

Witness Name: Carmen Thompson
Exhibits: CT/01-CT/02
Dated: 27 August 2025

THE SOUTHPORT INQUIRY

FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF CARMEN THOMPSON

I, Carmen Thompson, will say as follows: -

INTRODUCTION

1. I am a Police Sergeant 10216 of Greater Manchester Police.
2. At the outset, I want to by express my sorrow to all those affected by these events, which I will address in more detail later in this statement. I recognise that I cannot even begin to imagine what the families and those directly involved are going through.
3. This witness statement is made to assist the Southport Inquiry (the "Inquiry") with the matters set out in the Rule 9 Request dated 22 July 2025.

BACKGROUND

4. I joined Lancashire Constabulary in October 2016 as part of the early action intake which was an initiative designed to place more officers in the community to prevent criminality. In 2018 I applied to the Prevent programme as I felt the skills I had learned as part of my early action role were transferable. I was successful and started with Prevent on 3rd December 2018.
5. I left Prevent on promotion to Sergeant in July 2021 where I took up a role in the change and continuous development team. I remained in that role until June 2023 when I went

into Force Crime Management Unit as a Sergeant subsequently transferring to GMP in March 2025.

6. I previously provided a witness statement on 24th December 2024, at the request of Merseyside Police [CTPNW000018]. I exhibit that statement as CT/01 - CTPNW000183
I do not recall receiving much in the way of guidance as to what areas I was expected to cover in the statement, and I felt under pressure of time to submit the statement due to the demands of my role and the Christmas period. The statement is an accurate account and my approach was to provide a factual chronology of my involvement in this case. To the best of my recollection I only referred to the information held on the Police Case Management Tracker (PCMT) to assist me with the preparation of that document.

Joining the Prevent programme

7. As stated above, I joined the Prevent programme on the 3rd December 2018 as a Counter Terrorism Case Officer (CTCO), which is equivalent to the role/rank of Police Constable, based at Padiham Police Station, Burnley. Therefore, one year before my first involvement with AR. My day-to-day role was dealing with referrals to the prevent programme highlighting concerns with individuals. The majority of referrals came from schools and related to children.
8. To the best of my recollection there were a total of 7 PC's in the department. In addition, I think there were two further PC's based in Cumbria. All officers dealt with day-to-day referrals with the exception of one officer who only dealt with Channel/Dovetail cases. This was generally an understandably demanding role involving the management of different caseloads, liaising with the subject and linked persons, liaising with partner organisations and investigation of any given case.
9. In terms of supervision, there were 2 Sergeant's based in Lancashire. There was one Inspector with oversight of the team of 9 PCs.
10. In addition, initially when I started in the role there were also 3 police staff members who were engagement officers. Their role was to do presentations in the community and run Independent Advisory Group meetings. This was an important part of the work of Prevent in relation to education about the issues that can arise in these cases. However, resources were reduced and the CTCO's took on their responsibilities as well which added to the already demanding caseload.

Training received

11. I have reviewed my training records as referenced within my PDR documents and can confirm I completed the following training as part of my role in Prevent:-
 1. Police Case Management Tracker (PCMT) training - 3rd January 2019
 2. Prevent Conversation and Intervention Management Course - 31st Jan 2019
 3. NCIA training 3rd – 5th April 2019
 4. National CT induction 8th – 9th April 2019
 5. Prevent Foundation Course 16th – 20th October 2019
 6. COSI (Open Source) Training - 21st January 2020.

12. I understood that the Prevent Foundation Course had to be completed within 6 months of commencing in the role but this was not possible due to limited places on the course and a lack of resources to back fill any absences as the course was over 5 days and residential. I am now aware that the Counter Terrorism Case Officer Guide adds that this course should be completed as soon as practicable, but this did not come into effect until December 2020.

13. I also wish to add that I have a record in my daybook of attending a group discussion in Birmingham on the 23rd May 2019 which I have recorded as “PGA (Police Gateway Assessment) and DIF (Dynamic Investigation Framework) Training”. I exhibit the relevant pages from my daybook as CT/02 - [CTPNW000182]. I have a record within my notes stating “will be coming out to divisions to implement training”. The training at the time was, to my recollection, a few hours group session/discussion and I understood that they would be conducting further training on divisions on a one to one basis to reinforce the learning from the group session. However, I do not recall any further training being received. My understanding was that the focus was on the fact that they were merging the PGA and the DIF into one process. I am reliant on my note but do not recall any specific detailed focus on ideology and intent in that session. We of course, did have some training on ideology and intent in our initial training (I do not have access now to the full course details).

