Witness Name: Alphonse Rudakubana
Exhibits: AR/01-AR/03
Dated: 11 October 2025

THE SOUTHPORT INQUIRY

FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF Alphonse Rudakubana

I, Alphonse Rudakubana, will say as follows: -

INTRODUCTION

1. I am the father of AR.

2. This witness statement is made to assist the Southport Inquiry (the "**Inquiry**") with the matters set out in the Rule 9 Request dated 8 September 2025.

3. Before setting out my background I wish to acknowledge the terrible pain and suffering caused by the horrific actions of my son (AR), and to express my heartfelt apology for my role in failing to prevent what happened. I will do all I can to provide answers for the bereaved families and survivors, and to assist the Inquiry in minimising the risk of a future tragedy.

4. Since the awful events of July 2024 we have lived away from our former home in Southport and I have limited access to correspondence, emails and reports from the key period between 2019 to 2024. This statement is produced largely from memory.

BACKGROUND

5. I was born in Rwanda in 1975 and I lived through the genocide of 1994. My ethnic origin is Tutsi and I am a committed Christian, originally Catholic, but since 2017 I worship as an Evangelical Christian.

6. Many of my family members and friends were killed during the genocide, including both my parents and three of my sisters, and approximately 40 members of my extended family in total. I was 18 years old and still at school at the time of the genocide. I was taken from my home by armed groups on three occasions and questioned and threatened, during which I thought I would be killed. Following the genocide life was hard. I looked after my younger sister and we were in constant danger from suspected participants in the genocide who feared that we would testify against them.

7. I came to the UK in 2002 and claimed asylum, which was granted in 2003. My wife Laetitia Muzayire was granted asylum in the UK in 2002. We are now both UK citizens, and we have two children, Dion who was born in 2004, and AR who was born in August 2006.

8. My English was limited when I first came to the UK and I studied English language (written and spoken) between 2002-2004. In Rwanda my first language was Kinyarwanda, and I was educated in French. I mention these circumstances because I know that the Inquiry will be considering my communications with a number of organisations and I have received feedback in employment settings of the need to improve my communication skills. I am aware that I do not always express myself as well as someone whose first language is English.

9. I attended DPA between 2005 and 2008 and studied for a degree in DPA, graduating in 2008. I trained as DPA DPA between 2009 and 2012 on a fixed term contract, but unfortunately I was not employed by the DPA beyond this period.

10. In late 2012 Laetitia secured a good job in the Southport area and we moved there as a family. At this time Dion was 8 years old and AR was 6. The move was a big upheaval for our children as they had to leave their friends behind.

11. Laetitia's work was the main family income, and I focussed more on childcare responsibilities, including taking the children to and from school. I qualified as a licensed taxi driver in 2013 which provided some additional income, and had the advantage of allowing flexible working hours.

12. In July 2017 we purchased a house in the Banks area of Southport which is approximately 4 or 5 miles from Southport town. Prior to this, we had been living in rented accommodation.

13. Laetitia started a new job in 2018 which was based in DPA This was a longer commute and involved a shift pattern that included evenings, nights and weekends. We would coordinate child care around Laetitia's shifts and I would also fit in some taxi driving to supplement our income.

14. Dion initially attended secondary school at Christ the King Catholic High School in Southport, and it was our intention that both boys would be educated at this school. However, Dion developed a serious condition that significantly impacted his mobility, requiring his use of a wheelchair, and he transferred to Range High School in Formby in February 2017, because Christ the King School was not suitable for a wheelchair user.

15. AR wanted to attend Christ the King School because that was where all his friends were going, but we decided to send AR to Range High School from September 2017 because I did not think I could manage two separate school runs, particularly having regard to Dion's needs.

16. With hindsight this was a mistake, and I should have made more effort and found a way to send AR to Christ the King School.

17. AR's year 7 at Range High School seemed to go well. He was doing well academically and was keeping in touch with his friends at Christ the King High School. However, these friendships gradually drifted apart, and problems emerged in year 8 when AR started to experience bullying at Range High School.

18. AR was physically small and one of the youngest in his year (born in August). He was also autistic (although this was not formally diagnosed until 16 February 2021). AR complained to me of bullying at school and would often stay behind with a teacher after the last lesson of the day while I collected Dion, because he was scared.

19. In or about February 2019 I started to become concerned about AR's behaviour at home as he was starting to withdraw from Laetitia and I, for example he stopped telling us about his school life. He was spending a lot of time playing the video game Fortnite and I discussed with him the risks of violent video games and their potential to influence behaviour. However, AR was adamant that there was no link and he was insistent about being allowed to continue to play the game.

20. In June 2019 I requested a Special Educational Needs (SEN) assessment for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) through the Range High School. I had suspected that AR might be suffering from ADHD since about year 5 and I had raised this as an issue with AR's GP but no progress was ever made with an assessment. Mrs Alexander, who was a teacher and SEN officer at Range High School, arranged for AR to be screened for ADHD, but although AR's score was quite high it did not meet the threshold for ADHD. She did, however, suggest that AR should be assessed for autism.

21. Around this time I was also corresponding with one of AR's teachers, Mr Cregeen (who was a PE teacher and also AR's head of house) about AR's behaviour at school. The bullying of AR had escalated and I was also concerned that AR was starting to be issued with a lot of detentions. Mr Cregeen replied by email on 14 June 2019 and told me that he would obtain feedback from AR's teachers and report back. When Mr Cregeen reported back he told me that AR's behaviour at school was poor, and cited examples of disruptive behaviour, reckless comments, refusal to follow instructions, and poor concentration and motivation. He also reported that AR had been involved in a fight in the classroom.

22. I am asked by the Inquiry to include within this statement aspects of AR's upbringing and schooling that are relevant to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference. In this respect I believe that AR's exclusion from school in October 2019 (which I address in more detail below) had a very detrimental impact on him, and his behaviour and mental health became significantly worse from this point onwards. As already mentioned, I regret sending AR to the Range High School, and while we did this for good reasons, I believe he would have coped much better in secondary school with the support of his existing friendship groups at Christ the King School, and the behaviour that led to his permanent exclusion from the Range High School (and mainstream schooling) might have been averted.

23. I acknowledge that I was slow to recognise AR's poor behaviour, and was too accepting of AR's explanations that he was the victim of bullying and was being singled out by teachers. However, AR was undoubtedly experienced bullying at school, and this had a profound impact on him, and I know how scared he was.

Expulsion from school in October 2019

24. AR's behaviour continued to deteriorate into Year 9, and on 7 October 2019 the police attended our home because of reports that AR had been carrying a knife into Range High School. I had no prior knowledge whatsoever that AR had been carrying a knife to school.

25. The situation came to light because AR had contacted Childline himself (without my or Laetitia's knowledge) and in conversations that AR was having with the Childline call handlers (which I understand took place over several calls), AR told them that he had been carrying a knife, and Childline became sufficiently concerned to contact the police. I do not know the precise details of the calls that AR made to Childline.

26. I was shocked at this development and contacted Childline to complain on 28 October 2019 at what I perceived to be a breach of confidentiality in connection with a child who had approached them for help. The Inquiry has provided me with a transcript of my initial call to Childline on 28 October 2019 [MERP000322] following which I had a further conversation with a Childline representative who told me that AR had contacted them on several occasions, and that they had reported AR to the police because they had serious concerns about what AR had told them.

27. As a result of these events AR was excluded from Range High School on 9 October 2019 and a meeting of the School Governors was scheduled for 5 November 2019 to consider whether to confirm the exclusion or to allow AR to return. I sought to challenge permanent exclusion because I knew how detrimental it would be to AR's education, life chances and wellbeing. I also believed that AR was carrying a knife because he was scared of being attacked, and while this does not justify his actions, I thought that it did not need to lead to permanent exclusion. AR was very upset at the fact he had been excluded, and he cried (which was very rare for him).

28. On 28 October 2019 I emailed PC McNamee (one of the officers who had attended our home on 7 October 2019) to ask for his support in challenging the exclusion because my impression of PC McNamee was that he was a caring individual, who knew the background and I thought that he might be able to help us. However, PC McNamee responded later the same day, stating that he was not in a position to help and emphasised the seriousness of AR's behaviour, and that it was for the school to determine the risk [LANC000069].

29. I attended the meeting on 5 November 2019 and asked the Head Teacher and School Governors to give AR a second chance, and explained how AR's behaviour was linked to the bullying he was experiencing. However, the decision to permanently exclude AR from the Range High School was confirmed following the meeting by letter (a few days later).

30. I exhibit as AR/01 **IWS000053** a collection of my emails from around this period relating to the bullying AR was experiencing, the large number of detentions that AR received, the ADHD and autism screenings/assessments, and the exclusion process.

31. I am asked by the Inquiry whether I can recall a meeting with a social worker, Lucy Parkinson, of Lancashire County Council's Child and Family Wellbeing Service (CFWS) on 7 November 2019 following the exclusion. I am afraid I have no recollection of this meeting.

32. AR enrolled at the Acorns School in Ormskirk on 17 October 2019. Acorns School is a pupil referral unit for children aged 11 to 16 who have experienced difficulties in mainstream education and are not able to attend regular schools. AR did not have a good experience at Acorns School and his attendance and behaviour was poor. Acorns School provided reports to parents every Friday and I used to dread receiving them to the extent it made me physically unwell because of the reports of AR's poor behaviour.

<u>First Prevent Referral 5 December 2019</u>

33. On 5 December 2019 I attended a meeting at Acorns School which is detailed within Inquiry documents LCC001346, page 67, LCC000024, page 5, and the chronology LCC000010.

34. I do not have sight of the first Prevent referral but I am informed by the Inquiry that it states that AR had been carrying a knife into school which I believe to be a reference to AR's behaviour at Range High School up to October 2019. I was not aware and do not believe that AR had taken a knife into the Acorns School at this time. Acorns School scanned their pupils on entry for metal objects as a security measure.

35. My understanding of the Prevent referral process was that it was concerned with terrorism and I did not believe that AR was at risk of this. I was concerned to learn that AR had been researching school shootings, and when I asked AR for an explanation he told me that lots of pupils read news stories such as this.

36. AR spent a lot of time online and would research a wide range of issues, and at this time, although I was concerned with some specific instances of AR's online activity, I thought the vast majority was legitimate and harmless.

Attack at the Range High School on 11 December 2019

37. Shortly before this attack there had been an incident at the Acorns School when AR had got into a fight with another boy. AR had a cut and bruising to his leg.

38. I had no indication that AR was planning to carry out an assault on 11 December 2019 at Range High School and I believe that the fight at the Acorns School may have been a trigger. Prior to the incident on 11 December 2019 I did not think that AR was capable of committing an act of violence of this kind. Although I was aware that AR had taken a knife into Range High School some months earlier I believed that this was for self-defence, because he was being bullied and was scared, and that he would not have used it. AR was keeping himself to himself at this point and he was not communicating with me.

39. I am asked by the Inquiry to comment on a list of possible targets drawn up by AR. I have no recollection or other knowledge of such a list.

40. On 11 December 2019 the arrangement that morning was that I would drive Dion to Range High School and Axel was to be picked up from our home by a taxi organised by the Acorn School.

41. My memory of the circumstances in which I was told of the attack is not very clear, but I believe that I received a call from the Acorns School while I was driving back home having dropped Dion at school, to alert me that AR had not turned up. I do not think that I would have called Acorns School in the first instance because there would have been nothing to alert me to the fact that anything was wrong. I have been provided with a number of transcripts of calls made by a representative of Acorns School to the police on the morning of 11 December 2019 [LANC000071, 72 and 73]. From LANC000072_0002 it is recorded that Acorns School were notified by the taxi driver that the school had organised to collect AR, that AR had been seen getting into another taxi and that Acorns School subsequently determined from enquiries of the All Whites Taxis firm that AR had booked the taxi himself. The school representative also confirmed that they had spoken with me, and, "*dad doesn't know anything about it*".

42. After having been alerted by Acorns School I believe that I called Range High School because this is the only other place that I thought he could be, and that in this phone call I was informed that AR had been apprehended, that the police had been called, and that I should attend.

43. I then called Acorns School back to provide this update (see LANC000073_0001, at which the Acorns School representative informs the police that, "…*dad's actually rang back and spoke to our headteacher, he's turned up at his old school and they've called the police.*").

44. I can say with absolute certainty that I had no knowledge prior to AR leaving the house that AR was intending to cause trouble that day, by travelling to Range High School with or without weapons.

45. I am asked to explain why I called Acorns School rather than 999. As stated above, I believe that Acorns School called me first to report that AR was not in school. I then called the Range High School because I thought this was the only other place he could be. I think a factor in my decision to call Range High School and not the police was that at the point of being informed by Acorns School that AR had not turned up and had got into another taxi, I did not know that AR had attended the Range High School with weapons, i.e. I did not know how serious the situation was. Then once I called Range

High School I was told that the police had been contacted, so there would have been no point in me separately reporting the incident to the police.

