 17 December 2019 which is recorded on CPOMS [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, p.63] and in meeting notes [Exhibit JH/46 – LCC000234]. I attended alongside Janet Lewis, DSL. Also in attendance were: AR's parents, Anna Jameson (Allocated Case Worker, Children's Social Care), Ann Cookson (Senior Practitioner, WPEHS), DC Paula Murray (Merseyside Police), Skott Morgan (CAMHS Practitioner, Alder Hey NHS Foundation Trust), Carmen Thompson (Police Early Action Team), Laura Davidson (Team Leader, Early Help), David Cregeen (Designated Safeguarding Lead, The Range), Andrew Bramhall (Community Safety Sergeant, Merseyside Police), Karen Wigan (role not specified), Stephanie Hallaron (Criminal Justice Liaison and Diversion Practitioner, Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust), Matt Rowe (Practice Manager, Children's Social Care), Paul Harrison (Community Safety Officer, West Lancashire Prevent) and Julie Hamill (Community Support Worker, Children's Social Care).

67. It was confirmed that AR had been bailed with strict conditions and the case had been referred to the Crown Prosecution Service for a charging decision. AR had been adhering to his bail conditions and there had been no further incidents of violence. He had not returned to Acorns since the incident however work was being sent home. The key concerns identified by the agencies in attendance were in relation to AR's criminality, his undiagnosed learning needs, the impact on his sibling and the fact that the family appeared to be socially isolated. They had been referred to Early Help and a Child and Family assessment had been completed.

68. DC Murray, the investigating officer, advised that AR had provided a prepared statement denying that he had the intention to use the knife and stating that he had been bullied. He went on to give a no comment interview other than denying that he had researched violent acts on the internet. It was reported that AR would laugh at inappropriate times during interview and that there was little to no challenge from his mother, who was present as his appropriate adult. It was confirmed that a house search had been conducted and AR's devices seized which would be analysed. The police had also visited the target pupil's home address who had disclosed that he never had any issues with AR.
69. AR's parents were quiet throughout the meeting, and it was noted that AR's father had been dismissive when the police had contacted him to advise that AR needed a parent to attend the meeting with him. Ann Cookson advised that the family had been referred to WPEHS in October, but that Social Services initially had difficulty in establishing contact. Once contact had been established, AR's father appeared mainly concerned with supporting AR's return to school. He had been receiving parenting support from Parenting 2000 in Southport and was due to attend a further course on building resilience in families. AR had been attending fortnightly counselling with the support of his parents who admitted that they at times struggled with boundaries with AR and how to best parent him.
70. The Range disclosed that AR had started to exhibit challenging and inappropriate behaviours toward end of Year 8. He struggled to accept responsibility when challenged, even in the face of evidence to the contrary. The Range had no major concerns in relation to AR's parents. The Range shared that AR had also expressed views in relation to the Manchester Arena attack whilst he was still a pupil at their school.
71. From Acorns' perspective, it was highlighted that AR had initially been quiet but that his behaviour had escalated and he had started to display unusual behaviours, including fixating on certain staff members, and that his behaviour had triggered issues with other pupils. It was noted that AR had used a school laptop to research school shootings in America.
72. Stephanie Hallaron commented that she believed AR had ASD but that he was awaiting assessment and was unlikely to be seen until sometime in 2020 due to the lengthy

waiting list. During CAMHS assessment, AR had referred to family members being injured or killed in the Rwandan genocide, but said that this did not affect him as he did not know them. The plan was for him to be referred to Forensic CAMHS, who specialise in assessing risk, and Sefton CAMHS.

73. In terms of the referral to Prevent, AR was to undergo further Prevent assessments to consider whether a referral to Channel was necessary. A follow up strategy meeting was scheduled for 6 January 2020.

74. Acorns' position was that AR could not return to school until the assessments discussed between agencies had been conducted to better understand the triggers for AR's behaviour and his level of risk. Following the incident at The Range, Acorns were concerned that AR would repeat this behaviour in school as he had accused another pupil of bullying him. We had a genuine fear that he would try and do something similar in our school.

75. I felt that the decision to not allow AR to return to Acorns until assessments had been completed was met with some resistance by other agencies. As I have indicated, we felt that the situation with AR had been building before the incident at The Range and we were concerned both by the level of risk that he presented and also to understand what was going on. In the days and weeks that followed the incident at The Range, I felt that there was pressure from agencies to bring AR back to school. I made my concerns known in relation to him returning to school and was clear about the necessity for a full multi-agency risk assessment to be completed before he could return. Acorns did continue to support the continuation of AR's education by sending work home and undertaking home visits. In any event, AR's bail conditions at this stage stipulated that he could not attend Acorns.

76. Following the multi-agency strategy meeting, I sent an email to LCC Education Managers outlining the reason for AR's permanent exclusion from The Range and details of the incident on 11 December 2019 [Exhibit JH/47 – LCC001413]. I confirmed that I had attended a strategy meeting that morning and had made it very clear that AR could not return to Acorns due to his bail conditions and the fact that he presented a real risk to staff and pupils. As an interim measure, work was to be sent home.

77. Pita Oates (Pupil Attendance Supervisory Support Worker, LCC) responded on 18 December 2019 suggesting that one-to-one supervision be implemented in the interim

for AR in a public space such as a library or Youth Zone. She requested copies of any risk assessments and suggested that advice be sought from Local Authority Designated Officer ("LADO"). Jane Eccleston replied as follows:

"Risk assessment: the chronology sent to you details exactly what Acorns staff have done and that was to ascertain risk and get agencies/ services involved because we considered that there could be a risk. He is relatively new to us. No information came from the excluding school - we had to dig for it. Therefore our risk assessment is only that chronology at present.

The LADO has no role here; an allegation or concern has not been made towards staff or adults working with this child. The concern is the risk posed by the child to others. Unsure what you are asking? The multi agency meeting yesterday and the scheduled one on 6.1.20 should determine further assessments including risk. It is clear through the bail conditions set that there is a significant risk hence stipulations re both schools.

We have no further information about the bail conditions.

1-1 in a public space - I consider this unwise at present in lieu of my comments above and until we know exactly what the situation is."

78. Ms Oates responded advising that work being sent home to AR was unlawful and "a grey exclusion unless Acorns have put an official exclusion in place?" [Exhibit JH/03 – LCC001580, pg.10]. She also suggested that LADO could be useful in terms of providing a view on the allegations AR had made against staff regarding racism and in having a more general discussion around the presenting and perceived risks for AR. Mrs Eccleston responded to confirm that Children's Social Services were dealing with these aspects and that a permanent exclusion could be issued to comply with the legal framework if necessary. However, this was something that Acorns wished to avoid.

79. Ms Oates sent a further email requesting information around whether The Range had initiated an assessment of AR for SEN and whether any progress had been made with the forensic assessment of AR's risk [Exhibit JH/03 – LCC001580, pg.11]. I responded to confirm as follows:

- a. The Range had made a referral for ASD assessment in August 2019.
- b. It had been agreed at the strategy meeting the day prior that ASD assessment was urgent and AR was due to be seen in the new year.
- c. AR's father had raised concerns with The Range that AR may have SEN which would explain his behaviour. The Range consulted with teachers but there was no evidence to support AR having SEN and so this was not progressed. Acorns' own assessment was that AR did not have learning difficulties and was academically able.
- d. Children's Social Services were in the process of completing a detailed assessment of the family which would be discussed at the further strategy meeting on 6 January 2020.
- e. That prior to 11 December 2019 incident, AR's parents had failed to engage with Early Help, refusing to answer phone calls.
- f. Forensic CAMHS were to carry out an assessment to take place over the Christmas holidays.
- g. Prevent were also conducting a risk assessment.

6 January 2020

80. As planned, a further multi-agency strategy meeting took place on 6 January 2020 [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.11-12]. I reported that work had been sent home for AR however Pita Oates had advised that this was illegal. I again made clear that a full risk assessment needed to be completed before another educational provision could be put in place. Ms Oates queried why a Request for Statutory Assessment (“RSA”) and EHCP was not in place. I reported that AR had only been attending Acorns since October 2019.
81. David Cregeen advised that teachers at The Range had not considered AR to have learning needs and that their concerns were in relation to his behaviour. They had however referred him for an ASD assessment in August 2019. I had offered to make the RSA, but it was agreed in the meeting that this would be made via parental request. Ms Oates advised that due to the exceptional circumstances, this would be expedited.

82. AR's Social Worker agreed to assess whether AR could be safely tutored at home for one hour a day. I agreed that whilst assessments were ongoing, I would write to AR's parents to confirm the arrangements, namely that work would be sent home every Friday and returned and reviewed on a weekly basis. A letter was sent out the same day [Exhibit JH/48 – LCC001503] and [Exhibit JH/49 – LCC001456].
83. A Forensic CAMHS assessment was confirmed for 21 January 2020. It was noted that AR and his sibling remained on a Child in Need ("CiN") Plan, but the case was not escalated to a Section 47, Children Act 1989 investigation.

21 January 2020

84. The Forensic CAMHS meeting that took place on 21 January 2020 is recorded on CPOMS [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.61-62] and in meeting notes [Exhibit JH/50 – LCC000697]. I attended alongside John Hicklin (Clinical Nurse Specialist, Forensic CAMHS), Sarah Loughrin (CAMHS Criminal Justice), Stephanie Hallaron (CAMHS Criminal Justice), Anna Jameson (Social Worker), and Julie Hamill (Family Worker). The focus of the discussion was around the incident at The Range on 11 December 2019. The following is recorded on CPOMS:

"Meeting opened with Steph H describing the incident on 11th December, whereby [AR] had arrived at Range High School and assaulted a pupil. He had taken a hockey stick and knife to the school with the intention of using it on another pupil, MK. Steph stated that she had interviewed him straight after the incident and [AR] had described his intentions towards the other child MK. She said that she could understand the rationale behind his actions, given that he said that MK had been bullying him (even though it was still the wrong thing to do). However, she was very concerned because the child that he had assaulted was someone that he liked. [AR] had stated that he had assaulted him because he knew he was going to be arrested, so he might as well. Steph H then described the assault as severe, and said the child was very lucky not to have been seriously hurt. It was only because he had put his hand up to save himself that he had not been more seriously injured.

Jo H said that the police had described the CCTV footage as being a serious attack. John H asked whether there were concerns that MK had not actually been bullying [AR]. Jo H confirmed this and said that there had been similar concerns at The Acorns. [AR] had accused another learner of bullying him and Dad had phoned and

repeated the claims “just like the other boy”. Staff had been particularly vigilant and had not picked up on any bullying. On speaking to [AR] again it turned out that he objected to the other child telling him to put his apron on in cookery. [AR] had also been targeting certain members of staff and a meeting had been held about this just before the final incident. Jo H described his rising levels of agitation in the days before the incident.

At this point Anna J and Julie H arrived at the meeting. John H asked for people to go round the table and introduce themselves.

He described the work that his team does. They consider higher risk and offending behaviour, this was a professionals meeting. Following this he would decide whether their service would be able to offer anything and whether it was necessary to meet with [AR] and his family.

John H then turned to Jo H and said I’ve been thinking about what you said before, I don’t have a crystal ball, none of us have! We can’t say whether he’s likely to offend again. There are kids who have carried out serious offences, they still have a right to an education. Jo H replied that might be so, but she wasn’t prepared to explain to a parent why a child at our school has been seriously injured.”

85. I felt I had made clear in the meeting the concerns Acorns had in relation to the level of risk AR potentially presented and the fear that he may attack a pupil at Acorns, as he had at The Range. My concern was that he be allowed to return to school where a full assessment of risk had not been carried out. I was surprised when Mr Hicklin commented, “*I don’t have a crystal ball, none of us have!*” Whilst I appreciate that we could not foresee exactly whether AR would reoffend, there was clearly, in my mind, a potentially high level of risk which needed to be properly assessed and addressed before AR could safely return to school and be around other pupils and staff. I did not want to adopt a reactive approach to AR’s risk. With everything that had gone before I wanted to see evidence of proactivity.

86. In terms of the involvement of other agencies, it was confirmed that Prevent had interviewed AR but had no concerns about radicalisation. AR’s devices had been seized by the police with analysis to be completed in around two to three months. AR had not yet been charged with any offences however it was anticipated that he would either receive a Referral Order with a condition to work with the Youth Offending Team, or no further action would be taken for The Range incident.

87. It was confirmed by Social Services that AR's family had been placed on a Section 17 Child in Need plan, that they had no concerns about AR at home and that he did not present with any difficulties in the home environment.
88. In terms of ASD assessment, I confirmed that AR had been referred into the ASD pathway in August 2019 by The Range and that I had also referred him. I described how AR presented in his admissions meeting and made clear that it had been frustrating trying to engage with other agencies prior to the incident on 11 December 2019. Mr Hicklin repeated that there was *"no crystal ball"* and *"that he would offer a £5 bet to anyone who could say what was going to happen next. He said that [AR] clearly needed some sort of specialist provision with ongoing therapy and social stories. "But unfortunately, you've been left holding the baby!"*
89. Again, I was concerned by these comments as it gave the impression that Acorns were being left to deal with what was a very complex and difficult set of circumstances. I felt that the concerns I had raised were not being taken seriously and that the response from other agencies was inadequate. I also raised concerns about the decision made at the strategy meeting on 6 January 2020 that an RSA would be made via parental request. The EHCP process is lengthy and can be further delayed where parents make the request. Ms Hamill agreed that parental requests can be *"weak because they try to present the best picture possible, rather than the true extent of the problems."* Ms Jameson suggested that an RSA be coordinated via Social Services with input from all agencies involved.
90. Alongside Ms Hallaron, I also raised concerns around the ASD diagnosis, RSA, EHCP and identification of specialist provision taking a long time. Whilst Sefton CAMHS had done some initial work with AR, he was not assessed as having underlying mental health issues and I was therefore concerned that AR would be left with no service supporting him.
91. Mr Hinklin suggested that AR *"would become frustrated by being cooped up in the house all day"* and that he had a right to education. I made clear that I had the safeguarding of other pupils and staff to consider and that there were real concerns around AR's attack at The Range having been premeditated. It was not a spur of the moment thing. He had planned the attack, even going as far as to book a taxi the day before. It was not a playground altercation. Ms Jameson raised that she had been directed at the earlier strategy meeting to conduct a risk assessment but that she felt this should be completed

by education. I highlighted that the risk assessment Ms Jameson had been asked to carry out was only in relation to having a tutor visit AR at home. Ms Jameson responded, "Oh, yes, he'll be fine doing that", despite the fact no risk assessment had actually been carried out. At this point, I left the meeting.

