

Witness Name: **Officer B**

Exhibits: **Officer B/01** – **Officer B/23**

Dated: 20 August 2025

**THE SOUTHPORT INQUIRY**

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**FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF**

**Officer B**

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I, **Officer B** will say as follows:

### **Section 1: Introductory matters**

1. My name is **Officer B**. I am a Detective Constable ('**DC**') in the Lancashire Fixed Intelligence Management Unit ('**FIMU**') 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.
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. As a father, this attack was deeply upsetting. I would like to offer my heartfelt condolences and extend my sympathies to the victims, the victims' families, and the wider community in Southport.

#### *Preliminary matters*

5. It would be helpful to note at the outset of this statement, that, in the course of my nearly 26 year career as a police officer, and in my role within CTPNW, I have dealt with a high volume and very broad-ranging caseload. For that reason, I hope the Inquiry will appreciate that it is difficult for me now to recall the specific detail of the individual matters I worked on, particularly where they occurred a number of years ago.
6. I vividly remember the day that the Southport attack happened on 29 July 2024, but I have no recollection of my involvement in AR's first referral, which took place nearly 6 years ago. I have since refreshed my memory by reviewing the relevant documents and guidance from that time. Where I rely on those documents when discussing my involvement in this case, I try to make that as clear as possible.
7. I am now 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 first referral, which was received by the Lancashire FIMU on 10 December 2019.

8. I have limited my use of technical policing language and abbreviations where possible, and have tried to explain those as appropriate.

*My background and relevant experience*

9. I joined the Lancashire police force in 2000 and spent 5 years in uniformed roles. In 2009, I sat the National Investigators Examination and joined the Criminal Investigation Department ('CID'). The CID is an investigative branch of policing work which is considered a plainclothes (i.e. no uniform) role. After passing my exams, I joined the Public Protection Unit ('PPU') as a Detective Constable working in the Child Protection, Domestic Abuse and Rape team within the Department. I stayed in the CID until April 2014, when I moved over to Lancashire Police Headquarters to work on a project. I carried out this work until October 2014. From October 2014 until January 2019, I rejoined the PPU and was working on the Sex Offender Management Unit ('SOMU').
10. In January 2019, I joined Lancashire's Counter Terrorism Policing ('CTP') unit as a Detective Constable. Due to the security vetting requirements, I had to wait until I had cleared all of my checks before joining the FIMU as an intelligence assessor in April/May 2019. During this period, I spent some time working in the Intelligence Development Unit ('IDU'). At the time of AR's first referral, I had been a FIMU officer for approximately 7 months. I remain in this role.

*Fixed Intelligence management function*

11. The Intelligence Management Unit ('IMU') is designed to assess and manage all information and intelligence entering or created within the Counter Terrorism network, and ensure it meets the quality control standards.
12. The FIMU is a type of IMU and 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 December 2019, there were three FIMU hubs within CTPNW based at Lancashire Constabulary Headquarters (Hutton), Merseyside Police Operations Centre and Greater Manchester Police Headquarters. Each FIMU had a corresponding Prevent hub. The Lancashire hub, where I work, covers 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 first referral, the senior leader for the Lancashire and Cumbria FIMU hub was DCI Graham Hill. DI Hazra Patel was the Intelligence Manager responsible for the FIMU and the FIMU comprised of two FIMU sergeants, Sajid Mahmood and Tom Evans. I was one of 12 intelligence assessors working within the FIMU, with a split of police officers and civilian staff. I reported to the two FIMU sergeants.

#### *FIMU Assessment process*

14. 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 first referral.
15. 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 / Domestic Extremism ('CT/DE') relevant intelligence was directed to an IMU for assessment.
16. Prevent referrals made up just one part of the overall intelligence portfolio. 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, school, 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 different places and in different formats into a public facing CTPNW e-mail address, on a 'concern' form.
17. As a FIMU Officer I would then pick up a referral from the inbox and self-allocate matters. The intelligence would be assessed in line with the 'Receive, Assess, Decide & Outcome' ('RADO') principles set out in the NSIM guidance. This assessment could lead to one of 7 RADO outcomes, depending on whether it was deemed CT/DE Relevant, or if further development was required to establish the next steps. In making this assessment I would take account of the definition of terrorism in Part 1 the Terrorism Act 2000.