46. I have read the Inquiry's published opening statement at page 84 of the transcript of the hearing on 16 September 2025 that states that I had informed Acorns School that AR was travelling to the Range High School with a knife and was "hell bent" on causing harm. I did not do this. I did not know that AR had travelled to the Range High School with weapons until after the incident, nor did I say that AR was "hell bent" on causing harm. I believe that the call transcripts LANC000072 and LANC000073 make this clear. The phrase, "hell bent" is not language that I would have used.

47. Regarding AR's access to knives within the home at this time, once we (Laetitia and I) learned that AR had been taking a knife to Range High School we hid the kitchen knives from AR behind some trays in the kitchen drawer, so that they were not within easy reach.

48. Following the incident on 11 December 2019 we disposed of our kitchen knives except for a small 4 cm knife that we used in the preparation of food and a bread knife (that was bendy and we thought could not cause any harm). We moved them out of the kitchen drawer and into a cupboard that you had to use a chair to reach. A relevant factor in this regard is that we knew that the pupils of Acorns School were screened for weapons (see LANC000073_0005, "…*we wand every child that comes into this school*…") so we did not believe that AR was taking weapons into Acorns School.

49. AR was convicted of criminal offences and sentenced to a 10 month supervision order on 19 February 2020. The impact of the events between October 2019 when AR was excluded from Range High School and December 2019 when AR committed the attack at Range High School, and was subsequently convicted of a criminal offence, was profound. From this point his behaviour at home grew worse and worse (detailed below) and his mood was almost always low. His mind seemed to be very fast and he needed to be constantly occupied and he was physically restless, but not quite hyper. He was also not eating properly, and painfully thin, and he became obsessive about food (which I also deal with in more detail below).

50. As already mentioned I had suspected that AR had some kind of behavioural and/or neurological condition for some time. However, it was not until AR was seen by a

clinician (a woman) during his detention under arrest for the 11 December 2019 assault that we received the first clinical opinion of suspected autism. The clinician told us that from their initial assessment they thought that AR had a condition of autism. Earlier in the year Mrs Alexander had conducted a screening for ADHD (which was not indicative) and was in the process of conducting an assessment for autism (but this was not completed prior to AR's exclusion from Range High School in October 2019).

51. I was shattered at AR's behaviour, but the preliminary diagnosis of autism oddly made me hopeful because it provided some sort of explanation and I hoped that now that we knew that he had this condition, we would be able to get some help for AR.

52. I also had feelings of guilt because Dion had been occupying 90% of my time, and I felt that I had neglected AR. I also believe that AR was aware that the main focus of our attention as a family was on Dion and that this impacted him. Dion started to lose his mobility in 2016 when he was 12 (year 7) and he spent about five months in 2016 as an in-patient, initially at Ormskirk Hospital and later Alder Hey Children's Hospital. Dion started secondary school at Christ the King High School in Southport, but as his condition (a neuromuscular disorder) worsened and he needed a wheelchair we had to move him to Range High School which was more suitable for wheelchair users. As already mentioned, we decided that AR should also attend the Range High School, not just for practical reasons connected to Dion's needs, but also because we genuinely thought that the Range High School was a good school. However, I believe AR came to resent the amount of attention that we gave Dion, and to see himself as an outsider whose interests were secondary, for example he perceived that he was sent to the Range High School against his wishes in circumstances where he had wanted to go to Christ the King School because that was what was in Dion's best interests, not AR's. I believe that these feelings were amplified when AR started to experience bullying at the Range High School, and coupled with his condition of autism, he found it very difficult to cope.

53. When AR started to receive a lot of detentions in year 8, I discussed them with him and AR told me that he thought he was being singled out unfairly, for example, if a group that he was part of was behaving badly it was invariably AR that received a punishment and not the others who were behaving in the same way. Naively, I accepted these explanations at the time. However, I mention them here in connection with the impact

on AR because I think it gives some insight into how he was starting to see himself as an outsider.

54. AR had also complained of experiencing racism at school. I do not have specific examples to provide to the Inquiry but I believe that his ethnicity added to his feelings of isolation at school.

55. AR knew that his actions had badly damaged his life prospects, he was feeling bad about himself, and I believe that he knew that his behaviour and feelings were not normal and that he had a neurological condition. While at Acorns School I made enquiries about the possibility of sending AR to Christ The King School, and this option was discussed at a meeting at Acorns School with a member of the Lancashire County Council Child and Family Wellbeing/Early Help team, called Anne, to which AR reacted positively. However, this discussion was prior to the attack on 11 December 2019, following which it was not pursued further. AR also did not consider that he should have been at a school like Acorns School because he did not consider that his condition was as severe as many of the other pupils.

56. I would like to emphasise over what a short period of time AR's behaviour deteriorated. Year 7 (2017/2018) seemed to have gone well. However, during 2019 (across years 8 and 9) we discovered that AR was experiencing bullying at school, and shortly after we became aware of AR's challenging and concerning behaviour, which triggered assessments for ADHD and autism. Early in year 9 (October 2019) AR was permanently excluded from Range High School for carrying a knife, and his poor behaviour continued at Acorns School culminating in the unprovoked violent attack in December 2019. Laetitia and I were in shock and completely out of our depth. Over the space of just a year our son had gone from doing well at school to committing a very serious criminal offence of violence, exhibiting a pattern of concerning behaviour that resulted in a referral to Prevent, he had been excluded from mainstream schooling, and at home he was becoming increasingly distant, difficult and uncommunicative.

57. I wish to make clear that I mention these issues in an attempt to address the question posed by the Inquiry of why AR acted as he did. I do not in any way advance these factors as any excuse for his behaviour in 2024.

58. I took the assault in December very seriously. I believe that AR had attended the Range High School to confront the person who had bullied him. However, there was no justification for what he did. I tried to speak to him about the incident, but he would not speak about it with me, and after his arrest he became a different person.

59. In terms of the support we sought for AR, in the third term of year 8 (spring/summer of 2019) we paid for private counselling sessions (£40 each) with an organisation in Southport called Parenting 2000. I believe that AR had twelve sessions in total (six that we paid for and as a result of which we were able to access a further six sessions funded by the NHS). I cannot remember the frequency of the sessions but they were longer than weekly (possibly fortnightly). I took AR to the sessions after school by car and waited for him in the car. The counsellor told me that through AR's paid sessions I was eligible for free parenting sessions. These were held in the evenings and I believe that I attended six (which was the full course).

60. During these sessions I learned about how autism affects the brain and how some parts of the brain, for example the frontal lobe which is responsible for social interaction, are not fully developed until 25 years of age. This information always stuck with me and it played a part in my tolerance of AR's very challenging behaviour over the next few years, during which I clung to the hope that his behaviour would improve as he developed.

61. I also learned how to deescalate challenging behaviour, for example, by rewarding good behaviour but also recognising that poor behaviour could be as a result of difficulties and frustrations in communication and comprehension.

62. Although this was at a time prior to AR's formal autism diagnosis, I knew that AR was showing signs of autism and that this had been raised as a potential issue at school, so I was particularly interested in these sessions. AR stopped attending his sessions once he was permanently excluded from Range High School in October 2019 (I cannot remember how many he had attended by this time but I believe that he had almost completed the full course). As said, from this point his mood and confidence became very low, he lost all interest in his previous leisure and sporting activities, and he could not be persuaded to attend further counselling sessions. Had AR been willing to attend further sessions I would have paid for them.

63. I am asked by the Inquiry whether I had any concerns about the level of support provided by Parenting 2000. I do not. I believe they were of benefit to AR, and I certainly found them helpful.

64. I subsequently attended a number of other parenting/behavioural courses (detailed below) and I heard testimony from other parents at these sessions about the challenging circumstances that they faced (which were even more difficult than ours) and I do not know how they coped. The main lesson that I took away was that I needed to have bags of patience to endure the crises that would come and go without warning.

65. Sharon Barrett was the unit manager of child and family wellbeing/early help, with Lancashire County Council. Sharon became involved as soon as AR was permanently excluded from Range High School. AR seemed to like Sharon. Her involvement coincided with the move to Acorns School. AR seemed to like the way she spoke and engaged with him, and later (as AR's behaviour continued to be difficult) I asked for Sharon's involvement because she seemed to be able to reach AR.

66. As part of AR's 10 month referral order he was required to engage with an officer of the Child and Youth Justice Service (CYJS), run by Lancashire County Council. There was liaison between CYJS, Acorns School, and CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services). The main contact with CYJS was Mr Fitzgerald, and the first meeting was at home in February 2020 just at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. I believe that the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions had an impact on the effectiveness of the order, and one particular drawback was that AR did not like remote contact by video call and preferred meetings in person.

67. AR returned to the Acorns School in February/March 2020 although shortly after this the school closed because of the Covid-19 pandemic. By this time there had been a very marked deterioration in his demeanour. He was angry with everyone, especially with me, and he was not eating. Each week he was getting worse. His school attendance was reducing, and his behaviour at school was poor (which I was being informed of through weekly updates received on Fridays).

68. AR's electronic devices, including a PC, were seized by the police as part of the investigation into the December 2019 attack. Prior to the attack, AR used to play

computer games for long periods on the PC. The electronic devices were returned after approximately 6 months, however, by this time AR had lost interest in computer games and did not use the PC again.

Meeting with Prevent on 3 January 2020

69. My recollection is that police officers attended our home for this meeting, but that it took place between the officers and AR in his room. I do not believe that I was present, and I do not know what was discussed. AR would not discuss any details with me. As mentioned, I was under the impression that the purpose of the Prevent programme was to combat terrorism. I do not recall having a discussion with the officers about my concerns, and I do not recall the officers giving me any advice.

70. At this time I believed that AR's behaviour had stemmed from the bullying he had experienced at the Range High School and the difficulties he was experiencing from his condition of autism, which had culminated in the attack in December 2019. AR's behaviour was very concerning and I was extremely worried about the fact he had taken a knife to school on multiple occasions. However, I did not believe that this was connected to terrorist ideology nor did I believe at this time that AR had an interest or obsession with extreme violence.

Social Services' input following the Range attack

71. I do not have a good memory of the engagement with CYJS. As already mentioned, Mr Fitzpatrick attended the house for the initial meeting with AR, and there were subsequent meetings at the house. Once the pandemic restrictions were put in place in March 2020 (shortly after commencement of the referral order) the meetings switched to online. The inability to hold in person meetings probably hindered the effectiveness of the order, but AR complied with it. I do not know whether anything positive was achieved through the engagement with CYJS. However, AR did seem to respond positively to his engagement with CFWS in the same time period, which I detail below.

72. I am asked about interactions with Ms Jameson of Children's Social Care (CSC) within Lancashire County Council between December 2019 and March 2020. I have no recollection of Ms Jameson.

73. Between 24 March 2020 and 9 June 2020, AR engaged with Sharon Barrett and Andrea Fontaine, both of CFWS. I am informed by the Inquiry that this engagement was because AR's case was moved from CSC to CFWS. I am not sure that I was aware of the fact of this transfer or the reasons it was considered appropriate, but in any event AR's engagement with Sharon and Andrea was a rare positive over this period.

74. Sharon was the CFWS team manager/supervisor. She attended our home on a few occasions and seemed to be able to connect with AR. Andrea was the lead social worker and also established a good rapport with AR, and provided him with some coping strategies. She was even able to challenge AR about the way he was treating Laetitia and me in the home (examples of which are detailed below) and Andrea encouraged AR to treat us with more respect. AR was usually resistant to challenge but he responded positively to Andrea and listened to her. Andrea attended Acorns School to ask AR's teachers how he was doing. Andrea also gave me some advice about cooking meals for AR as he was becoming increasingly obsessive and particular about food and we were very concerned at how little he was eating.

75. At some point in late spring/early summer I requested that the CFWS sessions be paused because they had moved to video calls (as a consequence of pandemic restrictions) and this was not achieving anything, as AR would not engage remotely. I thought that we only had a set number of sessions and that they were being wasted. I was keen to get the most out of them and I wanted the sessions to be resumed when in-person meetings were possible. This was particularly because AR was getting on well with Andrea.

76. I do not know why the support periods were so short and I would have welcomed continued engagement. Subsequent social workers were not as effective as Andrea.

77. In this period there were a number of meetings with the 'Team Around the Family' (TAF). This team was comprised of a staff member from Acorns School, a representative from CAMHS (Samantha Steed) and a representative from CFWS (Sharon or Andrea). My recollection is that the CFWS representative would chair the meetings. The meetings were conducted monthly by video call, and were mostly with me, with only occasional attendance by AR. When AR was in attendance the meetings were disrupted by AR's poor behaviour. When we met without AR I would provide updates about his behaviour. I did not find these meetings particularly helpful.

78. The involvement of CAMHS was managed by a case manager called Samantha Steed with whom I had some issues because AR had told her that I was physically abusive towards him (which I was not) and I think that she may have believed AR's allegations. However, despite the fact that Ms Steed was critical of me I knew that she had AR's best interests at heart because she advocated for AR in respect of his Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

79. My understanding is that when a child is diagnosed with a condition such as autism an EHCP document is produced every year to set out the services that they should receive to thrive in their education and daily life. I believe that the first ECHP was drafted by representatives of Acorns School with input from other organisations involved in the provision of support services, and it focussed very heavily on AR's criminal behaviour. For the second report, Ms Steed made representations that the content of the first report was inappropriate for a child, and she instigated a more supportive approach for the second EHCP.