March 2020

92. At page 2 of AR's Student File [Exhibit JH/51 – LCC000482] is an email from AR's father to Social Services dated 2 March 2020 raising a number of concerns in relation to AR's education provision at Acorns. In summary, AR's father states that Acorns is not suitable for AR's "learning and thriving in the medium and long term" due to him having not learnt anything new, feeling paranoid and insecure about his behaviours being recorded, and his mood worsening before attending school. He makes a number of suggestions as to next steps including stating, "[AR] is a good boy, modest and respectful. He is not a risk to himself or others. It has taken persistent taunting and bullying from a group of young people to get the worst out of him at Range High School. He now understands more the consequences of the actions he took and if it was possible to go back in time, he admits he would not do what he did, we, the parents, believe that he is on the spectrum and having therapy and his own TA would improve his response to similar situations in the future." He goes on to suggest that AR would flourish in a mainstream school with the support of a Teaching Assistant.

93. This email was read out during a multi-agency strategy meeting on 4 March 2020 [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.58]. I attended the meeting with Mrs Eccleston and we both, alongside Pita Oates, challenged what AR's father had raised and made clear that the school were doing everything possible to support AR whilst also safeguarding other pupils and staff. There was pressure from other agencies at the meeting for AR to return to school and the email from AR's father appeared to be relied upon as justification for this. Acorns made clear that there was no way to put a comprehensive risk management plan in place for AR at school without the risks having been established. Pita Oates was supportive of Acorns' position and in terms of the requests raised by AR's father being wholly unrealistic. It was highlighted that AR appeared to be repeating some of the behaviours he had shown at The Range at Acorns, such as fixating on individual staff and pupils, and that AR's father would not accept the concerns being raised by the school.

94. On 6 March 2020, I visited AR's home address with Mrs Eccleston. The visit is recorded on CPOMS by Mrs Eccleston [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.58-59]. AR was not present during the visit. It was explained to his parents that it was necessary and proportionate to prepare a risk management plan for AR's return to an educational placement and that the assessment carried out by Anna Croll of the Youth Offending Team would assist with this. The importance of AR attempting the work set by teachers whilst he was at home was highlighted and his parents confirmed that they were happy for work to be sent online/electronically pending risk assessment.
95. It was explained that AR remaining on the roll at Acorns was the only option available and that if AR's parents wanted him to return to mainstream school, a risk assessment would be required to evidence that AR had successfully managed his placement at Acorns and there were no risks. AR's father did comment that AR was not a risk at home or to himself but that *"he would be a risk elsewhere, because if someone did something to him, he would do something in return."*
96. The process for applying for statutory assessment for an EHCP was explained as well as the necessary documentation to be completed where a parental request was being made.
97. Again, this was a memorable visit. There was a lot of clutter around the family home, and it struck me as a stressful environment for a child. I did not see anything inside the home of any concern other than it was a very chaotic environment.
98. Following the visit, correspondence was exchanged with AR's parents regarding the provision of schoolwork and AR having access to what he needed to complete this at home. Acorns had initially asked AR to complete written work and return this for marking however he declined to do this save for one piece of Maths work. A decision was therefore made to set online work for AR to do at his own pace and in short bursts. AR's father emailed me, Mrs Eccleston, Mrs Low and Miss Evans on 12 March 2020 to pass on thanks for the home visit and our understanding [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.60].
99. On 18 March 2020, Acorns was closed due to the Covid-19 national lockdown. Doorstep visits to AR's home address were implemented and he was offered a school laptop, but had access to IT in the family home and did not require one. Work continued to be sent home, and AR did complete some of this online. Efforts were made regularly to contact home however there was initially minimal response from AR's family [Exhibit JH/52 –

LCC000945]. His key worker, Carol Rooney, did try to make weekly contact with AR's father over the telephone and by text but there was minimal response [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.57]. We had concerns that the family were not responding to our attempts to contact them. However, it was confirmed that the family had been engaging with Early Help and had weekly telephone meetings with the Youth Offending Team. A Covid-19 risk assessment was completed and AR was assessed as being safe and well at home.

17 April 2020

100. On 17 April 2020, I emailed Acorns staff to confirm that AR's RSA had been agreed [Exhibit JH/53 – LCC001472]. I attached the Educational Advice I had provided to Kelly Hayes (Special Educational Needs and Disability Officer, LCC) on 27 March 2020 [Exhibit JH/54 – LCC001581] and the letter that Ms Hayes had sent to AR's parents dated 17 April 2020 confirming that an Education, Health and Care ("EHC") assessment would be coordinated [Exhibit JH/55 – LCC000049]

101. With regard to my educational advice in contribution to AR's EHC assessment, I provided as follows:

a. AR did not have any learning or cognition needs and is extremely articulate. However, struggles with social communication and has little empathy. Very literal in thinking. Regarding the assault, A has "no understanding of the impact on his victim" and thinks all is okay because the boy has received compensation. JH notes that one of teachers made a CPOMS entry because of concerns that AR wasn't accepting of another pupil's difference of opinion. Other pupil was being light-hearted but when other pupil would not change his opinion AR turned in front of class and said "well, in my opinion it is" in a "very aggressive tone". His face showed extreme anger, and he wouldn't look at the pupil. It took him some time to calm down.

b. JH notes that AR was initially quiet but very soon began to display concerning behaviours, including "searching for school shootings on the internet, being obsessed with dark and morbid subjects and fixating on staff members and other pupils". AR claims he is bullied in school but there was no evidence of this, also seems to have maintained this at The Range, also with no evidence to suggest

bullying. AR presents as neurodivergent. JH claims AR isn't allowed out the house by his parents.

102. The Covid-19 pandemic had a stark impact on the provision of education, especially in the early stages whilst we set up a virtual learning platform so that all pupils could access their lessons online and be taught face to face via Microsoft Teams. During the first lockdown, AR would not complete work at home. He stated that school was school, and home was home. We offered him a place back in school on a two-to-one to try to re-engage him. We then made some progress in school. During subsequent lockdowns, AR would complete some online learning with Maggie Allred, but this was inconsistent. It took time to build the relationship back up every time he came back into school. The Personalised Learning Profile seen at [Exhibit JH/56 – LCC000695] shows the two steps forward three steps back pattern which resulted from the Covid lockdowns and other factors.

103. I comment on further incidents concerning AR on 1 February 2021 and 21 April 2021 in the section of my statement which addresses Prevent referrals. I also comment separately in respect of the incident on 17 March 2022 in the section of my statement which addresses AR's transition to Presfield School.

AR's parents

104. AR was very unusual but that was not just because of his presentation. His family dynamic and their social isolation was also a factor. Cultural differences were also a relevant consideration. There was no doubt that education was culturally important for AR's family.

105. For much of AR's time at Acorns, the school had been able to manage and communicate with AR's father well. For the most part, there was an open channel of communication; Acorns staff would always contact AR's parents, mainly his father, where there were incidents of concern and generally in relation to AR's education provision, EHCP, involvement of other agencies etc.

106. Acorns were not afraid to challenge AR's father and push back on unsubstantiated allegations regarding how Acorns were managing AR and how he was being treated by staff. AR's father was open in his criticism of Acorns in circumstances where the school

felt that this was unjustified. We only ever tried to do our best to support and educate AR in circumstances that were complex and often upsetting. Underlying those criticisms were, in my view, the father's perception that the Acorns is a school for naughty children and that AR should not have been there in the first place.

107. What I observed was that AR's father could be manipulative of professionals and would rely on their goodwill and concern for AR to influence the decision making around how AR was handled. He influenced professionals to advocate for what he wanted as opposed to what may have been best for AR. In this sense, AR's father became a barrier to AR's progress, and it was often very difficult to get through to him about the concerns the school had about AR's behaviour as this was met with minimisation and denial.
108. A particular example of that manipulation was AR's father's use of Samantha Steed of CAHMS to advocate for an education provision that he wanted for AR, as opposed to what was actually suitable. Samantha Steed made recommendations to the family about moving AR to Pinefields, a different PRU under the responsibility of Sefton Council. AR was not in fact eligible to attend Pinefields as a resident in Lancashire. Those discussions were unhelpful, and it was not CAHMS role to find an education provision for AR. I felt that they were working against us with the encouragement of AR's father.
109. Of more concern were my experiences when it came to the review of AR's EHCP in May 2021 following his ASD diagnosis. I wanted to include a section in the EHCP which included details of the risk that AR posed to others. I thought it was highly relevant given our experiences at the Acorns and what had gone before at The Range, including the attack which AR had perpetrated. AR was a risk in a school environment and any school dealing with him needed to understand those risks. My efforts to include this information within the EHCP draft were met with hostility by AR's father and also by Samantha Steed (CAHMS). Ms Steed even went as far as to accuse me of racially stereotyping AR as "*a black boy with a knife*". Nothing could be further from the truth. We wanted to support AR and his family in finding a suitable education provision. Withholding relevant information was not going to assist him or us in that process. The statement on risk assessment remained in the EHCP. However, in the end the wishes of the family prevailed and the wording of the EHCP was re-written in many places to change the emphasis of some of the concerns in the original EHCP. For example, a reference to AR researching content online which could be viewed as sinister was changed to read "*inappropriate*".

110. The issues with AR's father were not confined to him minimalizing concerns but they went further than that. AR's father would endorse and justify AR's concerning behaviour, often in his presence, and openly criticise Acorns in front of AR thus undermining our authority. It was hardly surprising that AR had no respect for authority. It was clear that both AR and his father viewed there as being a stigma attached to AR attending a PRU and that the father's preference would have been for him to be in mainstream education, or at least attending Acorns full time, which would have been completely unsuitable given the way AR presented.
111. AR's father's determination to return him to a mainstream school environment like The Range ultimately extended his time at Acorns because of the lack of any suitable alternate provision. I did not feel that such a setting was in his best interests but in fact that was the request made as the parental preference in the first version of the EHCP [Exhibit JH/57 – LCC000298]. The request was lacking any sense of realism: AR had been excluded from a mainstream school for carrying a knife. It is difficult to persuade a mainstream school to accept a pupil who has carried a knife, let alone to find a mainstream school who would both accept AR and be able to cater for his special educational needs. We were always clear that the Acorns was not the long-term solution for AR because he needed an environment where his social and emotional needs as well as his educational needs could be met. The provision at the Acorns only caters for children to the age of 16 so any further education beyond that age would also have to have been pursued elsewhere in any event.
112. In my view, AR's father appeared more concerned with AR's academic ability and him being allowed to attend a mainstream school as opposed to his social and emotional needs. AR's mother was more in the background and made very little contribution to discussions about AR on the occasions she attended meetings or was contacted by the school. She appeared to be disassociated from what was going on with AR and perhaps also living in a state of denial. AR's parents outwardly gave the impression of cooperation however, on reflection, I feel that this was disguised compliance and that they were in fact frequently a barrier to AR's progression.

AR's attendance

113. From September 2019 to July 2020, AR attended Acorns 29.9% of the time, with authorised attendance (reflecting AR's part-time timetable and home learning during

Covid-19 lockdowns) of 69.0%, and unauthorised attendance (reflecting when AR did not attend school when he should have done) of 1.1% [Exhibit JH/58 – LCC001872]. During this period, we did not allow AR to attend school from December 2019 to March 2020 due to concerns over the risk he presented to pupils and staff following the incident at The Range on 11 December 2019. From March 2020 to June 2020, we were in national lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic. AR started to attend school again in person on 6 July 2020 with two-to-one staffing. Indeed, he was prioritised for his return to school because of concern that he was socially isolated and vulnerable.

114. Between September 2020 and July 2021, AR attended Acorns 36.4% of the time, with authorised attendance of 62.6% and unauthorised attendance of 1.0% [Exhibit JH/59 – LCC001873]. During this time, he attended school for one hour a day with two-to-one staffing initially. This dropped to one-to-one staffing from October 2020. Attempts were made to extend his timetable in November 2020, and in May 2021 to reintegrate AR into some classes. This was unsuccessful as AR was distressed by being with the other pupils. It was felt by Acorns staff that the risk was too high to continue to reintegrate him into classes with other pupils. We also had several periods of Covid-19 lockdown, the lengthier periods being between September and October 2020, and a national lockdown between January to March 2021. There was a shorter period of lockdown in July 2021.

115. From September 2021 to 1 April 2022, AR attended Acorns 12.2% of the time with authorised attendance of 50.0% and unauthorised attendance of 37.8% [Exhibit JH/60 – LCC001874]. AR refused to return to school in September 2021 and did not start attending again until November 2021. His attendance was intermittent until February 2022. We did not see him again after 28 February 2022.

116. There were a number of reasons why he disengaged: He was angry at the third referral made to Prevent which had been shared with him by his father against our wishes. He had been prescribed new medication which was cited as a reason for his non-attendance. AR had been to visit Presfield School and in his mind, he had moved on and just wanted to go there. This was not helped by some of his interactions with CAMHS who were opposed to him continuing to attend Acorns when it was decided that he would be placed elsewhere. This led to a decision at Acorns to contact LCC and Presfield to see if an earlier start date for AR could be funded and agreed. His start date was subsequently pulled forward September 2022 to April 2022.

117. AR was formally taken off the roll at Acorns on 1 April 2022, as agreed with LCC and Presfield. He was in Year 11 at this stage and would have otherwise left Acorns in June 2022.

118. AR had been capable of sitting his GCSE's and capable of securing reasonable grades. Ultimately, the intention was that he would complete his education at Presfield, including sitting his GCSE's before moving onto Sixth Form and A-Level studies.

Internet Usage

119. I have been asked about AR's use of the internet at Acorns and how it was monitored, limited and controlled. Access to the internet at Acorns was controlled by LCC firewalls and Netsweeper which is a security software. Teachers in the classroom would visually monitor pupils' activity on the internet and they would be supervised at all times when using school laptops. The school only had laptop computers at that time. The LCC firewalls and Netsweeper restricted access to LCC only approved webpages.

120. During the above detailed incidents on 15 November 2019 and 21 April 2021, AR would have been able to conduct searches on the internet but would have only been able to access sites approved by LCC. Both incidents were recorded on CPOMS [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.71 and pg.41-42].

121. The incident on 15 November 2019 and further incidents on 22 November 2019 and 4 December 2019 are recorded in the Acorns chronologies [Exhibit JH/02 – LCC001345, pg.8 and pg.12] and [Exhibit JH/03 – LCC001580, pg.3 and pg.5]. The chronology seen at [Exhibit JH/03 – LCC001580] was shared with all staff working with AR so that they were aware they had to be vigilant in monitoring his internet usage.

122. During the incident on 15 November 2019, AR was in a small class of up to six pupils with ICT Teacher, Stephanie Heaton, and another member of support staff, Sharon Murphy. They were monitoring visually what was on the pupils' screens and this is when Miss Heaton saw that AR was searching for school shootings in America.