#### *Relevant policies*

18. 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 Office 01/01 - CTPHQ000047 01/02 -

[CTPNW000271]. 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 police CT/DE network.

#### *My role*

19. As a FIMU officer, an overview of my role involves receiving, assessing and managing all information and intelligence in line with the relevant guidance, highlighting threat and risk to my IMU Manager and carrying out development where appropriate. I have exhibited a copy of the role profile applicable to my job at the time of AR's first referral [Officer B]/03 - [CTPNW000382].
20. My role is not limited to assessing Prevent referrals. As explained above, information and intelligence comes to the FIMU in a variety of forms and from multiple sources and we apply the same assessment processes.
21. In terms of the split of my time across Prevent referrals versus other workstreams, it is balanced and can change on any given day. Some days, Lancashire FIMU might receive no referrals, and on other days we might receive numerous referrals which are then allocated out to the on-shift officers. The number of Prevent referrals can also be influenced by the time of year (e.g. we receive less referrals during school holidays) or recent developments in the news.

#### *Training*

22. Throughout my time within CTPNW, I have attended a number of training courses. For the purposes of this statement, I have concentrated on the training I completed by the time of AR's first referral, relevant to my role as a FIMU officer.
23. When I joined the FIMU, I had to attend mandatory training sessions (which I set out below). Beyond that, I was partnered with a more experienced officer and learned on the job. My mentor was now retired DC Tim Aspinall.
24. Around the time I joined the FIMU, I also spent a week in the Joint Assessment Team (JAT) to understand more about their role. I was able to observe their work to understand how the JAT interact with the FIMU.
25. I have exhibited a copy of my Police Training Record which sets out the CT training I had completed prior to 10 December 2019 [Officer B]/04 - [CTPNW000371]. I have listed the courses I had completed by this date, as well as details relating to the course's duration and content.

26. In 2019, the maintenance of training records was not managed by Greater Manchester Police. Instead, it was the responsibility of the regional officers. As a result, some of the training courses on my record are not listed on the dates I completed the training, but the dates they were updated on the system. I have tried to include the approximate dates for each course, based off my own recollections.
- a. **Introduction to CT:** I completed this training in January 2019 when I first came into CTP. This was a 2-day course providing a general overview of the CT function. It covered the background to terrorism in the UK, what CTP is and learning about the various organisations and Partners who I would be working alongside.
  - b. **NCIA Core:** I completed this course in January / February of 2019. This was also a 2-day course, and covered how to use the system, including registering documents and logging information.
  - c. **NCIA Assessor:** I completed this course in March 2019. This was a 3-day course which built on the learning covered during the NCIA Core course, giving us more access rights and privileges on the system to be able to process workflows.
  - d. **Insight:** I completed this course in September 2019. This was a 4-day workshop which walked through the process of conducting a FIMU assessment. During the workshop, participants were fed information and had to conduct mock CT/DE relevance assessments.
  - e. **NSIM Intel Assessor:** I completed this course in October 2019. This was a 4-day course covering what the FIMU do, what the RADO outcomes are and how to use them.
  - f. **Covert Open Search Internet Investigation ('COSII')**: I completed this course in 2019 and it covered how to conduct open source research.
27. The Inquiry has referred me to Annex B of the NSIM guidance Officer B/05 - CTPHQ000042, and asked whether I received any specific training on this. The NSIM guidance is covered within the mandatory CT training, but I do not recall any specific training covering Annex B. I do not recall seeing the Annex B guidance before it was provided to me as part of this Inquiry process. Having reviewed the document, I note that it sets out a very high-level overview of the role of Prevent and how the IMU feeds into the Prevent process. Last month, FIMU received further training on Prevent. I have discussed this training in Section 6, which addresses improvements that have been made within the organisation.

28. I am also asked about my awareness of the Dynamic Investigative Framework ('DIF') [redacted]/06 - [redacted] CTPHQ000040, including the sections addressing ideology and intent. I was not aware of the DIF at the time of AR's first referral. The DIF is not used as part of my role as a FIMU officer. Over the years, I have heard Prevent officers talking about it and I understand it is an assessment tool used by Prevent colleagues.

## Section 2: Factual narrative of involvement

29. I set out below a factual narrative of my involvement in AR's first referral. Any specific issues or themes arising from this narrative will be addressed in Section 3.

