

Witness Name: Timothy Robert Aspinall

Exhibits: TA/01 – TA/11

Dated: 18 August 2025

THE SOUTHPORT INQUIRY

**FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF
TIMOTHY ROBERT ASPINALL**

I, TIMOTHY ROBERT ASPINALL, will say as follows:

Section 1: Introductory matters

1. My name is Timothy Robert Aspinall. I am a retired Detective Constable. From September 2018 until my retirement in December 2022, I was an assessor within the Lancashire Fixed Intelligence Management Unit ('**FIMU**'), which is part of Counter Terrorism Policing North West ('**CTPNW**').
2. I make this statement in response to a Rule 9 request received from the Southport Public Inquiry ('**the Inquiry**') dated 29 July 2025. This is the first witness statement I have provided to the Inquiry. I also provided some input to inform the preparation of the corporate witness statement made on behalf of CTPNW by Detective Chief Superintendent Sarah Kenwright ('**the CTPNW corporate statement**'), dated 8 August 2025.
3. This statement addresses the matters raised in the Rule 9 request pertaining to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference, insofar as they relate to my involvement in AR's case, my reflections on those events, and any improvements that have been made or, in my opinion, could be made to working practices and procedures in this area.

Personal condolences

4. I wish to extend my deepest sympathies to the families and friends of Alice da Silva Aguiar, Elsie Dot Stancombe and Bebe King, and the other victims involved in this senseless act. As a retired police officer who has given much of my service to complex safeguarding roles and trying to protect the most vulnerable in our communities, I am truly devastated. No words can fully capture the pain and injustice felt. I fully support any effort to identify better practices in this complex safeguarding area.

Preliminary matters

5. It would be helpful to note at the outset of this statement, that there has been a considerable passage of time between the events I am being asked to recall which took place in April 2021, and the present day. During this time period, I also retired from the police force in December 2022. For these reasons, I hope the Inquiry will understand and

appreciate that my memory of this referral is very limited. With that in mind, and with a view to being as helpful as possible to the Inquiry, I have sought to answer the questions asked to the best of my knowledge and recollection, carefully reviewing all relevant documents and guidance from the time to refresh my memory. In this statement I have tried to identify where the account is taken from documents as opposed to my own memory.

6. I am aware that AR was referred to CTPNW Prevent on three separate occasions throughout the period December 2019 – April 2021. My involvement in AR's case was limited to his third referral, which was received by the Lancashire FIMU on 22 April 2021. I was not directly involved in the decision-making for the first and second referrals; however, I did consider them as part of my assessment of the third referral.
7. I have limited my use of technical policing language and abbreviations where possible and have tried to explain those as appropriate.

My background, qualifications and experience

8. I joined Lancashire Constabulary in January 2004.
9. After probationary training, I was employed as a response officer based in Blackburn. In 2007, I moved to Accrington CID as a trainee investigator working on serious and complex crime. In 2009, as a Detective Constable, I moved to the Management of Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders ('**MOSOVO**'). This role included working with key agencies such as prisons, the probation service, local policing and social services to best manage and safeguard the public from these high-risk individuals. This fell under Lancashire Constabulary's 'Public Protection Umbrella' and included attending Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements ('**MAPPA**') meetings. I continued with MOSOVO until September 2016, when I joined CTPNW.
10. My initial role within CTPNW included the supervision and ongoing management of subjects who were already convicted of terrorism offences, and who were living in Lancashire. I was involved in home visits to establish if relevant notification requirements had been adhered to and was tasked by FIMU to develop and submit intelligence to support their investigations.

11. As noted above, I moved to a role within FIMU in September 2018, where I stayed until my retirement in December 2022.

Fixed Intelligence Management Unit

12. The FIMU is responsible for the day-to-day business of intelligence/information management in a Force/Region on behalf of the Chief Officer. My role as an intelligence assessor within FIMU involved the management and decision making on how intelligence was progressed. I monitored intelligence as it was received to ensure that it was dealt with properly, and in accordance with the National Standards for Intelligence Management ('NSIM').

13. In April 2021, there were three FIMU hubs within CTPNW (Manchester, Lancashire and Cumbria, and Merseyside and Cheshire) with three corresponding Prevent hubs. The Lancashire hub, where I worked, covered the Lancashire and Cumbria areas. The FIMU hubs were overseen by one Intelligence Manager, who may have been based in any part of the region. At the time of the third referral, DI Mark Saunders was the Intelligence Manager responsible for the CTPNW FIMU hubs.