Return to the Acorns School

80. AR returned to Acorns School in September 2020 and Andrea and Sharon began to engage again from 14 September 2020. I was not present at their sessions, some of which took place at school. The simple fact that AR was accepting the meetings was a good sign and AR's behaviour improved.

81. When these sessions with Andrea concluded AR's behaviour deteriorated. When CFWS re-engaged at a later stage, with different personnel, AR did not respond as well. In my view the lack of continuity of personnel and the short term nature of the sessions were detrimental. Had Andrea remained involved over a longer period I believe AR would have responded more positively.

82. I am asked to comment on CFWS closing AR's case on 10 February 2021 [LCC000093]. My recollection is that the sessions with Andrea did not continue until February 2021 and that they had stopped earlier. As mentioned, I would have liked the input of Sharon and Andrea to have continued because I thought they were a positive influence on AR.

Alleged assault of AR in January 2021

83. I am asked to address AR's report to CYJS on 20 January 2021 that I assaulted AR. I cannot remember the precise date but I confirm that I did slap AR to the face with the palm of my right hand. The circumstances were that a few days earlier AR had hit me on the head. He had come to talk to me and was pacing around and asking questions, and because he was unhappy with the answers I gave him, he hit me. I was not injured and did not take any action in response. However, his behaviour escalated a few days later when he kicked me hard to the groin in response to which I slapped him in the face. I regret doing this, but it was only for the purpose of stopping his violent behaviour. I tried to restrain him immediately afterwards but he was too strong and wrestled free, and went on to damage property in the house until he calmed down.

84. AR rarely physically hit me. His outbursts usually took the form of pouring fluids (such as water, juice, oil, and milk) over me and on our bed (as a form of punishment), and also damaging property by throwing plates, bowls, and mugs, and cans of food. I learned to tolerate this behaviour (which may have been a mistake but was the only way to avoid escalation). These incidents make me distressed and ashamed when I remember them. I set out more details of this type of behaviour and the reasons that I put up with it, in subsequent paragraphs of this statement.

Second Prevent referral on 1 February 2021

85. I am aware that this Prevent referral was based on posts made by AR about Colonel Gadaffi [LCC000883 and LCC000885]. When I spoke with AR about these comments AR dismissed the seriousness of the internet search and his posts and again claimed that others were doing it. I told him that he was getting himself into trouble and that he must stop.

86. My relationship with AR at this point was very poor (he hated me) and any attempt to restrict his internet use would have caused a huge fight and resulted in damage to property at home. Also, I genuinely thought that his main online interests were educational and for entertainment.

87. Regarding not raising issues about AR's behaviour with Prevent officers, I did not properly understand Prevent. I thought it related to terrorism and I did not believe that AR had any interest in terrorist online content. I also do not think that I properly

understood that the police officers with whom I had contact were part of Prevent (I thought Prevent was run by the security services).

88. I do not believe that the closure of this Prevent referral was communicated to me.

89. AR did not seem concerned by the Prevent referral but I was extremely concerned and I knew how serious they were, and my concern at this time was that he was getting himself into trouble unnecessarily.

90. One of AR's traits as someone with autism was to research specific topics and issues in depth and I thought that this was what was driving his behaviour. I did not think that he had a particular interest or obsession with extreme violence and/or school massacres. A lot of his time was spent online and I thought the concerning content was the exception and that the vast majority of his time was spent researching history (which was a subject he was particularly interested in), and current affairs. AR was also very interested in languages including German, Kinyarwanda (the language of Rwanda), and Old Norse (an old language of Scandinavian countries). He also followed social media, including YouTube, Twitter, and Twitch.

91. I knew that having been excluded from mainstream education AR was feeling lonely and my relationship with AR was becoming more and more difficult. At this time I believed that AR was turning to the internet and social media as a source of companionship as well as a source of knowledge.

92. There was also an element that when AR was online things were calm and manageable at home. If AR was not occupied in this way and if we had tried to monitor and restrict his online activity, there would have been a violent outburst.

Third Prevent referral on 22 April 2021

93. I can remember that I attended a meeting at the Acorns School to discuss this referral and that it concerned AR reading news stories about a bomb that had been planted on London Bridge, and also about the Israel/Palestine conflict. I am afraid I do not have a detailed recollection of what was discussed.

94. After the meeting I discussed the referral with AR, and I believe that I did show him a copy of the referral document, because I wanted to better understand the circumstances of AR's behaviour. I had also discussed each of the two previous referrals with AR. I was not advised by Acorns School that I should not do this and as mentioned I wanted to know if there was an explanation. This was now the third referral in only a few months and I was very concerned at this pattern and that AR may be getting himself into serious trouble.

95. AR told me that the London Bridge incident came to his attention in a news feed on his computer and that he accessed it out of curiosity. AR would tell me that he was bored and disengaged with the lessons at Acorns School which I think was a factor in his behaviour. I understood why he was interested in such a significant news story, and as mentioned it can be a feature of autism to become very focussed on a particular issue, however, I told him that he should not be using school computers to access news stories, and as with the second referral, I thought he was getting himself into trouble unnecessarily.

96. I have been asked to consider a witness statement made by Joanne Hodson, Headteacher at Acorns School [MERP000509/7] that includes a statement that AR had informed the school that I had told him of the Prevent referral. As already stated, I was not aware of any request that the referral should not be discussed with AR, and as a parent I thought it was the right thing to do.

97. Following this incident I believe that Acorns School told me that they would not share any future referrals to Prevent with me, although I cannot be certain about this. I also believe that Acorns School reduced the level of their communications about AR's behaviour. As already stated, I used to dread the weekly reports that Acorns School provided on Fridays, and these reports became less frequent from around this time.

98. Ms Hodson also states in her witness statement that this was a significant turning point and that the school felt like they had lost my and Laetitia's support. In response, my position at this time was that AR was becoming increasingly unhappy at Acorns School and his attendance was reducing. I felt that Acorns School prioritised their behaviour assessments (which AR found to be oppressive) at the expense of AR's education, and that the third referral was an example of this approach. For example the London Bridge bomb story was a very prominent news story at the time that was very widely reported

in mainstream media, and I did not think it was necessary to have reported AR for having accessed it. I did not consider it to be a turning point, but part of a pattern of critical reporting that was having a detrimental impact on AR's behaviour and wellbeing.

99. Despite this, we remained in communication with Acorns School, and this included communications by phone.

100. Other relevant circumstances at this time were that I was working as much as I could as a taxi driver (often through the night) around my significant childcare responsibilities which included Dion's needs as a wheelchair user, and now AR's increasingly challenging behaviour. This was emotionally and physically demanding and it was taking a toll on me.

101. Closure of this (the third) Prevent referral was not communicated to me and I thought that all the referrals (the first, second, and third) remained open. I do not think I was given any advice by the police at this time, and as already mentioned, I thought Prevent was run by the security services.

102. My understanding of AR's online activity at this time had not changed from February, i.e. that although AR had accessed some inappropriate and concerning content I attributed this to the fact that he was a teenage boy and that he was no different from many of his peers in this respect. I thought that the vast majority of his online activity was for entertainment and education, and that AR had a tendency to become engrossed and very focussed on particular issues, which I attributed to his autism. I did not believe or suspect that he had any interest in terrorist ideology and extreme violence (including school massacres).

Incident reported on 17 May 2021

103. I am asked to comment on the fact that AR reported to the Acorns School on 17 May 2021 that he had thrown juice on me and hit me on the head, and that I had taken photographs to provide to the police but had told AR that I would delete them if he did not say anything to Acorns School about the incident.

104. I have no specific memory of this incident and I no longer have access to the vast majority of the photographs taken on my phone from this period. I do have a photograph

of me that was taken after AR had thrown fluid on me, but I do not know whether it relates to this incident.

105. As already stated, AR regularly threw fluid such as water, juice, milk and oil over me and also on our bed as a punishment, and I learned to tolerate this behaviour because it was the only way to manage the situation. If I ignored it and cleaned up after him, the situation would calm down. If I challenged his behaviour it would quickly escalate. I had ceased to have any authority or respect as AR's father, and this passive approach was the only way we could manage the situation.

106. I did not report behaviour of this type to the police, and I do not believe that I would have threatened to do so as AR alleged. Nor do I believe that I would have asked AR not to report it to Acorns School.

107. AR did make false allegations. For example the child and family assessment from 2021 [LCC000247] records at page 5 that AR alleged that I had hit Dion, "recently". Whereas, it is recorded at the same page of the assessment that Dion (while being spoken to alone) had denied that I had hit or slapped him. AR also alleged that I was responsible for Dion needing to use a wheelchair, which was also false and hurtful.

Social Care request in June 2021

108. On or about 23 June 2021 I sought financial assistance from Lancashire County Council and I can confirm that the document LCC000108 is an accurate account of my request. We were struggling financially because of the time I was spending supporting and looking after Dion and AR. I thought that if I could secure some financial assistance I would be better able to look after Dion and AR. I can remember meeting with Stacey Haydock of the Lancashire County Council to explain the reasons for my request but no financial support was provided. The Council did offer to take AR into care for a short period so that Laetitia and I could take some time to recover, but we did not want AR to be taken into care, even for a short period.

109. My understanding is that the formal assessment of my request for financial assistance is the Child and Family Assessment [LCC000247] of September 2021. This is a good summary of our family situation at this time with the benefit of the input from me, Laetitia, Dion and AR and it records the following circumstances:

a. AR had a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and was receiving medication for anxiety [LCC000247_0002]
b. There were concerns about AR not eating enough [LCC000247_0002]
c. Laetitia and I wanted AR to receive education at a special educational school with autism specialism [LCC000247_0003]
d. AR's behavioural issues are recorded, including smashing items at home, throwing fluids on me, AR's fractured relationship with me, and his reluctance to leave the house [LCC000247_0004 and 0005]
e. AR's allegations against me that I had hit and threatened both AR and Dion, including that I am responsible for Dion's mobility issues, which allegations are false, as confirmed by Dion [LCC000247_0005]
f. "*[AR] has been attending school for 1 hour per day which has provided him with limited education and limited social interaction. [AR] does not attend any groups or activities outside of school and refuses to go outside of the home with parents or Dion. [AR] spends much of his time watching the news.*" [LCC000247_0005]

110. I am asked by the Inquiry to explain AR's access to knives at this time, and the Inquiry has referred me to my recorded statement at LCC000247_0005 that, "*We only have a small knife to cut onions*.". As already explained, because of AR's behaviour in October and December 2019 we had removed all knives from the house except for a small knife (with a blade approximately 4 cm in length) that we used in the preparation of food. We also had a bread knife that we did not think posed a risk. We hid the small knife within the kitchen where we thought AR would not find it. Despite this, AR did manage to locate it and it is the knife that he took with him when he went missing in 2022 and was subsequently returned home by the police having been found on a bus (which I address in more detail below).

111. In respect of the parenting courses recommended by Ms Haydock (LCC000247_0007], "*Explore with parents support groups…Consider Stepping Stones course for parents*.", I do not have a specific memory of this recommendation from our meeting. However, I had attended parenting courses in 2020, and I was willing to do so again, although I had very little spare time in between my caring responsibilities and taxi work. I do not recall attending a Stepping Stones course, but I do recall attending a course titled, "Triple P"

which was for the parents of children with autism. The course was not of much practical assistance because by this time AR had become so belligerent, and he had no respect for me, and would not follow my parenting requests. For example, I was advised that I should be firm but not confrontational, and to reward good behaviour and withhold privileges (such as meeting with friends) if his behaviour was poor. However, AR's behaviour was well past this stage, and if I challenged him in any way he would become violent, damage property, and on occasion assault me. I did, however, find all the courses that I attended informative and I became aware of the huge range of behaviours across the autism spectrum and also about the way in which people with autism can find social interaction difficult, their tendency to take things literally, and also to become very focussed (fixated) in their interests.

112. Ms Haydock also proposed, "*Direct work sessions with [AR] and father to address their relationship issues and work to re-build their relationship*" [LCC000247_0007]. In this respect, we had earlier attended a small number of sessions together in 2020 by Teams video call, but AR was disruptive and constantly interrupted me, and nothing was achieved. I remained willing to attend future sessions but AR was not, and they did not take place.

113. TAF (Team Around the Family) meetings were ineffective in this period. They had not been particularly effective in 2020 when AR was engaging with Andrea (whom he liked). Now he was engaging with social workers with whom the relationship was not as strong, the meetings were even less effective. I had the impression that the various representatives of social services, CAMHS, and the school, doubted what I said about how difficult AR's behaviour was and that they saw me as the problem. I accept that there are things that I could have done better, but I was trying my best in extremely difficult circumstances. I was desperate for AR to have some form of normality and to resume his education, but nothing seemed to work.

