

Southport Inquiry

Witness Name: Laetitia Muzayire

Exhibits: None

Dated: 11 October 2025

THE SOUTHPORT INQUIRY

WITNESS STATEMENT OF LAETITIA MUZAYIRE

I, **LAETITIA MUZAYIRE**, will say as follows: -

Introduction

1. I am the mother of AR (A).
2. Before making this statement, I need to express my deepest sorrow and remorse for the actions of my youngest son. I know there is nothing I can say that will undo or alleviate the pain inflicted on so many lives and I can only imagine the depth of suffering that my child has caused. I am so very sorry. My life shattered that day. I grieve for my own child, for who he has become, as I grieve for the lives that have been devastated by his actions. I understand that these sentiments are very likely to be unwelcome, but they are sincere. My heart is broken, and I carry his actions with me every day. I pray for the lives taken and those who were hurt every day.
3. I make this statement in response to a Rule 9 request dated 8 September 2025 from the Southport Inquiry (the "Inquiry"). I have done my best to answer the Inquiry's questions to the best of my recollection, and I wish to assist the Inquiry with its investigation. However, the Rule 9 request contained in excess of 500 questions across 212 numbered

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paragraphs, and while I have reviewed each element of each question, I am unable to answer every question individually. In some instances, this is because I was not aware of the specific incident or event that I am being asked about, and I learned about it for the first time from the Inquiry's Rule 9 request. In other instances, I now no longer remember the incident, event or person that is referenced in the question. In some cases, I cannot even be certain whether I was made aware of the incident/event at the time but have since forgotten the detail, or whether I was never aware of it to begin with. I no longer have access to my emails and messages or any documents from that time to assist in my recollection of events.

4. I have a lot of holes in my memory. I feel that for many incidents I am asked about, I was not at home or was not aware. I am also concerned that given the passage of time, and how traumatic recent years have been, I mix up my recollection of different incidents - whether it was Alphonse or me who went to the police station, or whether it was Alphonse or me who made a call to the police. I really do not remember these details. Also, as I will go on to explain, Alphonse was the parent who was primarily involved with the children when we were in Southport. He took the lead on engaging with schools and different organisations, both for Dion and for A. There are many things I struggle to remember, and Alphonse reminds me. However, for the purposes of this statement, we have deliberately not discussed our recollections of events or incidents, so that we can give our respective, individual accounts to the Inquiry.
5. Given the limits of my own memory, I am assisted in writing this statement by the detail provided by the Inquiry in the Rule 9 request, which provides information about, and the dates of, specific incidents and events. I am also assisted by the documents made available to me with the Rule 9 request, and by the opening statement made by Counsel to the Inquiry on 16 September 2025, which set out a detailed chronology of incidents, events and A's engagement with different agencies.
6. I have been provided with two previous accounts I gave to the police. The first is a witness statement to the police dated 31 July 2024 [MERP000719], made immediately following the attack. The second is a transcript of interview with Merseyside Police from 4 December 2024 [MERP001432] when I was interviewed under caution in connection with A's attempts to make ricin at home. I have reviewed both documents before making this statement.

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My background

7. I was born in Rwanda in 1972. I was 22 years old during the Rwandan genocide, during which more than 800,000 people were killed. I do not speak about the genocide. My family and I were subjected to horrific violence and abuse, and I do not know how we survived (not all of us did). The terror and trauma of that time and what we endured has never left me. In 2002, I came to the United Kingdom as a refugee and began to build a life in Cardiff.
8. I studied [DPA] in Cardiff as a mature student and I graduated in 2010. My now husband, Alphonse, was also born in Rwanda. He studied [DPA] in Cardiff and graduated in 2008. We built our life together and our two boys were born in Cardiff, Dion in 2004 and A in 2006. After I finished my course in university, I got a temporary job in Cardiff for 12 months. At the same time Alphonse was completing his [DPA] (which was a fixed three-year contract). Both our contracts finished up around the same time (late 2012), and we applied for jobs around the country, agreeing that wherever one of us found a job, the family would move to be near their place of work. I got a job first in the [DPA] [DPA], and we moved to Southport in 2013. Southport was a nice place, and it was our home.
9. I worked in [DPA] from 2013 until 2018. At that time, [DPA] [DPA] and my role moved to [DPA]. By this time, we were living in Banks, and I did not relish the thought of driving to [DPA] every day, so I moved jobs to become a [DPA] in Lancashire. The road from Banks to [DPA] was about 35 minutes.
10. When we moved to Southport, Alphonse did not have a job. When our eldest son, Dion, lost his mobility, we realised that we needed flexibility as my job (which operated on a shift structure) granted very limited flexibility. Alphonse started driving a taxi and it worked as it gave him time to be with the boys and then to work when I was at home.
11. Over an eight week period, the shift pattern at my work involved two weeks of days (Monday to Friday, 08:00-17:00), one week of lates (Monday to Friday, 12:30-21:00),

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another two weeks of days (although with two days of rest in the second week to prepare for nights), and then into a pattern of nights and weekends for two weeks (e.g., night shift (21:00-08:00) on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday; then Thursday and Friday off; all day (08:00-20:00) Saturday and Sunday; then three days of rest; then four nights (21:00-08:00); before having one full week off). After the pattern of nights and weekends, I would start again being on days for two weeks and then a week of lates. This is relevant to explain that I often had limited availability during the day (either working or sleeping to prepare for night work), and Alphonse did the majority of the administration around the boys, engaging with schools, social care, healthcare etc. Alphonse and I were a good team, and although work was hard and we did not have a lot of money, we thought that our system worked.

Summary of A's upbringing – 2006 to 2019

12. We lived in Cardiff when Dion and A were small. A was a normal little boy, like any other baby and little boy. He did not have troubles at school, and I do not remember him having any problems when he was small.
13. We moved to Southport when A was 6 and a half years old and in year 2 of primary school. We lived at first in a rented flat in Southport, but in 2017 we moved to a small house in Banks. A and Dion both attended St Patrick's primary school in Southport. A was popular in school, he made many friends and boys liked him, even though he was new. He had one friend whose dad was a police officer, and I remember A was invited on a caravan trip with them in year 6. He also went to sleepovers at his friends' houses. A was at St Patrick's primary school from year 2 until the end of year 6.
14. As parents, we introduced A to a lot of games, sports and music. A liked running and he played hockey and tennis. He went to a gymnastics club in Southport, and he was good on sports days. He did not enjoy swimming very much, unlike Dion. Both boys enjoyed music and there was music in the house. A played baritone and started to learn the violin but it needed too much patience. A asked to learn the guitar and we paid for private lessons for him for some time – maybe about four months – but in the end he gave that up too. Dion played violin and trombone and enjoyed attending music services provided by the council. A went along with him, although he was not as committed.

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15. A and Dion had a PlayStation at home, and the two boys used to play together. We also used to play card games and Uno to have time together as a family. I have good memories of us playing games together and laughing.
16. A and Dion were always picky eaters. A had a small build anyway, but he was very picky about what he ate. We ended up relying on takeaways just to make sure he was getting food. We wanted him to eat homemade food, and the only thing he liked was Spaghetti Bolognese, which meant that we sometimes had it every day because that was all he would eat. The only other things A would eat were homemade chips, oven baked chicken nuggets and pizza.
17. A liked to win. If you were talking about a subject or a topic, A was the one who had to be right. As a younger boy, this did not show itself too much, but perhaps from year 5, I could see it might be a problem. A would become angry and the other person would have to give up their side of the discussion or argument. I always tried to make peace and have a peaceful environment at home. I would say to A, in a nice way, that we would have to agree to disagree. Reflecting back, this might not have always been a good thing and sometimes I should have held my ground more. My way was to try to teach the boys to make peace around them, to learn to agree to disagree and not to go into conflict.
18. In the summer of 2016, A and I were involved in a car accident on the Coastal Road in Southport. Another car cut across the road in front of us and hit us, and our car ended up in a field. We were both injured, with burns from the air bags. I had back pains and A developed tinnitus, but we got better.
19. A moved to the Range High School in year 7 (2017-2018). A was the only boy from St Patrick's to move to the Range so he had to make new friends.
20. It is relevant at this point to explain that Dion had moved to the Range in year 8 from another school, Christ the King high school in Southport. Christ the King was the high school where most boys from St Patrick's primary school progressed. However, in September of year 7, Dion started experiencing falls and by March the following year, his mobility had deteriorated to such an extent that he was using a wheelchair. Christ the King did not have a lift, which was a huge difficulty for Dion, and so we had to find another school for him, which was the Range in Formby.

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21. When the time came for A to go to high school, it was much easier for both boys to go to the same school. It was not feasible to drop Dion at the Range (which was about 20 minutes outside of Southport) and then bring A to Christ the King on time. Also, the schools finished at different times in the afternoon, which would have caused difficulties. While Christ the King had a bus service, was decided it was best to have both boys in the same school. Thinking about how things deteriorated for A after he moved to the Range, both Alphonse and I have wondered if this was the right decision and whether A would have been better staying with his peers.
22. When A joined the Range from St Patrick's, Dion was in year 9. Dion's health condition was a huge concern for our family. When Dion started at Christ the King in September 2015, he was walking, and we were unaware that he had any difficulties. He went swimming in a lake on a school trip at the beginning of the year and then started experiencing pains in his leg and falling. We brought him to Alder Hey Children's Hospital and in January 2016, Dion was admitted to hospital for about seven months. They checked everything and he was observed by many different consultants. Dion was diagnosed with autism during this time, and the conclusion was that mobility issues can sometimes happen for children who have autism, but Dion's mobility problems were largely unexplained. Dion was referred to a psychologist and a talking therapist, and he was discharged with no psychiatric issues.
23. We knew nothing about how to look after a child who had autism and was now in a wheelchair. We did not even know where to get a wheelchair for him, and I remember Alphonse borrowing one from the Red Cross. We did everything for Dion at home. Alphonse spent a lot of time focusing on Dion's needs, trying to get treatment, support and educational provision in place. It is possible that A felt overlooked around this time.
24. At the beginning of year 7, A was doing well and he was confident. There was a parents evening at the end of each term when teachers gave feedback, and I recall one parents evening when we were told that A was popular and had friends around him. We thought he was coping well. Things started to change in year 8, and at a parents evening at the end of year 8, some of the feedback was not good. I remember the arts teacher saying that A was not doing his homework and there may have been reports that he had become disruptive in the classroom.

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25. Since our boys were small, they were quite independent and knew what they had to do in terms of homework. It was only at the end of year 8 that I realised A was not doing what he should have been doing. I started asking him about his homework and he would just scribble down some answers. When I said he was not doing it properly, A would say, *"Mum, I've done it, just leave it"*.
26. A (and Dion) had Baptism, Communion and Confirmation in the Catholic Church, and Alphonse and I brought the boys to mass every week. Our faith is a big part of our lives. When A was in year 8, he decided to stop going to church. He would say he thought it was *"stupid"* or it *"wasn't real"*.
27. It was in year 8 that A started experiencing bullying at school by other children. He came home from school and told us (Alphonse more than me) that he was being bullied. I recall a time when A came home with a wound on his leg, and he said he had been hit when he was on the ground. He was so scared of the boys who were bullying him that he stayed back when it was time to go home, to wait until they had left school. Alphonse dealt with this, writing emails to the school and the person in charge (the PE teacher). Alphonse was asking the school to do something about the bullying, and he tried to get an appointment with the school to discuss the issues after dropping the boys to school one day. I do not recall the outcome of these efforts, but my lasting sense was that limited action was taken by the school to address the bullying.
28. It was also around the end of year 8 and the beginning of year 9 that A was becoming more disruptive, and he was being put on 'time-outs' or detention quite a lot. The reason for the time-outs was A's behaviour, for example talking during class or disrupting the lesson. The way the time-outs worked was that A was given periods of time that he would have to sit in a classroom, for example, during lunch-time, but the time-outs accumulated, and it meant that A often missed out on his lunch completely and would still have to spend further time in detention after school. Alphonse raised this with the school, highlighting that the time-outs were happening too frequently and he was concerned about the impact on A. He was regularly missing lunch because of time-outs, which meant he was missing out on food, and then he was delayed getting home in the evenings. He also had accumulated time-outs, which was like a debt he had to pay back.

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We were worried about this. It was also unfair on Dion, who had to wait in the car after school until A's time-out finished in the evenings.

29. It seemed that time-outs were the only punishment, and there was no other option. The school did not have the capacity or means to do anything differently. We were told about A's behaviour by teachers and the reasons for the time-outs, although of course we did not witness this behaviour ourselves. Alphonse was the one who was asking A what was happening at school and telling him to improve his behaviour to avoid time-outs. Generally, Alphonse had more disciplinary conversations with A than I did. I did not talk to A about the time-outs or the reasons for them. My role at home was more focused on A's emotional wellbeing, making sure he was feeling okay, that he was eating okay. This was just the way that my and Alphonse's roles emerged as parents.
30. I do not remember A talking to me about his feelings on being given time-outs or being bullied in school. I would ask him how school was, and he would answer that it was 'fine', and he might give me a hug. However, I felt that he was overwhelmed by all the punishments.
31. I do not remember many discussions with A about his homework, other than me telling him that he was not doing it properly. He was very good at English and History, but he was not an ambitious boy. A was in the middle of the class grades-wise: he was not the one who was struggling but he was not the brightest student either. It became clear to me around this time that A was starting not to like school.
32. Looking back, this time was the beginning of A's poor behaviour and bad decisions. In year 7, A was still the boy we knew, keeping up with sports and music, wanting to get to school on time, he was very organised and kept things clean and tidy. He was a normal boy who was obsessed with PlayStation. At home he was relaxed and happy, and there was no shouting or violence.
33. In year 8, when the bullying started A changed; his behaviour changed. He became confused and anxious. He stopped his activities. He no longer wanted to keep up with sports and music. He stopped playing tennis, he quit the baritone, and he refused to go to music services. We tried to make him continue, but he refused. I cannot remember any specific reason, just that he did not like the activity or did not find it interesting, and

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he did not want to go. He stopped playing games with Dion on PlayStation, preferring instead to play Fortnite which he could play on his own. I am not sure if, at this time, he had any friends. He was nervous going to school or in crowds, and he became particularly anxious about eating in public. He developed a fear of people hearing him eat or swallow.