My role within the Prevent programme

14. Upon commencing in the role in December 2018, officers would routinely work in a team of two and predominantly with the same person. I was paired with a PC Paul Parkes, who was part of my intake in 2016 and had only been in the Prevent role for 3 months. I have no direct criticism of this officer, but they were also very inexperienced and

learning the role. I wasn't comfortable with this and requested that I was given the opportunity to conduct visits with more experienced officers. I am not able to provide the exact date of this request but this will have been within a couple of months of me starting in the role and my supervisors at the time were aware of my request. This was facilitated at times but not as frequently as I would have liked. It is difficult to say how many times I was given this opportunity, but I would estimate no more than 4 or 5 times. The expectation at the time was that you would work in your dedicated pairs. That pair of officers had responsibility for a certain geographical area, so I accepted that it was difficult to accommodate requests to work with other officers and did not seek to push this any further. However, there were other officers with years of experience and it would perhaps have been more appropriate to pair an officer such as myself with only 2 years' service in the force, with more senior colleagues. However, being new to the role I accepted the decision my supervisors had made and did not feel it appropriate to challenge this any further.

15. I would describe my role as a CTCO as demanding and we carried at times a high workload. These cases varied in complexity. A Police led case means that I would have sole responsibility for the management of the case and the involvement/coordination of other agencies, in addition to the management of risk and safeguarding. A Channel/Dovetail led case meant that the local authority had responsibility for coordinating the various agencies which meant a less intensive role for the CTCO.
16. I would have a weekly meeting with my Sgt to review my caseload and there would be daily discussions with supervisors as issues arose.
17. A referral would come into the department via FIMU (Fixed Intelligence Management Unit). FIMU would initially undertake background checks on the referral to establish whether it was suitable for Prevent. The concern form would always be emailed to the Prevent supervisor email inbox which would then be allocated by the Sergeant.
18. The way in which further information pertinent to each referral was received from FIMU varied. This could come in the form of a verbal conversation with the FIMU officer, emails from the FIMU officer or a direction to review an action on the National Common Intelligence Application (NCIA). It is important for the CTCO to have a good working relationship with the FIMU officers. The CTCO would need to keep the FIMU officer updated as to any developments or changes in intelligence as it could alter the assessment of the risk. In my experience it was dependant on who the FIMU officer was

as to whether they may seek to offer a view on the likely outcome of the referral. In cases where FIMU did offer an opinion, that would be something taken into consideration by the CTCO.

19. When a referral was received, it would be allocated a PCMT reference. Any actions, decisions and developments associated with that referral would be updated on the PCMT system.
20. Upon allocation of the referral, the CTCO should complete a PGA (Police Gateway Assessment). The PGA is the form used to complete the initial screening and triage on all de-conflicted prevent referrals. This would ordinarily need to be completed within 5 working days. Before completing the PGA, the CTCO would liaise via a phone call or a visit with the referrer and partner agencies. When completing the PGA, the CTCO is assessing whether the case should be allocated as Police Led, Channel/Dovetail or marked for closure. That assessment is then provided to the supervisor for final authorisation.
21. In a Police Led case, it would be the responsibility of the CTCO to complete the Dynamic Investigation framework (DIF) within 5 days of the completion of the PGA. It would be necessary to complete the DIF in cases where there were reasonable grounds to suspect vulnerability to being drawn into any terrorism related activity. If no such grounds existed, then the matter would be referred for closure at the PGA stage without the need to complete DIF.