123. On 21 April 2021, AR was in class with his one-to-one teacher, Maggie Allred. Mrs Allred was monitoring his screen visually and observed two website tabs open with "*London Bridge*". Due to the Netsweeper security software, AR had only been able to

access information that was publicly available. In fact, one of the reasons provided by Prevent for not following up the third referral was that AR had only accessed information that was readily and publicly available which was all he was able to access on a school laptop.

124. AR's access to the internet was prohibited following concerns raised by staff in relation to his behaviour on 15 and 22 November 2019 and 4 December 2019. AR did make attempts to override this on 9 and 10 December 2019 which is documented on CPOMS [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.66-67] and the Acorns chronologies [Exhibit JH/02 – LCC001345, pg.16] and [Exhibit JH/03 – LCC001580, pg.6]. A block had been placed on his access to the internet which he attempted to override by adjusting the settings of the laptop but was unsuccessful and asked by teachers to continue with his work.

125. AR was extremely literate with technology and at this stage, at the age of 14, had already built his own computer at home.

126. The incident on 21 April 2021 was the first that AR had been allowed to access a school laptop since 15 November 2019. Mrs Allred went through the rules and expectations with him very clearly before he was allowed to log on, but he still made the searches for the London Bridge terror attack.

127. The supervision and monitoring of AR's internet access in school was robust and led to members of staff logging their concerns and taking action straight away. The incidents in November and December 2019 and on 21 April 2021 led Acorns to make two referrals to Prevent.

128. The nature of the learning provided by Acorns meant that AR was either in a very small class or with two-to-one or one-to-one staffing when he was using a laptop. This enabled staff to clearly see what was on his screen. I do not think that we could have done anything differently in relation to the control, monitoring and supervision of his internet usage.

129. Pupil's internet browsing history is stored by Netsweeper which is managed by LCC. Browsing history is kept for 14 days. As a school, we do not have administrative rights to access this however we can request that a report is run into a pupil's browsing history.

130. Acorns' concerns in relation to AR's internet usage were logged on CPOMS [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346] and the chronology available to staff [Exhibit JH/03 – LCC001580]. The firewall and Netsweeper security software in place meant that AR could not access violent or distressing content, or content concerning weapons, mass killings, injuries to animals and/or terrorism whilst he was in school.
131. The Inquiry has received the records concerning AR's internet usage on 15 November 2019 when he was seen to have been accessing online content in relation to school shootings in America [Exhibit JH/61 – LCC001401]. I have been unable to locate any records relating to AR's internet usage on 21 April 2021, other than Mrs Allred's account of what she observed on his computer screen as logged on CPOMS [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.41-42]. I do not believe that at the time, a download of AR's browsing history was obtained. There is no such document uploaded to CPOMS, and I did not specifically request that a search be carried out as at the time, it did not seem necessary. AR had only just logged onto the school laptop and Mrs Allred could see the tabs that were open on the screen and logged the detail around this on CPOMS.
132. Acorns did attempt to analyse the data seen at [Exhibit JH/61 – LCC001401] at the time. This was undertaken by ICT Teacher Stephanie Heaton and Blue Orange who were our IT support provider. Due to Acorns being a small school, we do not have our own IT department or staff, and IT services are outsourced. I was informed by Miss Heaton that the analysis of the data was not successful as pupils (possibly AR, but also others) had managed to override the filtering and browsing history settings so that there was no information that could be used to show what AR had been looking at.
133. The data seen at [Exhibit JH/61 – LCC001401] was uploaded as a document to CPOMS. It was also provided to Prevent as an attachment to the referral made on 5 December 2019. I provided this to the Inquiry as part of the documents supporting the chronology at [Exhibit JH/02 – LCC001345]. Merseyside Police did request a statement from Stephanie Heaton prior to AR's trial however she no longer worked at Acorns, and I am not privy to any conversations she had with Merseyside Police.
134. A copy of [Exhibit JH/61 – LCC001401] was therefore provided to the police at the time and I recall this being discussed in a multi-agency strategy meeting with the police on 17 December 2019 as recorded on CPOMS [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, p.63] and in the meeting notes [Exhibit JH/46 – LCC000234]. As mentioned above, the document

was also provided to Prevent as an attachment to the Prevent referral made on 5 December 2019.

135. Janet Lewis, Designated Safeguarding Lead, made the following entry on CPOMS on 6 December 2019 at 14:27 [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC0001346, pg.67]:

“Phone call from PREVENT requesting that the referral be completed again due to too many attachments being forwarded for the Police to go through. JL to email referral form again with details just on the form.”

136. Unfortunately, the CPOMS entry does not state which attachments were included with the Prevent referral however the record of AR’s browsing history was uploaded to CPOMS at the same time, which would indicate that it had been attached to the referral.

137. Prevent also confiscated AR’s computer, laptop, mobile phone and PlayStation 4 for analysis. They later reported in multi-agency strategy meetings that nothing of concern had been found. Prevent and the police did not request details of AR’s browsing history at the Acorns at any other stage.

138. Having reviewed [Exhibit JH/61 – LCC001401], it appears on 15 November 2019 AR was attempting to access a number of webpages which concerned weapons and that he was conducting searches in relation to degloving injuries and attempting to view at least one graphic image of an animal injury. Acorns were aware that AR had been conducting searches of this nature having obtained a download of his browsing history, although he would not have actually been able to access this kind of content in school. His internet usage was observed by staff who were monitoring what he was looking at and logging their concerns with colleagues using the shared chronology and CPOMS, with AR’s father via telephone, in meetings in school and with other agencies including the police, Early Help and MASH.

139. Acorns shared their concerns regarding AR’s internet usage in November and December 2019 with MASH, the Police, Prevent, Early Help, AR’s parents and both West Lancashire CAMHS and Alder Hey CAMHS. This included the sharing of the staff chronology document logging staff members’ concerns [Exhibit JH/03 – LCC001580]. Acorns also sought support from The Range.

140. In April 2021, we shared our concerns with Prevent, AR's parents and Alder Hey CAMHS. We consistently sought support from other agencies and asked for help in circumstances where we had identified as escalating level of risk with AR. We were proactive in our response to concerns about AR's internet usage including raising concerns with his parents, other agencies and lodging Prevent referrals. We took steps to limit, restrict and monitor his access to the internet whilst in school.
141. Whilst AR's internet usage was heavily monitored and at times restricted at school, we had no control over what he was able to access at home. However, concerns around his internet usage were discussed with AR's parents and they were left in no doubt about his efforts to access inappropriate material at school. However, there was a sense, from AR's father in particular, of downplaying AR's behaviour and denying that he was seeking to search for harmful material online. For instance, when AR was found to be searching for school shootings in America, his father suggested that he had copied another student and clicked on a hyperlink to a news article.
142. Acorns do provide online safety advice and support to parents. During admissions, parents are required to sign online safety consent forms. There is a page on our website dedicated to online safety and parents can also access via our website a copy of the Online Safety Policy. Each year, we hold a Safer Internet Day to provide learning around what young people are experiencing and seeing online. In 2025, Safer Internet Day took place on 11 February and focusing on the issue of online scams, how young people can protect themselves and others, and what support is available to them.
143. Acorns now invest in a software security system called Impero which provides web filtering and monitoring services. Instead of relying on staff to visually monitor pupils' screens, the software allows staff to access pupils' screens in live time. Investing in this software has helped to improve the safeguarding of pupils when accessing the internet and has aided staff in confidently monitoring what pupils are doing online to keep them safe.
144. We have also reviewed our online safety protocols and now send out group text messages to parents when any new or updated documents are uploaded to the website. In order to improve how the school communicates with parents, we have implemented a system called Synergy. This is an application which parents can log on to and view all communications from the school including letters, policies etc. which are all uploaded to

the application. This means that parents can access all communications at any time and in one place.

Prevent Referrals

145. A good deal of AR's time at Acorns was taken up with consideration of the risk that he posed to himself and to others. Following the initial admission meeting and the concerning discussion about a knife we were alive to the risk that AR presented. As we went through November and December 2019 those concerns started to escalate, and we had to consider how those concerns were shared and addressed.

146. A first Prevent referral was made by Designated Safeguarding Lead Janet Lewis on 5 December 2019 [Exhibit JH/62 – **LCC000383**] The decision to make a referral was agreed following a multi-agency meeting on 5 December 2019 attended by AR, his father, Ann Cookson from WPEHS, myself, Janet Lewis and Headteacher Jane Eccleston. This was held as an emergency meeting to discuss the concerns raised throughout November and early December 2019 in relation to AR's behaviour. The meeting is recorded on CPOMS and in the chronologies provided to the Inquiry: [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, p.67], [Exhibit JH/02 – LCC001345, pg. **12**] and [Exhibit JH/03 – LCC001580, pg. **7**].

147. AR attended the meeting mid-way through. He alleged that the staff who had recorded concerns about his behaviour had not done so truthfully, and he denied saying or doing the things as described. It was clear throughout the meeting that both AR and his father sought to minimise his behaviour and the extent of our concerns and did so by challenging the facts as recorded in the chronology document which was provided and discussed at the meeting [Exhibit JH/03 – LCC001580].

148. Ann Cookson recommended that a Prevent referral was made and confirmed that she would arrange a TAF meeting with agencies invited to discuss concerns with AR's family and the support that could be provided.

149. I have considered, with the benefit of hindsight, whether a referral to Prevent could have been made earlier. From the incident on 15 November 2019, efforts were made to share concerns and information about AR's behaviour with other agencies. I have detailed above the efforts made to lodge concerns with other agencies including:

- a. Lancashire CAMHS and Alder Hey CAMHS regarding having AR referred onto an ASD pathway.
- b. The raising of “*serious safeguarding concerns*” with Mr Cregeen at The Range on 21 November 2019.
- c. Contact with Parenting 2000.
- d. Contact with AR’s parents when an incident of concern had occurred.
- e. My email to Lancashire Police and Early Help on 3 December 2019 raising “*serious safeguarding concerns*”.
- f. Janet Lewis’ efforts to seek a referral to MASH on 3 December 2019 leading to the police’s response on 4 December 2019 and my further email to PC McNamee in which I requested advice as to whether there is anything further the school should be doing.

150. During this time, we made every effort to seek advice and assistance from other agencies and were awaiting advice from LCC via MASH. In addition to seeking external advice, we were also busy building the basis for the Prevent referral to be made. Ann Cookson, in the emergency meeting on 5 December 2019, was able to give us the advice that we needed to refer AR to Prevent. As a school, we did not have a lot of experience in making Prevent referrals and would always speak to MASH in the first instance for advice. To my knowledge, we had only made one referral previously and that had been a number of years before.

151. A response from MASH was received on 6 December 2019 after the referral to Prevent had been made [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, p.70]. Jenny Ashton, MASH Education Officer, did not recommend a Prevent referral but Level 2 support:

“Hello Jan,

I’m Jenny and I work with Matt as Education Officer, unfortunately Matt is off sick for the next few months which is why he’s not responded to your enquiry.

I'm not sure who you've sent your email to in MASH for advice? I note that you have spoken to CFW on 3 Dec who advised you to contact the Hub, however the concerns do not present as level 4.

*The concerns regarding **** searching on the internet for violent images, can be managed with level 2 support such as Police Community Safety Officer and Emotional Wellbeing Services / CANW.*

*Children with Autism (which **** may have) often develop obsessions around death, violence and crime. This is due to their neurodevelopment and I wasn't sure whether **** was being assessed for Autism by the Community Paediatrician?*

I hope this advice is of help."

152. It is also of note that further information was shared by Mr Cregeen from The Range at the multi-agency strategy meeting on 17 December 2019 regarding comments made by AR in support of the Manchester Arena attack [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, p.63] and [Exhibit JH/46 – LCC000234]. This information was shared with Prevent at the meeting and added into the referral. Overall, the first referral was detailed with Prevent having been cited on all concerns raised in relation to AR. It was the product of a considered and thorough approach with appropriate advice from other professionals and that is reflected in the level of detail provided. This referral perhaps had the best chance of success. A referral might have been made days earlier, but it would have been missing the detail actually captured in the referral that was ultimately made.

153. A second referral to Prevent was made on 1 February 2021 [Exhibit JH/63 – **LCC000455**]. This referral was made following an email from Mr Cregeen on 1 February 2021 [Exhibit JH/64 – LCC001498] to which he attached screenshots of AR's Instagram account which were included in the Prevent referral lodged by Mrs Lewis. Mr Cregeen advised that AR appeared to be in contact with some pupils from The Range, one of whom had brought to his attention what AR had posted to his Instagram story. Mr Cregeen advised that whilst there was "*nothing strikingly dangerous in this message, it contains some details regarding Colonel Gaddafi, which might raise some potential radicalisation concerns, particularly if [AR] has been posting, or discussing other similar material.*"

154. Janet Lewis sought advice from CT/Prevent Pam Smith over the phone before making the referral [Exhibit JH/65 – LCC001502]. At this time, we were in Covid-19 lockdown and working remotely. AR was having virtual lessons at home delivered online by Mrs Allred.
155. We shared Mr Cregeen’s concerns about possible radicalisation with Prevent, particularly considering his previous referral and the fact that AR was at home due to lockdown. Following reports from YOT, Mrs Allred had specific concerns that AR and his father were not getting along, and she feared that this may be a sign that he was being influenced by others online. Our primary concern here was that AR was vulnerable to being radicalised. There was a suspicion that he had written the text in the social media posts and that the content might have been evidence of radicalisation, or at the very least evidence of the vulnerability.
156. In hindsight, I do not think that the wording of the second referral was sufficiently robust. It did however enrich the intelligence picture for the police, as did the third referral made to Prevent.
157. Janet Lewis did highlight in the referral document that AR had been “*previously referred to PREVENT after the Range High School shared concerns with Acorns School regarding possible radicalisation and what he was looking at online and discussing just before he was permanently excluded*” [Exhibit JH/63 – LCC000455 p. 3] We could have perhaps included more detail around the reasons for the previous referral and our concerns in relation to AR’s online searches.
158. On 9 February 2021, PC 5905 Carmen Thompson of Counter Terrorism Policing North West emailed Janet Lewis “*to check that there were no further concerns other than the information from the previous school in relation to the Instagram posts?*” [Exhibit JH/66 – LCC001526]. Mrs Lewis responded to confirm that there were “*no further concerns at this time.*” Mrs Allred followed up with an email advising: “*I am concerned as I think he may not be active, but he could easily be radicalised and would be a huge risk if this happened – the risk would be very real of harm to others.*” Mrs Lewis responded to reassure Mrs Allred that PC Thompson had worked with AR before, knew of his background and was simply querying whether there were any further immediate concerns at that point in time.