34. A asked for counselling because of the bullying. Although I had forgotten this detail, I am aware from Counsel to the Inquiry's opening statement that A was referred by his GP to Alder Hey CAMHS on 11 April 2019; however, the referral was not accepted [16.09.2025/107:10]. Alphonse found counselling for A through the Parenting 2000 clinic, and we paid privately for A's counselling with Claudia Aldersley. We did not have much money, but we were doing all we could to make sure that A got support.
35. I realise that many children may experience bullying, but I think this was a terrible thing. When the bullying started, A changed completely, and it caused a lot of problems. It was the starting point for things going wrong. I think A became scared but also felt a deep sense of injustice about the bullying and the fact that nothing was done to address it.
36. It was very challenging caring for a child with mental health difficulties. A had been experiencing anxiety but was not at this time diagnosed with autism. I am aware from the information available that in August 2019, A was referred by his GP for an assessment for Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder and Autism Spectrum Disorder, although I cannot now recall what prompted this.
37. Things went downhill very quickly for A, and it was in A's first term of year 9 that he brought a knife to the Range and was expelled.

Incidents in 2019

A's expulsion from the Range – October 2019

38. I understand from the Inquiry's Rule 9 request that this incident took place on 7 October 2019. The request states that officers from Lancashire Constabulary attended our home to make inquiries about A being reported to have carried a knife into the Range (which had come to police attention after A had self-reported it to Childline).

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39. I cannot now recall how I became aware of this incident, whether I was at work and received a phone call from Alphonse telling me to come home, or whether I was at home when the police called to the house. It was only reading the Rule 9 request that I remembered that A had reported himself to Childline and it was Childline who had called the police. My memory was that the school had found the knife and contacted the police, but I realise now I must be mistaken.
40. The opening statement from Counsel to the Inquiry indicated that PC McNamee and a colleague from Lancashire Constabulary attended our home address on 7 October, and spoke to A, Alphonse and me. It was also stated that I told the officers I had taken the knife A had been carrying away from him and locked away all the other knives [16.09.2025/81:6].
41. I cannot remember the police being in the house that day, but I seem to remember being advised not to have sharp knives. I kept one small knife, the kind to cut food like onions, and I hid it away every day so that A could not find it. I did not want A to take a knife again and I suppose I was concerned that he might do it again as he had done it before without our knowledge. Other than cutlery knives, and one blunt bread knife, this was the only knife we kept in the house.
42. The Inquiry has asked why I considered A brought a knife to school. I never asked A why he did this, and he never told me. I can only guess that he wanted to protect himself, even though it was the wrong way. We did not talk about him bringing a knife to school. Alphonse may have spoken to him about it, but I am not certain. I was very worried about him, and I was trying to focus on his emotional wellbeing.
43. A did not talk to us about contacting Childline, and I believe we were told about this by the police. I did not ask A about it, and I do not know why he called them. I can only speculate that A felt he needed help, but he had lost trust in us as parents that we would be able to help him. I did not know what was in A's mind, but we thought his behaviour was related to the bullying he was experiencing.
44. I am asked about a complaint that Alphonse made to Childline. I am not aware that Alphonse made this complaint, and I do not believe that I knew at the time. There was a lot going on for us and, as I mentioned, Alphonse took the lead on issues relating to

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the boys as my shift work meant there were periods when I was out of the house a lot. Alphonse basically had a full-time job looking after the children – he still drove a taxi but sometimes just in the evenings to get a break. Alphonse was in touch with a lot of agencies for both children. Of course, we talked about the children but there may be things Alphonse forgot to tell me or maybe he decided not to tell me in case I would worry. If I was tired coming home from work, he might decide to wait to tell me something but then forget. Alphonse and I were a good team, and the system we had was based around my work and Alphonse being the primary carer for the boys and driving the taxi when he could.

45. The school held a meeting to tell us what they were going to do about A. We did not realise that he would be expelled and unable to return to school. That is not to say that we did not appreciate the seriousness of A carrying a knife to school, but we thought that there would be another punishment that would allow him to stay in mainstream school. I understood that this was a measure the school had to take to protect children in the school; however, it was a very difficult time. No parent wants to hear that their child has brought a knife to school, and this is not something we would ever have expected A to do. We were asked to meet the head teacher and the governors to discuss what happened, and I broke down in the meeting. I was very upset. I think I felt that life for us was breaking down. It was our first experience of something like this, and Alphonse pleaded with the school to allow A to stay but they could not. They said there was nothing they could do to help, and we went home in tears.
46. Probably at the time, I felt that permanent exclusion was a heavy punishment but reflecting now, I understand the decision. Thinking about what would have happened if the knife was used, or if something happened after allowing A back to school, there was nothing the headteacher could have done. It was unacceptable. We were very worried about A, not just about him being expelled and no other school accepting him, but that he was carrying something that could cause harm. I felt very helpless, but I hoped this punishment would make him think about the consequences of his actions.
47. After his exclusion from the Range, A became another person. He was angry and irritable, less communicative and more isolated. Things started to escalate at home. He started to throw things, like a plate or remote control. This had not happened before, but it happened afterwards. If A did not like something you said, or thought he was in the

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wrong, his way of fighting was to throw something on the floor. It might also happen if you were trying to teach him something. He began to have these outbursts at home a lot. I did not want things to escalate, and I wanted to keep things at home peaceful. My approach was to try to calm the situation and look after A's emotional wellbeing.

48. I am quite confused on timings of different interventions from social services. I think it was around this time that a social worker came to the house to check in on A and see how he was doing. I do not remember that they stayed very long, and they said A did not need a social worker. A was referred to Early Help, a less formal type of social service provision.
49. I am now aware from the information made available to me by the Inquiry that Lancashire Constabulary made a MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) referral on 8 October 2019 and the same day, Lancashire County Council Children's Social Care said the police had made a referral and it was stepped down to Early Support [LCC000010]. I am also aware that there was a meeting on 6 or 7 November 2019 with Lucy Parkinson, a social worker from Lancashire County Council's Child & Family Wellbeing Service (CFWS or Early Help). I do not remember Lucy Parkinson, although this might be the meeting I am thinking of.

First Prevent referral – 5 December 2019

50. After his expulsion from the Range, A was referred to the Acorns School very quickly. The Acorns was a pupil referral unit, like a detention school, to teach children who were not able to be in mainstream school. I cannot recall whether A was referred by the police or social services. I am now aware from the documents made available to me that A was placed on the roll at the Acorns on 17 October 2019 and started in the Willow group on an initial two-hour timetable on 4 November 2019 [LCC000010]. I think A liked going there at first and he was taken to and from the unit daily by taxi.
51. The Inquiry has asked me about a meeting that Alphonse attended with Ann Cookson of CFWS and teachers from Acorns School on 5 December 2019, which included referring A to Prevent and to police Early Action.
52. I cannot now remember Alphonse having this meeting. It is possible I knew at the time and that he told me the outcome of the meeting, but I cannot recall the detail. I remember

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Alphonse telling me about Prevent, although neither Alphonse nor I knew what Prevent was. Now I know that Prevent is a counter-terrorism police agency where concerns about terrorism can be referred, but at the time, Alphonse and I did not understand Prevent or police Early Action. I think we received a letter from the school about Prevent but I am not sure. This was new to us, and I do not feel like it was well explained.

53. I have no knowledge as to whether A was made aware of the meeting on 5 December or of the referral to Prevent.
54. The Inquiry's Rule 9 request explained that the reason for the referral to Prevent was because A *"had been researching school shootings during an ICT lesson; in another lesson, had referred to people mistrusting others they do not know in case they get murdered; in an art lesson, had asked for a picture of a severed head to colour in; in a workshop, had been discussing videos of people hurting themselves with another pupil and made a comment that if a drill bit broke it could fly off and kill someone; and, in others lessons, he had made disparaging remarks about politicians and accused his keyworker of racism (an allegation that appeared to the school to be unfounded)"*.
55. I have a vague recollection of these incidents, but I cannot remember whether I knew about each distressing complaint individually. I remember that A was accused of looking at violent things online, but I cannot now recall whether Alphonse told me or whether I read about it in a letter from the school. Generally, I remember feeling very scared and confused around this time. We did not know what to do about A. Although we did not understand what the Prevent referral meant, I was in some way reassured that it was part of the police, and the police were dealing with it. If there was something that needed to be done, they would handle it. That was how I felt at the time.
56. It is possible that Alphonse spoke to A about these incidents. I did not speak to A about them, and I am unable to say what A's explanation was.

Incident at the Range – 11 December 2019

57. On 11 December 2019, A went to the Range with a knife in his bag and assaulted a pupil with a hockey stick. Prior to this incident, I did not have any concerns that A was at risk of physically harming anyone else and A did not do or say anything to indicate that he was intending to carry out this assault. Of course, Alphonse and I had concerns

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about A's previous behaviour, when he carried the knife to the Range but did not use it, but he was expelled for this behaviour, and we believed and hoped it would not happen again, that he had understood the consequences of his actions. We were aware that Acorns School did a security check on every student entering the school each day.

58. On the day of this incident, we thought A had attended Acorns as he should have. I was working a day shift, and I believe Alphonse had taken Dion to school (to the Range).
59. The Inquiry has asked me about Alphonse calling Acorns to alert them to a risk of harm. This is not my recollection, and I am not aware that Alphonse called Acorns School. As I said, at that time Alphonse and I were not worried that A was going to cause harm. There was a taxi assigned to A to bring him to Acorns and bring him home, and we thought A was going to school as planned.
60. I am aware from the opening statement made by Counsel to the Inquiry that it is suggested Alphonse called Acorns to advise that A was travelling to the Range, that he had a knife, and that he was "*hell bent*" on causing harm [16.09.2025/84:12-17]. I have had the opportunity to review the transcripts of calls made between Ashley Martindale of Acorns School and Lancashire Constabulary and I do not believe that the transcript supports this version of events. Rather the transcripts appear to indicate that Ms Martindale contacted the police after the taxi driver who was due to bring A to Acorns, saw A get into a different taxi from a different firm, and after A did not arrive at Acorns. Ms Martindale told the police that she did not know A's whereabouts and "*Dad doesn't know anything about it*" [LANC000072], suggesting that she had spoken to Alphonse by this point but not that he alerted her to a risk of harm. The police operator called Ms Martindale back because of a problem with the computer system. Ms Martindale updated that Alphonse had called Acorns and spoken to the headteacher to advise that A had, by that time, turned up at the Range and they had called the police. She told the police that Alphonse was "*heading down to the Range High School to them*" [LANC000073].
61. I believe that the Range rang Alphonse and told him that A was being taken by the police. I was in work and got a call from Alphonse. The police took A into custody, and we were asked to come to the police station in Liverpool. I am blurry on the detail of what happened then. I said in my statement to the police that I attended the police station

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leaving Alphonse at home looking after Dion [MERP000719_0003]. I believe this is what happened, that I drove home from work first, spoke to Alphonse and then travelled alone to the police station while Alphonse remained home.

62. I am not clear on what happened when I got to the police station, but I think I waited in a small room or cell on my own, and then they brought A to me. I think they released A that evening, but we had to bring him back to the police station in Liverpool over the following days. I took him a couple of times, and I remember one evening, the police put us both in small cell together, like a telephone booth. We were discharged later but had to come back the next day. When A was interviewed and asked questions, he had a lawyer with him. I think I was in the room too, just to be present with him as he was a minor. I was not asked any questions, and I did not say anything. I cannot remember what questions A was asked or what he said in response.
63. The Inquiry has asked me if I was aware of a 'list' of possible targets that had been drawn up by A. I was not aware of any such list, I did not see a list or have possession of one, and I do not recall hearing about a list at any stage. When I was interviewed by the police in December 2024, they asked me about A having a list of targets and suggested that I knew who they were, who A was angry with [MERP001432_0049]. I do not remember ever discussing a target list and I certainly had no knowledge of who was on any such list. I have not been provided with any documents from this time.
64. When A took the knife to school at the Range in October, I threw out all our sharp knives except for one small knife that I used for chopping onions. I cannot recall if this was the knife that A took with him to the Range in December, but after that incident, I made sure we had no sharp knives left in the house. We used a table knife/cutlery knife for chopping. A did not ask for knives at home, but for my own peace of mind I wanted to ensure that there was nothing sharp in the house.
65. I did not ask A why he did what he did, and I cannot say why he did it. I can only guess that it related to the bullying he experienced at the Range, but neither Alphonse nor I thought he would go to the school and try to fight. It was a big shock, and Alphonse and I were very worried. We knew how serious this was. But we did not know what was happening, and it was very difficult for us to talk about. As the police were involved, I felt the police would handle the situation. I did my best to look after A at home, to make sure

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he showered and had food, and I tried to keep things calm. When A had outbursts, when he smashed plates or shouted, I was scared, and it had a physical effect on me.

66. After A was arrested, the police came to search the house. They asked us to come out of the house, and they looked everywhere. They took all the computers and devices from the house. After the search I was asked to identify who owned each device and my responses are recorded in MERP000186 (pages 66-87). The Inquiry has asked me whether my answers to the police were true to the best of my knowledge. I answered all the questions asked of me truthfully. At the time I gave my answers to the police, they were standing in front of me holding up each item that they had seized from the house, so I was able to tell them who owned which device. I had no reason not to be honest. There is nothing I can say now to amend, update or supplement the answers I gave at the time.
67. I note that the record of the police search [MERP000186] references general cosmetic damage in the house and a hole in the wall on the staircase. This damage was caused by A's outbursts at home.
68. I do not recall that A's behaviour changed specifically following the police search or the seizure of his devices. His behaviour at home as I will explain was very volatile. I think it was about six months later that Alphonse and I were discussing whether we needed to get a new family computer, and Alphonse said he would ring the police about the items that had been seized. When he rang, the police said he could come and collect the items. I cannot remember which police station he went to, maybe Liverpool. I also cannot remember which items we received back but I knew we got the family computer back and A's laptop. We also got back A's PlayStation although he never really played again after this.
69. When A was arrested in December 2019, he was assessed by a nurse in the police station who said he was autistic. This prompted a referral to CAMHS. He was not formally diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder until February 2021.