First Referral

22. The first referral regarding AR was initially allocated to my colleague Russ Davies on 17th December 2019. However, there had been a delay in FIMU allocating the referral to Prevent and I had been made aware of it several days earlier as a result of AR's arrest by Merseyside Police and subsequent communication from PC Paul Harrison, who was part of the community safety team in Ormskirk. As such the referral was reallocated to me on the 17th December, when it was finally received.
23. At no time do I recall having any direct contact with DC Blundell from the Joint Assessment Team (JAT). The JAT is a team that would assess intelligence to determine if it meets the criteria for further investigation or intervention including by Prevent. They would liaise directly with the FIMU department who would then disseminate the relevant information to me if it was deemed appropriate. I cannot say whether I ever viewed the

JAT assessment document. However, I was aware of the assessment made by DC Blundell as it was referred to by [Officer B] in email correspondence to me on the 16th December 2019. I would have noted the wording of the recommendation from JAT/FIMU that "preference would be for continuance and recommend dovetail team and channel panel are sighted with regard safeguarding and AR vulnerabilities going forward". I understood this to mean that JAT were suggesting that when I conducted my assessment, I should consider a referral to Dovetail if I considered that was appropriate. However, it was not a direction or order. It was my role to undertake my own assessment taking all matters into consideration. Any recommendations from JAT/FIMU would always form part of my decision-making process. In this case I did not refer it to Channel/Dovetail as I formed the view that there not sufficient concerns identified for reasons I will set out later in this statement.

24. I attended the strategy meeting on the 17th December. Attendees included representatives from Children's Social Care, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), the Investigating Officer from Merseyside Police, and Police Early Action.
25. During the strategy meeting, the investigating officer from Merseyside provided an update which included comments from AR's mum that she had been hiding knives from him. I recorded this and any other information I considered relevant in my daybook. This has previously been provided to the Inquiry.
26. At the time of the Strategy Meeting, I did take into consideration the apparent conflicting accounts given by AR regarding his intention with the knife he had in his possession during the assault on 11thDecember 2019. I was also aware of the email from Paul Harrison on the 11th December 2019, which described AR's intention to use the knife to kill the pupil if the hockey stick had not worked. I would always have in mind the issue of disguised compliance when assessing the relevance of this information as against any denials AR may have made regarding his intent with the knife.
27. The meeting resulted in 3 actions, one of which was for me to conduct a visit to AR. In terms of the management of any risk posed by AR at this stage, I understood from the meeting that this was being managed by a combination of the involvement of other agencies which were Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Children's Social Care and the local police. I felt that these were the appropriate agencies to be managing the current risks and safeguarding at this time and I was not aware of any

further information that would suggest otherwise. I was also aware of the bail conditions imposed at the time which were 1. Not to be within 400 metres of Range High School, Formby, L37 2NY, 2. Not to contact by self, servant or agent [DPA] or [DPA] [DPA] by any means including electronic, 3. Not to attend the Acorn centre, Ruff Lane, until confirmation of return is given by social services or the appropriate authority. I also was satisfied that he had the correct support in place to manage his vulnerabilities at that time.

28. In updating the PCMT on the 20th December 2019, I incorrectly uploaded a PGA unrelated to AR. It was not possible to remove information from the PCMT. I sought advice and was told to add a note confirming the error, which the note dated 23/12/19 on the PCMT, refers. I have reviewed my daybook and the subject in question was visited by me on the same day as AR as they both lived in the same area. I have worked on both matters simultaneously throughout this period and I have clearly confused the two cases on this occasion.
29. Having established that a visit to AR was necessary, I took advice from my supervisor who directed that the case be moved to the PLP (Police Led Partnership) and agreed that the visit should be conducted. I understood this to be on the basis that there was not enough information at this stage to establish whether the matter was appropriate for a Dovetail/Channel referral. A reluctance to proceed to Channel/Dovetail due to local authority control did not form part of the decision making as I understood it. In theory any case would benefit from information gathering and the convening of the multi-agency Channel Panel. However, this was not an available option unless the case met the threshold. My assessment was that this case did not meet that threshold as I did not identify sufficient concerns or indicators that he was vulnerable to radicalisation. The main concerns were around his mental health and autism, and these issues were being managed by other agencies. I perceived that any threat of violence or use of weapon would be specific and focussed in relation to the incident rather than through radicalisation, ideology or extreme belief necessitating Prevent intervention.
30. Within the Police Case Management Plan on the 23rd December, I referred to a lack of evidence in relation to grievances. I do not think I considered his issues around bullying to amount to grievances from a CT/DE perspective. This was a child at school who was apparently being bullied. I did not assess this as meeting the definition of a grievance within Dynamic Investigation Framework (DIF). I would have been trying to identify any political, racial or religious motive for any grievance in this context, which did not appear

to me to be present in this case. This is how I interpreted my training and my decision making in relation to this.