### *First contact with AR's case*

30. I have reviewed my email correspondence and I understand that Janet Lewis, the Designated Safeguarding Lead ('DSL') at Acorns School in Lancashire, sent what was intended to be a Prevent referral to the relevant 'concern' email address at Lancashire police on 5 December 2019 [redacted] Officer B/07 - [redacted] CTPNW000373. I understand that the DSL was asked to resubmit her concerns on a Prevent form, and the completed form was received by my team on 10 December 2019 [redacted] Officer B/08 - [redacted] CTPNW000154.
31. On any given day, FIMU officers would monitor the inbox and self-assign Prevent referrals when they come into the inbox. Other officers would have been progressing existing projects.

### *AR's school internet history*

32. When I receive a referral, one of the first steps would be to read through the form and consider whether I need to contact the referrer for further information.
33. On 10 December 2019, I can see that I have edited the referral email at 2.19pm to confirm I have actioned the referral [redacted] Officer B/07 - [redacted] CTPNW000373. I noted that I had been in contact with the DSL since we did not have any details of AR's internet search history. I recorded that the DSL would be contacting the school IT provider to obtain this information if it was still available.
34. In terms of my contact with the DSL, I can only assume that I had phoned her since I cannot see any email correspondence. I regularly called referrers in other cases to retrieve or confirm information, so this was not an unusual practice. When I deal with referrals now, I prefer to email the referrer so that my actions are noted against the case file. I may still phone the referrer, but would follow up in writing via email to create a written record of my communications.

35. I discuss my communications with the school, and external agencies more generally, within Section 4.

*Referral to the Joint Assessment Team and interactions with the JAT officer*

36. My email from 2.19pm on 10 December 2019 also records that I would be submitting the referral to the JAT for further intelligence assessment [Officer B]/07 - CTPNW000373.
37. Like the FIMU, the JAT is an intelligence team who assess information and intelligence in terms of the risk and threat to National Security. The CTP officers in the JAT work jointly with MI5 to discuss referrals and are able to conduct additional checks for the FIMU teams.

*FIMU Checks performed*

38. Before submitting the referral to JAT for further assessment, I performed my initial research checks which also formed part of my decision making on CT/DE relevance. According to the relevant NSIM guidance (Section 1, para 1.21), sufficient and proportionate checks should be undertaken to support a CT/DE relevancy decision [Officer B]/01 - CTPHQ000047.
39. The relevant NSIM guidance lists suggested minimum standard checks which can be performed as part of the relevancy assessment. I have listed these checks alongside the results of my searches, and I have recorded both in my email at 2.19pm on 10 December 2019 [Officer B]/07 - CTPNW000373, the JAT referral form I completed on 11 December 2019 [Officer B]/09 - CTPNW000146, and my Police Daybook [Officer B]/10 - CTPNW000142. Where I have performed searches beyond the minimum checks, I have made this clear.
- a. **Secure CT Intelligence system:** The National Common Intelligence Application ('NCIA') is used by UK CT Policing agencies to share intelligence and manage information related to national security threats. I typically start with a search against the NCIA to check if there are any positive hits against the subject's name. In case the person's name has been spelt differently on the system or in the information/intelligence we have received, I would usually perform the name search in the widest sense possible. I would also carry out checks to see if the subject has a nominal profile (i.e. they have been the subject of a previous matter which has triggered the creation of an NCIA profile), but also whether the person's name has come up in a document on the NCIA. I have recorded 'no trace' against the NCIA for AR and created a profile for him.



terminology. Instead, if I perform Open Source checks on social media and cannot find any results, I write 'no identifiable accounts identified'. This more accurately describes the fact that I haven't been able to find any accounts linked to the subject, but that doesn't mean they have no social media presence. They could be using a nickname or a handle that cannot easily be linked to them (i.e. they are using a handle which is different to their name).

41. There is now a proforma for Open Source research [Officer B]/11 - [CTPNW000375]. This proforma was introduced earlier this year. It provides a checklist for what identifiers (e.g. email addresses, names and handles for social media research) an officer has researched and the results of these enquiries. The checklist is a guide to assist with providing a minimum level of Open Source research, but does not restrict an officer's checks beyond the minimum checks. The proforma acknowledges that the Open Source research may be sent to the Prevent team, where appropriate, and prompts officers to consider documenting whether the results of any checks suggest that the subject has an extremist mindset or displays any vulnerabilities that may make them more susceptible to radicalisation. The form has been updated at least once since it was introduced.
42. I accept that the level of detail I have noted for my open source searches is brief, and does not list the various social media sites I may have checked. When dealing with referrals now, I make sure to document as much information as I can when recording my research for record keeping and onwards referral purposes.