Incidents in November 2021

114. On 5 November 2021 we called the police in response to AR's violent behaviour. I believe that it was Laetitia who made the call. This incident is a good example of how we were walking on egg shells around AR, and how he could be triggered and take offence at everyday interactions and spiral out of control. AR was sleeping in the living

room during the day. He would sleep for short periods at irregular hours throughout the day and night. He used both his bedroom and the living room as his personally spaces, and he regularly slept on the sofa in the living room. AR had a dislike of being seen while he was sleeping. On this occasion someone called at the house (I can't remember who or for what reason) and I answered the door. I forgot to close the living room door before I answered the front door, and this meant that the caller had a view of the living room and could see AR on the sofa. When AR realised that he had been seen while sleeping he went crazy, and became violent and damaged the house by throwing things. Laetitia found AR's outbursts incredibly traumatic and would become physically unwell when they occurred, and I believe that she was so concerned by his behaviour on this occasion that she called the police. I had become conditioned to his behaviour. I experienced it more often as we spent more time together in the house, and it was always directed at me (AR would not threaten or be violent towards his mother). I would probably not have called the police as I knew that the outburst would run its course and he would calm down.

115. I am referred to paragraph 30 of the witness statement of Dr Ramasubramanian [AHCH000239_0007] at which Dr Ramasubramanian indicates that we did not make her aware of this incident, and that had we told her she would have explored this with us further and ensured that we were offered the right support. I do not understand this comment. CAMHS were well aware that AR engaged in behaviour of this type. Other than medication for anxiety no support was provided by CAMHS. We did not report every incident, but all the organisations involved in providing support for AR were told about how challenging his behaviour was, and as mentioned above (in respect of the effectiveness of TAF meetings) I had the impression that they did not believe me, and thought that I was the problem. I also thought that the police would inform social services and CAMHS about the incident. We provided CAHMS with all the information that we thought they needed to know, and we did not deliberately withhold information. We wanted AR to get better.

116. I have also been asked to review and comment on paragraph 73 of Dr Ramasubramanian's witness statement [AHCH000239_0016] at which it is stated that we as a family were provided with an extraordinary amount of access to CAMHS clinical staff and that AR and me were not open and honest with CAMHS. We did not feel that we were given an extraordinary amount of access to CAMHS. In fact the opposite, our

engagements always felt rushed and superficial. Regarding the complaint of a lack of openness and honesty, I can only repeat what I have said already about wanting AR to get better and that I did not deliberately withhold information. I refer at a later point in this statement about an occasion when I requested a home visit by CAMHS, which request I made because AR was refusing to attend appointments. I accept that AR's refusal to engage with CAMHS and to take his medication hindered their ability to provide treatment and care, but they knew full well that this was the position.

117. On 21 November 2021 I reported to CAMHS two incidents over the weekend during which AR made threats and poured milk over me, and I also reported that as a family we were struggling to cope with AR's behaviour [LCC000975_0001]. The response of CAMHS can be seen within this document that this was, "*primarily a social issue*". These incidents were similar in nature to the incident on 5 November 2021 (and were typical of AR's behaviour at home at this time). The reason that the police were called to the 5 November 2021 incident was not because it was more serious but because Laetitia became very distressed. I feel that CAMHS have sought to blame me for isolated incidents of non-disclosure (accusing me of dishonesty to deflect blame) when in fact I was communicating with them and they knew about the circumstances of AR's challenging behaviour and that he would not always take his medication, as these disclosures on 21 November 2021 demonstrate.

118. I did not separately report these incidents to LCC or to the Acorns School, just as we did not separately report the incident on 5 November 2021. I genuinely thought LLC, the School, CAMHS and the police were all sharing information.

119. There was no specific follow up from CAMHS or social services as far as I am aware.

120. On 30 November 2021 I called the police because AR had damaged a rental car that I was using at the time while my car was at the garage. Again, this was typical of AR's behaviour, and I would not normally have called the police in response but I thought it was necessary because of the damage caused to property that was not ours (had he damaged our car I probably would not have called the police). The circumstances were that I had cooked some food for AR and he did not like it and his response was to throw the plate of food. I believe that this incident escalated because I remonstrated with him about the broken plate and the mess he had caused. AR then took a tin of food outside and smashed it against the windscreen of the rental car, causing damage. Again, I

assumed that the other organisations would be informed of this incident by the police, and I did not separately report it.

121. This incident is an example of how any attempt to impose discipline at home was met with an escalation of AR's behaviour. As mentioned, I became conditioned to AR's behaviour and I allowed him to abuse and assault me, and to cause damage at home, without response, because this was the only way of getting through the day. AR's outbursts would blow over quite quickly and would be followed by a period of relative calm. I am ashamed that this was my response and I felt demeaned, but I did not know what else to do.

Social Care from November 2021

122. I am asked by the Inquiry to comment on a number of sessions between 3 November 2021 and 21 February 2022 that were organised by Carl Coughlan, a social worker within LCC's Targeted Youth Services. I remember that Sharon Barrett introduced Carl, although I do not recall that there were as many as seven sessions. I can remember taking AR to a youth centre in the evenings where the children could interact with each other and play games such as pool. I think that AR only attended on a couple of occasions and then refused to attend further. I also remember an occasion when AR attended a rural location (possibly an outdoors activities centre). AR seemed to respond better to female professionals and this may have been a factor in his refusal to participate with Carl. I also seem to remember that Carl was of the view that the sessions with AR were not working.

123. Around this time (January 2022) AR completed his contribution to his third ECHP, exhibited as AR/02 IWS000054 which despite AR's incredibly challenging behaviour at home, we thought showed some signs of hope for an improvement in his behaviour, and this is what we were clinging on to.

AR's purchase of materials to make ricin in January 2022

124. The Inquiry has provided details of a number of orders made by AR with Amazon for materials with which to make the poison ricin, including on 18, 19, and 25 January and

1 February 2022. At least one of these orders (that of 19 January 2022) was in my name (Alphonse Rudakubana) with a delivery address of our neighbour at 8 Old School Close.

125. AR had his own bank account and we gave him money as presents (but not significant amounts – they were in the region of £100). He also made some money between 2020 to 2022 by providing online genealogy services (to trace people's ancestry) for which I believe he received several payments of approximately £150. I also provided AR with some payments as a reward for taking showers (he would go several months without taking a shower), which was an approach that I had learned about on the parenting courses that I attended. These were the sources of the money with which I believe AR made this and other online purchases.

126. At MERP000164 there is a WhatsApp exchange between me and my neighbour in which my neighbour informed me on 25 January 2022 that some parcels have been delivered to them from Amazon (addressed to me). From the content of the messages it is apparent that these were not the first packages, and my response, "*It's sorted now. These were the last orders. He will use our address next time.*" indicates that the orders had been placed by AR and that I had spoken with him to tell him to stop using our neighbours address.

127. Regarding the use of my neighbours address and my name I thought there were two possibilities, either it was a genuine mistake, and/or because AR was afraid of answering the door to a stranger.

128. As a family we would take delivery of packages addressed to each other, like many other families do, and I did not suspect that the items were in any way dangerous. I had overheard a conversation between AR and Laetitia about AR's interest in gardening and I thought that one of the packages contained seeds and was for this purpose.

129. As a father, my instinct was to take an interest in what AR was doing, and I would have liked to have asked him what the packages were for. However, by now I knew that any questions would be met with a violent outburst.

130. As to the reasonableness of my belief that the items were for gardening purposes. AR did express an interest in gardening but he did not actually do any gardening, and he

hardly ever went outside. But, he would become fixated by a particular issue or activity, and then quickly drop it, and I thought that this was what was going on.

131. I never opened any of the packages for AR, not even the occasion when I intercepted a knife (which I detail below). To have done so would have triggered a violent episode. I realise how surprising this will seem but it was the day to day reality of our lives. At this time I had assumed a very passive role, I no longer had any authority or respect as AR's father, and my whole life revolved around trying to keep the peace. I realise with hindsight what a dangerous practice this was and how it has contributed to the awful events of July 2024.

132. We had absolutely no idea until after the attack in July 2024 that AR had attempted to make the poison ricin, and we only found out when were informed that this was the case by the police. I had cleared some of the items that AR used in the preparation of the poison on 22 July 2024 (addressed in more detail below), and I handled them with my bare hands oblivious to the risks. I explain my response to discovering these items in AR's room on 22 July 2024 when I detail the events of that day at a later point in this statement.

Comments to Acorns School in January 2022

133. I am asked by the Inquiry what I know in relation to AR engaging in concerning conversations in January 2022 about the Holocaust and that violence was sometimes necessary to create change. I do not recall being informed about this incident and it may be that Acorns School decided not share the information with me following the events of April 2021 when I had spoken with AR about the circumstances of the third Prevent referral. I was not separately aware that AR had any specific interest in the Holocaust.

CFWS Closed Case in March 2022

134. Louise Lewis of CFWS (Children and Family Wellbeing Service) closed their case on 14 March 2022. As is recorded in the meeting notes of LCC000153 I wanted social services to remain involved because it was intended that AR would soon attend Presfield Special Educational Needs (SEN) High School, and I knew that this process would be difficult. I knew that he did not like attending school and had difficulty with new environments and meeting new people, and I anticipated that his behaviour would become challenging, so

I thought it was prudent to maintain the involvement of CFWS. I also thought that the transition to a new school posed an obvious risk and I did not understand why the case could not be kept open, even for just the short period until AR attended Presfield SEN High School in the summer (third) term.

135. At this time AR was eating better and there had been a reduction in his violent behaviour. I had attended another parenting course around this time (the Triple P Parenting Course) As with the other courses I attended, I found it to be interesting and informative, but of little practical value. I attribute the improvement in AR's behaviour around this time to the fact that I was adopting a very passive approach at home and was not challenging AR at all, and not to any new parenting skills that I had learned.

136. I now know that this passive approach was just masking the problem and that AR was in fact extremely disturbed during this period, as shown by the fact that in January and February 2022 he had ordered materials to make ricin.

137. I think that around this time AR had stopped taking his anxiety medication. The side effects of the medication significantly affected AR's appetite, and once he stopped taking the medication he began to eat much better and more normally which I also thought might have contributed to the apparent improvement in his wellbeing. We did not tell CAMHS straight away that AR had stopped taking his medication. I would remind AR to take his medication every day (which would irritate AR).

Incidents in March 2022

138. On 17 March 2022 AR was due to attend a taster day at Presfield SEN High School, but he did not attend and went missing, which confirmed my fears that the transition to Presfield was going to be very challenging.

139. On the morning of 17 March 2022 I had taken Dion to the Range High School (he was in his last year before going to University). When I returned I expected to find AR at home, because attendance at the taster session was planned for later in the day. I called the police first to report AR missing and I then called Laetitia to ask whether she could help me search for him. I think I might also have called Range High School because of the history of the attack in December 2019, but I cannot be certain.

140. When Laetitia arrived home, around mid-morning, we searched the area but could not find AR. He was found sometime in the afternoon on a bus by the police. When we asked him where he had gone, he said that he had gone out for a walk but had got lost. He had been carrying the small knife that we used in the preparation of food (with the 4cm blade), which he must have found in the kitchen. I do not think that I knew that AR had taken the knife until he was returned home.

141. I am informed by the Inquiry that when the police found AR he told them that he had an interest in making poison. I was not aware of this and it was not communicated to me by the police. I do not remember if I was at home when the police returned AR, and I may have been out collecting Dion from Range High School and attending to Dion (for example helping him upstairs to his room which required a stair climber) for part of the time. I do not remember speaking to the police officers in the afternoon. I do recall a conversation with Laetitia after the police had left during which Laetitia informed me that AR had told the police that he planned to stab someone (which was hugely concerning). But there was no mention of AR's interest in making poison. If Laetitia had known that AR was interested in making poison I am absolutely certain that she would have told me.

142. I am also informed by the Inquiry that when he was found, AR had told the police officers that he planned to stab someone in order to be arrested so that he could get his social media accounts deleted. I believe that the explanation for this odd statement is that AR had been speaking with Samantha Steed (CAMHS) who had told him that in certain circumstances the police could access social media accounts of people that they suspected of having committed a criminal offence. Around this time AR was concerned to delete some information from his social media accounts but he had forgotten his password. I believe that the comment made to the police about wanting to be arrested so that his social media account could be deleted, is an example of how AR interpretated statements made by others very literally due to his autism. I believe that AR thought that if the police arrested him then they would be able to access his social media account and help him remove the content that he wanted to delete.

143. The Inquiry has provided me with the witness statements of the police officers, PC Fairclough [LANC000023] and PC Rhodes [LANC000056], who found and returned AR. These statements record that AR had told them of his intention to stab someone so that he could delete his social media. We were incredibly concerned at this behaviour. We believed that AR was suffering from serious mental health issues and we did not think

that CAMHS were doing enough. PC Fairclough records at LANC000023_0001, "*I do recall Laetitia appearing stressed with [AR] and she commented how she did not feel mental health services were doing enough despite her numerous requests*".

144. I did not separately inform CAMHS about the incident, but as already stated I was under the impression that information about AR's behaviour was being shared between LCC social services, schools, CAMHS, and the police.

145. Following the incident, AR would not talk about the knife with us, and we did not mention the issue of poison because I had no knowledge that he had told the police of his interest in poison. As stated, I do not believe that Laetitia knew about it either. We hid the knife, which the police had returned to us, in another location in the kitchen which we thought would be harder for AR to locate.