31. I acknowledge that the PCMP recorded the decision to refer the case to the Vulnerability Support Hub (VSH). The VSH would provide assistance to CTCO's in assessing the complex needs of subjects and the development of intervention plans. I understood that the VSH could access health records to make the appropriate recommendations to manage vulnerabilities. I must have taken the view that this would potentially have assisted in addressing AR's mental health concerns and his Autism diagnosis. This step is referred to within the DIF and I would have been taking this into consideration in coming to that view. I had a good relationship with the team at the VSH and would often contact Sarah Sanderson directly. I would like to know whether there is any record of me emailing Sarah Sanderson directly rather than via the central VSH inbox. At the time of making the entry in the PCMT I must have had the intention of making the referral and cannot specifically say now why this does not appear to have happened. However, I do note that AR was receiving the support required through CAMHS and the pending implementation of an Educational Health Care Plan/Autism assessment. I would therefore still maintain that any concerns were being adequately addressed and that was my thought at the time. The VSH referral was therefore of importance but not essential.
32. When a visit was to be conducted it was standard practice to conduct a risk assessment in advance. I assessed the risk posed to us by AR as medium to high based on his recent arrest and use of weapons This was a general type of risk, as in any policing situation and not specific to Prevent. This assessment would include any intelligence known to me at the time which included information held on local police systems including warning markers i.e. possession of weapons etc. We would operate as standard by two officers attending any visit and would always notify the communications staff that we were to conduct such a visit for our own personal safety. It would be routine to wear standard police issue PPE given the risk assessment level in relation to AR.
33. Having initially visited AR's home address on the 31st of December 2019, we rearranged due to work commitments of AR's father and returned on the 3rd January 2020. I attended in company with my colleague PC Christopher Lawrence.
34. My assessment of AR during the visit was based on the information known to me at the time which included information provided by other agencies that were supporting him

and his family, information from the referrer (Designated Safeguarding Lead), FIMU assessment, information from parents, how AR presented to me and the information AR provided. I followed the processes and guidelines that were in place to conduct my assessment and referred to the National decision making model (NDM) throughout.

35. At the time that I conducted the visit to AR, it was my standard practice to make a checklist in my daybook of the relevant topics in the DIF assessment in order to guide my conversation and dialogue as per my training and guidance. I relied on that checklist as I was still developing my experience of taking the lead when conducting visits.
36. I spoke to AR to obtain his account of the concerns that had been raised to Prevent. He was 13 years old at the time and his appearance was that of a young boy who was struggling to adapt to the recent changes within the family home. I recorded the outcome of the visit in the Action Result document (ARD, which is the record of the result of an Action), and made notes of the discussion in my daybook.
37. I did speak to AR's Dad. I don't recall his mother being present. I recall his Dad making comment that he was a good boy. I did not place any weight on that as such a comment would be routine from a parent. I did advise him regarding obtaining support for his other DPA son and recall that he was receptive to advice and support although I have not referred to this within the ARD.
38. I didn't consider a need to speak in more detail to AR's teachers regarding his (AR's) suggestion that things had been taken out of context. I felt I already had sufficient information from the school and was aware that both the School and Merseyside Police were conducting further inquiries regarding search history and devices. I understood that the school and Merseyside Police would alert me to any relevant information following the analysis of his devices and school internet searches. This was agreed in the strategy meeting on the 6th January 2020 and is documented on the ARD.
39. It seemed a credible explanation that he hadn't actively searched for information regarding school shootings and I was happy that inquiries were ongoing to establish whether this was the case or not. When the referral was closed, it was on the basis that matters would be looked at again if any further information was referred in. The fact that the case was closed does not mean that is an end to it, if circumstances changed the case could be reopened.