159. I agreed with Mrs Lewis' statement; I was reassured that the Prevent Officer dealing with the second referral was the same officer who had dealt with the first referral in December 2019 and therefore understood AR's history and the link between the first and second referral.
160. Mrs Lewis went on to say in a further email, "*We can only refer on what we see not what we fear or assume*". I both agree and disagree with this statement. We cannot refer based on things that haven't happened yet, but I also think, with the benefit of hindsight, that Mrs Allred's concerns about AR's vulnerability to radicalisation should have been included in the referral, rather than just saying that we believed that he had written the post on his Instagram story.
161. I had a subsequent conversation with Mrs Allred about her concerns on 1 February 2021. To my knowledge these concerns were not passed onto Prevent, because there was no evidence to substantiate them. On reflection, these concerns should have been passed on and communicated with Prevent, although I do not know if this would have made a difference. With the benefit of hindsight, Mrs Allred's instincts were correct. They were communicated to YOT and Social Services [Exhibit JH/67 – LCC000891], but both services had closed to AR on 21 January 2021, and he did not reopen to Social Services until September 2021 [Exhibit JH/68 – LCC001510].
162. A third referral to Prevent was made on 22 April 2021 by Janet Lewis [Exhibit JH/69 – **LCC001400**]. On 21 April 2021, Mrs Allred had reported on CPOMS that AR had been researching the London Bridge terror attacks during her lesson and that he had two tabs open on his laptop [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.41-42]. Mrs Allred had challenged AR about this and then a conversation had taken place which included his expressing his views about the Irish Republican Army, Israel and Palestine.
163. On 22 April 2021, Janet Lewis sent an email to the Concerns Team at Lancashire Police into which she had copied the CPOMS entry made by Mrs Allred. She requested advice as to whether this should be referred to Prevent which ultimately led to a referral being made on the same date.
164. The three referrals to Prevent made by Acorns do not appear to have been taken seriously and were treated as low risk. Only as a result of the first referral was a home visit carried out to speak to AR and his family. From my experience, AR's family provided a good impression on first meeting, and I suspect that is how they came across during

the home visit from Prevent, and was taken at face value. No mentorship was offered by the Prevent Team following any of the referrals. This was done in school by Mrs Allred. No other support was offered by any of the other agencies.

165. The second referral was not followed up at all by Prevent. Although our concerns could have been stated more robustly, the Prevent officer dealing with the second referral was aware of and had dealt with the first referral. Throughout the CPOMS Record, you can see our expectation and understanding that Prevent were dealing with this and were in contact with AR. We thought that this was why he was not engaging with us as well as he had done previously.

166. On 25 February 2021, Janet Lewis logged the following as an action on CPOMS: *“Continue to be consistent with the approach both with parents and ****-log anything of concern. PREVENT will have followed up my referral that was made regarding his Instagram post-this might have caused some issues within the home.”* [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.44]. We did not know that this was not the case with Prevent.

167. Following the third referral, Prevent responded to advise that AR had only been looking at information on reliable websites and that he had only formed strong opinions. The feedback from Prevent was that the third referral was a knee jerk reaction by the school. AR’s political views were ignored. The fact that Prevent did not take action left us open to criticism, challenge and attack by AR’s family and CAMHS, and they were able to downplay the risk that he presented.

168. I do not know what more could have been done by Acorns to follow up on the referrals made to Prevent. As a small PRU, we would not have been in a position to challenge decisions made by Prevent and their authority. We were never told definitively what action was being taken by the Police and throughout we held the hope and expectation that AR was being monitored by them. I did not imagine that no action was being taken. On the contrary we felt that by making further referrals we were adding to the intelligence picture. We were concerned by the lack of output from Prevent though and that is why I discussed with Maggie Allred strategies for trying to re-educate AR and to shift his views from his radical mindset.

169. The Prevent training delivered to Acorns staff centres on identifying risks and concerns and passing the information on to Prevent. There is nothing included in the training to prepare staff for situations where Prevent have not adequately dealt with

concerns raised, nor is there any signposting to a process to deal with this. There is no scope for challenge and limited, or no opportunity for feedback.

170. In relation to the first referral, Prevent attended multi-agency strategy meetings on 17 December 2019 and 6 January 2020. At the latter meeting, PC Thompson reported that that there was no evidence of AR having any concerning ideologies or beliefs. Accordingly, AR was to be closed to Prevent but it was advised that professionals should request further assessments if further concerning information came to light [Exhibit JH/70 – LCC000235].

171. Mrs Allred and I considered whether further Prevent referrals should be made following comments made by AR during lessons on 21, 25 and 26 January 2022 [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, p.12]. We decided that we would deal with this in school, using the approach of direct discussions with Mrs Allred and social stories. This was because previous referrals to Prevent had not been acted upon and had not led to any work being carried out with AR. Instead, they had caused a complete breakdown of trust between the school, the family and AR. On reflection, Acorns had a legitimate rationale for not making further referrals off the back of the three that had already been lodged and had resulted in no further action being taken. It was exasperating to consistently raise concerns in the way that we did with Prevent and to not receive reassurance that some action would be taken. Had further referrals been lodged in 2022, I think the response would have been in line with the response, or lack of, to previous referrals and I am not sure what difference it would have made. There was a general feeling of helplessness and the sense that Acorns did not have the authority to challenge the decisions made by Prevent. Not only were we unable to challenge Prevent, but my impression was that the local police force were also unable to influence the outcome of enquiries either.

172. In dealing with the Prevent referrals as they did, I believe that Counter Terrorism North West Police failed to have regard for our expertise as a PRU. We are experienced in dealing with challenging pupils. We are experienced in identifying and addressing concerns. We were sufficiently concerned about AR that we made three referrals which tells its own story. The Police failed to have regard for the fact that we had experience of dealing with AR on a day-to-day basis and had raised legitimate concerns about his behaviour.

173. Beyond our exasperation with Prevent and the referrals the Prevent process itself also brought about the breakdown in the relationship between the Acorns with AR and his father. Prevent referrals in 2022 would have caused further damage this relationship which would have placed the school in a difficult position in circumstances where we were making every effort to engage with AR but had been accused of racially profiling AR by CAHMS.
174. On reflection, whilst I regret not submitting further Prevent referrals in 2022, I think by this point Acorns had lost faith that anything would be done.
175. Following the third referral to Prevent, and on 29 June 2021, AR requested to see the Prevent referral during a teaching session [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.25-26]. The Acorns had made AR's father aware of the referral but asked that AR was not informed. This request was not respected by AR's father. Mrs Lewis sent an advice request to MASH regarding her concerns around AR having access to his own safeguarding records. Her view was that it would not be in AR's best interests to see the referral due to the concerns as outlined in the active risk assessment and the fact that the detail of the referral may be overwhelming and disrupt his wellbeing and education. Mrs Lewis outlined in her advice referral to MASH that in the event AR's father would not agree to the information being restricted to AR, then Acorns would contact Lynn Brewer, LCC Education Solicitor, for input. MASH responded on 2 July 2021 endorsing this approach.
176. Legal advice was ultimately sought from Lynn Brewer on 19 July 2021 who advised that the information should be provided to AR, where he was assessed as being competent and understood the implications of his request, unless it was considered that to do so would cause harm to him or another person [Exhibit JH/71 – LCC001548]. Ms Brewer had been provided with a copy of the CPOMS record by Janet Lewis and observed that *"there is clearly a balance to be struck between him trusting staff that the referrals were appropriate and preventing any further escalation in behaviour that might come with seeing the records – although not seeing them seems to be also causing a problem. Fundamentally though he had a right to see the records unless this would cause harm."*
177. From Acorns' point of view, it was felt that AR seeing the records would cause harm due to his ASD and literal thinking. Further advice was sought from Samatha Steed at CAMHS on 23 July 2021 [Exhibit JH/72 – LCC001564]. Ms Steed responded on 30 July

2021 to confirm that she had spoken to AR's father that day who advised that he had already shown AR the details of the latest Prevent referral. It was stated that AR's father did not feel he could refuse AR's request and that AR was already aware of some of the details as the referral was discussed during a virtual meeting with the school when AR was present. This was poor parenting in my view and was representative of AR's father working against the school in circumstances where he should have been taking the school's concerns seriously and addressing them in the home.

178. Acorns felt that AR's refusal to return to school in September 2021 was driven by him having seen the Prevent referral and becoming angry at what had been said about him. Ms Steed's email refers to AR having made notes of inaccuracies and being unlikely to want to discuss the incident again with his teacher when returning to school in September.

Risk Assessments

179. Risk assessments are carried out at Acorns for those pupils that we consider to be a risk to other pupils and/or staff. These are internal risk assessments only and do not take into account the child in the community as this does not fall within the school's remit. Where there are contextual safeguarding concerns in the community, Acorns work with other agencies around this.

180. The nature of our school and the complexity of our cohort means that we are constantly and dynamically assessing risk. Acorns staff are regularly exposed to high levels of risk and are adept in assessing the reality of real risk as opposed to contemplated risk.

181. Not every pupil has a written risk assessment, as not every pupil needs one. The risk assessment process starts once referral paperwork is received and the reason for the pupil being sent to our school is considered. However, the admission meeting often takes place before this paperwork is received. At the first admission meeting a further risk assessment is carried out. This is mainly around:

- a. Checking body language to consider how the pupil presents, whether they have their hood up/down, their facial expressions and whether they make eye contact, whether they sit at the table or away from it etc.

- b. Who is with the pupil, whether one or both parents or any other relatives, and what how their relationship to them appears.
 - c. The involvement of any other agencies and why other agencies may be involved.
 - d. Asking the pupil whether they know why they are at Acorns and if they can explain in their own words the reason for their referral. It is very important to take into account what the pupil says in relation to this. If those attending with them try to intervene, we advise them of the importance of hearing what the pupil has to say to check whether or not they understand the reason for their referral.
 - e. Asking if there have been issues at High School only or concerns have stemmed from primary education.
 - f. Asking the pupil who they know, whether there is anyone they are worried about, anyone who they are friends with, anyone they cannot be near to at the school or share a taxi with etc.
 - g. Explaining what subjects we teach and asking the pupil what their favourite subject is.
 - h. Asking if there is anything the pupil really struggles with.
 - i. Asking about any diagnoses i.e. ASD, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia etc. Where a pupil has been diagnosed with ADHD, asking about any prescribed medication and whether this is taken at school or at home.
 - j. Asking whether the pupil is on an ASD pathway. We may identify traits of ASD during the admissions meeting even if it is not specifically mentioned.
182. Following an admissions meeting, I send an email out to all staff with an initial risk assessment and any other information they need to know and the pupil. The pupil then goes through the assessment process before usually joining class, and a further risk assessment takes place carried out by the staff in assessments.
183. If the risk assessment is too high at this early stage, a pupil may go direct to High Support or be taught off site, rather than go into class with other pupils. Whenever risk is

deemed to be high, a written risk assessment will be opened and updated over time. If there is an incident in school, a written risk assessment will be opened and added to as required. The owner of this document is the pupil's form teacher, but the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will also have an overview.

184. Acorns have a keyworker model which means that alongside subject specialist teachers there is always another adult in class. The pupils' behaviour, conversation and other interactions are constantly monitored. If there are any concerns, these are added to CPOMs the same day. CPOMS is reviewed by a team of DSLs and appropriate action is taken and recorded on CPOMs. Examples of action taken are as follows:

- a. A phone call home.
- b. An emergency meeting with the family.
- c. A referral to MASH for further advice.
- d. A referral to another agency (or agencies).
- e. A phone call to the police.
- f. A change in timetable.
- g. A move to an after school or off-site timetable.
- h. A referral to Prevent.

185. Both AR and his father repeatedly objected to this level of monitoring.

186. The approach to risk assessment as outlined above allows us to pull together an overview of each pupil and the level of risk they present to themselves and others. Dynamic risk assessment is crucial in monitoring pupils in real time and understanding where their level of risk escalated or de-escalates and how to respond to this accordingly.

187. The first risk assessment conducted in relation to AR was during his admissions meeting on 17 October 2019. Unfortunately, it is not unusual for pupils to be referred to Acorns having brought a knife into school. However, the comment made by AR

regarding his intention to use the knife is the only time I have experienced this with a pupil.

188. As I have already indicated AR's demeanour was very cold and emotionless, and he displayed no remorse which was a cause for concern. These matters fed into our risk assessment. At this stage, we had not received all the referral paperwork as outlined above in my statement. I emailed all Acorns staff with my initial risk assessment and advised that AR would have to be searched and wanded with a metal detector every time he came into school.

189. Another factor considered as part of the risk assessment process was that AR was very unusual and quite different than the pupils we were used to dealing with. This is despite the fact that we deal with very complex and high-risk children every day. His interactions with staff and other pupils were very concerning and we started a written risk assessment in November 2019 following the incident on 15 November 2019 when AR was found to be researching school shootings in America [Exhibit JH/38 – LCC000707]. This enabled us, alongside the staff chronology and CPOMS, to capture and share concerns quickly amongst staff. The document provides a summary of the risks associated with AR and was updated each time a new risk assessment was carried out. It was intended as a working document and would be updated with an action plan in real time.

190. The risk assessment document shows that Acorns considered AR to be a risk primarily to other pupils where he perceived that he was being bullied. There was concern around how he might react to this given the previous incidents at The Range. It also states that he was known to bring a knife into school. It shares his history, including police incidents and his searches for school shootings in America on the internet. An action plan is included which shows how AR's risk was assessed and managed over time. It also states how risk had been managed and mitigated by AR's work with the Youth Offending Team and other agencies.

191. The incident on 21 April 2021 was not included in the risk assessment as we were concerned in that case that AR was at risk of harm, rather than this incident being something that would cause harm to others in school. Mrs Allred did not consider that the risk to herself of working with AR on a one-to-one basis had increased. She did not request an increase to two-to-one staffing as a result of this incident, although Mrs Lewis

did come into lesson to discuss the Prevent referral with AR. With the benefit of hindsight, it should have been included in the document.

192. As mentioned previously in my statement, and to assist Acorns in assessing AR's level of risk, I contacted Mr Cregeen at The Range who was able to provide further background information and the paperwork that they had sent to Pupil Access which had not been sent initially to Acorns at the point of AR's referral. I also contacted PC McNamee who had been involved with the original incident at The Range to see what his assessment of risk was. He stated that he considered AR to be high risk and to phone 999 if we were concerned.

193. As I have indicated we had a real sense throughout November 2019 and early December 2019 that something was building up with AR and that the risk he presented to staff and pupils was increasing. We were however finding it difficult to get support from other agencies. My concern was that he would attack another pupil, but staff who were very experienced and resilient were also starting to have concerns about their own safety.