14. Each FIMU hub was staffed by a mixture of police officers and civilian police staff. There were two Detective Sergeants in the Lancashire Hub during my time – DS Tom Evans and DS Sajid Mahmood, and one Inspector – Insp Hazra Patel. I can recall that we were all sat together at a long desk, separated by small partitions, and that the two Sergeants were very accessible. The Sergeants tried to apply more structure to the practice of assessing intelligence, including by preparing the FIMU assessment form, which allowed the assessors to set out the checks they had performed more clearly.

FIMU Assessment process

15. Before setting out my involvement in AR's case, I have provided a high-level overview of the FIMU Assessment process and its connection to Prevent, as I remember it being followed at the time of AR's third referral.

16. Information and intelligence was received from a wide range of sources including local policing teams, schools, hospitals, immigration officials, members of the public and other

partners. All potential Counter Terrorism Policing ('CTP') relevant intelligence was directed to an Intelligence Management Unit ('IMU') for assessment. The FIMU was one type of IMU. Prevent referrals made up just one part of the overall intelligence portfolio.

17. As the Inquiry will be aware, the Prevent duty was introduced in legislation in 2015, with the aim of stopping people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The Prevent duty places obligations on authorities such as social services, schools, prisons, police officers etc. to have "*due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism*" when carrying out their functions. As a result, you could receive Prevent referrals from a wealth of different places, and in different formats.
18. Generally, a referral would be received into a public facing CTPNW e-mail address, on a prescribed 'concern' form. The FIMU officers would then pick those up from the inbox and self-allocate matters based on capacity. A FIMU officer would mark the referral with their allocated colour to show it was being actioned.
19. FIMU would then assess that intelligence in line with the 'Receive, Assess, Decide & Outcome' ('RADO') principles, the Intelligence Handling Model ('IHM') and the NSIM guidance. This assessment could lead to one of 7 RADO outcomes, depending on whether it was deemed CTP Relevant, or if further development was required to establish the next steps.

Relevant policies

20. The main policy governing the responsibilities of the FIMU was and remains the NSIM. I have exhibited the relevant sections of the NSIM guidance which set out the IMU configuration and assessment model [TA/01 - CTPHQ000048; TA/02 - CTPNW000270]. The purpose of the NSIM was to ensure best practice and to provide a consistent national standard for the management of information and intelligence within the CTP network. I would describe it the key text, which set out all of the functions and terminology to be used by intelligence officers. The Inquiry has specifically asked whether I received any training in respect of Annex B of NSIM which discusses the role of Prevent [TA/03 - CTPHQ000043]. I have no recollection of receiving any formal training specific to Annex B. However, it forms a part of the NSIM standards and would have been accessible to all working in the FIMU as a key guidance document.

21. Other guidance in place at the time of AR's third referral included the IHM, which is a joint process agreed by MI5 and CTP to deliver a nationally consistent approach to the management of terrorism.

Training

22. This section sets out the training, relevant to my role as an assessor within FIMU, which I had completed by the time of AR's third referral. I exhibit a copy of my full Police Training Record at TA/04 – CTPNW000367. In order to assist the Inquiry, I have provided a summary of my training relevant to CT below.

23. I completed the National Common Intelligence Application ('NCIA') Core programme in October 2016. This was the first course in terms of navigating the secure database which holds all CTP intelligence and investigations. I then completed the NCIA assessor training in November 2018, and the NSIM intelligence assessor training in October 2019.

24. In addition to this, my training record confirms that I completed the following courses:

- a. **Introduction to CT:** I completed this course on 17 October 2016. This was a mandatory 2-day long course held in Manchester. It provided a general overview of the CT function. It covered the background to terrorism in the UK, what CT policing is and learning about the various organisations and Partners who I would be working alongside.
- b. **NCIA Core:** I completed this course on 19 October 2016. This was also a 2-day course and talked through how to navigate the secure database which holds all CTP intelligence and investigations.
- c. **Insight:** I completed this course on 13 February 2017. I believe this involved an introduction to CT, covering the basics and giving an introduction to the types of jobs we would be dealing with.
- d. **Autism and Terrorism:** I attended this event, hosted by HMPPS, on 31 October 2017.
- e. **COSII:** I completed this course on 22 August 2018 and it covered how to conduct open source research.
- f. **Clio:** I completed this course on 3 November 2018. This course would have taught me how to use the Clio system.