40. I was aware of competing information regarding whether he was in fact being bullied. I did not consider I needed to speak to teachers more about this as the school's position was clear that they had no record of any bullying. Regardless of whether any bullying had occurred, I considered AR genuinely perceived that he was being bullied and took that into consideration accordingly.
41. At all times in my discussion with AR, I did consider the risk of disguised compliance, which I understood to be him potentially saying what I wanted to hear. However, I discounted this as, despite some contradictory comments by AR, I put this down to issues with his Autism, his age and general level of maturity. I made this assessment as a result of my training and previous experience of dealing with individuals with Autism.
42. On or around the 8th January 2020, I believe I will have had a discussion with the FIMU about the closure of the referral. The entry on the PCMT includes my assessment that there were no CT/DE concerns. This was my wording rather than FIMU's but I did let FIMU know verbally that was my assessment. I would always take into consideration the views of FIMU and they did not express any concerns regarding my assessment for closure. The type of relationship meant that they would express their views about my assessment, and had they raised any such concerns, then I would have taken them into account.
43. In assessing that there were no CT/DE concerns, I was not just referring to AR's lack of ideology and was considering the wider context. It was my assessment that the case be closed on the basis that it could be re-opened if appropriate. As stated, I would take into consideration the opinion of the FIMU in coming to that conclusion.
44. I was aware of the work being undertaken regarding AR's devices. I expected Merseyside police and/or the school to contact me directly if anything of concern was identified. I did consider asking for the results but didn't feel this was necessary given the agreement that they would update me when they received them. I was aware of the potential significance of the device download but had no idea how long the results would take to come back. The matter could be reopened in the event of any further information from Merseyside Police or the School.
45. I do not consider that it would have assisted to have received the charging decision regarding the 11th December assault before closing the referral. I was aware of the incident that had taken place and a charging decision would not have impacted on my

decision making because I was aware of the circumstances of the incident and was working on the basis that the information that I had was correct and that he may have behaved as alleged.

46. AR presented to me as suffering from Autism. The assessment I made was based on this. A diagnosis seemed likely so it would not have assisted me to wait for the outcome of the Forensic CAMHS appointment as I had assessed that the matter should be closed regardless of that diagnosis.
47. If a referral was police led or in Channel/Dovetail, it was standard practice to conduct a 6 and 12 month review. Given this referral was moved to police led I conducted the reviews accordingly. I would have been aware of the absence of any further information regarding his devices or school search history but would have considered that if anything of relevance had been discovered, I would have been updated as previously agreed in the strategy meeting on the 6th January 2020. The searches I undertook reassured me that there were no relevant updates regarding his mental health or safeguarding. All agencies would have been aware to report any new concerns back into Prevent and I anticipated that this review would pick up if there were any further concerns.

Second Referral

48. In relation to the second referral, my understanding is that the incorrect spelling of AR's name should not have had any impact on the handling of the referral. The wildcard search facility on the systems in my experience should allow for subjects to be successfully identified even with incorrect spellings. I'm aware from reviewing the documents in preparing this statement that the supervisor appears have been unable to view the PCM for the first referral. However, I am not certain that this was in anyway due to the misspelling of AR's name and may be due to IT problems specific to her; this is only based on my experience of using the system.
49. The appropriate steps were taken to re-assess AR's vulnerabilities and risk factors, a PGA assessment was completed and the relevant information obtained from the referrer. The FIMU assessed the intelligence and conducted the appropriate checks in relation to AR's online activity. There was no Instagram account associated to him and no other social media accounts in his name. The relevant checks with the information available had been conducted by FIMU as far as I am aware. The new information did not change the original assessment and it did not meet the thresholds for adoption at Channel. The appropriate measures and safeguarding were in place to manage AR's risk factors

through the school and other agencies that were currently supporting him. All agencies were aware to re-refer to Prevent with any new concerns.

50. I took the assessment of FIMU into account when I was assessing the case as set out below and also the information provided by the school. The recommendation whether to refer to Channel/Dovetail was my assessment and I did not consider the case to meet the threshold for a referral to Channel/Dovetail.
51. I did consider the previous referral whilst completing the PGA on the 9th February 2021 and considered the information I had available to me at the time. I feel my assessment was an appropriate assessment in the circumstances as I understood them to be based on my knowledge, training and experience. On the 9th of February I attempted to call Ms Jan Lewis, the referrer, who was unavailable and responded to my email to confirm that there were no further concerns other than that contained within this latest referral.
52. The content of these posts which had been sent to his friends were screen shots from a website that he was not the author of. The posts were in relation to Gaddafi's Libyan regime questioning the US and EU for removing him.
53. This information did not highlight any new concerns and my assessment took the previous referral and this information into account.
54. The content showed that he continued to display an interest in certain current affairs events and media, but there was not sufficient information to conclude he held an extremist ideology.
55. I also took into account the vulnerabilities and issues that were apparent in the previous referral; I felt these were being sufficiently addressed by the agencies supporting him which included the educational care healthcare plan to support his ASD. I checked police systems and could not find any further reports or concerns since the previous referral. I completed the PGA assessment considering all the areas this assessment covers.
56. I did not assess him as being vulnerable to radicalisation and I did not feel that the issues raised were for Prevent and that the case was suitable for closure to Prevent. I felt the issues that were presented by AR were attributed to his ASD and lack of support to manage this. I felt his use of violence was likely due to frustration and lack of his ability to understand and manage his ASD and his inability to cope with the recent changes in