*JAT assessment*

43. On 11 December 2019, I sent the following documents to the JAT for consideration:
  - a. AR's Prevent referral form completed by the Acorns School DSL [Officer B]/08 - [CTPNW000154]
  - b. FIMU Intelligence Report ('IR') [Officer B]/12 - [CTPNW000145]; and
  - c. JAT referral form [Officer B]/09 - [CTPNW000146].
44. At the time of the AR's first referral, the JAT referral form was completed by the referring FIMU officer. It would set out a summary of the relevant intelligence for the subject, including the results of any checks performed (as described above). The JAT CTP officer would review the information contained within the form, and write up their JAT outcome within the final section. The referral form with JAT outcome included,

would be sent back to the FIMU officer for further action. As explained earlier, this process has since changed, and I set out details of these changes within Section 6.

45. The IR includes basic details of the referral and makes an assessment on the reliability of the intelligence provided. The completion of an IR was, and remains, a standard request from the JAT. The reason for completing both a JAT referral and an IR is that the IR can typically be disseminated more widely because of the handling conditions attached the report. In AR's case, the JAT referral was also classed as 'OFF SEN' and could be disseminated to Prevent officers. The IR I completed was very brief as I had also filled out the JAT referral form which contained more extensive detail. The IR template has remained the same, but we are now much more detailed and particular about how IRs are completed, ensuring all the handling codes are correct. This is all monitored by business assurance.
46. Typically, when I refer a case to the JAT, I will ensure that one of the FIMU Sergeants is copied in for supervision purposes. I might also speak to the FIMU Sergeant before sending the referral off to the JAT to confirm that this is the route I have taken.
47. On 13 December 2019, I received DC Philip Blundell's JAT outcome [Officer B]/09 - [CTPNW000146]. The JAT assessment noted that AR presented with "no apparent ideology" and did not meet the thresholds for further consideration under the CT/DE banner. I discuss specific issues arising from this outcome within Section 3.

#### *Communications with Merseyside Police*

48. On 11 December 2019, AR was arrested on suspicion of an assault under s.47 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861, and for possession of a bladed instrument. I can see from my email correspondence that I received an email from Counter Terrorism Case Officer ('CTCO') PC Carmen Thompson at 3.01pm on 11 December 2019, notifying me that AR was in custody [Officer B]/07 - [CTPNW000373]. My FIMU Sergeant, Sajid Mahmood also received this email.
49. On 12 December 2019, I emailed a Detective Sergeant at Merseyside Police regarding the update about AR's temporary release from police custody [Officer B]/07 - [CTPNW000373]. I confirmed that I had picked up AR's case within the FIMU, as it had come in as a Prevent referral for assessment. I also confirmed that the case had been sent for further intelligence consideration. I asked to be kept updated with the outcome of AR's arrest and for my details to be passed to the Officer in Charge ('OIC') in relation to the computer/mobile seizures. I would have asked for the results of any

examinations in case they might contain information or intelligence of a CT nature which could be escalated to the JAT as part of their assessment.

50. Later that day, I was one of many recipients to receive a detailed update on AR's assault case, which mentioned that a report had been submitted to the Crown Prosecution Service ('CPS'), and following their instructions, AR received bail with conditions attached [Officer B]/07 - CTPNW000373.
51. On 13 December 2019, I engaged in further correspondence to understand more about AR's return bail date [Officer B]/07 - CTPNW000373.
52. I have set out my reflections on the information sharing between myself and Merseyside Police within Section 4.

*Discussions with my FIMU Supervisor and Quality Assessment check*

53. I cannot recall the specific conversations I would have had with my supervisor in relation to this case. Within the FIMU office, we sit together at a group of desks. Sajid Mahmood or Tom Evans would have sat one or two desks over from me and would have been very accessible in terms of having verbal discussions regarding case progress. I will always speak to my supervisor if I have any queries about a case which I think would benefit from a more senior opinion.
54. Before a case can be considered closed from a FIMU/CT perspective, it will be sent to our FIMU supervisor for a Quality Assessment ('QA') check. The QA check allows the FIMU supervisor to consider whether they agree with the decision that no further IMU involvement is needed.
55. On 16 December 2019, I emailed the CTCO and PC Russ Davies to notify Prevent of AR's case and inform them of the JAT assessment outcome [Officer B]/07 - CTPNW000373. Since the referral from the DSL was submitted on a Prevent form, once the case is dealt with from a CT perspective, it will be thereafter sent to the Prevent team for further consideration. I discuss the specific wording in my email to my Prevent colleagues within Section 3.
56. That same day, PC Davies confirmed that the referral had been uploaded onto the PCM Tracker [Officer B]/07 - CTPNW000373 [Officer B]/13 - CTPNW000122.