- g. **NSIM Intel Assessor:** I completed this training on 7 October 2019. This was a 4-day course covering what the FIMU do, what the RADO outcomes are and how to use them.
- h. **Fusion Cell:** I completed this course on 24 October 2019.
- i. **Holmes Initial:** I completed this course on 26 February 2020.

25. From memory, all training would have been classroom-based in Manchester. The training had a practical focus, including for example how to use the CT system. Many of the courses were mandatory, and it was an officer's responsibility to keep up with their training.

26. I have been asked about my awareness of a joint letter from the Director of Prevent at the Home Office and the National Coordinator for Prevent at CTP ('the Joint Letter') dated 25 June 2019 [TA/05 - CTPHQ000134]. I do have some recollection of the Joint Letter although I cannot recall with any certainty how or when I became aware of it. I do not recall having any formal input or briefing regarding the Joint Letter and I do not have any specific memory of having used the letter when making a FIMU assessment. As such I can't comment on my understanding of the authority of the letter at the time of AR's referral. Having refreshed my memory of the letter now, it reads to me like a consideration for the Prevent team not to discount mixed, uncertain or unclear ideologies. As I understand it, the letter is directed towards the Prevent leads and education providers, not FIMU.

27. The Inquiry has also asked about my knowledge of the Dynamic Investigation Framework ('DIF') [TA/06 - CTPHQ000040]. I was aware of the DIF, but this was not something that was utilised by the FIMU or something that the FIMU had any training in. As I recall, the DIF was a Prevent assessment tool, and was not something that a FIMU assessor would populate or use when conducting their assessment.

Section 2: Factual narrative of involvement

28. On 22 April 2021, I completed an assessment of a 'Prevent concern form' relating to AR which had been submitted by the DSL at Acorns School in Ormskirk earlier that same day [TA/07 - CTPNW000137]. This was the third Prevent referral received in relation to AR. I was not directly involved in the decision-making for either the first or the second Prevent referrals relating to AR. However, I did consider them to ensure the background was considered when making my assessment in respect of the third referral.

29. I understand that a full chronology of the key decisions that were made for AR's third Prevent referral is set out within Section 6 of the CTPNW's corporate witness statement. I do not intend to repeat that level of detail here, but I have set out below a factual narrative of my involvement in the third Prevent referral. I then go on, in Section 3 of this statement, to deal with specific themes and issues arising from the narrative, in line with specific questions asked by the Inquiry.

First contact with AR's case

30. On 22 April 2021 at 13:01, Mrs Jan Lewis, the Attendance Manager / DSL at Acorns School, Ormskirk sent a Prevent referral via email to the Prevent team at Lancashire Police [TA/08 - CTPNW000143]. Mrs Lewis was asked to complete a 'Prevent referral form' with as much detail as she could regarding any new concerns, to allow for a full assessment. Mrs Lewis e-mailed the completed form on the same day at 14:29. I exhibit the completed 'Prevent referral form' as TA/07 - CTPNW000137.

31. The Prevent referral form [TA/07 - CTPNW000137] set out concerns over what AR had been viewing on the school computer. In particular:

- a. A staff member noticed that AR had two web pages open with the words 'London Bridge'. When questioned by the staff member, AR stated that he was "*reading the news about the recent bomb that had been planted on London Bridge*" [TA/07 - CTPNW000137].
- b. AR expressed interest in and spoke in detail about the Irish Republican Army and the Israel-Palestine conflict, stating that members of MI5 had been asked to kill members of the IRA. Staff were concerned, and asked AR if he understood about radicalisation [TA/07 - CTPNW000137].
- c. It was apparent from the conversations, which were animated and passionate, that AR had formed 'strong opinions about what was right' [TA/07 - CTPNW000137].

32. The completed form also noted that AR had a confirmed Autism Spectrum Disorder ('**ASD**') diagnosis; had an Education, Health and Care Plan ('**EHCP**') in place; and was awaiting a specialised educational placement [TA/07 – CTPNW000137].