Incidents in 2020

Prevent referral – January 2020

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70. The Inquiry has asked me about a meeting with Prevent on 3 January 2020 and about the closure of the Prevent referral on 31 January 2020. As I mentioned, I understood very little about Prevent or the fact that a referral had been made. I have no memory of this meeting. I cannot remember people coming to the house to talk about Prevent or about opening or closing a referral. If I was asked for information as part of this referral, I would have provided it. If I was asked questions, I would have answered them honestly.
71. The Inquiry has also asked me to comment on whether I thought A could have become radicalised to believe in a terrorist ideology or have an interest or obsession in extreme violence or school massacres. I did not think that either of these things were possible. We are a Christian family, and A was brought up Catholic. Although he had stopped coming to church with us, I believed that he would keep the values of being Christian, that they would stay with him. At no point did I have any sense that A was sympathetic to terrorist ideology.
72. When he was having an episode of crisis at home, he could be violent, but I did not think that he was becoming obsessed with violence. A did not say anything to me that led me to think this, nor did I see anything at home that led me to think this. I did not have access to, or any knowledge of, what A was looking up on his devices at home.

A's behaviour at home

73. As I mentioned, A's behaviour at home changed dramatically at the end of 2019. He became a different person - he was quieter but also much more volatile and had frequent outbursts. Particularly with Alphonse, A would lose his temper at a question or a comment.
74. When A had an outburst, he was angry and could be violent. He would throw things, like the remote control, or smash things, like a glass of water or a plate of food. He poured milk or yogurt on the ground or on our bed. He threw ketchup at the walls and ceiling. If we asked why he was behaving like that, it was more bad behaviour. He became impossible to discipline.
75. We felt there was nothing we could do to manage these outbursts at home. The only option was to try to deescalate and make sure the episode did not last too long; to move away from A, both to allow him time to calm down and for our own safety; and then to

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clean up afterwards. Once A was calm, things would go back to normal until the next episode of crisis.

76. I remember one instance (which from the documents provided to me by the Inquiry appears to have taken place in August 2021) when A kicked off in front of a person from social care - he went to the fridge and took out a milk carton, went to our room and poured it on the bed right in front of them. The woman said to let him finish what he was doing, and we cleaned up after she left. We learned to put a plastic mattress cover on our bed so that we did not have to clean the mattress when he poured milk or mouthwash on it; we could just wash the sheets.
77. It was not a good idea to surprise A with an appointment or something he should be attending, as that could cause him to have an outburst. If I knew that he had an appointment the following day, I would prepare him in advance by telling him what was happening. If someone knocked on the door without warning, there was trouble. A would bang or smash things.
78. There were occasions when I would come home from work, and Alphonse would warn me that plates had been smashed. A often insisted that Alphonse clean up after he had an outburst, not me. If I cleaned up, A would smash more dishes. Sometimes A smashed things on the floor because of something I said, but I think generally he did not direct his outbursts at me. Most of his anger was directed to Alphonse. Before A was excluded from the Range, he did not fight with Alphonse, he was just 'dad'. Afterwards, A started calling him 'Alphonse'. A became violent towards him, pushing or hitting him, lashing out at him. I remember one instance (although I am unable to say when it happened) when A was pushing Alphonse and I stood between them to try to make it stop, but A pushed me aside. That is the only time I can remember that he was physically aggressive with me.
79. At one point, Alphonse went on a course that teaches people how to manage chaos. I am not sure if it was specifically directed to parents of autistic children, but I remember him telling me about some of the other situations that people were dealing with and saying that he felt we were lucky compared to how difficult other people had it.

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80. I could sometimes make A do things that Alphonse could not, for example, to make him have a shower, eat food, do his homework or a bit of reading. I usually approached things quite gently with A and he was more likely to respond to my requests.
81. A's outbursts were frequent but unpredictable. It could happen once a week or once in the morning and then again in the afternoon. Sometimes it was because Alphonse challenged A about something or asked him what he was doing or why. It could be because we were asking him to do his homework. It was difficult to know what would set him off. The incidents were very distressing, we learned as we went and tried our best to manage the situation. It was easier and safer to step to one side and to give A space, and over time we probably avoided raising issues that we thought would lead to an outburst.
82. I mentioned that A's behaviour at home triggered severe physical symptoms. When A smashed things on the floor or banged things or shouted, it made me very scared. It led to intense or uncontrollable shaking, and gastrointestinal distress. I found it very traumatic - the violence, the noise, the shattered glass or plate with pieces everywhere. I would just do my best to calm things down, to deescalate the situation and the outburst.
83. As the country was in lockdown, it was difficult to gauge A's level of anxiety about leaving the house. Before he was expelled, he would come out with me to get his hair cut, to sit in the Café at Morrisons, or go to the shops, the park, or the library. This stopped after he was excluded, and he was closing himself off bit by bit. He did not want any interaction. He was not attending school, and during lockdown he was spending all his time inside the house. After lockdown, he had anxiety and a fear of going out, and it became much more difficult to make him do anything he did not want to do.
84. It came to the point where the living room became A's room because he was spending so much time there. Over the years he began sleeping there although sometimes he went upstairs to his bedroom. The house was not big. In the kitchen, we had a dining table and chairs, and I was happy to spend my time there or go up to my room. There atmosphere in the living room did not make you want to sit there. Dion also preferred to spend time in his room, listening to music. He did not want to be downstairs when A kicked off or there was an argument.

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85. We went years without looking at what we wanted to watch on television, as it was in the living room. There were some programmes that A liked to watch, and I tried to connect with him by suggesting that we watch them together. A liked music and dancing shows, like Strictly Come Dancing, Dancing on Ice or the Voice and X-Factor. He also liked This Morning (which was on as he did not go to school) and games shows, like the Chase.

Social Services, probation services and mental health

86. My recollections about the different interventions from social services, probation services and CAMHS between 2020 and 2024 are very blurry. I cannot remember the names of the different probation workers, social workers, or family care workers that were involved with our family. I think I have a better memory of the team at CAMHS who worked with A. Alphonse was generally more involved in the meetings and engaging with different organisations than me. I have provided below my general recollections of the support provided over this period and I have also done my best to answer the specific questions in the Rule 9 request as they relate to each year. I am assisted by the timeline of appointments and interventions outlined in the opening statement made by Counsel to the Inquiry.
87. After A committed the offences in December 2019, he was required to attend St. Anne Police Station in Lancashire to meet with a probation officer or a social worker, I am not sure which. I felt that everyone was police, even though they might actually have been from social services. The person allocated to A seemed like a nice man and I believe he came to the house once while I was home. Although A did not allow Alphonse or me to be present, we understood that he explained to A that it was bad to take a knife into public places. He talked to A about what he had done and tried to make him understand the severity and impact of his actions on other people. I do not know whether A understood the advice he was being given; I did not know what was in A's mind. I cannot state what impact this engagement had on A.
88. I remember that A was referred to a youth group where young people met together in school in the evening and did cooking, baking, and played games. The group helps to make them feel that they belong. A did some sessions at the youth group and I remember he did some baking and played with the other boys. But then he said he did

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not want to go anymore, and that was it. We tried to encourage him to go, offered to drive him, but he refused. I do not know when this was.

89. Social services sent staff (and I remember Carl Coughlan) to go out for a walk with A, although I believe this was not in 2020 but during a later engagement with social services. I also remember a young woman would come to our house to talk to A and do things with him that he liked to do – I think this was Michelle Warner from CAMHS, but again I believe this was after 2020. She had a folder that they worked through together. She would talk to A and teach him how people live, how they treat each other, how they like to be treated. I think this was designed to engage A in normal life and give him a picture of normal life and good behaviour. I think A liked her, and they would sometimes go out for a walk together.
90. There was one woman specifically that A liked who was called Sharon Barrett from Early Help. A liked talking to her and he would listen to her more than anyone else. However, she was a manager, and I think when Alphonse asked if Sharon could do more work with A, he was told she could not do so because she was a supervisor.
91. I am asked about A's involvement with Children's Social Care and lead social worker, Anna Jameson between 13 December 2019 and 24 March 2020. I think I remember this name, but I cannot remember who this is. I am not sure that we received anything in writing from social services about who was coming to the house. People would call and say they were a social worker from the council – they would check to see if A was okay, to check on his wellbeing and perhaps on our family dynamic, but I do not remember them providing much information when they left.
92. I am also asked about a change from Children's Social Care back to Early Help between 24 March 2020 and 9 June 2020, with Andrea Fontaine as lead support worker supervised by Sharon Barrett. At this time, we were going along with what was suggested and I probably thought that they were all part of the same thing. To me, it was people coming into the house to engage with A. It is possible that Alphonse has greater awareness about this decision. I cannot recall Ms Fontaine, but as I mentioned I remember Sharon Barrett. She was the one who A liked. He would sit down and talk to her. In terms of my relationship with Ms Barrett, I would say this was positive.

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93. I was not present during A's sessions with the social worker or family care worker. It was not that they were confidential or that I was excluded, but the person who visited might say, *"mum, you can go off and I'll do some work with A"*. I might hear what they were saying if I passed the living room, for example, asking A how he would do certain things or getting him engaged in how humans live with each other, or talking about the things you do when you wake up every morning. I think around this time A was keeping himself clean and was eating okay, although towards 2022, this started to deteriorate.
94. I cannot say specifically what impact the Children's Social Care or Early Help engagement had on A. I do not remember noticing a significant improvement or change in his behaviour.
95. I am asked about CFWS closing their case on 9 June 2020 until A could return to school and be provided with support face to face. I am also asked about CFWS re-opening their case on 14 September 2020. Unfortunately, I do not recall any details about these decisions.
96. The support provided through Early Help was for A and it was not directed to Alphonse and me. There were Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings which happened on Teams and were attended by social care people. It could be Sharon leading it or someone else for Lancashire Social Services, and I think there were times that the meetings were attended by someone from CAMHS. I would always try to attend these meetings, even if I was in work. I would ask my manger if I could use the time for my lunch to attend the meeting, and I would sit in a corner at work and dial in from my phone. Even if I could not contribute to the meeting because I was at work, at least I could listen to what was said and keep in the loop.
97. I cannot remember the specific details of what was spoken about at the TAF meetings during different time periods. There were generally discussions about trying to engage A or maybe talking about the fact that A was refusing to engage. I am not sure what was achieved. I remember a meeting, much later in time, when everyone told us they were leaving and we would have no more support.
98. I am aware from the opening statement of Counsel to the Inquiry that A had a social worker from the Child and Youth Justice Service (CYJS) who started working with A in

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March 2020 remotely (due to the lockdown) [16.09.2025/90:23]. His social worker from the CYJS changed in June 2020, and A had face to face meetings with them [91:22] but contact began to reduce from September 2020 [92:6]. I do not have a good recollection of these sessions; I am unclear whether CYJS is the same as the probation service. As mentioned above, I recall A meeting with his probation officer or social worker in person at the police station and the probation officer visiting our home on one occasion while I was there.

99. I am aware from the opening statement of Counsel to the Inquiry that A had his first face to face appointment with a CAMHS case manager (Scott Morgan) on 20 December 2019 [16.09.2025/113:21] and that he was offered support by CAMHS through telephone and in-person appointments with Sam Coppard from May to August 2020, but A failed to attend on a number of occasions [115:3]. I do not have a memory of these sessions, although I seem to remember that A did not like Sam Coppard very much. I do not remember why. Sam was the lead on Family Therapy, and I thought he was nice.

100. When the national lockdown was announced in March 2020, my job was not affected. [redacted] and I continued to travel to work in [redacted] on the shift pattern I described earlier in this statement. There was much less work for Alphonse, and he was home with both boys most days. It was not ideal, but I had to keep working so we had money as a family. I was often very tired when I was at home, and I do not have a good recollection of engagement with external agencies during this time.

Schooling in 2020

101. After A's arrest, he was not permitted to return to the Acorns School in person, but they sent work home for him to complete. A refused to do it. I tried to work through the booklets or homework with him, but it got to the point where he completely refused.

102. When the country went into lockdown, the school was not available to attend in person and schooling moved online. A did a bit in the beginning, but soon stopped engaging with school completely, despite our efforts to make him join classes or complete his homework. I tried pushing but it did not work.

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103. I recall that A returned to school once lockdown had lifted but his attendance was unpredictable. I remember there was a period when a car would come to bring him to school – if he accepted, it was a very good day. Often, he refused to get in the car.

Incidents in 2021

104. The Inquiry has asked me to comment on an incident in January 2021, when A reported to CYJS that Alphonse had assaulted him and the information was passed to CFWS/Early Help, who made inquiries. I have a recollection of the row, but I did not witness what happened or who did what. I think I was upstairs and heard banging and people fighting. I think A hit or kicked Alphonse, but I was not aware that Alphonse hit him back. I never saw Alphonse hit A; he is not someone who hits their child. When the boys were very small, Alphonse may have smacked them on their bottoms if they were naughty, but not when they were teenagers. By this time, A would often start rows and if Alphonse thought A was being threatening, he would try to protect himself from getting hurt by hiding in the small bathroom downstairs or holding the door of the living room closed to keep A from following him, to allow A the time to calm down. Alphonse would not strike out at A, and I think if he had, A would certainly fight back. It was very traumatic managing A's episodes.

105. I am asked about CFWS closing A's case on 10 February 2021, but I cannot recall this.

106. The Inquiry has asked me about the second and third referrals to Prevent in February and April 2021, respectively. I was not aware of either referral or of A's activity which formed the basis for the referrals. A did not talk to me about Colonel Gaddafi, the IRA, the London Bridge bombing, or the conflict between Israel and Palestine. I would not wish to talk about those things, and he would never speak to me about wars or conflict or anything like that. I was not aware that A had become aware of these referrals.