*Emergency child protection hearing*

57. I have been shown a copy of an action request I raised on 17 December 2019, for a Prevent officer to attend an Emergency Child Protection conference for AR being

convened that same day [Officer B]/14 - [CTPHQ000087]. I note that this has also been recorded on the PCM Tracker [Officer B]/13 - [CTPNW000122]. I was asked to prepare the action request by one of the FIMU Sergeants.

58. An Emergency Child Protection conference is a meeting convened with relevant professionals where there are serious, immediate concerns about a child's safety and wellbeing, requiring urgent action. The aim of the meeting is to look at all relevant information and circumstances in order to determine the best way to protect the child and promote their welfare. Following an investigation under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989, a child protection conference may be held.
59. PC Thompson later updated the action request form to confirm she attended the meeting and attached meeting minutes [Officer B]/14 - [CTPHQ000087]; [Officer B]/15 - [CTPNW000132].
60. I later closed the action request on 9 January 2020.

### **Section 3: Particular issues relevant to my involvement**

61. This section considers particular themes and issues arising from my involvement in AR's first referral, expanding on what is set out above.

#### *Joint Letter and consideration of ideology*

62. The Inquiry has referred me to the Joint Letter of 25 June 2019 ('**Joint Letter**') from the Director of Prevent at the Home Office and the National Coordinator for Prevent [Officer B]/16 - [CTPHQ000134]. I have no recollection of any formal input or briefing regarding the Joint Letter, nor do I have any specific memory of having used the letter when making a FIMU assessment. As part of my preparation for this Inquiry, I have now reviewed the Joint Letter and it reads to me like a consideration for the Prevent team not to discount mixed, uncertain or unclear ideologies.
63. I am asked whether I considered that AR might have an unclear, mixed or unstable ideology, consistent with the reasoning set out in the Joint Letter. I do not think this thinking was at the forefront of my mind when dealing with AR's case. I still consider this to be a difficult area as it is not clear to me how you would assess this from a CT perspective. For example, I cannot remember if this trend took place before or after AR's first referral, but there was a growing trend where young people were fascinated with shock gore websites and videos, featuring violent behaviour such as beheadings. When we reviewed those kinds of cases, they were often not classed as CT/DE relevant but viewed as a vulnerabilities and safeguarding issue.

64. I understand that in 2025, CTPHQ introduced a new interim policy on 'Fascination with Extreme Violence and Mass-Casualty Attacks' policy. This was recently sent to me by the FIMU Inspector.
65. It was not my role to balance my FIMU assessment of AR's ideology against components set out in a Prevent Gateway Assessment ('**PGA**'). The PGA is a Prevent tool to support their assessment of the referral against certain criteria. My role was to look at CT/DE relevance and the threat and risk to NS. In terms of the criterion itself (intent, grievances, capability etc), I might have subconsciously considered these elements within my FIMU assessment, but I did not know what the PGA was in any detail.

*AR's internet school history and examination of seized devices*

66. The Inquiry has asked whether I obtained the following information during the course of my FIMU assessment:
- a. *AR's browsing history from his school:* I have reviewed the relevant documents and I believe I have spoken to the DSL on the phone to request this information, but I do not appear to have received this information from Acorns School.
  - b. *Information about AR's internet use at home, which I referenced within the JAT referral form:* I have no recollections of whether or not I considered seeking information about AR's internet use at home. This would be difficult to do without the devices, and any decisions regarding searches would depend on the facts of the case.
  - c. *Examination results for the seized devices which I had requested in my email to Merseyside Police on 12 December 2019:* I requested an update on the examination of the seized devices from Merseyside Police. I have reviewed the relevant documents and I do not appear to have received this information.
67. I have reviewed the minutes from the multi-agency meeting which took place on 6 January 2020 [Officer B]/17 - [CTPNW000009]. I note that PC Thompson attended this meeting. The minutes state as follows:

*"...The investigation in relation to the recent assault is still ongoing with Merseyside Police and awaiting a CPS decision. The devices are being examined, the school internet history is also being looked at by Merseyside Police, they will update accordingly with any concerns found."* [Officer B]/17 - [CTPNW000009]

68. I would have been made aware that this meeting had taken place since it was recorded on the action request log [redacted] /14 - [redacted] CTPHQ000087 . At this stage, Prevent was handling the referral and therefore my active involvement in AR's case had stopped (apart from the outstanding action request which was closed on 9 January 2020). If, during the course of reviewing AR's school history or seized devices, CT/DE relevant information or intelligence was uncovered, this would have been fed back to the FIMU for reassessment. The information or intelligence could have been referred to the FIMU either by the Prevent CTCO or Merseyside Police on an IR. The re-assessment would have been picked up and completed by any FIMU officer on duty.
69. With the benefit of hindsight, I could have chased the DSL for an update on this matter before the case was referred on to Prevent. Similarly, I could have chased Merseyside Police for an update on the examination of the seized devices, however, Merseyside Police were looking into the internet history and seized devices as part of their criminal Investigation and would have informed us if any concerning/related material was found.

#### *JAT Assessment*

70. My understanding of DC Blundell's comment on the JAT referral form that *"preference would be for continuance and recommend Dovetail team and Channel Panel are sighted with regards safe-guarding and AR vulnerabilities going forward"*, is that he was making a recommendation that Prevent should consider referring AR's case to the Dovetail team and Channel Panel. In my role as a FIMU officer, I do not recall making a recommendation to refer a case to Channel, since I do not have the training or knowledge on the thresholds for making a Channel referral. However, when assessing other referrals, I have made a recommendation about which team is best suited to deal with the subject after the CT/DE assessment is complete. For example, I have received Vulnerable Child referrals, where I have made the recommendation that the case is referred to Prevent.
71. On 16 December 2019, I summarised DC Blundell's recommendation in my email to the Prevent team, writing: *"This has been returned form [sic] the JAT for a prevent referral to be inputted onto the pcm tracker and referral to channel/dovetail"* [redacted] /07 - [redacted] CTPNW000373 .
72. On 17 December 2019, I emailed PC Thompson and wrote: *"JAT assessment for prevent visit to establish ideology and consideration for Channel/dovetail..."* [redacted] /18 -

**LANC000175**. Looking at my notes, I cannot recall why I have written about a Prevent visit here.

*Case closure to Prevent*

73. The Inquiry has referred me to the PCM Tracker, specifically to the entry recorded on 8 January 2020 by PC Thompson **Officer B/13 - CTPNW000122**. PC Thompson wrote:

*"FIMU have assessed that the case can now be closed to prevent there are no CT/DE concerns present at this stage; the relevant agencies are supporting the subject, all agencies aware that if any new concerns are identified they can refer to prevent."* **Officer B/13 - CTPNW000122**.

74. I had not seen this entry before preparing this witness statement, as I would not have reviewed the PCM Tracker. I understand Prevent have tried to summarise the FIMU report, but do not consider it to be an accurate account of my assessment.

75. I have reviewed the entries on the action report for the multi-agency meeting on 17 December 2019 **Officer B/14 - CTPHQ000087**. I can see that on 7 January 2020, PC Thompson had updated the notes section to inform me that she had met with AR on 3 January 2020 and had attended the follow-up multi-agency meeting on 6 January 2020. PC Thompson had asked if FIMU could advise *"if this can now be closed to prevent"*. I updated the log on 9 January 2020, confirming that I had reviewed the above information and agreed that it could be closed. Without specific recollections of dealing with this issue, my reading of the action request document is that I have assumed PC Thompson had meant that the outstanding action request could be closed since she had now attended the initial multi-agency meeting as well as the follow-up meeting and home visit. When I had agreed that it *"can now be closed"*, I was referring to the action request, not the Prevent referral itself. Sgt Mahmood had reviewed this report on the same day and had agreed with my decision and had written that the action, not the Prevent referral, was *"now complete"*.

76. I did not make any assessment for Prevent to close the case since this is outside the scope of my role as a FIMU officer.