Searches performed to assist my assessment

33. My assessment would have started with reviewing any previously generated or recorded material in relation to AR.

34. I reviewed the available material from both the first and second Prevent referrals. I had access to the Prevent referrals made by the school, and records of the multi-agency strategy meetings held in December 2019 and January 2020, and details of the home visit conducted by the Prevent team in January 2020.

35. I also carried out checks on both secure and non-secure systems to assist in making my assessment. The NSIM suggests the minimum standard checks to be performed as part of a relevancy assessment, as follows:

- a. Secure CT Intelligence system.
- b. Local Intelligence and Crime Systems.
- c. Police National Computer ('**PNC**').
- d. Police National Database ('**PND**').
- e. CT HOLMES.

36. As recorded on my assessment form [TA/08 – CTPNW000143], I completed checks against the following databases:

- a. NCIA: I received a positive trace for AR on the NCIA in relation to the first Prevent referral.
- b. Connect: This is a Lancashire police database. I received a positive trace for AR on Connect in relation to the incident where he took a knife to school.
- c. PNC: This is a central database which includes details on criminal records, missing persons and vehicle information amongst other things. The form indicates I received a negative trace for AR on the PNC. Although I do not have any direct recollection of the searches I completed, these are minimum standard checks, and I am confident they would have been done. They should have shown a trace of

AR's arrest for assault and possession of a knife. I can only conclude this was an error on my part when editing the boxes on this form. I would have been aware of the details of AR's arrest in 2019 as it was included in the records from the previous referral.

- d. PND: The PND is a national information database that allows police forces to share and access local information, without geographical or jurisdictional boundaries. I received a positive trace for AR on the PND in relation to the '*associated incident at school*'.
- e. PCM Tracker ('**PCMT**'): I received a positive trace result for AR, due to the two previous Prevent referrals. I note from my assessment that I have marked this 'NT', meaning 'no trace'. This is clearly a mistake, and I do provide details of the positive trace.
- f. CT Holmes: This refers to the Home Office Large Major Enquiry System, which is used by police forces to manage serious and complex crime investigations. I received a 'no trace' result for AR.
- g. Open Source: I was unable to find details for AR. I have set out more detail of the open-source searches that I conducted in section 3 of this statement.

Consideration of previous referrals

37. When considering the first and second referrals, I would have looked at the detail of the referral itself, as well as the checks that had been undertaken, and the assessments made by FIMU. contained and referenced that to the contents of the third referral. As set out in my assessment, the fact that both previous referrals had been closed was clearly factored into my decision making. However, this would not have been the reason for deciding whether the third referral was CTP relevant.

38. The fact an individual is the subject of multiple referrals, does not automatically mean an escalation in CT risk, and it is not unusual for someone to be referred more than once. Schools are rightly told they should send in follow up referrals if they have any concerns or see any new behaviours. When a child has educational needs and is difficult in school it is again not unusual for the school to re-refer. I therefore had to carefully consider the substance of the third referral and assessed that it did not give rise to an escalation in risk. The concerns raised were similar in nature to those which had already been assessed by FIMU and the JAT. The fact that AR was looking at material on the news about the London

Bridge attack did not necessarily evidence an ideology and I did not consider that the comments made by AR displayed extremist views. I did not consider AR's behaviour to be sufficiently unusual to make him an outlier in comparison to other referrals that I was assessing.

39. I was aware that AR's first referral had been assessed by the Joint Assessment Team ('JAT') for an assessment and was able to review the details in the JAT research report and outcome. AR had been assessed as not meeting the threshold for investigation under the CT banner. To the best of my knowledge the JAT received all the available information to carry out their assessments and concluded that AR was not considered to hold an extremist ideology.
40. The second referral, in my consideration, offered nothing new to this assessment, but again I reviewed the details, and the FIMU assessment. I agreed entirely with [Officer A]'s assessment that it was not CTP relevant. In my opinion, the school had made that referral because there was mention of Colonel Gaddafi but it did not indicate a particular ideology or threat.
41. AR clearly had vulnerabilities, and the records showed that there had been significant local authority MASH led intervention with AR and his family to address the vulnerabilities he displayed. This included representation from children's social care, mental health, Merseyside Police Early Action Team and education providers. As a FIMU assessor, it would not have been my role to contact MASH to check on current involvement, or to speak to the school for any points of clarification. This would have been a role for the Prevent team, effectively maintaining a 'sterile corridor' between the referrer and FIMU, thereby protecting FIMU case work and investigations. I am not sure whether this is something that the Prevent team would have done in practice.
42. I concluded that the third Prevent referral was not CTP relevant, as AR did not display signs of CT ideology, and assigned it a 'RADO 6' outcome. A copy of my assessment, together with my e-mail to the Prevent team is exhibited as TA/08 - [CTPNW000143]. The assessment form details the checks that I carried out, and the rationale for my decision making with the following factors set out:
 - a. AR had been assessed in 2019 as not meeting the threshold for an investigation under the CT banner.