146. I am asked by the Inquiry whether AR had ever spoken to me and Laetitia about his intention to make poison. I can categorically state that AR had never told me of any such intention, and nor do I have any memory of the police officers telling us about this intention when they returned AR home. This is not something that I would have forgotten. I am informed by the Inquiry and also note from the statement of PC Fairclough [LANC000023_0001] that PC Fairclough states that Laetitia made a comment about AR having previously spoken about poison. I have no knowledge of this whatsoever. The police officers did not mention to me that AR had told them that he wanted to make poison, and neither did Laetitia relay this information to me from any conversation with the police officers at which I was not present. I do not believe that Laetitia had any knowledge of AR's intention to make poison either from conversations with AR himself, or with the police, because I am absolutely certain that if this had been the case she would have told me.

147. At a later point in this statement I explain how on 22 July 2024 I moved some of the materials that AR had used to make the poison (without realising the potential danger). Had I known that AR had spoken about wanting to make poison I believe I would have connected those items on 22 July 2024.

148. I am informed by the Inquiry that a 'return home' interview was conducted on 22 March 2022 by Amanda Chapman of LCC Children's Social Care. I have no recollection of this interview, but I observe that the incident occurred only three days after CFWS had

closed their case against my wishes because it was thought at that time that AR's behaviour and wellbeing had improved.

149. The Inquiry has requested that I review the document LCC000910, particularly the email that Ms Lewis sent on 23 March 2022 at 09:23, and comment on the views she expresses about my relationship with AR, including that I did not want to take responsibility for my actions and attitude towards AR. This email from Louise Lewis of LCC social services demonstrates the lack of insight into how difficult our family life was and how simplistic their thinking was. Ms Lewis states that, "*father doesn't want to take responsibility for his actions and attitude towards [AR] and will often antagonise [AR]*". The reality was that the opposite was the case. I remained passive while AR assaulted me, poured milk and other fluids on our bed and on my head, and damaged property in the house, in an attempt to avoid escalation of his behaviour. I have indicated already at the shame this made me feel but I did not know what else to do. It is incredibly frustrating to learn that a social worker with knowledge of the severity of AR's behaviour, considered that I was responsible. We were desperately seeking help at this point, and this inaccurate and simplistic view of the problems that we were experiencing shows that there was no real appreciation of the seriousness of the situation.

Incident in May 2022

150. In the early hours of the morning on 14 May 2022 AR flew into a rage. I cannot now recall why, but it would almost certainly have been something trivial. He demanded that I give him my laptop because he wanted to break it as a punishment for whatever had caused him to become angry. From the Inquiry's questions of me in relation to this incident it appears that the Inquiry may be under the impression that AR became angry because I would not give him my laptop to use, and that I may have been attempting to restrict his access to the internet. This was not the case. AR had his own devices with which to access the internet. He demanded my laptop so that he could damage it as a punishment because he was angry with me about something else. AR had threatened to damage my laptop in the past and for this reason I hid it from him, together with my phone, in a box of bedding. However, on this occasion he managed to find it and took the laptop to the bathroom where he smashed it, filled the bath and put the laptop in the bath. He left the bath to overrun which flooded the house and we had to switch off the electricity. He also put some of my clothes into the toilet. I remember Laetitia begging

him to stop and because of the damage he was causing I called the police. The police spoke with AR and he told them that he would do it again if I made him angry. Despite this, I told the police that I did not want to take it any further. This was not the only occasion that he flooded the bathroom and put my clothes in the toilet. I did not separately report this incident to CAMHS. The police told us that they would share details of what happened with LCC and the school, and I assumed that this also meant that CAMHS would be informed.

Presfield High School

151. As already mentioned, AR was due to start at Presfield SEN High School in April 2022 (for the summer/third term) but he failed to attend for a taster day on 17 March 2022, and he only attended on very few occasions after this. My dilemma was that I wanted AR to be in full time education but if I tried to force the situation there would be a violent backlash. When I was contacted by LCC social services in April 2023 following concerns raised by Presfield School at AR's non-attendance I asked for their help because I was concerned that AR was not getting an education (as recorded in LCC000187).

152. Laetitia and I found it impossible to persuade AR to attend school. He flatly refused to attend and said that the school taught him nothing and that he learned more at home. Had we tried to force him, it would have been a disaster and he would have become violent. At LCC000187_0002 it is recorded that I stated that if school staff had attended our home to see AR, we (Laetitia and I) would pay the price, by which I meant that AR would respond violently to such an intervention.

153. At LCC000187_004 it is recorded that I mentioned the positive impact of Sharon from 2020 (and I also had in mind Andrea as well) as these were the only social workers who had been able to moderate AR's behaviour. But I also said that I would accept support from anyone.

154. Both Laetitia and I believe in the importance of education, and we are incredibly proud of Dion (our eldest) who is thriving at University despite all the challenges he has faced with his mobility. We wanted the same for AR, but AR was a completely different person and was uncontrollable. We had tried everything we could think of and we were at a complete loss.

155. One other issue that I believe hindered the process of returning AR to full time education was that AR was placed in sixth form classrooms with children who were two years or more older than him (while AR should have been studying for GCSEs). I was grateful to Presfield School for offering AR a place, but this decision to place him with older students did not help given how anxious AR was about leaving the house and new environments.

Social Care from April 2023

156. From 4 April 2023 to 29 September 2023 Ashleigh Williams of CFWS was the lead social worker for AR, and the Inquiry has requested that I explain the relationship I had with CFWS, the support that we were offered, and the reason I declined parenting support, as recorded in LCC000203.

157. By this time there had been significant CFWS involvement over a number of years. I had been on a number of parenting courses which while interesting and informative, had not enabled me to bring about any improvement in AR's behaviour. I felt like we were going round in circles. AR was adamant that he would not attend school and was refusing to meaningfully engage with CFWS. Nothing had worked and I felt that yet another parenting course was not the solution.

158. I note that LCC000203_0002 records that AR was taking his anxiety medication (sertraline) at this time but that he was experiencing side effects of tiredness and lack of appetite.

Delivery of a machete on 14 June 2023

159. On 14 June 2023 I accepted delivery of a package that I believed to have been ordered by AR and that I believed to be a knife. The package was heavy and the packaging was in the shape of a knife. I also believe that the delivery driver told me it was a knife.

160. I am informed by the Inquiry that the delivery driver found my attitude to be "*just terrible*". I am sorry about this but I was in shock and did not know what to do, and I was also confused because there was a false name on the package, of Alice DPA

161. The delivery driver noticed that I was clearly not Alice DPA, and initially made to leave with the package. However, almost immediately he turned back and allowed me to sign for the package.

162. The reason that I accepted the package was because I believed that AR had ordered it and I was worried that if I refused there might be an attempt to redeliver it when I was not at home and AR might then obtain the knife. With hindsight I should have refused to accept the package and I should have separately reported the incident to the police. I am sorry that I did not do this.

163. AR had overheard my conversation with the delivery driver and following delivery he asked for the package. I refused and expected there to be an outburst, but unusually he accepted being told no.

164. I did not open the package ever and I hid it on top of the wardrobe in our bedroom. I knew that he would not find it in this location, because I was almost always in our bedroom (AR occupied both his bedroom and the living room and used these rooms as his own personal spaces), and when I left the house to work as a taxi driver, Laetitia was at home in our bedroom. Dion was at University by this time, i.e. I was not making the school run twice a day when Laetitia was at work, so AR was rarely at home alone.

165. The reason I did not dispose of the knife was because I thought that by throwing it away I was abdicating responsibility and would somehow be complicit in what AR had done. I did not think that throwing it away was solving the problem.

166. I did not confront AR about the knife. I knew that if I did he would fly into a rage. He had also threatened to kill me by this time, and I was scared of him.

167. I was not aware that AR had obtained false identification documents with which to make the online purchase of the knife, and I just assumed that he had used a random name hoping that I would sign for it.

168. I told Laetitia about the knife but we did not discuss it in detail because she would become physically unwell from stress and anxiety.

169. My assessment of the risks at this time was that AR had not left the house alone in about a year and for this reason I did not think that he posed a risk to anyone outside of the

family. Dion was away at University, and AR would never have hurt his mum. I thought there was a possibility that AR might seriously injure me (and he had threatened to kill me) but as he was my son I accepted the risk. I could not bring myself to report him to the police and be potentially taken into care and/or go to prison. I thought I would be giving my son away, and my thinking at this time was to try and get through this awful period in the hope that his behaviour would improve.

170. I believed that we had restricted AR's access to knives in the house. The situation was that we were still hiding the small kitchen knife. We also had a bread knife but no other sharp knives. I did not take any steps to stop AR from ordering more knives.

171. I only ever took delivery of one package that I knew or believed to be a knife, which was this one on 14 June 2023. I set out what I know about subsequent deliveries of knives in later paragraphs of this witness statement. It is possible that on one or more subsequent occasions I unknowingly accepted a package that contained a knife and passed it to AR. However, had I known or suspected that a package contained a knife I would not have passed it to AR.

172. One other point of clarification about later events that I wish to make at this point is that I can confirm that this knife (delivered and accepted by me on 14 June 2023) was the knife that AR demanded when he entered our bedroom and threatened me on 22 July 2024, the circumstances of which are fully set out below.

CFWS closing their case in September 2023

173. CFWS once again closed their case with AR. I wanted the support to remain in place even though it had largely been ineffective up to this point (and in fact AR's behaviour had grown worse since 2020 when the support was first provided) because AR needed help and I wanted him back in education. I am referred by the Inquiry to LCC000203 which records the decision to close the case. At LCC000203_0001, this document states "*AR is now very clearly voicing to professionals both directly and indirectly by refusing contact that he is not ready for the support. AR's parents do not seem to be listening to AR or to professionals and have continued to try to keep the support open while also themselves not being ready for the support.*" I assume that the reference to Laetitia and me not being ready for the support relates to the fact that we had declined to go on any more parenting courses. As stated, I had attended a number of parenting courses

already, including Parenting 2000, Triple P, and parenting and autism awareness course run by Presfield SEN School, and we did not believe that our attendance at further courses of this type would help with addressing AR's behaviour.

174. I had learned on some of these courses (and it had possibly also been mentioned by the schools and CAMHS) about a condition called compulsory avoidance behaviour, of which I believed AR was exhibiting symptoms. AR would quite often indicate a willingness to attend school but when it came to the point of actually attending he would change his mind and refuse. But despite having been educated and informed about issues such as this, I was not able to positively influence AR's behaviour, and the only strategy that worked was to let AR's outbursts blow themselves out. However, this was not addressing the underlying issue. AR was not being educated which was a huge concern. Laetitia and I were at a complete loss. I asked for the continued involvement of social services because I did not know what else to do or where else to turn.

175. I am asked by the Inquiry whether I agree with the assessment of CFWS that there were no safeguarding concerns at this time. I understand the term, 'safeguarding' to mean risks to AR, and I do not think there were any risks to AR, other than the fact that he was not being educated which I was concerned would compromise his life chances. However, as mentioned I knew that he posed a risk of harm at home, primarily to me. I did not think that he posed a risk to anyone else (outside of our family) for the simple reason he would not leave the house.

CAMHS home visit in September 2023

176. The Inquiry has asked me to review Dr Molyneux's record of a home visit on 25 September 2023 [AHCH000145] and paragraphs 63-73 of Dr Molyneux's witness statement to the Inquiry [AHCH000253].

177. Dr Molyneux's note [AHCH000145] is accurate in respect of the fact that AR had not been taking his medication for approximately two months, and it is also correct that AR had not left the house in the last few months (in fact I believe the last time that AR had left the house on his own was 17 March 2022, 18 months earlier, when he was returned home by the police).

178. AR's medication (sertroline) had some bad side effects, particularly with AR's appetite, and when AR did not eat his behaviour became worse. On the first occasion that AR stopped taking his medication he was under the care of Dr Ramasubramanian and when we informed her she said that AR should continue to take the medication, and she convinced AR to continue to take it. When AR stopped taking the medication under Dr Molyneux's care he said that if AR did not wish to take it AR should try to reduce the medication slowly rather than just stopping completely. As I have previously stated, we were not hiding information from CAMHS, and CAMHS knew that AR had stopped taking his medication on multiple occasions. We could not force AR to take his medication, just as we were unable to persuade him to attend school.

179. In respect of the statements of Dr Molyneux at AHCH000145_0001, "*I am struggling to see if there's any further role for psychiatry (or CAMHS as a whole)*", and AHCH000145_0002, "*Feels to me defo like social care, but prob not for us [CAMHS]?*" I would comment that at this time, AR's behaviour was not at all normal and we knew there was a serious issue. The medication was not working and there appeared to be serious side effects. AR was of low mood (depressed) all the time. None of the interventions had a positive impact and AR was refusing to further engage with CFWS and CAMHS. We were really struggling at home and we did not know what to do. We were hoping to receive help from CAMHS, and Dr Molyneux's statements that he did not see a role for CAMHS was typical of our experience of their services.

180. At paragraph 63 of AHCH000253, Dr Molyneux refers to that fact that I had "*cheerily confirmed*" that AR had departed to his bedroom when AR saw that Dr Molyneux had attended for a home visit, by which I infer that Dr Molyneux considered that I was not taking the situation seriously enough. This was not the case. Any expression of cheerfulness would have been because of embarrassment at AR refusing to see him. I was grateful for Dr Molyneux taking the time to attend our home and I had requested the visit because I could not persuade AR to attend at CAMHS. There is no possibility that I thought that the situation was funny or that I was not taking it seriously enough.