107. The Inquiry has asked me to comment on an incident in May 2021, when A reported to the Acorns School that he had thrown juice over Alphonse and hit him on the head, that Alphonse had taken photos and videos to send to the police, and that Alphonse said he would delete the photos and videos if A did not say anything to the school about the incident. I cannot believe that this is as A described it to Acorns School. A's behaviour – throwing juice over Alphonse and hitting him on the head – was, by this time,

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something that was happening regularly. Juice could be thrown at any time. But I cannot believe that Alphonse would threaten to send photos to the police or that he would tell A not to say anything to the school. After these incidents, Alphonse would usually try to deescalate the situation and then clean himself up.

108. I cannot recall whether the Acorns teacher, Mrs Allred, came to the TAF meetings. I think I can remember only one occasion. However, if the school was attending these meetings, I think it is likely they would, by that time, have been aware of the nature of A's behaviour at home, of throwing juice or food, or breaking things. It was also becoming clear to me that A could lie to social services or the school in an attempt to make trouble for Alphonse.
109. I can remember some instances when Alphonse took pictures after an incident, if A threw milk or threw food on Alphonse's head. This was not to send to anyone, but more about recording the life we were living at this time. It was very hard. We had no family in the UK that we could rely on, and we felt very isolated. I am very conscious that anyone outside our family would think how unusual this situation was, but it had become our normal. A was 14 years old at this time, and for us, he was our child. We loved him. We saw him struggling and we tried our best to keep things calm. We called the police when we were concerned about his behaviour impacting others (like when he flooded the house and we were worried about other houses) or when it felt out of control, but when it was only us affected by his behaviour, we did not call the police.
110. There was one incident that took place in the middle of the night, when we did call the police, but I cannot remember when this happened. I think Alphonse had come home from taxi'ing and I was upstairs sleeping. I heard a bang and when I came downstairs, I saw Alphonse sitting in the kitchen with food all over his head – A had poured chicken tikka and rice over him. I cannot remember what the fight was about or what happened next, but we must have felt the situation was out of control, as we called the police that night. I do not remember if it was me or Alphonse who called. I remember A was hiding in his room when the police arrived, and I remember the voice of the police officer saying, *"mate, look what you've done to your dad. Look at the state of Dad's head. Don't do that"*. I do not remember why this was different to other incidents, but we must have thought we could not manage the situation to have called the police. If it was just A

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throwing food, we would not have done so. I believe this is separate to the flooding incident in May 2022.

A's mental health - 2021

111. From the documents provided to me by the Inquiry and the chronology set out in the opening statement of Counsel to the Inquiry, I am aware that A was formally diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder in February 2021 [16.09.2025/111:6]. I am also aware that a psychiatry appointment was requested for A in June 2021 due to concerns about A's increasing levels of paranoia [115:9]. I do not remember this specifically and I expect that Alphonse requested this appointment. However, I do recall that A was becoming more anxious about leaving the house or going to school. I remember that he saw a psychiatrist, Dr Ramasubramanian, and he was prescribed propranolol to help manage his anxiety. This was later changed to sertraline, as he did not feel the propranolol did anything.
112. I believe it was during 2021 that Sam Steed became A's case worker at CAMHS, and A had sessions with her every two weeks. I do not think that Sam Steed was the right psychologist or therapist for A, and it felt as though she was seeking to come between A and us as his parents. She questioned us, our parenting, and it created division. Rather than helping A to develop strategies to manage his own behaviour or his response to situations, it seemed that his behaviour was entertained, including when he was saying that Alphonse was a bad parent or even lying about things like Alphonse's physical abuse of A or Dion. When Alphonse raised this, it led to misunderstanding.

Child and Family Assessment – September 2021

113. The Inquiry has provided a record from Lancashire County Council indicating that Alphonse contacted the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub in June 2021 requesting a needs and carers assessment for both A and Dion [LCC000108]. The record states that Alphonse and I were struggling to look after the children and required financial assistance. It was certainly very challenging over this time. Alphonse was self-employed as a taxi-driver, but he was not working very much by this point due to caring responsibilities and the pandemic. The financial struggle was always there. We did not have a lot of money to do nice things as a family, or to go on holiday. We did not have family in the UK that we could go to stay with. While I do not specifically recall Alphonse asking for this assessment, I knew he was proactive in seeking support for the boys. He

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probably told me about it, as he would often tell me about the things he was doing to try to benefit our family, but I cannot now remember.

114. It seems from the documents provided by the Inquiry that as a result of this contact, a child and family assessment was completed on 7 September 2021 by Stacey Haydock of Children's Social Care [LCC000247]. I do not recall Ms Haydock, but I see from the assessment record that she saw or spoke to us on three occasions between 2 and 18 August 2021. It also appears that Ms Haydock was the social worker who witnessed A pour milk over our bed, as she says in the assessment that A *"proceeded to take milk from the kitchen, upstairs and pour it over his parents bed. A stated this was because everyone had lied"*.
115. I have reviewed the assessment record carefully and I believe it gives an accurate picture of how things were for A and our family at this time, for example:
- a. We had concerns around A's eating. He rarely ate, could go long periods without food and ate the same foods. A only ate certain takeaway foods, like McDonalds. A sometimes asked Alphonse to cook a recipe he had found but if the meal did not look exactly like the picture, A refused to eat it.
 - b. CAMHS had prescribed A Propranolol medication to treat his anxiety, but A felt it was not working.
 - c. A was attending the Acorns School but by this time Alphonse had requested that he be enrolled in a specialist school with autism knowledge who would be able to provide support for A's needs.
 - d. If we said something that A did not like, he became upset and smashed things. We had come to know what A liked and did not like, and it was easier to keep things calm. It made it difficult to discuss certain things while keeping A calm enough to have the conversation.
 - e. A threw plates or water at Alphonse and he spoke over him, so Alphonse was unable to speak. A lot of A's behaviour was directed at Alphonse.
 - f. A refused to go out of the house except to school. He did not leave the house with us, and he did not have any friends to socialise with. He spent a lot of time watching the news.

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- g. A struggled to accept the view of others and resorted to shouting and pouring milk over a bed to make a point. He felt that people were lying if they were in disagreement with him and he struggled to respond to this.
 - h. A spent a lot of time at home with Alphonse but found it difficult to respond positively to Alphonse which made home life very difficult.
116. This assessment record also reflects that A alleged Alphonse had hit Dion, but “*did not hit [A] as he knows [A] would hit him back*”. The social worker spoke to Dion alone who confirmed Alphonse did not hit or slap him, save for a smacked bottom when they were younger. Dion raised no concerns about Alphonse or me. The record was clear that I had no concerns about Alphonse’s behaviour towards the boys, which was true.
117. Ms Haydock also recorded that Alphonse and I spoke warmly and lovingly of both Dion and A, that we wanted the best for our children and we clearly loved them very much. This was absolutely the case. I love both my children very much, and even now, even while experiencing so much heartbreak over what has happened, I love my children.
118. I am asked whether I attended the parenting course recommended by Ms Haydock. I believe Alphonse attended the courses that were recommended because he was available during the day. I was unable to attend any courses because of my working pattern. I see from a later report that Alphonse had attended the Triple P Parenting course [LCC000320].
119. A was due to attend Acorns; however, at some point I remember he simply refused to go. From the opening statement of Counsel to the Inquiry, I believe this was around September 2021 [16.09.2025/130:24].

Social services’ input

120. The Rule 9 request states that between 3 November 2021 and 21 February 2022, Carl Coughlan, who was a social worker within Lancashire County Council’s Targeted Youth Service, had seven sessions working with A. I mentioned Carl earlier in my statement and I remember that he would come to the house and bring A out for a short walk. They probably talked together, but I did not go with them. Carl was quite firm, and I think he had expectations of the young people he worked with. A refused to keep up the sessions. Carl would call to the house, but A would not come out of his room. I did not remember

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the dates when Carl visited the house or that he and A had seven sessions together. I did not realise that Carl was a social worker.

121. I remember attending TAF meetings when there were discussions about whether the support that was being offered should remain or be withdrawn because A was not engaging. I knew that people were sometimes unhappy on the call, like when A refused to go out walking with Carl. The social workers or family support workers were annoyed by this, which was understandable. Perhaps it was the first time they saw this and maybe other young people accepted the support they were offering. The biggest barrier to the support that was offered by social services was A's refusal to engage. Because of this, it seemed that options were limited.
122. There were social workers and other support workers who came from different departments within the council. This was confusing to me. When people called to our house, I was unsure what their role was. Although they were there for A, I often felt that Alphonse and I as parents were under scrutiny. They did not really communicate with us, so I suppose I did not feel supported. To be honest, I often felt judged, as if the police had shown up, not to help us, but to blame us or find fault. My overwhelming sense from the visits from social services was that Alphonse and I were not doing enough or not doing it right. While I understand that was probably not the intention, it felt hurtful as if they were against us as parents. I felt that Alphonse and I were doing all we could under immense pressure. We were really struggling, and it did not feel as though there was any recognition of what we were going through day-to-day.
123. I think it is important that there is a relationship of trust between a person who helps and a person who needs help. When the person who needs help is a young person, I thought the support would be provided to the family; that the person who was helping would speak to the family and to the young person. But that was not my experience. Lots of people came to the house for different reasons, but because of the way they engaged with us as parents, because of the lack of compassion, even though we needed help, it was very difficult to trust. In the end we learned to manage as best we could, and I prayed to God to help us. But I could not make people understand what we were going through.

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Calls to police and CAMHS – November 2021

124. The Inquiry has asked me about two incidents in November 2021 when we contacted the police in relation to A's behaviour. The first incident took place on 5 November, and the Inquiry has indicated this related to a report of A damaging the house and throwing things after a stranger knocked on the door. I understand from Counsel to the Inquiry's opening statement that A calmed down while we were on the phone to the police and so we no longer wanted police attendance, and it was dealt with by telephone only [16.09.2025/94:19-23].
125. I have no other information about this call to the police, and I now cannot recall the incident very clearly. Were it not for the information provided by the Inquiry, I am not sure I would remember it at all. I do not know whether it was me or Alphonse who called the police. A regularly had outbursts at home, but we only called the police if we were worried that his behaviour was out of control, that we would not be able to contain his behaviour, or if his behaviour risked impacting others. I cannot remember this incident, but I can only guess that we panicked and were worried about what A would do. But if he calmed down while we were speaking to the police, that is very likely the reason why we said that there was no need to do anything further. If things were calm again, it would not seem necessary to have the police come to the house.
126. The second incident (I am told) took place on 30 November 2021. The Rule 9 request states the police were called at approximately 18:45 after A threw a plate of food at a rental car, damaging it and assaulting me, after an argument about what was cooked for tea. When the police attended at approximately 23:30, I provided details but did not want to pursue a criminal complaint. I have not been provided with any documents about this incident or the details provided when the police attended.
127. I am aware from the opening statement of Counsel to the Inquiry that by the time the police attended our house A had calmed down and we told the police his behaviour was related to his autism, and we did not support police action. It seemed that A had kicked Alphonse (not me) and threw a plate at the rental car outside causing the front windscreen to crack [16.09.2025/94:17, 131:10].
128. I do not have a good memory of this incident, and I do not remember what the argument was about. However, I do not believe that A assaulted me during this incident. It was

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more likely that he became violent with Alphonse (as indicated in Counsel to the Inquiry's statement). As I have described, throwing plates of food was part of A's regular behaviour at this time. We had a rental car because Alphonse's taxi was in the garage, and he was given a courtesy car. All I can remember is that A damaged the car. We called the police because A had damaged property that was not ours, which was a big worry. I do not remember whether it was Alphonse or me who called the police.

129. I do not recall any follow-up from police or social services after either incident in November. As I mentioned, A regularly had outbursts, and these were known and understood by social services and by CAMHS. Also, my view at the time was that if the police had information, they would share it with social services or CAMHS or A's schools. I believed that if the police were involved or if they thought there was trouble, they would pass this information on.
130. I am referred by the Inquiry to paragraph 30 of AHCH000239, which I believe is an extract from the witness statement of Dr Ramasubramanian, a psychiatrist at CAMHS. In this paragraph, the witness is critical that they were not informed about the incident on 5 November during an appointment with A and Alphonse on 15 November, that young people and families should be open and honest, and that had they known they would have ensured the appropriate support was offered.
131. I do not consider that this criticism is fair. We were always open and honest with CAMHS and social services about what was happening at home, and we were not concerned about them being aware of what was happening. It is clear from paragraph 33 of this statement that Alphonse contacted the CAMHS Crisis Care Team just over two weeks later, on 21 November 2021, to report two incidents of intimidating behaviour from A that weekend, including verbal threats and pouring milk over Alphonse, so it is evident that he was being open about the incidents that took place. I was not at the appointment on 15 November, so I cannot say what was discussed. It is possible that because these incidents were so frequent, Alphonse might not have thought to specifically mention what had happened on 5 November.
132. I have also reviewed paragraph 73 of this statement which states that our family "*had an extraordinary amount of access to clinical staff within CAMHS including myself as his consultant psychiatrist*" and "*it appears that AR and his father were not open and honest*

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with me during their interactions and appointments" [AHCH000239_0015]. I cannot comment on whether the access we had was ordinary or otherwise, and while I cannot say what Alphonse discussed with the psychiatrist, I do not believe that he would have lied or deliberately withheld information. We were actively seeking support to try to help A and to help our family, so it would not make sense to cover up what was happening for us.

133. I am asked to comment on the two incidents that Alphonse reported to CAMHS Crisis Care Team from 21 November 2021 (referred to above), when A "*exhibited intimidating behaviour, verbal threats and on two occasions poured milk over dad*" [LCC000975]. These were normal incidents but may have been particularly bad or aggressive to prompt Alphonse to call for help. I do not remember. A called Alphonse names; told him he was a 'stupid idiot' or things like that. This was normal. I do not remember that we received any help from CAMHS. We were once told to wait and see if A's behaviour improved and if not, to call the police. This was a learning curve for us in seeking support during these crisis episodes. Although we contacted CAMHS on occasion, it was of limited assistance.

134. I would also note that even when we informed the Crisis Care Team of incidents that were taking place, it does not appear that they were sharing information across the whole CAMHS team. Dr Ramasubramanian says in her statement that she was not made aware that Alphonse had contacted Crisis Care that weekend [AHCH000239_0007].