- b. There was a local authority MASH led intervention already in place.
- c. The ongoing advice to staff had always been to refer should they have concerns and this could lead to 'knee jerk' referrals.
- d. I did not consider the comments made by AR to evidence he displayed extremist views, and noted that he had commented "there are always two sides to a story" and obviously had an interest in current affairs.
- e. His behaviours could be attributed to his ASD diagnosis, and he was waiting for an EHCP and specialist educational placement.

43. In conclusion I noted: *"As per the previous PCM (Colonel GADAFFI) I do not feel this new reporting holds any CT DE vulnerability and only highlights and [sic] interest in world news and current affairs which is a trait of ASD. Subjects educational needs are being met at Acorn and it is clear that the teachers are aware of reporting any future concerns."* [TA/08 - CTPNW000143].

44. I concluded that the referral should still be passed to Prevent, which I believed was the most suitable and proportionate action to take. As noted above, I considered the Prevent team to have a role in safeguarding against harm. Passing the referral to Prevent would allow them to conduct their own assessments and decide if the case could still be managed under the Prevent programme.

45. I shared my assessment with the Lancashire Prevent team on 22 April 2021 at 21:06 so that the Prevent team can conduct their own assessments and decide if value can be added [TA/08 - CTPNW000143]. I was not involved in the referral after this point, and as far as I am aware no further intelligence was submitted to the FIMU for assessment.

46. To the best of my recollection, I did not have any discussion regarding my assessment of AR with the CTCO, PC Carmen Thompson, or the CTCO supervisor, DS Treharne. I was not involved in AR's case after I submitted my assessment. The case was not resubmitted back to the FIMU for reassessment. I also do not recall having any conversations with FIMU supervisors, as I had concluded that the referral should be passed to Prevent, which I believed was the most suitable and proportionate action to take. . If further intelligence had come out of a Prevent investigation, then the case would be referred back to FIMU as part of the intelligence cycle, and a reassessment by FIMU could mean that another RADO outcome is assigned, and the resulting action progressed.

47. In my email, I noted that there was no need for a further Vulnerable Child ('VC') referral. My recollection is that VC referrals were made in response to Prevent referrals with incidents involving children, where there were concerns for the child's safety or well-being. This was to ensure the relevant agencies, including the local authority, were aware of any safeguarding risks. Although I do not have any direct memory of writing this email, as AR was already the subject of a multi-agency response, I think I would have concluded the relevant organisations were aware of his needs. In my view this new report did not contain any new vulnerabilities so there was no requirement for another referral to be submitted.

Section 3: Particular issues relevant to my involvement

48. In this section, I address specific questions asked by the Inquiry in respect to my involvement with AR's referral.

Comment regarding "knee jerk referrals"

49. I accept that my language in this regard could have been better chosen. The school had been advised at the time of the first referral to refer again should they feel that AR showed further vulnerabilities in the future [TA/10 – CTPNW000164]. My comments were intended to highlight internally that sometimes referrals can be made regarding a student who continues to be challenging that, whilst in good faith, does not increase the risk in terms of counter terrorism vulnerabilities.

50. As I understood, while the FIMU assessment would be considered by the Prevent team, it was not for the FIMU to seek to influence Prevent decision making. It was not my intention to do so. The Prevent team took the lead in terms of safeguarding and dealing with information sharing with the public. It would not have been common practice for the FIMU to approach those making a referral for any points of clarification. That would have been a role for the Prevent team, effectively maintaining a 'sterile corridor' between the referrer and FIMU, thereby protecting FIMU case work and investigations.