the family home. Whilst he was a vulnerable child, I felt his needs could be supported by the relevant agencies already working with him. I did not assess his needs as meeting those for a Prevent intervention.

57. I did not feel it was necessary to conduct any further checks in relation to AR's social media activity. I felt that the checks conducted by FIMU were sufficient and there had been no further reports from the school in relation to his social media activity. There was not sufficient information to enable any further checks and given the matter was to be closed it did not seem that any further checks were required, this was with the knowledge that any further concerns would be reported and that there was the facility for review.
58. I took the assessment of FIMU into account, which was that the new intelligence did not meet the thresholds for adoption at Channel and that the content of the posts did not suggest that he held any extremist ideology. This was consistent with my earlier conclusions about AR as the first referral was also taken into account. I also took account of the information provided by the school and I completed a PGA assessment. I used the NDM throughout my decision making and with the information available to me at the time I made the decision that the case was suitable for closure. The school were again advised to re-refer to prevent should they have any further concerns.
59. I felt I had sufficient information to make the assessment to close the case. In relation to the results from the download of AR's devices following the assault in 2019, I was not made aware that any information of concern had been found. The school had also not reported any concerns about AR's internet search history. Whilst I acknowledge that I could have spoken to the pupil who reported the concerns and/or AR's parents, I did not feel I would have gained any further information to alter my assessment. I had enough information regarding the nature of the posts on the Instagram account and I understood that if AR's parents had any further concerns, those concerns would have been passed on to me by the agencies involved as I had previously spoken to his father to explain this.
60. As I stated with the first referral, in theory any case would benefit from information gathering and the convening of the multi-agency Channel Panel. However, this was not an available option unless the case met the threshold. My assessment was that this second referral did not meet that threshold.

61. I did consider the fact that this was a second referral relating to AR. However, I did not feel it was suitable to be referred to Channel/Dovetail. I was satisfied that AR had the relevant agencies supporting him and I made the assessment to close the case using the information available to me at the time.
62. As with the first referral, a post closure review was undertaken as this was policy to review cases that had been closed after PLP or Channel/Dovetail intervention after 6 and 12 months.

Third Referral

63. I am not aware of the incorrect spelling of AR's name having any impact on the handling of the referral for the reasons I have set out above regarding referral 2.
64. I would not describe the third referral as a "knee jerk referral". It was clear that the school was following the advice they had been given. It wasn't unusual to receive multiple referrals regarding the same subject. Multiple referrals would be factored into any assessment but the primary issue was always whether that referral met the threshold to refer to channel/dovetail or Police Led.
65. Dealing with people with a diagnosis of autism was not uncommon. In assessing the impact of AR's autism diagnosis and the risk he presented at the time of the third referral, I considered the way he had presented to me previously and the information that had been passed from other agencies. I had previously referred people to Channel who had autism but their behaviour was far more concerning and extreme than that displayed by AR. I took the view that if exposed to certain news articles and current affairs, his ASD diagnosis may trigger him to look things up online. These were all topics that mainstream media reported on a daily basis and this seemed different from someone who had a fascination or obsession with those topics. I took the view that the support he needed was in place and I was aware of the implementation of the Educational Health Care Plan. I made this assessment based on the training I had received. I understand that coupled with this were concerns about an individual with a propensity for violence. However, I did not conclude that there was an ideological or extremist basis for the risks he presented and therefore this did not reach the threshold for a Prevent intervention. I would also have in mind that the support that he already had in place would address his needs.