Incidents in 2022

A's purchases online

135. A had a bank account with Lloyds Bank that Alphonse had opened for him. I did not put money into this account, but Alphonse did, maybe on his birthday or for Christmas.

136. I understand from the Rule 9 request that A had an email address, a.megalania7@yahoo.com. I do not remember that this was his email address, and I am not sure I was ever aware that this was the email address he was using.

137. I knew nothing at all about A's online purchasing activity or the deliveries that came to the house. I had no idea that A had purchased items that could be used to make poison

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or that he was developing poison at home. Nor did I ever suspect that he was making poison. It was a total shock, and we learned about it from the news after the attack. When they said that A had been making poison, I remember thinking that I was ready to give up, that it was all too much. I did not know what ricin was, as I had never heard of it before.

138. In terms of the other items A purchased throughout 2022, I did not know that A was buying things, and it was not something that Alphonse and I discussed. I did not go into A's room as he refused to allow anyone to go in, even to clean, and I did not want to have an argument about it.

A's behaviour

139. The Inquiry has asked me to comment on a closure report from CFWS from 14 March 2022 [LCC000320] which states "*Alphonse is reporting that things are better. A is much calmer*". I do not have a specific recollection of A's behaviour at this time, but if Alphonse had reported to Early Help that things were better and calmer, he must have seen the improvement. A and Alphonse could get on well, but they could also have arguments. It may be that at this time, there were fewer arguments or fewer episodes of crisis at home.
140. I cannot remember Early Help closing their case at this time. I have reviewed the record of our last meeting with CFWS from 10 February 2022 [LCC000153] when Alphonse requested that the case remained open while A transitioned to Presfield. It is stated, "*[A] still at times says he doesn't want to go to school and that's where they face challenges*". I assume that was why Alphonse requested that they stay around us, so that in the event of another crisis - banging something on the floor or smashing something - we would have somewhere to go to ask for help. The difficulty was that even when things were calm one day, it might not be the same the next day or the day after that. Our lives over these years were a series of ups and downs, going from one episode of crisis to the next. I do not know why A acted the way he did, and the psychiatrists and doctors were unable to explain it. It was very traumatic, and I felt like we were surviving from day-to-day.
141. Over 2021 and 2022, A became more difficult about the foods he was eating. The Child and Family Assessment from September 2021 [LCC000247] noted that CAMHS had provided cookery skills to Alphonse as A had focussed a lot on this and he refused to eat most of the foods at home.

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142. I have been provided with an extract from Sam Steed's witness statement to the Inquiry, which details a TAF meeting in January 2022 when there was a discussion about A being hungry, and Alphonse buying three recipe books to ask A what food he wanted. A wanted Mongolian stir fry but was upset when Alphonse did not cook it for him that day, but Alphonse told the meeting he obtained all the ingredients and was exhausted trying to find it all. The statement also says Alphonse had reported that a dietician had prescribed shakes for A, but A would not drink them because he did not like the consistency or flavour/taste [AHCH000290_0047]. I was not at this meeting, and I do not recall specifically the incident relating to the Mongolian stir fry.
143. I recall receiving advice from the dietician about trying to encourage A to eat more homemade meals. Their advice was to stock up on ready meals that A liked - chicken tikka, chilli, Indian meals - which was the nearest thing to homemade food and better than takeaways like McDonald's, Subway or Papa John's. They also advised not to push him to eat, but to leave the meals in the fridge. This worked and A would pick up a meal and ask Alphonse or me to prepare it for him.

Schooling

144. The Inquiry has asked whether I was aware that Acorns School had recorded two instances in January 2022 of A engaging in concerning conversations about the Holocaust and about violence sometimes being necessary to create change. I do not remember being aware of these incidents, although it is possible that Alphonse told me. As I mentioned, Alphonse was the one who managed communications with the boys' schools, and I think he sometimes tried to protect me if he thought I would feel physically unwell or find a report distressing (which given our past I would have in these instances). My recollection of Acorns was that A was often in trouble for not doing what he was meant to be doing or for looking up the internet when he was not supposed to.
145. On 14 March 2022, A had an initial visit to Presfield High School and Specialist College, a special school for young people with autism that A could attend until he was 19. A and I visited Presfield together and we looked around the school. I thought it looked really good – they had different rooms that someone could go to if they did not want to be in the main classroom, and the teachers seemed very nice and supportive to the children. During this visit, A seemed like someone who was looking forward to going to school

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again, which I saw as very positive. I thought he seemed impressed by Presfield on this visit. If A had stayed at Presfield, I think this would have been a really good thing for him.

146. Again, the way to encourage A for this visit was to tell him, the day before, that the appointment was coming so that he was prepared and it did not come as a surprise. It was important to take things slowly with A because if I tried to rush him or did not prepare him, he would refuse to go to the appointment. I am not sure why, but I think he felt scared or anxious. I knew he was having anxiety about going out, and the focus of many of the visits (for example from Carl Coughlan) was to try to encourage A to go out, even for a short walk.
147. It was not possible to force A to do something he did not want to do. Even when I prepared him, sometimes it did not work, and he would refuse to go. It was very difficult.
148. A enrolled in Presfield in March or April 2022. We did all we could to encourage A to go to school. We reminded him it was only a small amount of time (I think only a couple of hours a day), we assured him that he would not be bored, that he could choose what he wanted to read or learn. Some days the car would appear to bring him to school, and A would just get ready and go out to the car. It was impossible to know from one day to the next, and on the days that he did go to school, we felt that it was a good day. Sometimes you could tell from A's mood that it was not a good day, that if we tried to press too hard about going to school, he would kick off. It was not possible to impose consequences (like taking a device away) for not going to school. This would only cause a fight. A did not tell us very much about Presfield. If I asked him how it was, he would simply say "*fine*". If I asked him about lunch, he might talk a bit more.
149. We were very worried about A's education, but we were also worried about his wellbeing and felt it was more important to try to keep him calm. He was learning at home – teaching himself languages and keeping up with news and politics. He could have been a very bright student, and he was good at English. But it became very hard trying to push him to go to school. The child had to try and he did not; he actively refused to go. And we could see that he was not learning like the others. It got to the point with school, where we felt it was not going to work and we stopped trying to push him to go.

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150. I am aware from the Information provided by the Inquiry that A's last attendance at Presfield was 25 May 2022.

17 March 2022

151. On 17 March 2022, before being enrolled formally in Presfield, A was due to have another transition visit to the school, but he did not attend. Alphonse called me at work to tell me A was missing and he had called the police. I asked permission to come home from work, and I remember all of us searching around the house and at the back of the house. I was praying that he would be found. I was worried that something bad had happened to him. Later that afternoon the police called and said they found him and were going to bring him home. It felt like a long time before he was found.

152. The police found A after a local bus company reported that A was on a bus without having paid the fare and was refusing to get off. He had a small kitchen knife with him. I cannot now remember whether I was aware that A had taken the knife from the kitchen, or if so, when I became aware. I do not believe I was at home when the police officer attended the property in the morning time.

153. I have read the statements provided to me from PC Fairclough [LANC000023] and PC Rhodes [LANC000056] from Lancashire Constabulary. PC Fairclough says A disclosed that he wished to stab people and had thought about using poison, that the only explanation he provided for wanting to stab someone was to have his social media accounts closed down. PC Rhodes says in her statement that A disclosed he was carrying a knife as he wanted to commit a serious offence and stab someone, and when asked why, he said he wanted his TikTok account deleted because he was being bullied about a video on it and his psychologist had told him the police could delete someone's social media if they committed a serious offence. She does not mention that A referenced poison.

154. Both officers report that when they brought A home, they spoke with Alphonse and me. PC Fairclough says he related the concerning comments A had made to us. He refers to a previous statement (which I have not seen) that says I made a comment about A previously speaking about poison in response to his disclosure that A talked about poison in the police vehicle. He did not recall what I said, but he remembered "*there not being much of a reaction or shock on [my] part*". PC Rhodes says they escorted A into

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the property, returned the kitchen knife to us and gave advice on securing knives in the property to prevent them being taken again.

155. I remember that when the police brought A home, they got out of the car and said A was fine and he could go into the house. My recollection was the police officers did not stay very long, and I did not remember that they even came into the house. Whatever information or guidance the police had for A, they must have told him in the car because they did not speak to him after he was home. I do not remember what we discussed except that they said that A's psychologist had said if he wanted to delete his social media accounts, he would need to do something bad. That shocked me as I could not imagine a psychologist giving that advice. I did not remember that the police returned the knife to us, but I had a recollection that we were given advice on securing knives at home.
156. However, I do not remember being told about the comments that A made in the back of the police vehicle. I do not remember being told that he wanted to stab somebody, or that he thought about using poison. When I read these comments, they made me feel physically sick. Also, I have no memory at all of A talking to me about poison, and I do not think that he ever did or would. While I understand that it is PC Fairclough's recollection that he told me about A's mention of poison, and that I made some comment about it (although he says in his statement, he cannot recall exactly what I said), I think there must be a mistake or misunderstanding about this. He acknowledged I did not react, and I can only guess that I did not hear or did not understand what was being said. If I had heard or understood the comment that A was talking about poison, I would have been extremely worried and anxious. I also think Alphonse and I would have spoken about this afterwards, but I do not believe we ever did.
157. I note that Counsel to the Inquiry's opening statement said A made remarks about having made poison [16.09.2025/97:10]. PC Fairclough's statement is clear that he did not recall being told of any attempt to make poison. He also states that he searched the property in the morning and there was nothing he could see that suggested A was making or thinking of making poison.
158. After A brought a knife to the Range in December 2019, I threw away the only remaining sharp knife that we had at home. However, at some point between December 2019 and

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March 2022, I bought another kitchen knife to make food preparation easier. I hid this knife around the kitchen in different spots to make sure it could not be easily found by anyone other than Alphonse or me. I do not know how A found it, and I was very surprised that A had taken it. After this incident, I threw that knife away too.

159. PC Fairclough says in his statement that A was presenting as though he had mental health concerns, and that I was stressed with A when they brought him home, saying I did not feel mental health services were doing enough despite our requests. He says I spoke openly in front of A about how I was struggling with his mental health. PC Rhodes says that PC Fairclough gave Alphonse and I *“safeguarding advice about [A’s] mental health, as he was aware of the mental health issues that [A] had”*. I do not remember saying that I was struggling with A’s mental health, although that was certainly true. I did not feel that A was getting support that helped him, and I felt that CAMHS did not know how to manage him even as mental health professionals. I remember thinking, *“if they do not know what to do, what chance have Alphonse and I?”*
160. The Rule 9 request asks me if I agree that A was having a ‘mental health episode’ and says we were advised by police to take A for a mental health assessment the same day. I do not know what is meant by a ‘mental health episode’. I knew that something was not right when A had gone missing, but when he came home that day it was like any other time of crisis – something had happened, but then it returned to normal. I do not remember contacting CAMHS but if the police advised us to do so, we would have done.
161. A was not arrested and there was no criminal investigation. As I said already, with the police involved, I believed that they would follow up on anything further that was needed for A. I felt that we were in good hands.
162. The Rule 9 request asks me to comment on what impact this incident had on A. I cannot say what impact it had. I saw it as another incident of crisis, different to what we usually experienced at home, but similar in that afterwards A was back to normal. I do not know what was in A’s mind and we did not bring it up afterwards. Raising it with A would only cause A to lash out. We tried to avoid doing or saying things that would create a crisis in him. I just tried to move away from the event and find something happy or calming to do – like maybe watching a show he liked.

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163. The Rule 9 request refers to a 'return home' interview on 22 March 2022, conducted by someone called Amanda Chapman from Lancashire County Council Children's Social Care. I do not recognise this name, and I have no memory of this meeting; however, I have been provided with a record of the meeting which indicates I was present [LCC000159]. The record indicates that A told Ms Chapman he went missing because he had an argument with me about his social media accounts and the fact that the police could look at them if he did something. I am surprised that A said that we had argued as A and I did not argue with each other - nor I would not engage in an argument with him. And as I said above, I think I was at work when A went missing.
164. I do not recall A talking to me about his social media accounts and I did not know that A had TikTok. I remember the police telling me that A was talking about doing something to have the police access his social media, but A never spoke to me about that himself. I was not aware that A complained of being bullied at this time. The only bullying I was aware of was at the Range.
165. I am aware that Counsel to the Inquiry's opening statement indicates A gave an account that was starkly at odds with what the police had reported, denying (for example) that he had a weapon on him and the referral to Lancashire County Council was then closed [16.09.2025/98:9]. I am aware that A lied in some of his interactions with social services.
166. The record indicates that Ms Chapman had a discussion with me about A going missing and I agreed that I did not need further support. I do not remember being offered support or the nature of any support that was being offered. We were struggling and I think if it was offered, I would have said yes but I may also have thought that the engagement coming to us from social services had not been that helpful. I cannot be sure.

14 May 2022

167. The Rule 9 request describes an event that took place on 14 May 2022 based on Lancashire Constabulary records (although the records were not provided). Police were called to our home at 04:30 after a 999-call requesting assistance as A had woken up, demanded a laptop, and when that was refused, thrown food around and locked himself in the bathroom, overfilling the bath and causing a flood. On attendance, Alphonse reported to police that A was severely autistic and had not taken his medication for a

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week, and that we would be contacting CAMHS and our GP for help and advice. The police spoke to A in his bedroom, and he agreed to go to sleep.