AR's ASD diagnosis

51. The fact of AR's ASD is mentioned by several agencies in the documents that I had access to. In the third referral, the school advised that AR "has a confirmed diagnosis of ASD" [TA/07 – CTPNW000137]

52. I do not consider myself to be an expert in this area, but I did have a general awareness of autism traits from my years of experience in other safeguarding roles within the police, and from having attended the HMPPS autism workshop in October 2017. I was aware that autistic traits can include restricted and repetitive behaviours and an intense focus on subjects with a strong desire to talk about them. This can sometimes be without awareness of social boundaries. In my view, these behavioural patterns were echoed in both the third and the earlier referrals and did not automatically evidence a CT ideology. In the first referral, AR wanted to engage a teacher in conversation about school shootings in America; and in the third referral he had discussions with a teacher around the IRA and MI5, and Israel / Palestine. I was also aware that the intention was to put in place an educational placement to support AR, and I took the view this would help to address the behavioural concerns raised in the third referral.

Social media checks, internet history and seized devices

53. To the best of my knowledge, I did carry out social media checks. This was standard practice for FIMU assessments, albeit that 'open source' was not listed as a mandatory requirement in the FIMU assessment form. I can recall having been set up with a social media account using a false name, allowing me to run searches across social media sites. As noted in my assessment, I did not find anything which related to AR. Often it would be the case that individuals would not use their own name on social media.

54. There was nothing else available to me, other than looking on Facebook, and running searches across other sites. Ultimately, I did recognise safeguarding concerns, and did share the referral with the Prevent team. It was open to the Prevent team to go back to the school for more information, if they had seen value in that. Due to the passage of time, I cannot say with any certainty which social media sites I checked.

55. I did not consider seeking AR's browsing history from the school. The referral paperwork had been quite clear on what he had been looking at and made the point that he had not

been allowed access to a school computer for some time. Again, this would have been an option for the Prevent team to consider raising with the school.

56. I was aware from reading the paperwork connected to the first Prevent referral that AR's devices had been seized by Merseyside Police. The usual practice would have been for those officers to liaise with the CTCO and refer anything of concern. All police officers would have received training about what to look for in terms of vulnerability of being drawn in to radicalisation. It would not have been usual practice for seized devices to be checked twice – by Merseyside Police and then separately by CTP. This would only have been done when dealing with more concerning leads or investigations. To the best of my knowledge, nothing of concern was found on AR's devices.

Specialist educational placement

57. My reference to a “*specialist educational placement*” [TA/08 – CTPNW000143] was taken directly from the information provided by the school in the third Prevent referral form. This had also been identified as a requirement in the earlier strategy meeting held on 6 January 2020. As I understood it, this would result in an appropriate education provider to address ongoing concerns and vulnerabilities. As noted in my assessment, I believed that this placement would help and support AR “*through his ongoing education*” [TA/07 – CTPNW000137].

My assessment of CTP relevance

58. The Inquiry has drawn to my attention the entries made by PC Thompson on the PCMT which stated “[*t*]his has been assessed by FIMU as non-CT/DE and vulnerabilities will be addressed by the EHCP” [TA/10 CTPNW000164]. I did not see this entry at the time it was made as FIMU do not routinely view the PCMT. Having now reviewed this wording, I can see the rationale given by PC Thompson for closure on the PCMT included my assessment language but was a small precis of my overall considerations. As such, it is not strictly an accurate account of my assessment, but it gives a summary of the points I have raised.

59. I have been asked what was meant by ‘non-CT/DE’ in this context. I have not had to consider this since my retirement, but in April 2021, I would have been well versed in the

definitions and terminology set out in the NSIM. I remember keeping print outs of the key definitions and sections on my desk as a constant reference point. As I understood it, for intelligence to be CTP relevant (which was the terminology at this time) the information had to indicate a concern or vulnerability that also had a clear and identifiable link to terrorism or extremist ideologies.

60. My understanding was that even though my assessment was not CTP relevant (i.e. no evidence that AR was expressing support for terrorist groups or violent extremist ideologies), the Prevent team conducted their own assessment to decide whether the case should be managed by them. Prevent had their own writing up process and whilst my assessment would be a relevant consideration, it was for Prevent to determine their rationale for their decision making, including whether to close a case. It was not my role as a FIMU assessor to balance my assessment with the separate requirements of the prevent gateway assessment.