66. On the 29th April 2021 I amended the status from registered to initial assessment and in doing so I made reference to the FIMU assessment as “non CT/DE and vulnerabilities will be assessed by the EHCP”. It was standard practice to note the FIMU opinion at the point I amended the status of the case to initial assessment. As previously stated, I would take the FIMU assessment into consideration but it was not the sole factor. It would be an important factor due to the level of intelligence and information that FIMU have access to which would be considered in the assessment.
67. I did make an assessment of AR’s vulnerabilities at this time as part of the PGA and felt that my assessment and the steps taken to complete that were sufficient regarding the concerns that were being reported. I was aware of the Educational Health Care Plan being in place and therefore considered that sufficient support was available to address AR’s vulnerabilities. As a result, I didn’t consider it necessary to take further steps myself at that stage to specifically assess the EHCP.
68. I did consider the previous referrals when completing the PGA on 7th May 2021. I didn’t see any indications of matters escalating from those previous referrals. For that reason, I didn’t consider it necessary to take any further steps to investigate the issues. There had been no further involvement with the Police and the school did not report any wider concerns. The referral mirrored his interest in media articles as per the first referral, but it did not demonstrate a fascination or obsession with the subject matter of the articles he had considered. I still believe that this did not meet the threshold for referral to Prevent, in line with professional judgment and training.
69. I did not consider carrying out or asking for any further open-source checks to be conducted. I was aware from the information provided by FIMU that checks had been conducted and no relevant information was found. This seemed sufficient in the circumstances. Given I had assessed the matter for closure, it would not have been appropriate to refer the matter for further checks.
70. As I stated with the previous referrals, any case would benefit from information gathering and the convening of the multi-agency Channel Panel. However, this was not an available option unless the case met the threshold. My assessment was that this third referral did not meet that threshold. It wasn’t unusual to receive multiple referrals regarding the same subject. Multiple referrals would be factored into any assessment but the primary issue was always whether the specific referral under consideration met the threshold to refer.

Overall

71. I never considered it necessary to prove/establish a definitive terrorist ideology. I am assessing concerns or indicators that he could be vulnerable to radicalisation or hold extremist views. Throughout my assessment of AR, at no stage did I consider he met the threshold to be referred to Channel in this regard.
72. I didn't consider that he had a terrorist ideology. I acknowledge that across the three referrals there was information regarding his apparent interest in topics such as the MEN arena terrorist attack, London bridge terrorist attack, Colonel Gaddafi and MI5/IRA. However, at no stage did I consider he had a fascination or obsession with a particular ideology despite evidence of some level of interest in these topics. The mainstream media exposes us all to news articles and opinions on these topics and it appeared that his exposure to this could be explained in this context. I reached this conclusion based on other individuals where similar concerns were reported but deemed not relevant for Prevent and the experience that other children of a similar age would also be interested in the same topics. I also took into consideration his wider searches of current affairs and media.
73. I do consider fascination with extreme violence or school/public mass casualty attacks to be an ideology in accordance with my training and personal judgment including experience of dealing with individuals displaying this ideology. However, I did not consider that the evidence relating to AR's interest in this topic amounted to a fascination and as such it did not meet the threshold that there are reasonable grounds to suspect the individual is vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and as such it was not suitable for a referral to channel . I took into account the information available to me at the time which included information from the school, FIMU assessment and the previous referrals. I used the NDM throughout my decision making.
74. The school massacre ideology was entered on the PCMT as the ideology for the first referral but there was not enough information available at the time to determine whether this was the case. Although I cannot be certain I do not think it was me who entered this on to the PCMT and it was pre-populated. I will inevitably have been considering this. However, following my assessment I did not believe that AR was obsessed with extreme violence/school massacre attacks or that he had any extreme beliefs or fascination with this. He had looked at a news article in relation to the recent school shootings but did not display any concerning obsession or extreme views towards this and was looking at

other current news articles which I understood to be a general interest in current affairs. He had displayed violence in the recent attack on another pupil, but I did not believe this to be extreme in the Prevent context.