168. I remember this incident although I do not remember what caused the row and I did not remember the date. I was asleep, and Alphonse had come home from work as he did a few hours driving in the evenings. When he came in from work, he would pass by the living room on his way to the kitchen to put away his work backpack. I think A was in the living room and they had an argument, and in retaliation A wanted to smash the family laptop. I woke up to A running up and down the stairs – probably looking for the laptop. I think he had started filling the kitchen sink downstairs and then he went upstairs and locked himself in the bathroom, filling the bath and letting it overflow. He threw our family computer - the one that had been returned to us by Merseyside Police following the search in December 2019 - into the bath. I think he did this to try to break it, although we took it to be repaired and it still worked afterwards.
169. Water went everywhere, it was coming through the ceiling and into downstairs. We had a power cut. Even though we were telling A to stop, he kept the taps on. I cannot remember if it was Alphonse or me who called the police, but I remember we called them. It may not sound shocking, but for us it felt out of control, and we did not feel that we could handle it ourselves. We were worried about the damage, about the water affecting the other houses, or even starting a fire.
170. When A heard the police were coming, he came out of the bathroom and went into his bedroom. The police came but we felt they did not really do anything to help us. They just went into his room and said, *“okay mate, don’t do that again”*. We did not get any help to check that the house was safe or that the water would not cause any problems. The whole kitchen was full of water, up our legs.
171. I remember trying to clean the rooms of the water but having to lie down. I was shaking and had no energy. When things like this happened, it made me feel very unwell and very scared. It was difficult to clean the house of all the water.
172. A was also covered in water and his slippers and feet were all wet. He asked me for clothes, and I changed his clothes and shoes to make him warm again. It was not easy, but I needed to make sure my child, who had behaved in this terrible way, was okay. I

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asked him if he was alright, and he said he was fine. He did not speak about what he did. I felt so upset and sad about this. No one wanted something like this to happen again.

173. A was getting older, bigger and stronger. When he kicked off, he could be violent, and he was fighting with greater strength. He never fought with me, although he pushed me once as I have mentioned. He was trying to kick Alphonse, and I stood between them thinking that he would stop, but it did not work.

CAMHS and Family Therapy

174. I do not have a good memory of what happened after this incident, although I am aware from Counsel to the Inquiry's opening statement [16.09.2025/117:10] and from the extract of the statement from Dr Ramasubramanian [AHCH000239_0014] that A and Alphonse attended an urgent appointment with CAMHS on 23 May 2022. Dr Ramasubramanian describes Alphonse's behaviour as verbally aggressive, physically intimidating, and disrespectful and he later apologised. I was not at this appointment, and I cannot comment on his behaviour. However, I have two observations about this report. First, this appointment came at a time when we were feeling under particular pressure after A had flooded the house. It was extremely distressing, and this may have impacted how Alphonse communicated at the appointment. Secondly, when English is not your first language, you can sometimes sound rude even though it is not your intention to be rude, by mixing up words or speaking too quickly especially if you are feeling stress. You have to be careful. I cannot speak for Alphonse, and it may be that he was genuinely very rude, but I know that would not have been his intention. I think we both felt quite desperate.

175. I recall that Dr Molyneux took over from Dr Ramasubramanian as A's psychiatrist, principally to manage any medication prescribed to A. Sam Steed stopped being A's case worker at CAMHS, and Kathryn Morris took over. Initially A engaged with Kathryn Morris but stopped over time.

176. I am aware that A started sessions with Michelle Warner in January 2022 after she was assigned to him as his CAMHS keyworker towards the end of 2021 [16.09.2025/116:8]. As I said, I believe A liked working with Michelle Warner. When she visited, he would sometimes go out walking with her. I do not remember when or why these sessions

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finished but understand from Counsel to the Inquiry's opening statement that they finished in March 2022, as A did not want any further support from CAMHS keywork having achieved his original goal to leave the house more [116:16]. It is a surprise to me now that her engagement with A was only for two months.

177. Family Therapy was organised through CAMHS and was led by Sam Coppard. Alphonse and I attended but A did not. Sessions were every two weeks, and we talked about things, our life in general including about how we could help A. Other than that, we did not receive separate counselling or therapy of any kind. From Counsel to the Inquiry's opening statement, I am aware that our first session of Family Therapy was in June 2022 [16.09.2025/117:1]. I felt there was a lot of talking, but I am not sure how much this helped. There also came a point where we began to feel scrutinised and criticised. I am not sure if Family Therapy achieved what it was designed to achieve.

Incidents in 2023

Schooling

178. I am referred to concerns raised by Presfield regarding A's non-attendance at school since 25 May 2022 [LCC000187] and asked to explain the steps I took to address his non-attendance. As stated at paragraphs 148 to 149 above, I never stopped encouraging A to go back to school, trying to motivate him by what he might learn, or by making friends. I told him that Mr Berry, one of the main teachers at Presfield, would support him to read and learn more about the subjects that interested him. I offered to take him to school myself, but it did not work. When he refused to go, the school sent work for A to do at home. I tried to do it with him, but again he refused; he did not want to. I tried many times.
179. I realise it appears that we were not doing very much to get A back into school. However, I did not know what else to do.
180. The MASH record provided by Lancashire County Council from 4 April 2023, says the following:

"School staff have attempted to engage with A but he is too anxious to see any of us at school or at home. His Dad Alphonse commented that parents will 'pay

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the price' if staff go into the home and we have been unable to see him...Angela Maguire has visited and met mum who it was reported aired her annoyance and confusion over our involvement. On explaining it was a welfare visit, Angela was greeted with a complaint from mum who it was said saw no reason for the visit and she flatly refused for Angela to see [A]'

181. I do not remember this specific visit or Angela Maguire. However, I was annoyed and confused about who was coming to visit us, particularly if someone came without telling us. As I mentioned, I always tried to prepare A for any appointments or visits, as he needed to be ready, and even then, he would often run and hide in his room. If someone arrived unexpectedly and saw A in the living room, he would certainly have had an outburst, smashing things even before the person left the house. That is what Alphonse was referring to when he said we would 'pay the price'. I was scared that if I let someone in, it would cause a crisis. I also felt that whoever came was not really helping us.

A's behaviour

182. During 2023 there was a significant change in A's personal hygiene. He used to be very clean, sometimes showering twice a day and putting on clean clothes every day. After Covid, he started growing his hair and on occasion he asked me to help him wash it. Around 2022, this started to change, and he stopped showering every day. He also needed a push to change his clothes (which I would do carefully and tactfully so as not to cause an outburst).

183. This got worse and by 2023, he stopped showering. If A did not want to shower, it was very difficult to make him do it. There was a time when A told Alphonse he would shower if Alphonse gave him money, so Alphonse paid him £20 to shower. This did not last long, and after a time A simply refused. By September 2023, when Dr Molyneux came to visit A at home, his session note says that A had not showered in the previous month [AHCH000145].

184. A always brushed his teeth and always looked after his teeth. He did not like people seeing his mouth, but I do not know why.

185. Over time A was regularly sleeping on the living room sofa. Where he slept depended on how he was feeling. Sometimes it was in his bedroom, which was the lower bunk in

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the smaller bedroom upstairs. But more frequently it was the sofa in the living room, with his computer and his tablet by his side. He could sleep for a few hours upstairs and then move downstairs and there was no pattern to it. Sometimes he could sleep all day and stay awake all night. When we tried to get him into a routine, it did not last. A had a blanket on the sofa in the living room where he slept, but I had two of these blankets and I was able to swap them out to keep them clean.

Social Services' input

186. I am asked about our interactions with Ashleigh Williams of CFWS (supervised by Sharon Barrett) from 4 April to 29 September 2023. I do not remember Ms Williams.
187. I am referred to a CFWS assessment from 29 September 2023 when the Early Help case was closed [LCC000203]. The record states that parenting support was offered to Alphonse and me, but we declined stating we did not need parenting advice and that we felt professionals needed to be responsible to get A into education. I cannot remember Alphonse and I declining support that was offered. If the objective was to provide us with advice on how to get A back into school, it is possible that we declined. As I have mentioned, when we pushed A too hard, it risked causing A to lash out. Having reviewed the comments in this document, it is apparent that the assessment was conducted with Alphonse and A; it does not appear that I was present.
188. I cannot recall whether A accessed the support that was offered to him by Early Help during this period. I cannot remember when he began to refuse attending his appointments, but it seems from the record that it was during this period (*"A initially asked for this support but later declined and refused to have direct contact with CFW service. CAMHS continued this support but more recently A has disengaged with this service"*). I have outlined above the steps I took to encourage A to attend his appointments, to prepare him. Occasionally he would agree to go, but it was unpredictable.
189. In this assessment, Alphonse is recorded as wanting support from Early Help to remain in place. The opening and closing of different support at different times was difficult, and I thought the lack of continuity was a problem. If anything else happened with A, it meant that we had to seek out support and start again. We never knew when he would have his next crisis. The assessment also records that there were no safeguarding concerns.

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I did not think that A was at risk of self-harm and as I have said, I had no concern about Alphonse being a threat to him. I cannot specifically remember A's behaviour at this time.

190. I am asked to describe my engagement with TAF meetings during this period, but I do not have a good recollection of the meetings I attended or what was discussed. I think the focus of discussions was on what the different agencies were doing to encourage A to engage in education, and to get A back into school. I think by this time, it was difficult for the professionals to do anything. A had become so rigid and did not want to leave the house. Looking back, I think the time when we could have done more to keep him engaged with education when he was expelled from the Range. It may have been possible at that point to address things, and obtain support for his autism, but because many years had passed, including the Covid years when all schooling was remote, I think it became almost hopeless.
191. I do remember a very difficult TAF meeting when we were told that the support in place was discontinuing. I think it may have been the last meeting we had with Sharon Barrett, but I do not know when it was – possibly in September 2023 when Early Help was closing their case. I remember Alphonse begging them to stay but we were told they could not stay because A was refusing to engage with services, and that we did not need their support. A's therapist at CAMHS was saying the same, that A was refusing to come to appointments, and they were discharging him. A was enrolled in Presfield but he was not attending, and we were also asking Presfield to please not remove A from the school. Some months later A was removed from the roll. They said they were not a mental health institution, and there was nothing they could do. We felt like we were on our own and there was no one else around to help us. Honestly, I thought God will be there for us, let Him come and help.
192. We were heartbroken people. I do not know how we managed all that time to even pay the bills and do things that other people do. We had one proper job and salary between us, that we paid bills and bought food. But we did not do much for leisure, we did not go anywhere or have nice things. We did not take holidays. Our faith helped us a lot and I felt, because of my faith, that this was my assignment in life. I offered up these difficulties to God. I thought about all the other people who were in a worse situation to us, people who were very poor, people who were very ill in hospitals or hospices. I thought we were

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in a much better position. We learned to be grateful with the little we had – it was not perfect, but it was fine.

193. I am asked for my recollections of a meeting with Suzanne Walmsley from the Transitions Team in Lancashire County Council's Adult Social Care team on 9 November 2023. I do not have a good memory of this meeting. I think she may have come to the house and probably asked for details about A, taking notes. I do not remember what we were asked. I do not remember receiving any support after this meeting. I think at this time there was no Child Social Care in place, and we thought we needed to wait until A turned 18 to access Adult Social Care.

A's purchases online

194. I am asked about the delivery of a machete to our home on 10 June 2023. The machete was found on top of the wardrobe in our bedroom during the police searches after the attack. It was unopened.

195. Alphonse told me, either that day or the day after, that an item had been delivered to our home, that it was a long item, and he thought it was something metal. I cannot remember if he told me he thought it was a blade or a knife. I am almost certain he did not tell me that it was a machete, and I am not sure that Alphonse knew what was in it. I did not see the item or the packaging, so I am unaware of any markings that were on it. I did not realise that it was in the name of a British woman. Alphonse threw the item on top of the wardrobe in our bedroom because he did not want A to take it. We were too scared to open it but reassured that it was somewhere out of reach.

196. I was not aware that A had made the order using false details, or that he possessed a false identification document. I did not know that A had successfully ordered a knife online using those details. By this time, there were no knives in our house except for table knives and one blunt bread knife (which I hid).

197. I did not know what A was ordering online, but I do not recall that he was ordering a lot of items. I do not remember many deliveries coming to the house. I did not order very much online, maybe a face cream or a top, and then I would expect it to arrive so I would look out for it.

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198. It was quite possible items were delivered without me being aware. I regularly worked during the day and may not have been home when the item was delivered. If someone else had ordered something, they were probably expecting it and would go to the door to receive it. A was not scared of opening the door, but he did not want us to let anyone in if he was not told about it – he wanted to be able to decide whether to stay downstairs or go to his room. I can remember one time that A answered the door to a delivery, but I do not remember when this was, and it was not a regular occurrence. I do not remember a lot of deliveries coming to the house and I was not aware that A was ordering a lot of things online.
199. I do not know what A purchased from Hatilla on 12 June 2023.
200. I am asked about a delivery of a machete to our house on 6 October 2023. I had no knowledge of this delivery at all. I did not receive it, and I am not aware that Alphonse or A received it. I am referred to the signature for whomever received the delivery [MERP000339], but I do not recognise this signature. I knew nothing about this item being in the house, and I never found it. I was not aware that the order was made using false identity details.
201. I have no knowledge of a parcel for DPA Olakunle being delivered to our house around 24 October 2023. I am aware from the Rule 9 request that it contained a machete, but I had no knowledge of this at the time, and I was not aware that there were now three machetes in my house. The knowledge that these items were in my home is immensely distressing to me. I did not think that you would be able to buy weapons over the internet.

CAMHS and Home Visit – September 2023

202. A had telephone appointments scheduled with Dr Molyneux, but A often refused to speak to him and would just throw the phone down. When he had in person appointments, he refused to attend, and I remember him hiding under his bedcovers.
203. Dr Molyneux had prescribed A sertraline, but A did not follow the guidance on when and how often he should take it. I knew that with those kinds of medicines, you should not stop them suddenly, but you should start taking them gradually and come off them gradually. They were not good medicines to mess about with the dosage or frequency.

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Although we explained this to A, he would sometimes say in the morning he was not taking his medication. It may seem that it was possible to force him, but it was not. The only thing we could do was encourage him to take the medication at the time he was due to take it. Sometimes he did but other times he refused. A ultimately stopped taking the sertraline as he felt it was not working. He thought it would help him go outside without fear, which it did not, and he stopped taking it.