194. Following the incident at The Range on 11 December 2019, the assessment of AR's risk dramatically changed. My concern was that the attack had been planned meticulously and was premeditated. AR appeared to blame the pupil at The Range who he said had bullied him for the fact that he had been referred to Acorns.

195. AR also accused pupils at Acorns of bullying, and he was involved in a physical altercation with another pupil on 10 December 2019 [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.65], the day prior to him carrying out the attack at The Range.

196. In relation to the incident at The Range on 11 December 2019, AR had managed to acquire a knife, despite his mother hiding all knives from him at home. He had prebooked a taxi to arrive at the same time as his taxi to Acorns so that his father would allow him to leave the house. He went on to attack a pupil at The Range who was his friend because his intended victim was not in school. He did not express any remorse. My concern was that he was capable of returning to Acorns and attacking other pupils, in particular the pupil with whom he had a previous altercation, or staff, particularly Stephanie Heaton. This is the reason why I refused to allow AR to return to Acorns following the incident at The Range until we had a better understanding of the level of

risk. I also believed that it was too risky to send someone to his home address or to tutor him at a library, without knowing the risks associated with this.

197. As mentioned above, I carried out a home visit to AR on 6 March 2020 with Jane Eccleston. This did not alleviate our concerns, and the assessment of AR's risk remained at the same level. This was especially given the comment from AR's father that AR *"would be a risk elsewhere, because if someone did something to him, he would do something in return."* [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.58-59]

198. AR returned to school in July 2020 following a period of Covid-19 national lockdown. His return was prioritised because it was identified that he was at a risk of social isolation. A further risk assessment was carried out prior to his return [Exhibit JH/38 – LCC000707] and the following safeguards were put in place:

- a. Mrs Allred was to work with AR as a specialist teacher. She was the most experienced and specialist teacher in school in terms of working with pupils with ASD. Her timetable was changed to allow her to work with AR. Mrs Lewis would also be present with Mrs Allred and AR. She had experience of working with SEN pupils in secure units and it was felt that she would be a very helpful addition to AR's lessons.
- b. Mrs Allred shared a positive handling plan [Exhibit JH/73 – LCC000864] which included instructions such as not to position AR between the door and the teacher (which I have never experienced with another pupil), and to be aware that when he is very quiet, that is when he presents the highest risk. The plan included de-escalation strategies.
- c. The pupil with whom AR had previously had issues was not allowed to be in the school building at the same time as AR. This was workable because the school was only open to vulnerable pupils at this time due to Covid-19 and the other pupil's parents had opted to keep him at home.
- d. Acorns had concerns about AR's father and his interactions with the school. Mrs Allred and I devised a strategy whereby she would take on the role of "good cop" in communicating with AR's father and I would be "bad cop" and have any difficult conversations that needed to be had. This enabled Mrs Allred to build a trusting relationship with AR and his family.

199. A further risk assessment was carried out in November 2020 with the intention of reintegrating AR into some classes [Exhibit JH/38 – LCC000707]. By this time, AR was working one-to-one with Mrs Allred as it had been assessed that it was safe to do so. AR appeared to trust Mrs Allred and was able to have open conversations with her about things that were bothering him. I do not think that this was something he was able to do at home where he appeared isolated with limited support for his emotional wellbeing. AR had returned to school with a very different demeanour. He was not agitated in the same way he had been before. By this stage, he had completed his initial work with the Youth Offending Team.
200. Mrs Allred shared AR's risk assessment with staff in order to reassure them about AR returning to lessons and to advise on how to address any potential risks. AR's reintegration was unsuccessful as attending lessons with other pupils led to him being distressed and it was felt that this could potentially lead to harm. Reintegration was further attempted in May 2021 but again AR did not want to be in class with other pupils and so he reverted to one-on-one lessons with Mrs Allred. It appeared that he felt under threat from other pupils who were aware of the incident at The Range. Lessons with Mrs Allred took place in quiet space on the top floor of the school building where he would not be disturbed by other pupils.
201. The risks around AR being in school and being violent to pupils and staff fell as he continued to work with the Youth Offending Team and continued to build a trusting relationship with Mrs Allred. As was the case since his admission, he continued to be searched on his arrival on school premises to which he always consented and there was never anything of concern found on his person.
202. On reflection, I do consider that the assessment of the risk posed by AR whilst at Acorns was adequate, both in terms of the processes for assessing risk and the assessments of risk made. We identified risk from the date of his admission and tried to work with other agencies to mitigate it. Risk was dynamically assessed and information gathered from his previous school and from staff working with him at Acorns who were extremely vigilant and reported all concerns. We continued to challenge other professionals around the assessment of the risk that he presented to our staff and pupils. We never sought to minimise our concerns, and the processes used were robust.

203. Once AR had returned to school, Mrs Allred was exceptionally skilful in building a relationship with him and his father so that AR trusted her and felt able to have meaningful conversations. By doing this, Mrs Allred was able to identify the risk that he posed, share this with staff and other agencies and put measures in place to mitigate it. Whilst AR was with us, we kept him safe, and we kept everyone in school safe.

204. The risks around AR in school decreased over this time and we did not have concerns about his transition to Presfield. We believed that this was a more suitable setting for him and that he would thrive there. Presfield were equipped to better meet AR's needs given their specialism in working with pupils with ASD and we were in complete agreement that he should be transitioned there. Our concerns in relation to the risks posed by AR only increased again following the incident on 17 March 2022 and Presfield were notified of these concerns. At this point, AR was due to leave to start at Presfield on 1 April 2022, but we wanted to ensure that all relevant information about the incident was shared with Presfield and because of that we notified them of the incident, and we met with them to discuss the incident in more detail, as set out later in my statement.

Steps taken to re-engage AR

205. There are a number of steps available to Acorns where a pupil stops attending school. The first stage involves contacting the pupil's home and following three days of absence, we carry out a home visit. Other agencies who are working with the family will be notified that the pupil is not attending and a joint approach to address this will be agreed. Where Acorns have concerns that the family need support, and are not working with other agencies, we would consider a referral to Early Help in the first instance.

206. Where it is anticipated that a pupil will refuse to attend school, we engage them in Emotionally Based School Avoidance ("EBSA") strategies to agree a plan with the pupil and their family to get them back into school. This might involve a bespoke timetable or a place at a vocational provision. If a pupil becomes a persistent non-attender, then there is a legal process which can be followed.

207. AR's attendance began to fall away after the third Prevent referral in April 2021 and the EHCP review meeting on 20 May 2021. AR was very angry about the things that had been written about him in the EHCP. AR's father had shared the paperwork from the

EHCP meeting and the Prevent referral with AR, despite being asked not to do so and I feel certain that these actions contributed to the breakdown in our relationship with AR.

208. From May 2021 to July 2021, AR started to refuse to attend at school. Mrs Allred spoke to AR's mother most days who stated that AR was refusing to attend because he had hayfever and also that he was worried that it was Covid-19. Mrs Allred asked for a GP note if he was off any longer. AR's father expressed the view that AR was not attending because of the Prevent referral.
209. This information was shared with Samantha Steed at CAMHS who informed Mrs Allred that AR had not been attending her sessions, that he had been given new medication and was now refusing to speak to her. AR said that he would not come back into school until he could discuss the Prevent referral as he did not think it was accurate.
210. When school started again in September 2021, AR refused to come back and did not attend again until November 2021. Mrs Allred worked with AR's parents, the new Social Worker Stacey Haydock and Samantha Steed to address the reasons why AR was refusing to attend. Mrs Allred set up a multi-agency meeting with AR's parents on 14 October 2021 [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.17]. This was completed as a TAF meeting and a further meeting was set up in November 2021 but not held until January 2022. Mrs Allred continued to contact home every day to work through the reasons for AR's refusal and AR started to attend again in November 2021.
211. AR visited Presfield in January 2022 and after that visit started to refuse to attend Acorns again. Despite the consistent approach from Mrs Allred with AR's parents, Acorns did not see him again until after 28 February 2022.
212. Mrs Allred raised concerns with both AR's parents and CAMHS about the inconsistent messaging to AR and raised this at the TAF meetings on 17 December 2021 and 12 January 2022 [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.14]. Mrs Allred believed that the inconsistent messaging was not encouraging AR to attend at school. There had also been some discussions with AR and CAMHS about him attending another school other than Acorns whilst he was waiting for his place at a special school, which were not helpful. The other school was a Sefton based PRU for which AR was not eligible to attend.

213. A further TAF meeting took place on 10 February 2022. Mrs Allred raised concerns about AR's attendance and engagement and sent an email update to Louise Lewis (TAF Lead), Samantha Steed (CAMHS) and Carl Coughlan (CFW) on 11 February 2022 as follows [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.11]:

"[AR] has visited Presfield school and the head came to visit [AR] in Acorns. It was very positive, and [AR] has said he would like to go and the head has offered him a place with a possibility of starting before June. [AR] has been told he needs to achieve a grade 4 in GCSE English and Maths. If he achieves this by June, he will no longer need to study these subjects which is a great motivator as he is ready to study different things.

Since the visit to Presfield [AR's] attendance has dropped again and he has said at home that he "doesn't learn anything" at Acorns and "if it was a place like Presfield he would go to school". It is possible managing the transition to a new school is causing [AR] to disengage and it is of great importance that [AR] has a clear timeline when and how this transition will happen which needs to be agreed. [AR] is capable of a grade 4-5 in Maths and a grade 2-4 in English however if he continues to not attend and refuse to complete work he is at risk of getting low grades in both subjects. He does not have long before the year finishes, so he needs to put the effort in to achieve. It will also make his transition harder to Presfields if his attendance is poor as he will not be used to the effort of attending every day.

Can everyone continue to give [AR] this consistent message -he must put 100% into Acorns before he leaves to get the best for his GCSE's and making a good start in Presfields."

214. Mrs Allred proceeded to share AR's attendance record with Samantha Steed from CAMHS to inform the discussions around AR attending school and to assist in managing his transition to Presfield. Mrs Allred also sent an email to Hayley Dawson at Presfield as follows:

"Many thanks for making the arrangements for [AR] to get a place at your school. [AR] has spoken about it in school to the careers advisor and he is really happy to join your school.

Is it possible to provide a timeline and possible start dates? Since he has visited, he has found it hard to engage in school and has said he would work if he was at Presfield. I am keen to give him a concrete plan so he can manage the change to your school, and I think the earlier the better.

Is it possible for you to move forward with this and let me know so I can help [AR] to re-engage with learning and manage the transition to your school?"

215. With the benefit of hindsight, I do not believe that Acorns could have done any more to reengage AR with his education.

Referrals/Interactions with other agencies

216. As detailed above in my statement, I made a referral to West Lancashire CAMHS on 20 November 2019 to request that AR be assessed for ASD [Exhibit JH/29 – LCC000775]. We were very concerned by AR's presentation at that time and all of our concerns are included in the referral. Wendy Briody from CAMHS contacted Acorns on 21 November 2019 to advise that they could not accept the referral as AR had a GP in Sefton (although he had a Lancashire address) [Exhibit JH/30 – LCC001421].

217. I then emailed Dawn Meakin at Lancashire CAMHS and asked for help as I knew that Alder Hey CAMHS had already turned down the referral from The Range [Exhibit JH/30 – LCC001421]. I also contacted The Range to see if they could help [Exhibit JH/31 – LCC001415]. Following this, I contacted the Duty Clinician at Alder Hey CAMHS and was given advice on how to refer. A referral was made to Alder Hey CAMHS on 22 November 2019. I received a reply from Alder Hey CAMHS on 25 November 2019 to say that they were looking at the referral.

218. The following referrals and contact with other agencies were made up to December 2019:

- a. 22 November 2019: contact with Claudia Aldersley at Project 2000 about ongoing parenting support for family.

- b. 25 November 2019: contact with Lucy Parkinson from Early Help who was already working with the family. The CAMHS referral, including our concerns, was shared.
- c. 3 December 2019: referral to MASH for support in referring to Targeted Youth Support Services in Sefton, as requested by Alder Hey CAMHS.
- d. 3 December 2019: further phone call to MASH regarding Acorns' concerns in relation to AR's internet searches. An urgent response was requested.
- e. 3 December 2019: contact with PC McNamee who had dealt with the earlier incident at The Range.
- f. 3 December 2019: contact with Alder Hey CAMHS to advise them of additional concerns.
- g. 4 December 2019: contact with PC Harrison with whom Acorns shared the staff chronology. PC Harrison was the Community Support Officer and had been contacted by Lucy Parkinson at Early Help. He asked us to make a MASH referral, which we had already done.
- h. 5 December 2019: multi-agency meeting with Ann Cookson from Early Help in attendance.
- i. 5 December 2019: referral to Prevent.
- j. 6 December 2019: response from MASH stating that concerns could be dealt with at Level 2.

219. Following the attack at The Range on 11 December 2019, other agencies then stepped in. On 13 December 2019, Alder Hey CAMHS contacted Acorns to confirm that they had been asked to see AR as a matter of urgency by the Criminal Justice Mental Health Team and to request Acorns' address for referrals forms to be sent to. Lucy Parkinson of Early Help also contacted the school to confirm that AR and his family had been referred to Children's Social Services and that Anna Jameson was the Social Worker overseeing the assessment.

220. No further referrals were made in 2020, 2021 or 2022 as other agencies were already involved, primarily CAMHS however the Youth Offending Team, Social Services and Early Help were involved at different periods. The only exceptions to this are the further referrals that were made to Prevent in February and April 2021, and the request that was made to Lancashire SEND for the review of AR's EHCP in March 2021.

221. On 4 December 2020, AR raised concerns about his own mental health. AR's father initially asked for help but then said that he would discuss it with the Community Paediatrician. Mrs Allred recorded as follows on CPOMS [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.46]:

“During [AR's] lesson with Mrs Allred [AR] said he wondered why he couldn't have medication for his anxiety. He said he [AR] was told by the psychologist he couldn't. [AR] said he didn't want any talking because he had done that before and it doesn't work. [AR] said he didn't think Autism was the problem -if you sort the anxiety it would be fine. [AR] said he had just worked this out although the appt was 3-4 months ago.

[AR] appeared very down and Mrs Allred said she felt sad that AR was so down about it. [AR] said that doesn't help and it's not fair that his case isn't urgent to them and if he said he was going to commit suicide he would be seen straight away and he might as well say that. Mrs Allred said that would be very difficult for everyone and wouldn't solve the situation and make it worse. Mrs Allred said she would speak to Mrs Hodson and his dad to find a solution and [AR] was happy about this.”

222. Mrs Allred went on to contact AR's father and recounted what AR had said to her. She urged AR's father to keep a very close eye on him and to contact the school if anyone dealing with his mental health needed to be contacted.