181. A paragraph 64 of AHCH000253 Dr Molyneux expresses exasperation at the lack of parental authority. As I have explained I had no authority over AR and no ability to control his behaviour. Dr Molyneux's comments demonstrate his lack of understanding of the seriousness of the issues we were experiencing despite him being AR's doctor. Our life was incredibly difficult and we were exasperated. I did not overaccommodate AR. Had I

tried to exert control, there would have been an immediate violent response. There may have been an element of resignation, but I was not "*blithe*", as Dr Molyneux suggests.

182. At paragraph 65 of AHCH000253 Dr Molyneux states that he insisted on a home visit. This is not an accurate reflection of the circumstances. I had requested the home visit because AR would not attend CAMHS. There was no resistance to a home visit from me, and not only was Dr Molyneux welcome to attend our home, I had asked him to do so.

183. I observe at paragraph 66 of AHCH000253 that CAMHS, including Dr Ramasubramanian and Dr Molyneux, were well aware that AR had repeatedly disengaged from treatment (medication) from the following statement, "*AR had repeatedly, whether working with myself or Dr Ram before me as his psychiatrist, disengaged from treatment in an unpredictable and thus potentially unsafe manner; furthermore, there had never been a clear and consistent sense from AR himself that he had even found the SSRI medications helpful (if he had, then he would presumably have continued to take them consistently)*". As previously stated, we did not hide the fact that AR stopped taking his medication from CAMHS.

184. I found Dr Molyneux to be a nice person but there was never any in depth discussion about AR's condition. It was all very high level and superficial, and he showed no inclination to get to the bottom of the problem. I think his view of me that I over accommodated AR, is an over simplification. I did tolerate AR's behaviour, but as I have repeatedly stated, it was the only option in the absence of any effective treatment.

185. The Inquiry has asked that I provide details of all referrals to CAMHS that we requested. I am afraid I do not have access to this information.

186. I am asked by the Inquiry whether I am aware if CAMHS carried out a formal assessment of AR for ADHD. I had made repeated requests of various organisations since AR was approximately 10 years old for an ADHD assessment, including the GP, schools, and CAMHS. I exhibit an ADHD referral form as AR/03 IWS000055 that I was required to complete and submit to Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust myself in June 2023 in an effort to obtain an assessment, in the absence of any assistance from CAMHS. I was required to secure the cooperation of Presfield School in completing this form, which they only reluctantly provided. Once I had submitted the form I did not

receive a response until Spring/Summer 2024 to inform me that Alder Hey would not carry out an assessment. This was an entirely typical experience of trying to obtain a diagnosis for AR. The reason I sought this assessment was because I suspected that AR's condition and behaviour had not been properly and fully diagnosed. However, we found it impossible to make any progress in this respect.

187. My concerns about the treatment and support provided to AR by CAMHS were that the only treatment provided was anxiety medication which did not improve AR's condition and had bad side effects such as loss of appetite, which I believed, from my experience of living so closely with AR, was contributing to AR's erratic behaviour and his outbursts.

188. AR's violent outbursts could be very extreme and to be told that the only treatment available was ineffective medication and further parenting courses, did not seem an adequate response. The seriousness of AR's condition did not seem to be appreciated.

189. I also wish to emphasise that I am puzzled by the suggestion that we withheld information from CAMHS. We did not. We wanted AR to get better and as can be seen, the doctors knew about how serious his outbursts were and that on several occasions he had stopped taking his medication.

190. I am asked by the Inquiry whether I consider that there is anything more that CAMHS could have done to persuade AR to take his medication and to engage with his treatment. In my opinion the fundamental problem was that the treatment and medication had no beneficial impact. AR knew this and considered it pointless to continue. Had the treatment shown some signs of improving his condition I believe he would have engaged.

191. As a family we had a much more positive experience of CAMHS with Dion, which I attribute to a much better relationship that Dion had with the treating clinicians.

192. I am asked by the Inquiry to review paragraphs 97 and 174-176 of the witness statement of Samantha Steed [AHCH000290] of CAMHS and to provide any comments about the disclosures made by AR about me. The allegations that I hit AR and Dion are false. When they were young boys (under 10) I very occasionally smacked them when they were fighting with each other, and this included the use of a slipper. I have never hit or smacked AR on his chest. Similarly I did not threaten AR with a knife. AR had a tendency to make false allegations which can be clearly seen in the allegations that I hit Dion

(which Dion confirmed did not happen) and that I am responsible for Dion being in a wheelchair (which is absurd). I do not recall ever threatening AR that he would be removed from home. I wanted us to live as a family and I was terrified that he would be taken into care. I might have mentioned it as a concern, i.e. that if his behaviour did not improve he could be taken into care, but certainly not as a threat. AR also tended to exaggerate and to blame me for his problems, for example he blamed me for his fear of going outside. As to any suggestion that I was a disciplinarian. The complete opposite is the case. I spoiled my children and members of my Church congregation thought that I did not impose enough discipline.

193. The Inquiry has also asked me to review paragraphs 66-68 of the witness statement of Dr Ramasubramanian of CAMHS [AHCH000239]. Dr Ramasubramanian accused me of being verbally aggressive and physically intimidating at a meeting. Dr Ramasubramanian also complains that my behaviour was directed at her because of her gender, which is not correct. I was frustrated at AR's continuing poor mental ill health and the fact that nothing seemed to be working/helping, and my perception of the poor standard of care and treatment being provided by CAMHS. At this time I also considered that the uncritical acceptance by Samantha Steed of allegations made by AR against me was having a detrimental effect, and was enabling AR's abusive behaviour at home. This meeting occurred on 23 May 2022. Less than two weeks earlier AR had destroyed and flooded the house (the laptop incident to which the police were called). I thought CAMHS were not taking the situation seriously enough, that their treatment was not working, and that they were making the situation worse. It was like they were treating the wrong condition.

194. I am asked about the CAMHS family therapy sessions that Laetitia and I attended between 2022 and 2024. These were run by Sam Coppard with Michelle Warner. AR would not join. They were held once a month. We discussed AR's behaviour and how challenging it was. They were a form of therapy for us and we considered them to be a good thing. They came to an end because AR was about to turn 18.

Delivery of a machete in the name DPA Olakunie to 10 Old School Close on 6 October 2023

195. I am informed by the Inquiry that on 3 October 2023 AR ordered a machete from Knife Warehouse in the false name DPA Olakunle for delivery to our home address. And that the delivery driver described the person to whom he delivered the machete on 6 October 2023, as "*Black, middle-aged male, younger than himself, of slight build, with short cropped hair*."

196. The only possibilities are that it was AR or me that accepted delivery. From the description it is more likely to be me. However, I have a doubt because I am not of slight build and I am completely bald.

197. I have reviewed the signature [MERP000339] that was provided when the machete was delivered and it is more likely to be my signature but I cannot say for sure. The signature contains a sweeping left to right horizontal line that is a feature of my handwritten signature, but there are also some differences. Further, when I sign for deliveries on electronic device screens I tend to use an abbreviated version which looks similar to the letter, "M".

198. Another doubt that I have is that the package was delivered in a false name and had I noticed this I believe it would have alerted me to the fact that it contained a suspicious item, particularly after I had intercepting the knife in June 2023, which was also in a false name.

199. I think it is more likely that I accepted delivery, rather than AR. However, if I did take delivery, I would not have passed it to AR had I known or suspected that there was a knife inside.

200. I do not hold any records, such as diaries or emails, that can assist me in establishing whether I was at home on the date and time of delivery (6 October 2023 at 15:12). I note that this was a Friday, and the possibilities include that I was at home asleep after working a taxi night shift, that I may have been out of the house to purchase food or other items, and also that I may have collected the package and passed it to AR without realising it was in a false name and that it contained a knife.

201. The Inquiry has asked me to confirm my date of birth, which is 3 October 1975.

202. It appears from the images at MERP008292, that the item was delivered in grey plastic packaging, but that AR may have subsequently sought to disguise and hide the package with cardboard as shown in MERP008292_0015-17.

203. My practice at this time when accepting deliveries for AR would be to either leave them in the living room or the hallway (not AR's bedroom). On occasion I would see packages that had been delivered that I had not accepted, for example if I was working in the evenings, or less frequently, in the afternoons.

204. The first time that I knew that AR was in possession of a knife was on 22 July 2024, the circumstances of which I describe in detail below.

205. I was not aware that AR held false identification documents in the name of DPA Olakunle.

206. I am happy to seek to assist the Inquiry in whatever way I can to determine the circumstances of the delivery of this machete, including by providing handwriting samples. As said, from all the circumstances I think it is more likely that I took delivery, but I cannot completely rule out that it was AR.

Delivery of a machete in the name of DPA Olakunle around 24 October 2023

207. I have no memory of ever taking delivery of this item and I did not know that AR had it in his possession until after 29 July 2024. I am advised that it was found by the police within a black holdall under AR's bed. I noticed the black holdall when I tidied AR's room on 22 July 2024, but I did not know or suspect that that it contained a knife.

208. There is a possibility that I accepted delivery of the item and that I passed it to AR, but as with the delivery on 6 October, had I known or suspected that a package contained a knife there is no possibility that I would have passed it to AR.

Social Care from November 2023

209. I am asked about my recollections of a meeting on 9 November 2023 with Suzanne Walmsley from the Transitions Team in LCC's Adult Social Care to consider the care that AR might need when he turned 18. I can remember meeting with Suzanne but I do not have a good recollection of the meeting. I believe the meeting took place at our home.

I do not remember anything of significance. AR's 18th birthday was still some time away (August 2024). Also, my understanding was that Adult Social Care was not provided until AR was 19, but I may be mistaken in this regard. I believe that the purpose of the meeting was to establish a relationship to facilitate the future transition of services.

210. I have been made aware that there was an annual review meeting on 15 November 2023 for AR's ECHP but I am afraid I have no memory of this meeting, nor of the detail of the plan.

211. At this point, CFWS had no open case. CAMHS had withdrawn. AR would not attend school. We were at a loss as to where to turn.

212. I have been invited by the Inquiry to comment on the level of support we received prior to 29 July 2024 from LCC, the schools attended by AR, and the police.

213. In respect of schooling, I believe that there was an opportunity to have avoided exclusion in October 2019, from which point AR's behaviour and wellbeing significantly deteriorated. I do not believe that proper account was taken of AR's suspected condition of autism at this time and the fact that AR had volunteered the information about carrying a knife to Childline. The school decided to permanently exclude AR because of his lack of insight into the seriousness of his behaviour. I thought that the fact he had voluntarily contacted Childline clearly showed that he was aware that the situation was serious and that he needed help, and that the way AR communicated as a person with autism was misinterpreted as a lack of awareness (which was not properly understood and appreciated by the school).

214. Acorns School was an awful experience and cannot properly be described as a school. The emphasis was on monitoring and criticising pupils rather than their education.

215. As already stated, at Presfield School AR was placed in sixth form classrooms with children who were two years or more, which did not help him integrate. However, AR was already very disengaged by this time.

216. In respect of social services, the influence of Sharon and Andrea was positive, and I believe that their continued input would have made a difference. However, the on off

nature of the social services support, and the number of different personnel was detrimental.

217. In terms of health services, there was a lack of coordination between the school, GP, and CAMHS. We knew from a young age that AR likely had behavioural and/or neurodevelopment issues. However, it was a real struggle to obtain a diagnosis, and it came too late to avoid exclusion from mainstream schooling. I also experienced a difficult relationship with Samantha Steed at CAMHS and I thought that she emboldened AR to treat me with disrespect, and that she saw me as the problem, while not properly recognising the seriousness of AR's behaviour.

End of the placement at Presfield High School in early 2024

218. At this time AR was refusing to participate in formal education and there was no plan for the immediate future.

219. AR's behaviour and attitude at home could be very frightening. Around this time I remember that AR poured a significant quantity of oil over my head and threatened to kill me in very menacing terms. The background had been an exchange between me and AR some weeks or possibly months earlier during which I commented that if he did not change the way he was treating me it would be impossible to stay in the same house and he would have to leave. This comment had obviously festered with AR, and when he attacked me he poked me in my solar plexus and told me that if he was removed from the house he would come back and kill me. His eyes were red and he seemed very unwell. The way he said it, I knew that he meant it, and I was shocked and distressed. This is the incident that I referred to in my police interview at MERP001431/26. However, I believe that either the transcript did not properly record what I said, or perhaps I did not communicate AR's intention clearly. The transcript records that I said that AR had said to me during this incident, "*if you make me go out of this house I, I will kill and I felt it and know he meant it*". This gives the false impression that AR made a general threat to kill. However, the threat made by AR was specifically against me. He said, "…I will kill **you**". The word "you" should be read into the transcript.

220. Formal discharge from CAMHS psychiatry occurred in April 2024, but no assistance had ever really been provided, and AR was not engaging. AR still needed help and treatment but it was clear that this was not going to happen through CAMHS.