61. From my recollection, the idea of unclear, mixed or unstable ideology was not at the forefront of my mind, and none of the concerns raised in the third Prevent referral were related to school massacres. The focus of my assessment was therefore on specific CT ideologies. I have set out the extent of my recollection of the Joint Letter [TA/05 – CTPHQ000134] at paragraph 21 above.

62. It was not my role as a FIMU assessor to consider whether AR should have been referred to Channel. This was for the Prevent team to consider as the subject matter experts on this. I could not say what the required benchmark or behaviours were for a referral to Channel.

Section 4: Involvement with other agencies

63. To the best of my recollection, I had no contact with any external agencies as part of my role in this matter.

Section 5: Reflection on events

64. I have been asked to reflect on whether I or CTPNW could have done more or done things differently. With the benefit of hindsight, and knowing what subsequently happened, it would be only human to think the answer to that question must be yes. In saying this, it is important to balance what I knew then against what I know now. It is now known that AR, just short of his 18th birthday, committed a truly horrendous knife attack against the most vulnerable in our society. As a former police officer, who had a role in assessing the risks AR presented as a 14-year-old, this has left me feeling truly devastated.
65. However, I remain of the view that the assessment I made from a FIMU perspective, based on what was known at the time, was the right thing for me to have done. We were being asked to assess a 13/14-year-old schoolboy with traits of autism and vulnerabilities in terms of his behaviour and education. The concerns reported were already being addressed by a multi-agency response, as identified by those present at the initial strategy meetings. My understanding is that the organisations who met as part of the multi-agency meetings were broadly similar to those stakeholders who would typically sit on a Channel panel, with the exception of an appointed Chair and Intervention Provider. An Intervention Provider is someone, such as a local Imam, who would meet with the subject of the referral to challenge the narrative of their ideology or extremist views.
66. From what I can recall, I do believe that the training, guidance and resources I received whilst in CTPNW were adequate for my role as an assessor within the FIMU. I felt trained and supported in performing that role. I do note that the Prevent Learning Review ('PLR') [TA/11 – CTPHQ000055] recommends training for FIMU officers to ensure they have a full and current understanding of Prevent. This makes sense to me, due to the close working relationship between the two teams.

Subsequent Reviews of AR's Prevent referrals

67. I have been asked whether I have personal reflections to make on the issues identified in the recent reviews of AR's Prevent referrals. To help with this, I have been shown the relevant recommendations made by the PLR, the Dignate Review, and Lord Anderson's Review.
68. I understand that repeat/multiple Prevent referrals are now the subject of an interim policy issued by CTPHQ in March 2025 – the intention being that a repeat referral should now

specifically prompt the consideration of escalated risk. I understand why there might be a benefit in multiple referrals getting an additional level of scrutiny and this does seem to be good working practice. However, as I have set out above the fact that a subject had been referred more than once did not automatically increase the risk they posed.

69. I share the concerns raised in the reviews around use of the terminology 'CT/DE relevant' by Prevent as it has the potential to blur the lines between the role of both FIMU and Prevent. Although, from what I can recall, and not having been a Prevent officer, I do not know whether the Prevent team had any alternative terminology to use at that time. I support the introduction of the Prevent Assessment Framework ('PAF') which will support Prevent officers in using their own judgement and rationale when making decisions, including where that may involve conflicting with the previous judgement of colleagues.

70. I note the criticism made of an apparent undue emphasis on the contact visit that took place at time of the first Prevent referral. It is well understood within policing that there is always a risk that someone is telling you what you want to hear. I had lots of experience with that in my previous role around the management of sex offenders and would have approached any account with caution, but it remains an important way to gather information. I also knew that one of the police officers (PC Lawrence) who attended the visit with the CTCO was very experienced and had worked in roles where an understanding of disguised compliance would have been essential.

Section 6: Improvements

71. Given my retirement in 2022, I am not aware of any improvements to the process that may subsequently have been made by my former employer. I could not comment on whether any such improvements have been effective.

72. I have no current knowledge of FIMU or Prevent processes, and I do not feel in a position to make any recommendations as to possible improvements.

Section 7: Other matters

73. I have nothing further to draw to the Chairman's attention, beyond what is contained in this statement.

Section 8: Further disclosure: documents and communications

74. I have no additional documents, including WhatsApp or e-mail messages, or diary entries, to disclose.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed: **Signature**

Dated: 18th August 2025