223. AR's disclosures around his mental health were discussed at the TAF meeting on 19 January 2021 [Exhibit JH/74 – LCC000310]:

“Discussed action plan.

[AR] has reported to key worker that he is not feeling anxious anymore and recognises this is mostly because he is not being put into situations that cause his

anxiety, he has declined support around his anxiety and declined a referral to CAMHS. This is a direct contradiction to [AR's] discussions at school where he has spoken about feeling anxious to Mrs Allred, has asked about how the brain deals with anxiety and has also discussed wanting medication. Alphonse [AR] has previously mentioned wanting medication, but as this would need to be prescribed via CAMHS he declined this.

It was agreed a referral to CAMHS would be revisited with [AR].

School continue to support [AR] with his social needs within school and are moving at his pace in terms of introducing him to classrooms with other students. Extensive work has been completed by key worker around family relationships and dynamics, and Alphonse has reported improvements in this area and a calmer home atmosphere.

[AR] is confirmed on the ASD pathway and a telephone/video appointment has been scheduled.

All actions from CFW have been completed, therefore case to close.”

224. Following this meeting, AR was due to have a virtual meeting for his ASD assessment. He was formally diagnosed with ASD in February 2021 and started working with Samantha Steed from Alder Hey CAMHS. Acorns were notified of AR's ASD diagnosis by way of an email from AR's father on 11 April 2021 [Exhibit JH/75 – LCC001556]. He enclosed a copy of AR's ASD Assessment Report [Exhibit JH/76 – LCC000097] dated 16 February 2021. I suggested that a review meeting be arranged to discuss next steps in light of AR's diagnosis which took place on 23 April 2021 [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.42].

225. In terms of Forensic CAMHS, the only involvement that Acorns had with them was at the meeting on 21 January 2020 [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.61-62] and [Exhibit JH/50 – LCC000697], and the strategy meeting on 4 March 2020. Acorns did not have any involvement with Forensic CAMHS outside of these meetings and we were not asked for any input either before or after. Forensic CAMHS were very dismissive of our concerns about the level of premeditation of the attack at The Range on 11 December 2019, the severity and lack of remorse shown by AR and the potential risk of harm he

presented to Acorns' pupils and staff. They were patronising and inappropriate in their responses, despite the fact they had not met AR or his family. It was a very uncomfortable meeting on 21 January 2020; I felt unsupported and under pressure from other agencies to take AR back into school before the risk to our staff and pupils was understood.

226. Following a TAF meeting on 19 May 2020 [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.54], and on 20 May 2020, I sent an email to LCC raising a number of concerns regarding the risks that AR posed to staff and pupils at Acorns [Exhibit JH/77 – LCC000998]. I set out as follows:

- *“Neither Dad nor AR seem to have moved on in their thinking in the 6 months since the incident.*
- *Dad seems to be of the opinion that AR carried out the attack because of events at The Acorns, specifically the "fight" that he continues to refer to.*
- *Dad stated that AR is concerned over the level of monitoring at The Acorns. AR is annoyed by it and Dad doesn't know how he will respond. "It agitates him and his reaction is not the AR we know at home".*
- *Dad does not see any value in any of the work we do at The Acorns, he seems to think our pupils all have learning difficulties. He does not accept that AR is with us for a specific reason.*
- *He is of the opinion that AR needs to be at a mainstream school supported by a TA. I did state in the meeting that AR would not be able to go to a mainstream in the immediate future, but I'm not sure whether Dad accepts this, as he repeated the request later in the meeting.*
- *Dad seems to perceive that AR is the victim rather than the perpetrator. He excuses his behaviour, even excusing him carrying a knife "because he was frightened". Anna did point out that this was still not an appropriate response, but Dad did not seem to accept this and seeks to deflect blame.*
- *Dad stated that he is "A very good child, very respectable, but "If you do something to me, I do something to you harder"". Dad agreed that AR needs help in learning that this is not an appropriate response, but then stated that AR can be immovable and once he's made his mind up that's it. This concerns me as potentially any work we do with AR might be undermined by Dad.*

- *So far we have had complete non compliance with school work provided. Dad expressed his concerns that The Acorns do not teach AR in the way he likes to learn, which again is deflection as he has been offered a lot of support, including daily phone calls and emails and individual support from senior teachers via Microsoft Teams.*
- *Anna discussed that YOT considered that there was medium risk of serious harm but because of lockdown imminence wasn't there. If we do bring AR back in 1-1 with a specialist teacher, we will then have opportunity and imminence.*

In view of the meeting yesterday, I feel that AR poses to us all as a school has increased rather than reduced. I have a duty to both staff and pupils in raising my concerns with you."

227. It had been apparent during the TAF meeting that AR and his father were still of the opinion that AR had not done anything wrong and that him being at Acorns and being involved in a physical altercation with another pupil was the reason for his behaviour on 11 December 2019 at The Range. I was concerned that despite the input from the Youth Offending Team and other agencies, AR's attitude and beliefs, and those of his father, had not changed. In my view, this increased the risk of AR planning and carrying out an act of retribution against pupils and staff once he was back in school.

228. Andrea Fontaine of LCC responded on 21 May 2020 advising that whilst she appreciated the concern and frustration around the perceived mindset of AR and his father, she did not consider this to increase the risk posed by AR "*because there is appropriate parenting in place.*" She went on to say that there was no "*new or additional information shared that would suggest an increased risk.*" Anna Croll of the Youth Offending Team further responded on 22 May 2020 expressing her support for Ms Fontaine's views. She had assessed AR as being "*a medium risk of serious harm*". Although she agreed that there was an increased opportunity for AR to commit offences and/or cause serious harm, she did not assess this as placing him in the category of high risk.

229. I did not agree with this. I had real concerns about parenting whilst AR was at Acorns. At this time, AR's father was seeking to shift blame to Acorns for AR's behaviour and the incident at The Range, and he viewed AR as a victim rather than a perpetrator,

even seeming to defend him carrying a knife. He made his views about Acorns, the pupils and staff known in his email to Social Services dated 2 March 2020 [Exhibit JH/51 – LCC000482 pg.2], which was shared at the multi-agency strategy meeting on 4 March 2020. He continued to push these views during the TAF meeting on 19 May 2020. In my mind, this only served to increase the risk of AR carrying out another attack whilst he was in school.

230. AR father sought to manage AR by appeasement and negotiation, which was not appropriate parenting. I considered that in AR's father repeating his views in relation to Acorns at the 19 May 2020 TAF meeting constituted "*new or additional information*" in that he continued to hold these views therefore prompting the need for a dynamic assessment of ongoing risk.

231. I did not agree with Ms Croll's assessment that AR posed "*a medium risk of serious harm*". Both AR and his father had been completely non-compliant with any requests from Acorns. The risk of a further attack being carried out had been reduced by way of the Covid-19 lockdown, however there had been no assessment of what would happen once there was a more imminent risk of harm, namely AR returning to school premises.

232. I did raise my concerns with other professionals, but I felt that they were dismissed. We had the option to permanently exclude AR from Acorns due to the incident at The Range but neither myself, nor Headteacher Jane Eccleston, felt that this was the right thing to do. In excluding AR, we would have simply been moving the risk on elsewhere and AR might have been lost to the system.

233. Due to lockdown, the school was generally empty with no other pupils on site at the same time as AR and minimal staffing due to lessons being delivered virtually. This allowed us to the opportunity to bring AR back into school on High Support and to conduct our own risk assessment. I tried at first to source a specialist teacher with funding from LCC but was unable to do so. I considered the staff at Acorns and felt confident that Mrs Allred was highly qualified and skilled in working with the hardest to reach pupils, so I asked her if she was willing to work with AR on a two-to-one basis alongside Janet Lewis. I changed Mrs Allred's rota to enable her to do this. We carried out an initial risk assessment and put a number of measures in place which I have addressed in detail earlier in my statement.

234. I did not agree with the approach taken by LCC to supporting AR and his family. Social Services were very quick to de-escalate to Level 3 and then Level 2. Early Help were very quick to close the case altogether. In the time we worked with AR and his family, we were the only consistent professionals with an overview of the family and AR's history and progress. AR's father had no respect for the school and our staff or any understanding of what we were trying to do to help. He did not trust us and expressed this many times. This meant that we needed the support of other agencies to help support the family. AR had repeated changes in social workers and family support workers who started again from the beginning each time. AR and his family were very reluctant to trust professionals and it would take time to build up a relationship with services and individual professionals which would then be closed.

235. On 15 June 2020, I sent an email to Ms Fontaine as follows [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.51]:

"I think it's important to share that school has had quite a few issues in engaging with the family, despite efforts put in over the months. In view of your email below indicating that it 'leaves little by the way of a role for our service at present,' I'm a bit concerned that if CFW isn't involved over the summer - when schools will not be in the position to make any provision for students - we will find it more challenging to reach [AR] in September if he does not return soon.

My understanding of working together to safeguard children 2018 with regard to early help services such as LCC CFW service, is that services should improve family functioning and build the family's own capability to solve problems. We are happy to work with you on this and you appear to be having more success than school. It would help us if you could continue to work directly with [AR] over the summer?

We feel the family need more support so that they do engage and trust us and he will eventually re-engage with some learning. Also there is a real need for services to work closer together during these unprecedented times

We have made substantial efforts to engage [AR] and indeed parents, to support him. However, they appear to be putting up barriers. We have tried various methods to provide learning for [AR] and methods for contact to be maintained between him and specific staff. He won't engage with any of the learning.

We can provide 1-1 teaching on site as described by Jo. We could have him taxied in and that is being looked at. We don't know of any other barrier? You appear to suggest there may be others?

Today, colleagues went to the home to visit and asked parents to read and sign our reviewed Home School Agreement and behaviour policy, which is something we have to do as part of our risk assessment process advised by both the DfE and LCC. This is the case for all of our pupils and future admissions. I have learned that dad would not sign this today. This in itself is not a concern as I understand he may want to peruse it thoroughly, but I suspect he will not return it to us or may refuse. It's really essential our families understand why this is important at this time and all parents have been supportive. Is there a possibility that you could support with this?

The picture for September is not clear for any school but the 1-1 teaching is in place. However, it is necessary that the family get the message from other services to consider [AR] re-engaging as soon as possible.

I welcome your thoughts in relation to this email."

236. We offered for AR to come back into school at the beginning of June 2020, which is when we were allowed to open again to vulnerable pupils following lockdown. This place was refused by AR's father. At this time, we had not physically seen AR since December 2019, despite making home visits. Neither AR nor his father had engaged with the school, no schoolwork had been completed and there were no lines of communication open between the school and the family. Barriers to this were always put in place by the family. There was no relationship with the school, however Ms Fontaine had managed to have regular contact with the family. We were concerned that if she closed the family to Early Help, as was being suggested, that we would have no way of rebuilding trust with them and re-engaging AR in education.

237. On 1 December 2021, Acorns received an Encompass Referral from Lancashire Police advising that AR had kicked his father and thrown a plate at a car parked outside of the family home causing the front windscreen to crack [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.16]. Acorns did not take any steps following this notification. The relationship between AR and his father had been deteriorating since January 2021 when Acorns were first

made aware by the Youth Offending Team of a physical altercation between them. There had been a series of such incidents over the course of 2021, and we had concerns that AR's father was becoming fearful of AR at times. The information in the report was not volunteered by AR's father and actually quite often when issues were raised with his father he would simply deny that incidents had occurred.

238. Mrs Allred agreed with AR's father that she would text him before phoning so that she could speak to him without AR listening and becoming angry. We had previously spoken to AR and his father independently of each other on more than one occasion and they had both reported that they felt safe at home. AR was working with Early Help, Targeted Youth Support and CAMHS at the time of this incident. At the TAF meeting on 12 January 2022, Family Therapy was agreed as a way forward [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346], pg.14].

239. Following this incident, AR was not managed any differently in school.

Missing on a Bus and Reflections of multi-agency working

240. On 17 March 2022, AR's father telephoned the school to report that AR was missing [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.4-6]. He was advised to call 999 due to concerns around AR's vulnerabilities. Mrs Allred later contacted AR's father to ask if AR had returned home and was advised that the police had located him however no further information was provided. Mrs Allred sent an email to Samantha Steed at CAMHS, copying in AR's father, to notify her of the incident. She highlighted that AR's father was "*understandably distressed and concerned*" and requested that Ms Steed follow up with AR when she next spoke with him. An Encompass Referral was later received at 6:55pm with details of the incident.

241. A Police MASH notification was received on 18 March 2022 [Exhibit JH/78 – LCC001398]. On receipt, Mrs Allred contacted both Ms Steed and AR's father but neither disclosed any details around what had happened. They were not aware that Acorns had seen the Police MASH notification and Encompass Referral. AR's father advised that AR was meeting with Ms Steed that day and had a meeting arranged at Presfield on 21 March 2022.

242. We were concerned that information about this incident had been deliberately withheld from us by AR's father and that CAHMS had not been forthcoming about the

true nature of the incident. We had not been told by either that AR had been found in possession of a knife, or that he had stated his intention to use it. Nor had we been told about AR's reference to making poison. These were troubling omissions.

243. Acorns took the decision to notify Presfield of the incident on 17 March 2022 as they would not have received the Encompass Referral. Mrs Allred spoke to the Deputy Headteacher and, following this, Cheryl Smith (Designated Safeguarding Lead) on 21 March 2022 and shared the following information [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.4]:

"[AR] ran away from home on Thursday with a kitchen knife with a plan to stab somebody. This was as a result of taking literally information from Sam his CAMHS worker and he thought this would be a good idea as result. When police picked him up he seemed to have know insight into the actual risk of taking this action -no harm was done.

Mrs Allred [AR] would be very unlikely to do anything in school however he will need to be closely supervised (Acorns have asked all staff to be aware and carefully check [AR] on arrival into school).

Do not discuss the incident with him as he will probably not want the school to know as he is probably very keen to give a good impression.

[AR] has done work on this following his previous incident when YOT was involved. A social story has been used by Mrs Allred so he understands when he has a big problem he must talk it through or he may damage his future. At present in [AR's] perception he is in between schools (he is refusing to attend Acorns) and he hasn't got a member of staff who talks through his problems with him.

A full CPOMS report has been sent to the school but school will send an up to date report with the Encompass report on from Thursday.

Cheryl Smith asked has [AR] spoken to Sam since and will [AR] listen to her. Mrs Allred confirmed Sam was speaking to

[AR] on Friday and she has a strong relationship with her and will listen. Cheryl asked to have Sam's contact for further discussions if needed.

Cheryl asked do social stories work with [AR] and Mrs Allred said he doesn't like them and feels patronised however you can go through the process so that he understands how to do things differently in the future.

Cheryl said that she had not seen the CPOMS and Mrs Allred said she thinks the head Hayley Dawson has seen the CPOMS report. Mrs Allred agreed to get a full CPOMS report sent to her before the meeting on Wednesday.