204. I am referred to a session note of a home visit completed by A's psychiatrist, Dr Molyneux, on 25 September 2023 [AHCH000145]. In this note, it is recorded that A went to his bedroom prior to the visit and remained there throughout; Alphonse told Dr Molyneux he could not make A do anything he did not want to as A would get aggressive; A had not attended college that term; he had not left the house in the previous few months; he had not had a bath or shower in the previous month; Early Help was closing their case; A was eating well and gaining weight since he stopped taking the Sertraline medication; A seemed happy doing what he wanted to do, teaching himself the family's native African language; and Alphonse and I were in family therapy. It is clear from the document that I was not present during this visit, but broadly, it appears to reflect how A was around this time. He was not bathing or showering, and he refused to go to school or appointments.
205. I am also referred to Dr Molyneux's description of this visit in his witness statement [AHCH000253_0023-0027], where he concludes at paragraph 71 that "*parental overaccommodation now appeared to be the central problem that was driving the dysfunctional family dynamics*". It is evident that this is his opinion, but I do not agree. As parents we were doing our very best to look after A, while protecting ourselves and Dion from his violent outbursts. This comment suggests we were bad parents who were too lenient with A, but to me this indicates that there was no real understanding by Dr Molyneux or the CAMHS' team as to what we were dealing with at home and how desperate we were. We were seeking support from professionals who we thought would be able to help us, but we faced judgment and criticism. It was very disheartening.
206. I am asked about Dr Molyneux discharging A from CAMHS psychiatry in April 2024. I do not recall this happening, although Alphonse will likely have a memory.

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Incidents in 2024

207. A was removed from the roll at Presfield School in June 2024. We did not want this to happen, but I understand that they could not keep the place open for A when he was not engaging. I do not think that this registered with A. He had not been to school for about two years, and he did not care.
208. The biggest barrier to A attending and engaging with education, both at Acorns and Presfield, was I believe his anxiety and then his refusal to engage. He would say that he did not want to be where there were many people. Even when they provided small groups or 1:1 with A and his teacher, it did not work. He came home and said he was not learning anything, and it was boring.
209. Presfield tried to help A come to school, and they even sent a teacher, Mr Berry, to the house. Mr Berry was a nice man, and I thought he was able to speak well to the children. I cannot see what they could have done to encourage A more to come to school. He simply refused. They sent a car and offered that he could come for even one hour, but he refused.

Delivery of the knives – 15 July 2024

210. The Rule 9 request asks about the delivery of two Chef's knives from Amazon to our home on 15 July 2024.
211. In 2024, I drove a Hyundai i30, and Alphonse drove a Ford Focus, which was a taxi. He was insured to drive my car as a second driver, but he rarely did so as he had his own car. I think the only time he would have driven my car was if his car was in the garage. I could not drive the taxi for insurance reasons, so if my car was in the garage, I had no car.
212. I am asked to set out my precise movements throughout the day on 15 July 2024. I do not have a specific memory of going to work that day, but I have seen the Ring video footage of my car, the Hyundai, leaving our house at 07:14 on the morning of 15 July [ILT000076]. It was a Monday, and I think I was on day shift. My work started at 08:00 in [DPA], so I needed to leave the house before 07:15 each morning to get to work on

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time. The time of my car leaving the house on the video matches my usual practice for getting to work for the day shift.

213. The day shift ran from 08:00 to 17:00, and I usually did not get home until just after 18:00 with no traffic. If the traffic was bad, it was even later. Sometimes, I stopped in the shops on the way home – there was an African food shop in [DPA] that I would visit to pick up ingredients, and a shopping centre close to where I worked, that I would sometimes walk around. I cannot say whether I did either of these things that evening, and I have not been provided with Ring video footage showing what time my car returned to the house. As I said, I have no access to any records from the time which might help me recollect my precise movements that day.

214. I have also seen the Ring video footage of Alphonse's taxi, the Ford, driving into our driveway at 07:54 [ILT000077]. I cannot be sure, but he may have been driving during the nighttime and was returning home from the night shift. We generally tried not to leave A alone for too long, so that at least one of us was around if A needed anything.

215. The Inquiry has asked who drove away from our house in the Hyundai at 07:14 on 15 July, and although I cannot see who is driving, this is almost certainly me on my way to work. The Inquiry has asked who returned to the house in the Ford at 07:54 on 15 July. Again, I cannot see who is driving the Ford, but it was almost certainly Alphonse.

216. I cannot comment on what Alphonse did for the remainder of the day as I was at work.

217. I was not at home at 17:40 on 15 July when the delivery was made at our house. I did not receive the delivery. As I was not at home at the time of the delivery, I cannot comment on how A came to be in possession of the delivery. I did not know that two knives had been delivered to our house.

218. The Inquiry has asked me to confirm my date of birth as I understand that the delivery driver entered the recipient's year of birth as 1978. I was born in March 1972.

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Events of 22 July 2024

219. The following Monday, 22 July 2024, I was called home from work because A had tried to use a knife on Alphonse and tried to go in a taxi, before being stopped by Alphonse.
220. I went to work on a day shift so I probably left the house at 07:15. I remember Alphonse trying to call me and sending me a message to call him please. We are not allowed to have phones in work, so I only had access to my phone during breaks. When I saw Alphonse's calls and messages during my break, I called him and he told me that A had tried to stab him with a knife, but he managed to escape. He also said that A had tried to go in a taxi to the Range School, but Alphonse stopped him. I panicked and immediately asked to have time off to go home. I cannot remember my precise movements. I think I drove from work to the car park of a nearby garage to avoid A knowing that Alphonse had contacted me about the incident. I remember being worried that A would damage my car. I cannot remember if or for how long I stayed at the garage, but I think I then drove to the end of our close to leave my car there, before walking towards the house. When I got to the house, Alphonse was outside sitting in his car, and I sat in his car with him. We stayed like that for an hour or so, not going into the house. A was inside the house alone, but we were too scared to go in.
221. I remember needing to use a toilet as I had left the hospital in a rush. There was nowhere to go, and I could not ask a neighbour to use their toilet, so I drove to the McDonalds in town and used the toilet there. Alphonse stayed behind. Before I left, we had been thinking and talking about how to handle the situation. I was going to come back, and we would decide what to do next. When I came back home, Alphonse had gone back into the house and said things were back to normal. I went in and A was moving around the house normally. A said to me, "*mum, I'm hungry*" and asked me to get him McDonalds for dinner. I went back out to McDonalds.
222. Although the events that day had been very extreme, in another way it was like the countless other crisis events that we had experienced with A, when after his moments of violence and aggression, calm returned, and things were relatively back to normal. There were many evenings when I came home from work that A would say to me he wanted McDonalds, or Subway, or Papa John's. We got this food for him because we wanted to make sure he was eating.

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223. I think that night Alphonse went out to work. This was a chance for him to have a break and have time away from the house.
224. I have been provided with an extract of a call and message log from my old mobile phone [MERP001400] showing entries from 22 and 29 July 2025. The entries for 22 July show that Alphonse sent me a message at 11:27 asking me to call, and then he phoned me twice at 11:29 and 11:50 but I was unable to answer. He sent a further message at 12:45 asking me if I was on break. The log shows that I called Alphonse at 13:16 and we spoke for nearly nine minutes. I rang him again at 13:25 and we spoke for four minutes, and I rang a third time at 13:30 when we spoke for seven minutes. I cannot remember why we had three calls, but it is possible that we lost connection which would explain why I was calling him back. The log goes on to show that Alphonse tried to call me at 14:21 but we did not speak, and I rang him back at 14:25 when we spoke for four minutes. I think by this time I was probably on my way home from work. There is a further call to Alphonse at 15:20 which lasted for nearly a minute and a half. I cannot now recall what this was about. At 15:27 I sent a message in Kinyarwanda to a group, which included Alphonse, with a quote from Psalm 121 A Song of Ascents: *"I lift up my eyes to the mountains – where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, creator of heaven and earth"*. I do not remember sending this message, but I was trying to offer a prayer and bring comfort to both of us. I can see from the Ring video footage provided by the Inquiry that I walked towards the house at 15:44 [ILT000063].
225. The next entry in the message log shows that Alphonse messaged me a number of times from 17:25 to 17:47 in Kinyarwanda. I think this must have been when I went to McDonalds to use the toilet. The English translation of his messages reads as follows:

"Come to the house. I entered the house. He has calmed down. I passed by him going to the bedroom. He took a toothbrush and toothpaste and goes back downstairs. He said I cannot stop him from doing what he wants but he has moved on."

"Come home."

"He no longer has what he had before. He wears flip flops."

"He wears a t shirt."

"I am in the shower."

"I am taking a shower."

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226. Alphonse then messaged me later in the evening, I think when he was out driving. I cannot see from the log that I replied to these messages. The English translation of these messages is as follows:

“Are you alright?”

“Made £43, was going well and then a pause.”

“All is well for us.”

“Our child needs to be protected. Imagine how the troubles went away, but he could be killed or put in prison for good. You have to make sure he is eating well please because he uses his brain a lot.”

“He is awake 19 hours out of 25 hours. Buy some juices so that he can drink it to boost his brain energy when he goes into crisis.”

227. The Inquiry has asked me whether I agreed with Alphonse’s concern that A could have been killed or given a sentence of life imprisonment. I am not sure I thought about that at the time. I thanked God that nothing bad had happened.

228. I do not now remember exactly what Alphonse told me about A’s attack. I knew that he had threatened Alphonse with a knife and had tried to stab him; I do not remember that he was trying to stab Alphonse’s leg. I think he said A was trying to get a knife that was on top of the wardrobe, and that was the reason for the attack. I think Alphonse told me that he thought A had a knife in his rucksack when he got into the taxi to go to the Range. He may have mentioned something about a jerry can, but I do not remember precisely what was said. I am not sure that I was aware that A had asked for petrol to put into a jerry can.

229. When I got into the house, I checked that the knife we had (which by this time was a blunt bread knife) was still where I had hidden it in the kitchen. I had three different hiding places where I did not think A would look. I changed the hiding place so that it was not always in one place. I remember this knife was where I had hidden it and I felt reassured. I do not remember asking Alphonse which knife A had used to threaten him with. He did not describe the appearance of the knife, as I think he knew it would scare me, and I was already very scared. I mentioned that Alphonse would sometimes avoid telling me things if he thought they might make me feel anxious or unwell.

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230. After things had calmed down, I did not think about A having another knife in the house, or about the fact that he had threatened Alphonse with a knife. I did not think about where the knife was, and I did not try to find it. I do not know why. I think I was in shock. I felt on the edge, like I was not able to take any more. I was totally depleted and utterly distressed. I am not sure that I was able to think about that knife again.
231. When we were sitting in the car wondering how to handle the situation, our thoughts were on how to calm the situation down. That was how we approached things with A. We did not talk about calling the police but possibly had we had gone into the house and felt that A was still out of control, or we were still in a crisis situation, we would have called them. It was only the police that we would have thought about calling – at this point, there was no point in contacting CAMHS or social services. I am not sure that we would know how to contact Prevent.
232. However, because things had returned to normal, our approach was to monitor A and see how things were over the following days. I took two half-days from work that week and went to work for just a few hours on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons (from 14:00-17:00). I was due to have Thursday, Friday and the weekend off before starting into two weeks of night shifts. Throughout the week, everything was fine. It was calm. A behaved in the way he normally did after a crisis had calmed down, and there is nothing particular of note. Dion came home from university on Friday. Both Alphonse and I were at home, though I think Alphonse also did a few hours of work. We were very worried, but we believed that the crisis had passed, and I was at home keeping an eye on him.
233. I was very shocked by this incident and also very scared - scared of what A could do to us. In the years since A went to the Range and attacked the boy with the hockey stick, any violent behaviour was contained within our house, mainly directed at Alphonse. I did not believe that A would be violent or look to harm others. In all his interactions with CAMHS staff, with social workers and with Early Help, he was never violent or aggressive. I did not think that he would harm or be violent with anyone else. Even with Alphonse, this was the first time that A had threatened him with a knife or any kind of weapon. But A was also our child, and I felt heartbroken that we were in this situation. I did not speak to A about what he did that day.

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234. Looking back, of course I wish we had contacted the police. This, I feel, is my biggest failure. I cannot say what they would have done or not done but knowing what A went on to do the following week, I wish we had asked them to come. We were very frightened, and afterwards, as things were back to normal, I really thought that it was fine. I thought maybe if A had another episode we would make a call. That had been our life, living between peace and chaos, not just with A but in our past. It was up and down all the time. We were aware that A wanted to go to the Range, but as the Range had broken up for the summer, we thought that there was no longer a risk.

Cleaning A's room – 22 July 2024

235. On the day of the incident with the taxi, A allowed Alphonse and I into his room in the evening time. Normally, A's room was off limits and I could not go in there even to clean. He specifically told me not to go into his room, and I remember him saying this in a firm and slightly threatening way. He did not call me stupid or use bad language; he was just firm. He meant it. I do not remember exactly when he said this to me, but it was sometime after he was expelled from the Range. When A stopped me from going into his room, I would go to him with new bedding that he could swap for the old bedding so it could be washed.

236. On that evening, 22 July 2024, Alphonse told me that A had agreed it was okay to clean his room because his bed sheets were dirty. After A agreed, I changed the bed clothes very quickly. I did not clean the floor, and I think it was Alphonse who mopped the floor although my memory is that we were not in A's bedroom at the same time. It was a big surprise to me that A let us in there at all, as no one was normally allowed to go in his room. I was focussed on getting the dirty sheets off quickly in case the opportunity disappeared. I was in and out – changing the fitted sheet and duvet cover and then leaving. I did not change the sheets on the top bunk, only the bottom where A slept. I did not want to get into trouble with A, even though he had agreed. I was so nervous about everything.

237. I am asked by the Inquiry what I saw in A's room. I did not look around me when I was in there – I was focused on getting the bed clothes changed and getting out. I remember some cardboard boxes on the floor, but I did not spend any time looking at them and I certainly did not look in them to see what they were. I did not see any labels on the

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boxes. I did not want to get caught looking at A's things because I did not want any trouble. I had not been in that room in over a year, and I did not want things to escalate.

238. I did not clear or move the boxes; all I did was change the sheets on the bed. I did not see anything unusual or out of the ordinary – no knives, no chemicals, no bow and arrow, no Tupperware boxes and no smoke grenades. Alphonse did not tell me that he saw any of these items. He had previously said he saw the bow and arrow - I think some months before - but I thought it could be used for sport. I realise it sounds naïve, but my mind did not compute that it was something that could be used to hurt people. I understand that Alphonse told the police he thought the bow and arrow was for him, but I could not even entertain this thought – it was so traumatising. I did not know what smoke grenades were or what they looked like. As I said, I did not think that A was a risk to others.