The delivery of knives on 15 July 2024

221. I am informed by the Inquiry that a 20 cm Apollo Chef Knife, and a Cerbera knife (no description provided) were delivered to our address at approximately 17:40 on 15 July 2024, and that on this occasion the delivery driver entered the details of the recipient as over 25 with a year of birth of 1978.

222. The Inquiry has also provided me with Ring doorbell footage that shows a Hyundai vehicle leaving our address at 07:14 on 15 July 2024 [**ILT000076**], and a Ford returning to the address at 07:54 [**ILT000077**]. I believe that these videos record Laetitia leaving the house in the Hyundai for work, and me returning to the house in the Ford having worked overnight. Laetitia used the Hyundai for work but I was also able to drive it. I was the only person who drove the Ford.

223. I am asked to set out my precise movements on 15 July 2024. I am afraid I have no memory of the day. However, I would almost certainly have gone to bed shortly after arriving home at 07:54, having worked through the night.

224. I believe that I would have been at home at 17:40 on 15 July 2024, but I am unable to recall what I was doing at this time. I do not recall accepting delivery of the knives, and I believe that AR likely accepted the delivery. Factors that lead me to this view are the incorrect year of birth given to the delivery driver, and the fact that the packaging stated, "Bladed Article" [AMA000059]. If I had seen this warning I would not have passed the item to AR.

225. I have reviewed the Ring doorbell footage of the delivery [**ILT000075** and **ILT000067**], from which I am unable to assist the Inquiry in determining whether the package was delivered to me or to AR. I make two observations. First the delivery took place quickly which is typical of Amazon delivery drivers who are often under time pressure, and second, from the box delivered it is not obvious that the package contained knives.

The events of 22 July 2024

226. The Inquiry has requested that I describe the events of 22 July 2024 in as much detail as possible.

227. At approximately 11:00 AR entered our bedroom. I was asleep (I think I after having worked a night shift but I can't be certain of this). AR asked me when Range High School had their morning break. I told him that I did not know but would check. When I checked the school's website I noticed that this was the final day of their school year, and I remarked to AR that they broke up, "today" (22 July 2024) and that his year would have finished their A levels and would then be going to University. AR said to me, "but I'm not going am I".

228. AR was not calm, and he was restless which I knew meant he was experiencing a crisis. AR then came back into the bedroom with his phone (which was not working) and he asked me to make it work. I would describe AR as 'hyper', and not himself. He was breathing heavily, his eyes were red, and he was clearly in an emotional state. I did not know why his phone was not working and AR left the room again and went downstairs.

229. I stayed in the bedroom but remained attentive listening to AR's movements and actions. AR came back upstairs and I recall hearing AR mention that something was missing. I came out of my bedroom and asked AR whether I could help him. I noticed that the area of the landing (outside of the bedrooms) was very messy with a number of opened cardboard boxes. AR was pacing between his bedroom and the landing. He seemed to be distressed about the fact he could not find something. I went into his room and I noticed a bottle of fluid. I asked AR about it and he told me it was alcohol. But given the situation of AR being very agitated I did not ask him about it any further. On this occasion I also noticed the bow and arrow under AR's bed (I had known of these items for some time, probably a few months, but it was never discussed). Beside the bottle of alcohol was an open small Tupperware box that contained fluid. Because it was open and I thought it might be spilled I asked AR whether I could dispose of it, to which AR agreed, and I poured it down the toilet. After I disposed of the fluid I returned the empty Tupperware box to the room.

230. AR then went downstairs and I went back to my bedroom.

231. AR then came back to my bedroom and asked me to buy him petrol. AR had a petrol can in the living room that I had first noticed a couple of days earlier (which had worried me). I asked AR why he wanted me to purchase petrol and AR would not respond. I told AR that I would not buy him petrol, and AR left the room. At this point I was scared. I thought that AR wanted to use petrol to start a fire at Range High School.

232. AR then came back into our bedroom with his right hand behind his back. He brought his right hand from behind his back and he was holding a kitchen knife. I had never seen this knife before. I believe it was the knife shown in MERP002936/17. He asked for the knife that I had hidden from him in June 2023, and said, "give it to me now". I was on the bed at this point and AR started to lightly stab the bed. I drew my legs towards me to avoid these stabs and AR climbed onto the bed. I believe that he was trying to scare me into giving him the knife that I had hidden.

233. I felt extremely vulnerable and I went to get off the bed but in doing so I fell between the bed and a chest of drawers. AR was stood over me. I said to him, "*please stop, it's not here, it's downstairs, I will give it to you*", at which AR allowed me up. I asked AR to go first and pretended to follow him, but as soon as he left the room I closed the door. AR started to push back but I managed to keep it closed. This went on for approximately 30 seconds before I heard AR make his way downstairs.

234. At this point I got dressed.

235. AR made a call on his phone while he was downstairs (he must have managed to get his phone working again). I believed that he had called a taxi to go to Range High School. At this I made a call from the bedroom to the local taxi firm, DPA (which I knew quite well because I had done some work for them in the past). I asked them whether AR had just ordered a taxi but they would not tell me (they said they were not allowed to disclose the information). I think I may also have called the firm One Call Taxis as well and received a similar response.

236. Some minutes passed and I heard the front door open and close. I ran outside to see AR getting into the back seat of the taxi. He was carrying a bag, possibly a ruck sack. I said to the driver, "please don't take him, he is my son". The reason for telling the taxi driver that AR was my son was so that he would know to follow my request and not take

AR on the journey. The taxi driver complained about his time having been wasted, and I paid him £5. At this, AR got out of the taxi and went back into the house.

237. The reason I stopped AR taking the taxi was because I believed that he intended to travel to Range High School to carry out an attack similar to that in December 2019 (the reason for this belief was the fact of the previous attack and because he had asked me when Range High School went on their morning break). I believed that he was carrying a knife in his bag/ruck sack (the knife that he had threatened me with earlier).

238. I stayed outside. I was afraid of AR. I could see him inside the house pacing around. I made a call to Laetitia asking her to come home to help me with the situation which I believe was at approximately 13:30. I sat in the Ford car and waited for Laetitia to return home.

239. Laetitia managed to leave work early and from the video **ILT000063** I am aware that she came home at 15:44 (although from memory I had thought it was earlier). This video shows Laetitia returning on foot, and the reason for this is because she had parked the car away from the house because we thought that AR might damage it.

240. We sat in the Ford car and I told Laetitia what had happened and I explained that I was worried that AR had intended to go to the Range High School with a knife and carry out an attack.

241. We remained in the car together until approximately 17:00. We were in shock and for long periods we did not say anything to each other. At around 17:00 the situation in the house appeared to be calmer and Laetitia decided to go and collect her car (the Hyundai).

242. Before Laetitia returned, I decided to enter the house. AR was in the living room lying on the sofa. He looked like he had been sleeping, and he just looked at me and said, “what?”.

243. I went upstairs and laid on the bed. This might seem an odd thing to have done in the circumstances but the living room was AR’s personal space. When Laetitia returned, at approximately 17:30, we spoke and agreed that AR had calmed down and that the crisis appeared to have passed (as we had seen happen many times before). Laetitia went to prepare some food. We did not know what to do. We were shocked and scared, and the

whole situation was overwhelming. I knew that this was a serious escalation of AR's behaviour and that I should have called the police. I explain why I did not do this below.

244. At approximately 18:00 I asked AR if I could clear the boxes on the landing and he said, "do whatever you want". I put some of the opened boxes in the recycling, and I tidied the boxes that still contained items and placed them in his room.

245. I went downstairs and asked AR whether I could clean his room (which was extremely dusty because he hardly ever allowed anyone in his room). AR did not object.

246. Laetitia helped me clean and tidy. I mopped the floor and dusted and cleaned the walls with a damp cloth. Laetitia changed the bedding. While doing this I again saw that there was a bow under AR's bed. I had seen this before and I knew that it could be used as a weapon.

247. I moved the items that I now know were being used to try to create ricin including some Tupperware, a pestle and mortar, a funnel, and a bottle of alcohol. The contents of the Tupperware box looked disgusting but I had no idea that it contained poison. I also saw some items that looked like firecrackers and some matches. I did not see any knives, but I knew AR had a knife from the incident earlier.

248. Laetitia was petrified, and seemed close to having a panic attack. We were both looking at each other in shock.

249. We knew that we needed to take some action but we were not able to have the conversation about calling the police. The situation was just too overwhelming. We thought that AR's target was Range High School and that as the school was now closed until September the immediate danger had passed. We did not think there was a wider public risk because prior to 22 July 2024 AR had not left the house on his own since March 2022. I am desperately sorry to the families of the children, and to everyone that AR harmed for not calling the police at this point.

250. Downstairs in the living room there was a petrol can that I had noticed about two or three days earlier. There was also a sledgehammer in a box which I believe I moved to the airing cupboard so that it was out of the way. There were also two other boxes in the living room that had been there for over a year under the sofa. I thought that these boxes had not been opened. However, the police informed me that one of the boxes contained

bottles and that it had been opened because AR had taped matches to them. I did not know this prior to 29 July 2024. I do not know what was in the other box.

251. I did not knowingly pass any packages that contained knives to AR. Had I known or suspected that this was the case I would have intercepted and hidden the package as I did with the machete that was delivered on 14 June 2023. I did not accept the package that contained the sledgehammer (I would have known if this was the case because of its weight).

252. I did take delivery of items that AR ordered, and these may have included the bow and arrows, the bottles, matches, duct tape, and smoke grenades/flares. I may also have accepted delivery of knives without knowing or suspecting.

253. The Inquiry has asked me to explain the packaging for the knife that was used in the attack on 29 July 2024, that was found during the police search of our house within a carrier bag on the landing [MERP000571]. While cleaning up on 22 July 2024 I had seen the plastic wrappings of a knife. I knew AR had a knife at this stage (because he had threatened me with it earlier in the day) and I assumed the packaging was from this knife. I believe that Laetitia was also aware of the knife packaging on 22 July 2024 as well, when we were both cleaning. We used the plastic bag found by the police on the landing to place rubbish in when we were cleaning up. Laetitia also knew that AR was in possession of a knife because I had told her about it when we were sat in the car on 22 July 2024.

254. Prior to the incident on 22 July 2024 Laetitia had already booked time off work from Wednesday of that week onwards. Following the events of the 22 July 2024 Laetitia called work to inform them that she would not be attending work on Tuesday (23 July 2024). The plan was that we would try and talk to AR while Laetitia was at home during the week.

255. That evening I must have decided to do some taxi work, which I surmise from the circumstances of the messages that I sent to Laetitia that the Inquiry has requested that I review at MERP001400/2. This document contains two messages that I sent to Laetitia at 23:27 and 23:28 on the evening of 22 July 2024 in Kinyarwanda. The fact that we were communicating in Kinyarwanda should not be taken as any attempt to hide

what we were saying. Laetitia and I often communicated in Kinyarwanda when we messaged each other. The messages that I sent to Laetitia are as follows:

23:27 – "*Our child needs to be protected. Imagine how those things [meaning AR's behaviour] have faded away and he could have been killed or imprisoned for good/for life. You need to make sure that he eats well please. He uses his brain a lot.*"

23:28 – "*He is awake 19 out of 25 hours. You will need to buy juice that he will drink to boost brain energy when he goes in crisis.*"

I can confirm that the Inquiry's Google translation is broadly accurate. The only issue to note is that the translated text within MERP001400/2 is attributed to the wrong passage of Kinyarwanda (the translation for 23:27 relates to the 23:28 message and vice versa).

256. What I was communicating to Laetitia was that the consequences of AR's intended actions could have been incredibly serious including life in prison, or possibly that AR might have been killed. I also knew that AR had experienced a violent episode (which we had experienced in the past although nothing of this seriousness since December 2019) and I was concerned that lack of food and nutrition, and a lack of sleep may have triggered it. The reference to 25 hours was meant to state 24.

The events of 22-28 July 2024

257. Dion was still at University and was due to return home on Friday for the summer break. I was worried about Dion because he was vulnerable as a wheelchair user.

258. I went out to work on Tuesday and Wednesday night, but I do not think that I worked on Thursday might because on Friday I was due to collect Dion from University by car and I did not want to feel tired for what would be a long journey.

259. The situation at home was very strange. Laetitia and I could not bring ourselves to talk about what had happened, although we knew that we had to. I stayed out of AR's way. AR was not speaking to me in any meaningful way, and it had probably been approximately a year since we had had anything resembling a conversation. AR's refusal to speak with me was a punishment for what AR considered to be my failures as a father. AR did occasionally speak to me when he wanted something, or occasionally

when he forgot himself. He would also often write a request or instructions on his tablet and show me rather than speak to me.

260. I collected Dion from University on Friday and we arrived home at about 01:00 Saturday morning. I told Dion on the way home that things were not well at home and that something had happened on Monday so that he was aware (I cannot remember the level of detail that I went into but I asked Dion to be careful around AR). Laetitia and AR were waiting up for Dion. AR and Dion not really acknowledge each other. AR appeared angry and I left to unload the car.

261. When Dion arrived, AR withdrew even further into himself. He behaved as if the events of 22 July 2024 had never happened.