All 3 agreed that the transition between schools has possibly contributed to [AR] finding things difficult and agreed to stay in close contact between now and Easter when [AR] leaves Acorns.

Mrs Lewis agreed to send a full CPOMS report to Cheryl"

244. On 22 March 2022, Mrs Allred emailed Ms Steed to ask again about the events on 17 March 2022 [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.3-4]. Ms Steed again did not disclose what had happened. Mrs Allred forwarded Ms Steed's response to Presfield on 23 March 2022 along with the following information:

"Sam has not shared any concerns at all, so I am wondering if the risk is lower -you need to speak with Sam.

Sam Steed, [AR] and [AR's] dad will be unaware that we know about the events on Thursday. We only know as we received the Encompass report from the police.

I am very conscious if this is discussed in the wrong way it will break trust with mum, dad and [AR] so please be mindful and I think the best way is that they volunteer the information and if in doubt speak with Sam.

As you can see [AR] no longer wishes to attend Acorns, so please be mindful to build that rapport with him so he talks through his concerns with someone."

245. Ms Smith and Hayley Dawson (Head of Sixth Form, Presfield) responded to thank Mrs Allred for sharing the information which would be helpful in supporting AR and his family moving forward. Ms Dawson confirmed that she had a meeting with AR's parents on the morning of 23 March 2022 and that she would see whether they disclosed the details of the recent incident without disclosing that Acorns had notified Presfield.

246. It was at this stage that Acorns considered that the level of risk presented by AR had increased. Mrs Allred sent an email to all staff on 18 March 2022 as follows [Exhibit JH/79 – LCC001588]:

"[AR] is moving to a new school after Easter and he is struggling to deal with the transition and there are concerns regarding his behaviour as he is struggling to cope.

It is possible we won't see him and if he does there will be no issues. However, if he attends, please be extra vigilant on arrival: wand him carefully and check that he seems ready to come into school. If you interact with him in school, please be very pleasant and calm, and very aware to alert me if you believe there is any risk to staff/pupils."

247. When reflecting on my dealings with other agencies, and with a few exceptions, it was extremely challenging to get other agencies to take Acorns' concerns seriously. The impression given was that we were "just the PRU" and there was a lack of professional respect for our level of expertise, skill and in hearing our voice.
248. In the period leading up to the incident at The Range on 11 December 2019, I remember a rising sense of urgency and a gut feeling that something was about to happen but being unable to get any help from anyone. This is with the exception of Early Help and Ann Cookson's team.
249. Following 11 December 2019, and during the meetings that took place between the incident and March 2020, Acorns were put under immense pressure to take AR back into school. I felt that the other agencies involved wanted to minimise the risk that he presented and put him back into our school without considering what might happen to our staff and/or our pupils. We were even reported to Children Missing Education ("CME") and information from AR's father heavily criticising the school was shared at the multi-agency strategy meeting on 4 March 2020. The only voices that supported us at this time were Laura Davidson from Early Help and Pita Oates from LCC.
250. Acorns had a good working relationship with both of AR's Youth Offending Team workers. There was an open channel of communication and full support from Anna Croll and John Fitzpatrick.
251. Acorns had a good relationship with Early Help however we were concerned about how swiftly the TAF plans were closed. Acorns raised concerns around this at the time.

252. Acorns' relationship with CAMHS was uncomfortable. I felt at the time, and am still of the view, that the voice of AR's father and his opinions in relation to the school tainted our working relationship with CAMHS. There was poor information sharing at times from CAMHS, for instance they did not share with us the details of the incident on 17 March 2022 which we would have been unaware of if we had not received the Encompass Referral. They appeared to hold a negative view in relation to Acorns which influenced their dealings with us. The basis of this negative belief appeared to be that AR would be better off if he was removed from Acorns.

253. The SEND Team at LCC, and in particular Carole Power, were very supportive and helped Acorns in managing our relationship with AR's father when needed.

Handover from The Range High School to Presfield High School

254. I have already detailed the lengths that Acorns went to so as to ensure that Presfield were aware of the incident on 17 March 2022 and the change in risk profile that this incident had given rise to.

255. When a pupil is referred to Acorns, we receive referral paperwork either from PAT where there has been a permanent exclusion, or from the relevant PRU for a PRU-to-PRU transfer. If we are asked to be the named school for EHCP purposes an EHCP consultation will take place.

256. For pupils who are being placed permanently on the roll. We receive CPOMS files and a common transfer file ("CTF") once they were confirmed on roll. For interventions or medical places where pupils are dual rolled, then we have separate referral forms, but no CTF and no CPOMs. We only meet other schools for a handover if the pupil is a medical or intervention pupil. In that case, the school will usually attend the admissions meeting.

257. I have set out in detail earlier in my statement the information sharing process which took place between The Range and Acorns at the point of AR's permanent exclusion. Initially, the information received was quite limited however this is not uncommon. I followed this up with Mr Cregeen at The Range on 21 November 2019 due to the concerns Acorns had in relation to AR's presentation and behaviour in school. This is not normally something I would do. The Range were able to provide further information in

relation to the incident that had led to AR's permanent exclusion and the subsequent referrals to CAMHS.

258. As I have already stated it was accepted by the Acorns that we could not meet AR's needs from the outset of his arrival. We had supported AR and his family in securing the diagnosis of ASD so that an EHCP could be prepared and an appropriate provision sought. On 6 August 2020, a final EHCP was issued in relation to AR following parental request [Exhibit JH/57 – LCC000298]. It made clear that parental preference was for AR to be in a mainstream school. This was not however based on Acorns' professional advice; we were of the view that AR required special educational provision.

259. It was not until 25 March 2021 that AR's father contacted Mrs Allred to ask if the option of placing AR at Presfield could be explored due to AR's ASD diagnosis and the EHCP [Exhibit JH/80 – LCC001555]. In order for this to be a consideration, AR's EHCP would have to be reviewed and put before the panel to agree that he required specialist provision.

260. An EHCP review meeting took place on 20 May 2021 [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.29]. During this meeting, AR's father made it clear that he was not happy with the documents supporting the EHCP review and that he did not want the section that read, "A risk assessment to be completed to identify and minimise the risk for [AR] and those working with him", to be included.

261. On 28 May 2021, I completed and sent to Carole Power the documentation supporting the EHCP review which included an updated version of my educational advice [Exhibit JH/81 – LCC000105]. This was to support in the revision of the EHCP to best meet AR's needs.

262. A final EHCP was approved on 1 December 2021 [Exhibit JH/82 – LCC000139]. It had been substantially revised however remained very detailed and set out fully the support for AR's mental health and his previous engagement with the Youth Offending Team. The EHCP, and supporting paperwork, were sent out for consultation to schools in the LCC area. Presfield was one of the schools consulted and was the preferred option as they had a Sixth Form provision and AR was in Year 11 by that stage. I did not see the papers that were sent to Presfield, nor would I expect to, as this is the role of LCC. Acorns are not involved in consultation with other schools.

263. Hayley Dawson from Presfield met with AR on 20 January 2022 [Exhibit JH/83 – LCC001679]. The visit was “*very positive*”. Presfield offered AR a place which was accepted. He was funded by LCC to start in September 2022. Acorns requested that the date be brought forward as AR was refusing to attend at school and wanted to go to Presfield. This was agreed between LCC and Presfield and revised funding was agreed for a start date of 19 April 2022.
264. The usual process when a pupil leaves Acorns is for the school to have a handover meeting with the new school to share any assessment carried out and to agree the process of transition. We would then share the CTF and CPOMS Record with the new school.
265. AR’s handover to Presfield was more detailed than usual because of the complexities around him. The EHCP that was shared with Presfield by LCC references all the support that AR was receiving for his mental health, his diagnoses and his involvement with the Youth Offending Team. It also states the objective that “*AR will be able to identify and avoid inappropriate behaviours including those which place self and/or others at risk and which may lead to serious consequences both inside and outside of the educational context*”, and “*A risk assessment to be completed to identify and minimize the risk for AR and those working with him.*”
266. Acorns were contacted by Presfield on 12 January 2022 requesting a meeting with AR [Exhibit JH/84 – LCC001587]. Mrs Allred contacted AR’s father and asked him to speak to AR about it. She also went through the Presfield website with AR to prepare him. As mentioned above, he met with Hayley Dawson at Acorns on 20 January 2022 [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.14].
267. AR had his first visit to Presfield with his mother on 24 January 2022. Acorns understood that this meeting went well, and he was offered a place. As referred to earlier in my statement, and on 11 February 2022, Mrs Allred provided information to Samantha Steed at CAMHS in order to support AR’s transition to Presfield [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.11]. She also made enquiries with Presfield about the possibility of moving AR’s start date forward to manage his transition. enquire about the possibility of an early start to manage his transition. This was agreed on 24 February [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.8] and [Exhibit JH/85 – LCC001592].

268. Mrs Allred further contacted Hayley Dawson on 2 March 2022 raising concerns in relation to his academic progress, the need for access arrangements and how these could be managed at Presfield [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.7] and [Exhibit JH/86 – LCC001583].
269. On 21 March 2022, Acorns contacted Presfield regarding the incident that had taken place on 17 March 2022 [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346, pg.4]. Details of the Encompass Referral were disclosed. As referenced earlier in my statement, Hayley Dawson met with AR's parents on 23 March 2022. Following this, Acorns provided a full PDF version download of the CPOMS Record to Presfield. This was shared via Egress secure email platform and is the full version that can be seen at [Exhibit JH/04 – LCC001346].
270. On 27 April 2022, Mrs Allred provided a handover to Presfield [Exhibit JH/87 – LCC001595]. She attached the following documentation to support AR's placement at Presfield:
- a. AR Personal Learning Plan
 - b. AR CATS Assessment
 - c. AR Pupil Risk Assessment (internal)
 - d. AR Sensory Profile
 - e. Learner Passport
271. The provision of this information was to support Presfield in their interventions with AR and to assist them in identifying improvements as he settled in. Mrs Allred advised Presfield that she had all of AR's workbooks from July 2020 which they may find useful as evidence of what he had learnt. She left them in school reception for Presfield to collect. Mrs Allred left Acorns the following week for a new post.
272. Efforts were made at every stage to be fully transparent and open with Presfield as part of AR's transition. Given the difficulties experienced by Acorns in managing AR, and the complexities of his presentation, we felt it crucial to go above and beyond in handing over to them to ensure that they had all relevant information and, importantly, understood the level of risk associated with AR.

273. My hope was that AR would thrive at Presfield. It was clear to me that he needed to be in a specialist setting and Presfield were in a position to provide specialist education and had expertise in educating pupils with ASD, which was not a function of Acorns. We were however very fortunate that Mrs Allred had a specialism in teaching pupils with ASD and her contribution to supporting and managing AR and his family was invaluable.

274. Following AR's move to Presfield, I assumed he had been attending and engaging well. It is only due to my engagement with the Inquiry that I have become aware that AR did not ultimately attend at Presfield, and the situation deteriorated quickly. I am genuinely sorry that this is so, and I feel a little surprised that Presfield did not reach out to Acorns in these circumstances as we may have been able to assist them having taught AR since October 2019. It is disappointing that AR did not attend and engage with Presfield as he was an intelligent young person who was capable of achieving his GCSEs.

Reflections

275. To the bereaved families, the victims of the attack and all of those affected by the awful events of 29 July 2024 I wish to extend my sincere sympathies for what occurred.

276. AR was a very unusual child. He was someone that I was concerned about. At times, I was very concerned about him. However, I never imagined that he was someone capable of carrying out such a vile and evil attack. I perceived AR to be a risk in school and in the home. We were concerned that he was someone capable of being radicalised and that he was vulnerable. He was so socially isolated that I could not conceive of the idea that he might attack a group of strangers, let alone young children. The tragic events are so far removed from what I would have associated AR with in terms of risk.

277. AR was a highly unusual pupil, the most unusual I had experienced during my career. At Acorns, we educate and support young people with a range of complex needs however I have never come across a pupil like AR. He was incredibly difficult to read and had an unusual energy and was unpredictable. There was a sinister undertone, and it was difficult to build rapport. He had no respect for authority and generally a lack of respect of other pupils and staff. He was insistent that his views alone were correct and everyone else was wrong. There was never any sense of remorse or accountability for his actions. Those features are, in my view, extraordinary.

278. My feeling is that Acorns were left to figure out how best to manage AR without the support of other agencies and in circumstances where there was significant resistance and opposition from AR's family. I am an educator, not a clinician, and needed other agencies to step in to offer guidance and support. Clinical oversight was crucial in circumstances where we were dealing with a pupil who had complex social and wellbeing needs and a diagnosis of ASD.
279. AR's family and their own complex dynamic and backgrounds were undoubtedly a relevant factor. AR's father's mistrust of authority and his lack of respect of the Acorns and our work were a real issue in legitimising opposition to our efforts to work with him.
280. It is fairly common for PRUs to educate pupils who are fixated with violence and who access distressing content online. Staff are vigilant in identifying this, discussing it with pupils and raising concerns with parents and other agencies. I referred earlier in my statement to the online safety guidance provided to parents and the work we do directly with pupils in school to promote online safety. I do not know what steps AR's parents were taking to address the issue at home but on reflection I think they had lost control of AR, and they were minimalizing their problems to professionals. He ruled at home and in the end, I think that his parents were frightened of him and afraid of asking for support or of divulging the extent of their problems.
281. Despite the difficult situation we found ourselves in, we never gave up on AR and never walked away. We continued to work with him and his family whilst he was on the roll and took a dynamic and robust approach to risk assessment to support and protect AR, other pupils and staff and to mitigate risk as far as possible. Without the skills, support and guidance of Mrs Allred, I believe that other pupils and staff would have been subject to a greater risk of harm from AR.
282. I am heartbroken for all of the victims of this attack, and I am also heartbroken that the perpetrator was one of ours. Notwithstanding the many issues we had experienced with AR we want our pupils to go on and thrive in their lives, to learn from their time at the Acorns and to be well equipped for life and further education (where possible). I do not recognise the person that I saw on the news. The boy that attended our school was well kempt. I have been left asking myself what on earth has happened after he left the Acorns.