239. The Rule 9 request explains that the following items were found in the house after the attack:

- a. A sledgehammer, found in a box behind the door in A's bedroom;
- b. A 14cm kitchen knife, found in the bathroom;
- c. A 20cm knife, found wrapped in a duvet on the sofa in the living room;
- d. A machete, found in a black holdall under the bunk beds in A's bedroom; and
- e. Items that could be used to make petrol bombs (glass bottles with matches taped to the side).

240. I had no idea that these items were in my house. Reading the questions from the Inquiry and being referred to the photographs felt like a horror film. I am so sad to be asked about these things, and it makes me feel sick. As I said, I never took in any of the deliveries, and I do not know who did. I knew there were two boxes underneath the sofa in the living room, but the boxes were closed (not open), and I did not look in them. I would not attempt to look at them as it would cause A to lash out. As I have mentioned, A spent most of his time in the living room, including sleeping there. I did not ask A what was in the boxes as it would cause a row.

241. In my interview with the police, I said that when cleaning A's room, I noticed some boxes and the empty boxes were taken down to the bin [MERP001432/33]. I do not believe that I moved the boxes, and I think it was Alphonse.

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29 July 2024

242. On the morning of 29 July 2024, I had an appointment for a blood test at my GP. I think the appointment was for 08:00 or shortly after. I have seen Ring video footage of my car, the Hyundai, leaving the house at 07:41 [ILT000069]. That day I was about to start a block of night shifts from Monday night to Wednesday night (21:00 to 08:00). I would have shifts for two weeks, but then the third week off. I did not like taking appointments while I was in the middle of shift work because I needed the rest to do two weeks of long hours. I decided to get the blood test done first thing that Monday, before coming home to sleep and then starting the two-week block of shifts. I think A was in the living room when I left, doing normal things. I remember it was a warm, sunny day.
243. I cannot remember if I came straight home from the GP. The surgery was about 15 minutes away with no traffic, and I probably spent about 15 to 20 minutes in the surgery getting the blood test done. I cannot remember if I passed Tesco on the way home, but it is possible that I did. I liked to make sure that we had everything we needed in the house before I started the night shifts. The Ring video footage shows my car returning to the house at 09:15.
244. When I came home, everything seemed to be normal. I think I had a small bowl of cereal so that I would be able to sleep and not wake up hungry. I did not see anything unusual in A. I do not remember what we talked about, but I think it was normal things. When I was about to go on shift, I would often tell him that I was going to go on nights, that I needed to rest, that he should be good, and I would give him a hug. I remember that A was dressed in track trousers and a green jumper. This was not unusual.
245. Dion was planning to go see friends that day and Alphonse was helping to shower him and get him ready to go out.
246. I went upstairs to lie down but I was not fully asleep. I could hear everyone moving around the house. I cannot recall precisely what time I went upstairs. I do not think I would have delayed too long as I needed to rest.
247. I heard the front door bang closed and I went to the window in Dion's bedroom (which faced the front of the house) and saw A walking out of the close. He was not running or walking fast; he moved slowly. He was wearing the track trousers and jumper, and he

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did not have a bag or anything with him that I could see. I watched his back as he walked out of the close.

248. By this time, A had not left the house for a long time. He battled with anxiety about leaving the house and we were always trying to get him to go out for a walk. The work that A was doing with Early Help, with Carl, with the CAMHS keyworker was directed to trying to help A do the normal things that a young person would do – to leave the house, walk to the shop and buy a bar of chocolate or some crisps. Something like that. When I saw A leave the house that morning, I thought he was going for a walk. I thought he was being brave, and that he was trying to overcome his anxiety. I thought it was going to be a good day.

249. When I saw him, I immediately felt nervous and worried for him, but not that he would harm anyone. I am a natural worrier, and I could feel the anxiety in my stomach. As a mum, I always worried about how the boys were doing. All I wanted was for them to be okay, to be happy and to be healthy. I did not think about running after A because I thought he was trying to overcome his fears and that I should let him be. I thought he would go for a walk and then come home.

250. The Inquiry has provided me with copies of messages I sent and received that morning in Kinyarwanda. I wrote:

[11:23 to my Pastor]: *“We don’t know where he’s going”*

[11:24 to my cousin]: *“That child opened the door and goes; we don’t know where he is going”*

251. My pastor responded and told me not to worry, A would come back and said let’s pray. I replied at 12:03: *“We don’t know where he’s going”*.

252. I thought A had gone for a walk. It did not cross my mind that A was going to cause harm to anyone else. I never, ever thought that A could do what he did, that he would be capable of doing such a thing. If I had thought that A was acting suspiciously, that he was holding something or being violent, I would have called the police.

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253. Alphonse heard the door bang too and knew that A had left the house. I think we spoke about A going for a walk, but that was it. I do not remember anything particular that we said. Alphonse was still busy helping Dion to get ready to go. I lay back down on the bed and prayed that A's walk went well, that he would come back fine.
254. Dion left the house shortly after to go to the bus stop on the road outside our close. Alphonse had forgotten to give Dion the extra battery for his wheelchair, and he went running after him to the bus stop. I stayed in bed. It was not long after that when I heard the helicopters.
255. That was the end of us. It was the end of us being in that house. I have not seen A since that day. During the course of the afternoon, I learned what had happened; what A had done. My world shattered.
256. The time from lying down on my bed, Alphonse helping Dion in the shower, A leaving, Dion leaving and then hearing helicopters overhead felt like a very small amount of time. The timeline provided by the Inquiry through Ring video footage shows that A left the house at 11:10 and walked out of the close [ILT000071]. He returned at 11:17 [ILT000072] and got into a taxi at 11:31 [ILT000064]. Dion left at 12:00 [ILT000065], followed by Alphonse two minutes later (bringing him his battery) [ILT000073]. Alphonse returns to the house at 12:05 [ILT000082], wheels away a wheelchair at 12:07 (which he took from the boot of my car before I went onto night shifts) [ILT000074], and then at 12:13 he is seen looking under his car (he was checking one of the tires in the taxi, which he had been worried about) [ILT000066].
257. I did not see A come back to the close at 11:17 or get into the taxi at 11:31. It is unbelievable to me that he did that. I did not go to check that the bread knife was still in the kitchen. I did not go into A's room or the living room to check the packages and boxes that had been delivered. The last thing I would do was go through A's things. I was very scared.
258. The Rule 9 request refers to Dion's statement to Merseyside Police which stated: "[o]n the Monday 29th July, at about 11:15am [A] left the house. My mum told me she had found the wrappings of a knife, it said chefs knife on the packet". I am told that my

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finger/palm mark was found on the packaging of the knife that A used in the attack and the packaging for the knife was found in a carrier bag on the landing of our home.

259. We had a plastic carrier bag upstairs on the landing to throw away rubbish before taking it to the big bin downstairs. I saw packaging sticking half-way out of the plastic bag on the floor, and I just tidied it up, pushing it fully into the plastic bag. I cannot remember when I saw this, but I believe it was that morning. I do not remember telling Dion I saw it or that it said 'chefs knife' on the package. I do not think I mentioned it to Alphonse because it did not register with me as a problem in that moment. I remember seeing the packaging, but I think I looked at it and put it away. I did not connect this packaging to thoughts of A having a knife or causing harm to others. I knew that A had threatened Alphonse with a knife the week before, but it did not connect with me that he had a knife that morning. When I saw him leaving the close, I thought he was going for a walk. It did not cross my mind that he would have a knife with him or that he had thoughts of harming others.

260. I did not see the packaging with the knives in it, and I did not give the knives to A.

261. I blame myself. I honestly did not think A was capable of doing the acts that he did that day. Despite the past that I had lived through, I could not even contemplate that my own child could be responsible for such destruction and devastation. My heart is broken that my child did these things. If I had thought that A would cause harm that morning, I would have called the police.

Domestic abuse

262. I have detailed above in this statement the life that we led at home with A. Throughout these years, we simply thought that this was what it was to raise children with special needs.

263. A was abusive, violent and threatening particularly with Alphonse. However, he did not really fight with his brother, Dion. He did not hit him and there was only one occasion when A poured milk over Dion, I think one morning when he was getting ready to go to school after A had been expelled from the Range. If A had been violent or abusive with

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Dion it would have been very hard for us to manage, and it could have been the end of our family life together. It would have been impossible for us to manage in one house.

264. Dion loved his brother very much and I think A loved him. Sometimes, I would tell them to give each other a hug, and they would do it. But they did not talk to each other very much. Dion did not like when A smashed things or made loud noises. He liked to be by himself in his room.

265. I was scared of A's behaviour at home, of what he would do. When he was smashing things or being violent, it might sound as if he just broke a plate or a glass, but it was extremely distressing. We had a hard floor downstairs and when he smashed something, it would shatter with pieces flying everywhere. These outbursts made me feel physically unwell, and it was happening all the time. It was not that I feared he would be physically violent with me, but I did fear his behaviour.

266. As I said, he was not violent with other people. Other than his assault of a child with the hockey stick, he did not demonstrate violence towards anyone outside our family.

Online activity

267. In December 2019, A had a tablet that was connected to wifi in the house. I cannot remember whether he had a phone at this time. He also had a laptop, but when the laptop was returned by the police, some of the keys were not working properly

268. By 2024, A had a small mobile phone, not a smartphone, two tablets and a laptop. One of the tablets was broken and he had asked if he could have a replacement, so I bought him the second tablet from Argos for about £100. I also bought him the small Nokia phone that I got from a tiny shop in Southport. A bought the laptop himself with his own money.

269. By 2024, A barely used his mobile phone. He might call me on my way home from work to ask me to pick up a pizza for example, but he stopped answering the phone, even when I rang him. He stopped trusting anybody and he spoke to me less. I think he was becoming less trusting.

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270. The Inquiry has asked me whether I was aware of A's online activity or what he was accessing on the internet. I was not aware of what A was looking up online, and I am not sure that Alphonse was aware either. We never saw his screens, and we did not touch his things.
271. A spent his days reading online. He liked history, art history, economics, current affairs and politics. He read journals and news. He would go to the House of Commons live and listen to what was being discussed. He might pick a country and then research all about it – finding out their GDP, the languages they spoke, the politics and religion of the country, where people originated from, their cultures and the foods they ate. I liked to talk to A about these things, about what he knew of different countries and their people.
272. I was aware that for a time, A was doing genealogy research for people online. I do not know how he was doing it, where they found him or how long he did it for, but I think he was paid some money. I do not know how much.
273. A was good at teaching himself languages, and he taught himself German during Covid from a small book. He knew bits of Welsh because he was born in Cardiff and had some Spanish. He did not speak French. After Covid, he taught himself our native Rwandan language, Kinyarwanda. He would ask me how to conjugate this verb or what that word meant. He was not fluent, but he was doing very well.
274. A spent most of his time reading online journals and learning. I do not know how much time. He did not have many physical books.
275. A's devices were 'no-go' zones. We did not touch his things, and I would not go into A's territory or his space. We were scared of A's reaction being violent, so we took steps to avoid an outburst.
276. I am asked about A's use of Virtual Private Networks, and I had no knowledge that such a thing was even real.

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CAMHS

277. I have described some of our interactions with CAMHS throughout this statement. There were times when we called CAMHS, but we did not find them helpful. I was sceptical about CAMHS because they did not come to see what things were like for us at home. If there was a crisis, or if things got out of hand, it was best to call the police because at least they would come and see things.
278. Generally, I did not feel that people understood the situation we were living in. For example, we had a family therapy session through CAMHS every couple of weeks on Teams. But because we did not have a big home and you could hear things from different rooms, the only place where we could speak, where we would not be overheard, was our car. If A overheard us speaking about him, he would start smashing things. We would sit and do the appointment in A's car, and I have no doubt there was a view that we were rude or not taking it seriously, when we were trying to find a way to have the appointment without things escalating at home.
279. CAMHS left us around the same time that everyone was leaving. They discharged A because he did not attend the sessions. We were looking to them as professionals, thinking they would help us, but they looked helpless, like they had exhausted the options available because A would not engage, because he refused to take the medication. There was nothing left they could do. A was never monitored as an in-patient for his mental health, and I do not believe that this was an option that was explored.

Previous accounts

280. The Inquiry has asked whether there are any matters that I wish to add, correct or clarify for the Inquiry from the accounts I gave previously in my statement to the police dated 31 July 2024 [MERP000719] and in the interview with the police on 4 December 2024 [MERP001432]. My full account for the Inquiry is set out in this statement. I note there were some inaccuracies within the statement provided to the police which I clarify below:
- a. The statement says I met Alphonse in Cardiff through friends. I had met Alphonse before I came to the UK in [DPA]
 - b. The statement says we both graduated from [DPA] in 2010. I graduated in 2010, and Alphonse graduated in 2008.

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- c. The statement says that A was expelled early in year 8. A was expelled from the Range at the start of year 9.
- d. The statement says when any parcels were delivered A jumped up to the door to get there before anyone else. I can remember only one instance when A jumped up to get a delivery.
- e. The statement said I thought A did not let me in his bedroom because he did not want me to see something. This is what I think now. At the time, I thought A simply did not want anybody to go into his room.
- f. The statement refers to events on 22 July 2024, although it does not mention that A threatened Alphonse with a knife or that A was attempting to go to the Range. My full recollection of that day's events is set out above. I do not know why it was incomplete in my statement.
- g. The statement implies that Alphonse and I entered the house together on 22 July. I believe that Alphonse went in before me while I was at McDonalds.

Conclusion

281. I think about what happened every day, about what Alphonse and I could have done differently. I worry that our own history, the trauma and violence that we suffered in our past, somehow impacted our ability to respond to or cope with A's behaviour – to seek peace and avoid conflict. What A has done, the violence that he showed that day, is trauma on top of trauma. I wish with all my heart I could go back to change what happened, to protect everyone who was hurt. As a mother, it is unbearable to me to know that my child has caused such suffering. I pray for the victims and their families, and for mercy.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings many 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.

Signature

Signed:

Dated: 11 October 2025