**Section 4: Involvement with other agencies**

77. In terms of my involvement with other agencies, records suggest I had a telephone conversation with the DSL at Acorns School to discuss AR's school internet history. I have also emailed Merseyside Police to request an update on the outcome of any

examination of AR's seized devices. Otherwise, my communications with non-FIMU counterparts are still considered to be internal within CTPNW.

78. As for my reflections on my dealings with external agencies, with the benefit of hindsight, I think I could have emailed the DSL to ensure that my communications were recorded, and I could have ensured that the request for AR's school history was chased before handing over to Prevent. I am aware that the results of any examination by Merseyside would not have been available immediately, and as the referral had been sent onto Prevent at this stage I would have expected the IR to be sent to the Prevent team, the FIMU, or both. When dealing with referrals now, I make sure to check that all outstanding requests are actioned, where possible, before making my relevancy assessment.
79. I also note that the DSL was asked to resubmit the referral using the Prevent concern referral form. This is a fairly common issue and can create a delay in the referral being picked up. Where the original referral is more urgent in nature, I would still progress the case whilst waiting on the form to be resubmitted.
80. I have worked in CT policing for over 6 years now, and I have observed that when working alongside other agencies, there is a general lack of knowledge or awareness about the work we do in the FIMU. There can also be a misunderstanding about the regional function of FIMU. People can have a certain perception about what CT work is, and it's important to bring awareness about what function we provide and what assistance we can offer. I am not aware of any training Prevent run with schools to improve the standard of referrals, but my experience is that referrals still vary to a great extent.
81. I do not recall having any contact with the Vulnerability Support Hub for this case.

#### **Section 5: Reflections on events**

82. I been asked to reflect on whether I or my employer could have done more or done things differently.
83. 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. I agreed with the JAT's assessment outcome that AR did not demonstrate an "*apparent ideology*" and that the appropriate team to deal with his safeguarding needs was the Prevent team. Every case is assessed on its own merits and as a FIMU officer, it is my responsibility

to reach a decision using my experience, and the guidance and tools I have available to me.

84. Whilst Prevent do have safeguarding responsibilities, so does every police officer. As a FIMU officer, I have to look at the CT risks, but also the wider risks. If I think there's no CT/DE relevance, but there's an immediate wellbeing concern, I will speak to local police and ask for action to be taken. One of the functions of Prevent is that it can signpost a subject to other agencies where suitable, e.g. early action team, community safety team.
85. I do consider that the training, guidance and resources I received throughout my time in CTPNW have been adequate for my role as an assessor within the FIMU. Before joining the FIMU, I was an experienced police officer, so I had already received my basic officer training. Joining CT was initially challenging since the processes were completely different to my previous roles. With over 6 years' experience, I now feel more confident in my role. I still encounter challenging cases and I will consult my colleagues and supervisors for their views and professional input. To assist my day-to-day responsibilities, I keep my training materials and key policy documents accessible in a folder on my desk. Overall, I feel trained and supported in performing my role.

#### *Subsequent reviews of AR's Prevent referrals*

86. 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 Prevent Learning Review ('PLR'), the Dignate Review, and Lord Anderson's Review.
87. I note that the PLR agrees that my FIMU assessment has been completed in accordance with the policy on assessments at the time and has been conducted in a timely manner Officer B/19 - CTPHQ000055.
88. I note the criticism from the Dignate report that FIMU decision-making guided Prevent officer decision-making Officer B/20 - CTPHQ000028. The report suggests that in all cases, the FIMU assessment appears to be suggesting Prevent outcomes for the referrals which are then adopted by the Counter Terrorism Case Officer. We work very closely with Prevent, but the FIMU assessment of CT/DE relevance is not intended to be a Prevent assessment. As I have sought to explain in a little more detail above, my interpretation of the comment that this matter could be "closed to prevent" may have

been a misunderstanding of the action result document, as opposed to an instruction from FIMU. This highlights the importance of being very clear in our communications and reports, and I set out some improvements that have been made since AR's referral to our processes.