262. I worked on Saturday night, returning home at approximately 04:00 on Sunday morning. I would normally attend church on Sunday morning but I did not attend on 28 July 2024 as I was feeling too tired.

The events of 29 July 2024

263. In the early hours of Monday morning (between 03:00 and 04:00) I had a conversation with AR. I had gone downstairs to the kitchen for a drink in the night. AR came into the kitchen and started to talk to me about an online video that he was watching. This was the first time he had spoken with me in this way for a long time. He spoke to me for approximately 30 minutes and told me that he had found the views expressed in the video to be silly and childish. I cannot remember the precise details but it did not involve violent content. After 30 minutes or so I was very tired and as it was the middle of the night and I asked AR whether we could continue the conversation in the morning, and went back to bed. AR seemed accepting of the situation and did not become annoyed as could sometimes happen when he felt he was not being listened to. AR seemed much better than he had been.

264. On Monday morning I believe that Laetitia had an appointment (which I think may have been a GP appointment but I cannot be certain). Laetitia can be shown leaving the house in the Hyundai car in video **ILT000069** at 07:41 and returning in video **ILT000070** at 09:15.

265. From approximately 11:00, I was showering Dion in the bathroom. I had not seen or spoken to AR since the conversation in the kitchen in the middle of the night. I heard what I assumed to be AR leaving the house and I shouted to Laetitia who was in the bedroom, to alert her. Laetitia told me that she saw AR from Dion's window, leaving the house by foot and turning right onto Hoole Lane.

266. The fact that Laetitia chose to look out of Dion's bedroom window rather than AR's bedroom window demonstrates how scared we were of AR even though he was not in the house. AR's window would have given a slightly better view and his bedroom was largely clear of items. Whereas Dion's bedroom was packed with his belongings from University that Laetitia had to climb over to get to the window. However, she still chose to do this rather than enter AR's room, which was forbidden.

267. I asked Laetitia whether he was carrying anything (because I was concerned that he might have taken a knife following the events of 22 July 2024), and Laetitia said no. Hoole Lane leads to an area where we used to take walks and we thought that AR had gone for a walk. There was no taxi and he did not appear to be carrying anything.

268. The video **ILT000071** shows AR leaving the house at 11:10.

269. We had no idea that AR had doubled back to our house where he waited outside for approximately 15 minutes before getting into a taxi at 11:31, as shown in the videos **ILT000072** and **ILT000064**.

270. I continued to help Dion get ready and Laetitia went back to our bedroom to sleep as she was working a night shift that evening.

271. Dion left the house around 12:00 (as shown in video **ILT000065**) to catch a bus to meet his friends. Dion has two wheelchairs – his main electric wheelchair and a second manual wheelchair. As can be seen from the video MERP004721 he was using his electric wheelchair. The videos **ILT000068** and **ILT000073** show me realising just after Dion had left that he had forgotten his charger for his wheelchair, and walking to the bus stop where I was able to pass the charger to Dion before he caught the bus. The video **ILT000074** shows me returning empty handed at 12:05 having passed the charger to Dion.

272. The video ILT000074 shows me recovering Dion's manual wheelchair from Laetitia's car at 12:07. We had used Laetitia's car to store the manual wheelchair while Dion was home (because of a lack of space in the house) and I was retrieving it from Laetitia's car so that Laetitia did not take it to work that evening, in case we might need it.

273. The video ILT000066 shows me looking at the tyres of the Ford car at 12:13 because they were becoming worn and needed changing and I was intending to take the car to the garage within the next hour.

274. I received a message at approximately 13:00 on WhatsApp from a member of our church group (I think it was a lady called DPA who said that something terrible had happened in Southport and that some children had died following an attack. I immediately feared that AR could be involved. I believe that I responded with a message that I thought AR might be involved. I then heard helicopters above the house, and at this point I felt sure that it was him.

AR's online activity

275. I have been asked by the Inquiry about AR's online activity. AR had his own tablet (Lenovo) and a laptop (HP). Laetitia bought the Lenovo tablet for AR after his old tablet stopped working (both tablets were in the house but only one was usable). I believe that AR purchased the laptop himself. I have already mentioned that AR received some payments for online research work connected to genealogy and ancestry, and that we gave him money for birthdays and as incentives, and I believe that these were the sources of the money that AR used to purchase the laptop.

276. AR spent the majority of his waking time online, which could be as much as 18-20 hours a day.

277. Any attempt to limit or to intervene would have resulted in a violent outburst.

278. The Inquiry has asked me about the extent to which my actions were influenced by threats of physical violence and a fear of AR. I was very scared of AR as was Laetitia and the combination of fear and the desire to avoid confrontation (by not enquiring into his activities and accepting his punishments) undoubtedly prevented me from doing things that would be expected of a parent such as to monitor and restrict AR's internet

activity. This same tendency is what stopped us from enquiring about the items he was ordering and the packages that he kept around the house. This had catastrophic consequences for which I am desperately sorry.

279. I had no idea that AR was using Virtual Private Networks (VPNs).

280. I have explained the type of online content that I believed AR was accessing and I was not aware that AR was accessing content about violence, warfare, weapons, genocide, and/or anti-Semitic and anti-Islamic material.

Previous Accounts

281. The Inquiry has asked me to confirm the accuracy and truth of statements made in a witness statement provided to the police on 31 July 2024 [MERP001060] and interviews with the police on 4 December 2024 [MERP001430 and MERP001431].

282. The witness statement is not accurate in the following respects:

a. At the third paragraph of MERP001060_0001 it is stated that Laetitia and I met in the UK, whereas in fact we had met each other in DPA before we came to the UK.
b. At the eighth paragraph of MERP001060_0002 it is stated that the person who had been bullying AR was also in afterschool detentions with AR. This should state that they often shared the last lesson of the day (not detentions) which caused AR to wait behind until the person who was bullying him had left school. And in fact the situation deteriorated even further and AR started to wait behind even when he did not share a class with the person who was bullying him, to avoid any possibility that they would meet.
c. At the fourth paragraph of MERP001060_0003 it is stated that AR had not left the house in a year. This is not strictly accurate, there were a small number of car journeys to school and medical appointments.
d. At the sixth paragraph of MERP001060_0004 it is stated that AR does not have an income. However, during the preparation of this statement I have recalled that AR did earn some money from his online research into genealogy/ancestry from around 2020/22, the details of which are set out above.

e. The events set out from the penultimate paragraph of MERP001060_0004 to the fourth paragraph of MERP001060_0005 all occurred on 22 July 2024. However, my police statement gives the impression that AR threatened me with a knife on another date. I can confirm that AR threatened me with a knife on the day he tried to take a taxi to the Range High School (22 July 2024). I am certain about this and one of the reasons that I stayed outside of the house for several hours in the afternoon of 22 July 2024 (shown on videos) was because I feared for my safety following the knife incident. I cannot explain why my police statement gives the impression that the threat with the knife occurred on a different date. The fact I made my police statement just two days after the terrible events of 29 July 2024 may have been a factor.

f. At the final paragraph of MERP001060_0004 it is stated that, "I closed the door on him and locked him out. He seemed to accept this without a fight or attempt to force my door open…". This is not correct. As explained in this statement to the Inquiry, AR attempted to push the door open to our bedroom but I managed to keep the door shut. This struggle continued for approximately 30 seconds before AR gave up. Further, we do not have a lock on our bedroom door. The failure to properly distinguish between locking and closing a door is probably because I sometimes make mistakes when expressing myself in English.

g. At the second first paragraph of MERP001060_0005 it is stated that the events of 22 July 2024 commenced at around 09:00. Whereas I believe it was around 11:00.

h. At the second paragraph of MERP001060_0005 it is stated that I tidied boxes in AR's room at 10:00 on 22 July 2024. This is not correct. I tidied them during the evening of 22 July 2024 as set out in detail within this statement. Again, I think I confused the timings because of my state of shock at the time I provided my police statement.

i. At the sixth paragraph of MERP001060_0005 it is stated that AR, "*had been giving me the silent treatment for about 2 months*". Whereas the period of time was much longer, as I have described in this statement.

j. At the penultimate paragraph of MERP001060_0005 it is stated that, "*I notice AR leaving the house wearing his green hoody again. He did not have his rucksack with him and had not called a taxi…*" This was information that was relayed to me by Laetitia when she observed AR leaving the house from Dion's window. I did not see AR leave the house myself.

283. The transcripts of my police interviews are broadly accurate. However, during these interviews I was at times confused, and I also speculated, for example as to timings. I clarify a number of issues below, but I have not taken a line by line approach given the length of the transcripts:

a. At MERP001430_0008-9 it is stated that AR told me of his intention to go to Range High School. I no longer have a memory that AR told me of this intention when he was in my bedroom on 22 July 2024. However, I can confirm that I was under no doubt that he intended to take a taxi to Range High School with a knife to cause trouble.
b. At MERP001430_0015 it is stated, "I say "*Give me that knife. Give me that knife*". This indicates that I said these words which is not correct. It was AR who said them. AR was demanding that I give him the knife that I had intercepted in June 2023 (that was hidden on top of the wardrobe).
c. At MERP001430_0040 it is stated that Laetitia began to clean first on the evening of 22 July 2024. This is not correct. I commenced the cleaning and tidying while Laetitia prepared food and once the food was cooking, she helped me to clean.
d. At MERP001430_0041 I am asked whether I had ever seen the blue Tupperware box before, and I can confirm that 22 July 2024 was the first time that I had seen it. There was a second smaller Tupperware box that had no lid, and contained fluid, which I flushed down the toilet, and I had not seen this second Tupperware box prior to the 22 July 2024 either.
e. At MERP001430_0042 I mention two bottles. These two bottles are not related to the events of 22 July 2024. AR had ordered them some years before. One of the bottles had leaked and I disposed of it in the garden, and I placed the other bottle by the side of the downstairs toilet (where it remained until 29 July 2024). They are separate items from the bottle that contained alcohol.
f. At MERP001431_0011 there is a reference to a conversation that I had with AR at approximately 03:00 in the morning on 22 July 2024. This is not the correct date. This conversation occurred at approximately 03:00 on 29 July 2024.
g. At MERP001431_0026 the transcript records that I said that AR had said to me during this incident, "*if you make me go out of this house I, I will kill and I felt it*

and know he meant it". This gives the wrong impression that AR made a general threat to kill. However, the threat made by AR was specifically against me. He said, "…I will kill **you**". The full context of this incident is set out at an earlier point in this statement.

Reflections, improvements and recommendations

284. The Inquiry has requested my reflections on the involvement of the various organisations and agencies, my own conduct and actions, and any suggestions for improvement, which I set out below and which are confined to only those matters within my personal experience.

285. I currently have no contact whatsoever with AR and I reiterate how horrified I am by his actions. But he is my son.

286. I have already addressed (at paragraphs 22, 27, and 214) what I consider to be a missed opportunity in October 2019 when I think that there was an alternative to permanent exclusion from Range High School, and from mainstream education. From this point onwards AR's behaviour significantly deteriorated. He was no longer being educated in any meaningful sense and became more and more withdrawn, and prone to violent outbursts.

287. I also believe that there was a failure by social services and CAMHS to fully appreciate the challenging and extreme nature of AR's behaviour. His outbursts could be incredibly violent and would erupt from nowhere and then subside, and this aspect of his behaviour was never properly addressed.

288. Connected to this there was a tendency for organisations that were involved in providing support to seek to avoid responsibility, for example, CAMHS (at paragraph 180 above), "*I am struggling to see if there's any further role for psychiatry (or CAMHS as a whole)*", and "*Feels to me defo like social care, but prob not for us [CAMHS]?*". And CFWS (at paragraph 174 above) "*AR is now very clearly voicing to professionals both directly and indirectly by refusing contact that he is not ready for the support.".*

289. I accept that I bear my share of the responsibility, and that by not challenging AR's behaviour he was allowed to acquire dangerous weapons and view inappropriate

content online. However, we did not know what else to do. My approach was to tolerate AR's behaviour in the desperate hope that there would be an improvement as he grew older and more mature.

290. Had we sought to impose discipline and monitor AR's activities this would have resulted in a violent response. The only way that discipline and monitoring could have been imposed would have been through forceable restraint of AR, and we were not capable of this.

291. I should have called the police on 22 July 2024, and I am desperately sorry that I did not. Prior to this, the last time AR had behaved violently to anyone else but me had been at Range High School in 2019 and he almost never left the house, so we did not think that he posed a risk to anyone outside the family.

292. That changed on 22 July 2024, but even then we thought the risk was confined to Range High School and because the school was on a summer break until September, we thought we had time to decide what to do.

293. I did not feel able to report AR to the police on my own without discussing it with Laetitia first, and we could not bring ourselves to have the discussion in the week of 22 July 2024. I thought that by reporting AR to the police that AR would be taken away from us, and it was too much to contemplate.

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.

Signed: **Signature**

Dated: 11 October 2025

Index to the Witness Statement of Alphonse Rudakubana

Exhibit No.	Inquiry reference No.	Document description
1	AR/01 IWS000053	Collection of emails regarding events at Range High School in 2019
2	AR/02 IWS000054	AR ADHD Assessment Referral Form
3	AR/03 IWS000055	AR EHCP of 25 April 2022