283. Inevitably I, like many others, have been left to wonder where it all went wrong and whether these awful events might have been prevented. These are ultimately matters for the Inquiry to consider but I do have some observations which I wish to share.
284. Firstly, it is relevant to note the delay in AR's diagnosis of ASD. Pupils like AR who present as having undiagnosed traits of ASD are all too often not referred for assessment because they are academically able. When I first met AR, he presented as being what I would describe as being very autistic. The risk with pupils with undiagnosed ASD who are academically able are that they can mask their struggles until it suddenly presents as a crisis. As will be obvious from this witness statement the process of securing an ASD diagnosis for AR was extremely challenging and multiple referrals were rejected until AR's behaviour descended into violent criminality. By the time the ASD was provisionally diagnosed AR had already been excluded from mainstream education with little prospect of finding another mainstream school who would accept a pupil who had been excluded for bringing a knife into school. His strong sense of injustice for what had occurred seems to have started a chain of events which caused the breakdown of his education and will have had a much broader impact on his life.
285. In saying this I also wish to make clear that I do not think that ASD explains or in any way justifies AR's violent criminal behaviour. I reference it in the context of AR becoming disenfranchised and increasing his isolation.
286. Shortcomings in the EHCP process and in particular unrealistic parental preferences have combined to extend AR's time at the Acorns when a specialist provision ought to have been sought sooner. It is difficult to say what difference this might have made but conceivably an EHCP prepared before matters had come to a head at The Range might have identified a more suitable learning provision and environment where a crisis might have been averted.
287. Whilst there were examples of good multi-agency working, I was left with a feeling that the Acorns were not listened to and that our concerns were not taken seriously. There was a lack of professional respect for our expertise as a PRU and frankly a lack of expertise offered by other agencies at other times where it came to the assessment of AR's risk. The attitude of Forensic CAHMS appeared to advocate waiting for AR to offend before then reacting whereas we always felt that AR needed more proactive management because of the level of risk that he presented.

288. Our experiences with AR demonstrated a gap in the multi-agency working around escalation of concerns. As a school we had tried to warn of escalating behaviour with AR in late 2019 but our views were not listened to, or no one took responsibility for investigating them. Agencies adopted a reactive rather than a proactive approach. No other agency stepped up and we had no process of challenge or escalation.
289. History repeated itself when we made the three Prevent referrals. We were made to feel like we were overreacting. Our views were dismissed with very little information or feedback by the Police. They did not work with us to discuss our concerns in an effective manner. We had a real insight into AR that we could not possibly capture or fully articulate effectively in a sterile referral form. At the very least we could have worked with the Police to discuss how best to manage the risk from the school's perspective. There was a lack of professional respect and a lack of professional curiosity. Very sadly our concerns were in fact vindicated in the worst way possible.
290. We work hard at Acorns to create a sympathetic learning environment, and we are proud of our high success rates. The vast majority of young people go on to positive post aged 16 destinations. Some of our former pupils have gone on to prestigious universities, despite having not accessed education prior to joining Acorns. The number of pupils leaving Acorns with education, employment or training is well above the regional and national average for PRUs. In 2023, 91.6% of pupils went on to education, employment or training; in 2024 the figure was 93%.
291. I do not think that our organisation could have done any more. By putting Mrs Allred in as a key adult / teacher and putting all the resources we had into managing and mitigating risk we gave AR someone he could trust and talk through his worries with, reducing the risk that he presented in school. I think as an organisation we kept AR and everyone else safe for the time that he was with us. We believed that Presfield was the right specialist setting for him and we were positive that he would thrive there if he could build that relationship up again. However, the challenges of engaging AR and obtaining the support of his parents should not be underestimated.
292. In saying that I also recognise that we are a Pupil Referral Unit, we are not a special school. We were very clear right from the very beginning that AR was extremely unusual and that we were not the right setting for him. This was discussed at the Forensic CAMHs meeting on 21 January 2020 and they agreed that he needed a specialist setting

but stated “*you have been left holding the baby!*” That is exactly how it felt. That it took from January 2020 until January 2022 to find a specialist provision (delayed because of the parental preference for mainstream education) highlights a shortcoming in the EHCP process. There was a dearth of available guidance, policy or support for how to deal with a situation like AR. Nevertheless, as I have said I would not have foreseen this attack from what we knew of AR and based upon our experiences of him.

293. At Acorns we have made changes to the way that Prevent referrals are written, reviewed and how links are made. As Headteacher I have responsibility for the overview of any referrals, rather than this being delegated to the DSL. I have also commissioned professional supervision for my DSL so that she can discuss any concerns with the Safeguarding Team at LCC. We have done lots of work in school training staff as our cohort becomes increasingly complex. This has included a larger team of staff who are DSL trained; increase in SEN and SENCO training for staff; training in trauma informed approaches to support pupils; several staff undertaking NPQ courses so that our practice is research based; relational approach to behaviour management; training in de-escalation and restorative practice.

294. Referrals to Prevent should not be viewed as a paper only exercise. Having the ability to track referrals and receive comprehensive feedback from Prevent would be an invaluable introduction to the process in order to provide reassurance to schools and other agencies making those referrals that they had been properly considered with justification provided as to the decision made.

Improvements within LCC

295. At the Rapid Review Safeguarding Board meeting held by LCC in August 2024 [Exhibit JH/88 – LCC000786], I raised concerns that I had not known how to escalate my concerns with other agencies in the period leading up to December 2019 and again in the period leading up to March 2020. This was included as part of the action plan from that review. Each school now has a Designated Senior Early Help Lead Professional who comes into school to meet with the DSL and discuss any concerns with individual pupils.

296. I have not needed to escalate concerns with other agencies following the new guidance. Multi agency working has improved hugely since the events around AR. There

is a now a triage process in place for referrals to MASH whereby Acorns refer into a central hub, either via email or telephone, so that the school is no longer reliant on making referrals via one person, previously Mr Chipchase. Once a referral has been made, this is allocated and reviewed with advice provided to the school. This improvement has been effective in reassuring Acorns that referrals and concerns are dealt with and responded to appropriately without the fear of them slipping through the net or not being responded to in a timely manner. The meetings with our Designated Senior Early Help Lead have been invaluable in terms of advice provided and acted on.

297. The Head of Educational Improvement issued guidance to all schools via the Headteachers Briefing to highlight the professional disagreements and escalation policy with all schools.

Other matters

298. There are no additional matters I wish to draw to the attention of the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth.

Signed: **Signature**

Printed: JOANNE ELIZABETH HODSON

Dated: 2 September 2025

Appendix 1: Index to the Witness Statement of Joanne Hodson, The Acorns School

Exhibit No.	Inquiry reference no.	Document Description
JH/01	MERP000509	Joanne Hodson Witness Statement to Merseyside Police dated 19 August 2024
JH/02	LCC001345	Version 1 Acorns Chronology
JH/03	LCC001580	Staff Chronology of AR at Acorns
JH/04	LCC001346	CPOMS Record
JH/05	LCC001370	Email from Pupil Access Team to Acorns referring AR dated 14 October 2019
JH/06	LCC001394	AR's Permanent Exclusion Notice from The Range High School dated 9 October 2019
JH/07	LCC001373	Alternative and Complimentary Education and Residential Services ("ACERS") request for tuition out of school dated 14 October 2019
JH/08	LCC001372	Letter from The Range High School to AR's parents advising of permanent exclusion dated 9 October 2019
JH/09	LCC001374	Email from Pupil Access Team to Acorns attaching Alder Hey CAMHS letter to The Range High School dated 17 October 2019
JH/10	LCC001368	Alder Hey CAMHS letter to The Range High School dated 12 October 2019
JH/11	LCC001411	Email from Joanne Hodson to all Acorns staff dated 17 October 2019
JH/12	LCC001437	Dyscalculia Screening, Parents Record dated 31 October 2019
JH/13	LCC001438	Dyscalculia Screening, Teachers Record dated 31 October 2019
JH/14	LCC001436	Cognitive Abilities Test, Individual report for parents, dated 30 October 2019
JH/15	LCC000007	Cognitive Abilities Test, Individual report for teachers, dated 30 October 2019
JH/16	LCC001430	Social Emotional Wellbeing Assessment Tool 1
JH/17	LCC001431	Social Emotional Wellbeing Assessment Tool 2
JH/18	LCC001432	Social Emotional Wellbeing Assessment Tool updated November 2019
JH/19	LCC001439	Social Emotional Wellbeing Assessment updated 26 November 2019
JH/20	LCC001414	Email from Jill Ellison to Joanne Hodson regarding updated Social Emotional Wellbeing Assessment dated 20 November 2019
JH/21	LCC000384	AR's One Page Profile dated 31 October 2019
JH/22	LCC001434	AR's admission diary dated between 28 and 31 October 2019
JH/23	LCC001433	AR's admission diary dated 20 November 2019
JH/24	LCC000718	AR's Willow timetable for week commencing 4 November 2019
JH/25	LCC001428	Email from Jill Ellison to all Acorns staff advising AR joining Willow group dated 4 November 2019
JH/26	LCC000714	AR's Willow timetable for week commencing 11 November 2019
JH/27	LCC000716	AR's Willow timetable for week commencing 18 November 2019
JH/28	LCC001416	Email from Joanne Hodson to Lancashire CAMHS attaching referral form for AR dated 20 November 2019
JH/29	LCC000775	Referral form for Lancashire CAMHS
JH/30	LCC001421	Email from Wendy Briody to Joanne Hodson rejecting

		Lancashire CAMHS referral dated 21 November 2019 / Joanne Hodson emails with Dawn Meakin dated 22 and 25 November 2019
JH/31	LCC001415	Emails between Joanne Hodson and David Cregeen dated between 21 and 26 November 2019
JH/32	LCC000378	The Range High School Safeguarding Reporting Form dated 8 October 2019
JH/33	LCC000377	The Range High School referral to Alder Hey CAMHS dated 10 October 2019
JH/34	LCC000002	Information received by The Range from PC 4658 Alex McNamee of Lancashire Police on 7 October 2019
JH/35	LCC001417	Email from Joanne Hodson to Community Paediatrics at Alder Hey dated 22 November 2019
JH/36	LCC001419	Emails between Joanne Hodson and Parenting 2000 dated between 22 and 25 November 2019
JH/37	LCC001424	Email from Joanne Hodson to Acorns staff regarding AR Risk Assessment dated 26 November 2019
JH/38	LCC000707	AR's Pupil Risk Assessment Profile
JH/39	LCC001425	Email from Miss Walsh to Joanne Hodson regarding potential bullying of AR dated 26 November 2019
JH/40	LCC001426	Further email from Miss Walsh to Joanne Hodson regarding potential bullying of AR dated 26 November 2019
JH/41	LCC001427	Email from Mrs Low to all Acorns staff regarding Chester Zoo trip dated 28 November 2019
JH/42	LCC001404	Email thread with MASH and PC McNamee dated 3 December 2019
JH/43	LCC001408	Email thread with PC McNamee dated between 3 and 4 December 2019
JH/44	LCC001406	Email from PC Paul Harrison to Acorns dated 4 December 2019
JH/45	LANC000061	Email from Janet Lewis to PC Paul Harrison dated 5 December 2019
JH/46	LCC000234	Record of multi-agency strategy meeting on 17 December 2019
JH/47	LCC001413	Email from Joanne Hodson to LCC Education Managers dated 17 December 2019
JH/48	LCC001503	Letter to AR's parents regarding work being sent home dated 6 January 2020
JH/49	LCC001456	Email thread about work being sent home for AR dated 6 January 2020
JH/50	LCC000697	Notes of Forensic CAMHS meeting dated 21 January 2020
JH/51	LCC000482	Email to Social Services dated 2 March 2020
JH/52	LCC000945	Attendance/Safeguarding Case Work Recording dated between 20 March and 14 April 2020
JH/53	LCC001472	Email from Joanne Hodson to Acorns staff confirming Request for Statutory Assessment agreed dated 17 April 2020
JH/54	LCC001581	Educational Advice from Primary/Secondary Schools, prepared by Joanne Hodson, dated March 2020
JH/55	LCC000049	Kelly Hayes letter to AR's parents confirming EHC Assessment dated 17 April 2020
JH/56	LCC000695	AR's Personalised Learning Profile
JH/57	LCC000298	Final EHCP dated 6 August 2020
JH/58	LCC001872	AR Attendance Marks (Attendance Year 2019/2020)
JH/59	LCC001873	AR Attendance Marks (Attendance Year 2020/2021)

JH/60	LCC001874	AR Attendance Marks (Attendance Year 2021/2022)
JH/61	LCC001401	Records concerning AR's internet usage on 15 November 2019
JH/62	LCC000383	First referral to Prevent by Acorns dated 5 December 2019
JH/63	LCC000455	Second referral to Prevent by Acorns dated 1 February 2021
JH/64	LCC001498	David Cregeen email to Acorns regarding AR Instagram post, dated 1 February 2021
JH/65	LCC001502	Email thread with Prevent referral dated 1 February 2021
JH/66	LCC001526	Email thread regarding second Prevent referral dated 9 February 2021
JH/67	LCC000891	Concern form lodged with LCC dated 1 February 2021
JH/68	LCC001510	Email thread between Acorns, YOT and Social Services dated between 2 and 9 February 2021
JH/69	LCC001400	Third referral to Prevent by Acorns dated 22 April 2021
JH/70	LCC000235	Record of multi-agency strategy meeting on 6 January 2020
JH/71	LCC001548	Email thread with legal advice on sharing Prevent referrals with AR dated 19 July 2021
JH/72	LCC001564	Email thread between Acorns and CAMHS regarding the sharing of Prevent referrals with AR dated between 23 and 30 July 2021
JH/73	LCC000864	Positive Handling Plan
JH/74	LCC000310	TAF Meeting Outcomes dated 19 January 2021
JH/75	LCC001556	Email thread confirming AR's diagnosis with ASD dated between 26 March and 13 April 2021
JH/76	LCC000097	AR's ASD Assessment Report dated 16 February 2021
JH/77	LCC000998	Email thread sharing concerns with LCC following TAF meeting dated 20 May 2020
JH/78	LCC001398	Police MASH notification dated 18 March 2022
JH/79	LCC001588	Email from Maggie Allred to all Acorns staff regarding AR's increased risk dated 18 March 2022
JH/80	LCC001555	Email thread between Maggie Allred and Joanne Hodson regarding Alphonse Rudakubana's request to explore AR being placed at Presfield, dated 25 March 2021
JH/81	LCC000105	EHCP Annual Review Summary Report Form completed by Joanne Hodson, dated 28 May 2021
JH/82	LCC000139	Final EHCP dated 15 December 2021
JH/83	LCC001679	Learning Diary dated between 4 and 21 January 2022
JH/84	LCC001587	Email thread regarding Presfield meeting with AR dated between 12 and 13 January 2022
JH/85	LCC001592	Email thread with Presfield regarding offer of place and start date, dated between 24 and 25 February 2022
JH/86	LCC001583	Email thread regarding AR's transition to Presfield dated between 2 and 3 March 2022
JH/87	LCC001595	Email handover to Presfield dated 27 April 2022
JH/88	LCC000786	Rapid Review Safeguarding Board meeting held by LCC in August 2024