## Section 6: Improvements

89. I have reflected on any improvements which have been made in the FIMU and Prevent teams since my involvement in AR's case and the incident in Southport last year. I have already alluded to some of these changes within previous sections. I have summarised the changes I am aware of below:
- a. **Prevent team:** In 2019, the Prevent team were based at Padiham Police Station in Burnley. Now, the Lancashire Prevent team are co-located within Lancashire Constabulary Headquarters, which has fostered a closer working relationship between the FIMU and Prevent teams.
  - b. **FIMU referral form to Prevent:** A new information sharing product has very recently been created by CTPNW to try and introduce a more standardised way of passing referrals from the FIMU to Prevent Officer B/21 - CTPNW000378.
  - c. **Prevent triage team:** I understand Prevent now have a triage team who are the first point of contact for a Prevent referral when it comes from the FIMU. The triage team upload all of the referral information onto the PCM Tracker before it is handed over to a CTCO for assessment.
  - d. **Prevent training:** I attended a mandatory Bitesize Prevent training session in July 2025. It was an online learning session, covering the role of Prevent when assessing a referral; how they register the case; and how they perform their assessment. It has been beneficial to better understand how Prevent manage cases. I had not received specific Prevent training covering these aspects before.
  - e. **Multiple Referrals Policy:** A national multiple referrals policy was introduced in January 2025, which deals with subjects who are referred to Prevent on more than one occasion. This is a Prevent policy, and my understanding is that it would not impact the process we follow in FIMU before sending a referral on.
  - f. **Fascination with Extreme Violence policy:** I am aware that a new national interim referrals policy titled, 'Fascination with Extreme Violence and Mass-Casualty Attacks' was also introduced this year Officer B/22 - CTPNW000016.

- g. **FIMU induction pack:** New joiners to the FIMU are now supported with a guidance workbook. The workbook has been designed to give officers working within an IMU a structured plan and to ensure competence in dealing with the variety of documents received within an IMU.
  - h. **Intelligence Professionalisation Programme ('IPP'):** The IPP was designed by the National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing, and aims to provide a structure and recognition to the intelligence roles both in policing and the wider intelligence community. The IPP sets national standards and a consistent approach for those who work within intelligence and includes a learning curriculum and an assessment portfolio. I received my certificate in 2021 and renewed my accreditation in 2024 Officer B/23 - CTPNW000393.
  - i. **JAT:** The pre-JAT referral process has changed since 2019. Before sending the referral to JAT, the FIMU officer will open a file and attach the concern form, intelligence report, and any other supporting documents. It will then be sent to the FIMU supervisor who will perform a review and add comments to the investigation. The responsibility for completing the JAT form now lies with the JAT officer as opposed to the referring FIMU officer. The JAT officer will take the information uploaded to the investigation and will populate the form along with their risk assessment. This is a fairly new process and will show a clearer recording and decision-making process between the FIMU and JAT.
  - j. **Access to research resources:** FIMU officers have better access to the various systems used for the purpose of conducting research (e.g. PND and PCM Tracker). At the time of AR's first referral, only a limited number of people had access to both the PND and the PCM Tracker.
  - k. **Action requests:** The FIMU no longer create the action requests for Prevent attendance at meetings. This responsibility has been passed to Prevent. The only time a FIMU officer would still take on this responsibility is if it's a joint meeting with other CTPNW partners (e.g. Investigation Development Unit and Prevent).
90. I do consider that these improvements have made a positive difference, encouraging more accurate record keeping and a clearer timeline of the actions taken, and decisions made for a case. This is particularly important if it were to be reviewed in the future as part of a subsequent referral. This also holds FIMU officers to a higher standard of accountability for ensuring their work is properly recorded and they've followed all of the processes.

91. I have given consideration to any improvements that could be made within the FIMU, noting the Chair's request for practical recommendations that could make an effective difference. An increasing amount of intelligence is now related to activity online (the use of social media etc) so Open Source checks are an essential, and growing, part of the assessment process within CTPNW. There is a dedicated team in Manchester to support with Internet Intelligence and Investigation checks (known as "*III checks*"), but they only carry out the Open Source checks on our behalf in certain circumstances. FIMU officers do perform their own Open Source checks, but it can be a time-consuming process, and to be really effective requires good training and IT skills.
92. Consideration should be given to a dedicated person in each FIMU hub to lead Open Source checks on behalf of the team, providing ongoing training and support to all officers and ensuring there is enough resource in place to undertake those checks at pace.

#### **Section 7: Other matters**

93. I do not have any further matters that I would like to draw to the Chair's attention.

#### **Section 8: Further disclosure: documents and communications**

94. 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** **Officer B** *20/08/2025*  
Officer B Officer B

**Dated:** 20/08/2025