75. I acknowledge that the sections on ideology and intent in the DIF referred to a concerning fascination in mass killings or school massacres. However, there was not enough information available at the time to determine whether this was the case. The information was provided from the concerns raised from the school and Children's Social Care and the context around this was not clear until AR had been spoken to and further enquiries were made.
76. The section on intent stated that the subject had wanted to stab a particular individual as he had previously been bullied by him. There was also information that he had a list of 3 targets (which had been mentioned by the mother of the child that was assaulted), he had been showing hatred and aggression towards his brother and the male he wanted to assault. When further information was received it did not appear that there was any actual intent present to stab someone.
77. The comments about the MEN Arena attack was information that was mentioned by CSC during a strategy meeting, I believe this will have been referred to during the conversation with AR however, I cannot recall the details relating directly to this. I considered his comments about school shootings in America where he had stated he had seen on the news there had been loads in America but this wasn't a good thing (referenced in my day book) but did not assess him as supporting this incident or these types of incidents. My assessment was that he could make inappropriate comments to try and get attention. I felt that this could also have been linked to his ASD and frustration with understanding his diagnosis and the best way to manage it. I reached this conclusion from the way he presented to me and the information I had from other agencies about his behaviour and previous inappropriate comments and attention seeking tendencies. He did not display any extreme views or beliefs in relation to religious, racial or political ideologies or causes.
78. Whilst I do not recall seeing the Joint Letter from the Director of Prevent at the time, I considered the guidance referred to in it in any event throughout my decision making. I was aware of the school massacre ideology in particular due to having previously dealt with another individual presenting with this ideology that required support from Channel/Dovetail. I did not consider this to be the case in my assessment of AR. The

significant differences were that the previous individual displayed an obsession and concerning fascination with a school massacre at his school and was promoting hateful ideas about this. As I have previously stated I did not consider AR to have an obsession with school massacres.

79. The first referral stated that AR had complained about being unable to look at guns on the internet and asked for a picture of a severed head in an art class. AR had made this inappropriate comment in relation to Call of Duty images that the teacher had allowed the children to colour in during art lesson. These images were what had prompted what I viewed as his childish comments which I did not feel were out of context when considering his level of maturity and ASD and the subject matter they had been asked to colour in. My assessment was that he was showing off in front of his classmates who he wanted to make laugh. As he had previously articulated to me the recent difficulties in making friends, the majority of his inappropriate comments were made in the classroom environment which I understood as him trying to impress his classmates and make friends.
80. As I have previously stated above; I did not believe and did not have sufficient evidence that AR was actively searching for school shootings. He displayed an interest in current affairs and there was no report of a search history of school shootings as opposed to him having clicked on a news article relating to a recent school shooting.
81. AR commented during a lesson about people fearing those they don't know and people's mistrust of strangers "in case they get murdered" as I have previously made reference to AR making inappropriate comments particularly at school in front of his classmates. I understood this to be a child who was scared of people not liking him and who was struggling to make friends, his comments were childish and did not appear concerning to me as I viewed this as his typical behaviour.
82. His comments about getting teachers murdered were what I considered to be another example of an inappropriate comment, due to his belief that the teachers didn't like him. I considered the email of PC Paul Harrison which suggested he had a certain hatred of teachers. As I have mentioned above, AR had explained his reason for disliking the teachers as set out within the ARD and did not demonstrate this dislike towards any teacher in particular. It just appeared to be another childlike comment consistent with many children who might say they didn't like their teachers at school which I could relate

to from my previous experience of working with children (in Early Action) experiencing similar issues and their dislike of school.

83. I took into consideration that AR had been temporarily excluded due to assaulting a fellow pupil in class. I understood this to be related to his belief he was being bullied as previously mentioned and I also considered that assaults in school especially between teenage boys was not unusual and an everyday common occurrence.
84. A teacher had observed AR making inappropriate comment and graphic remarks about videos on YouTube of people hurting themselves. I took this into consideration during my assessment. The type of material was explained as comedy type material with someone playing a prank AR had explained the content to me during the visit and his explanation seemed plausible. It did not appear particularly unusual to me that a child of his age was watching things on you tube and following youtubers on the internet. I based this on my work with children and being a mother myself.
85. I felt the reason he said he hated school was because he felt he was being bullied and he was struggling to make new friends. I formed this view from the discussion I had with him and also the information provided by other agencies.
86. AR had previously admitted to taking knives into school which I considered in my assessment. The school implemented a risk assessment to ensure his bag was checked for the presence of knives and his parents also implemented their own safeguarding at home supported by CSC.
87. AR had returned to his school, despite his exclusion, with a knife and struck a pupil with a hockey stick. This behaviour was concerning and he was arrested and dealt with by local police who were the appropriate department to deal with this offence. The risk and safeguarding was managed by them and bail conditions were imposed. I understood this to be an escalation in his behaviour due to the offence committed and was part of the information considered during Referral 1. However, I did not assess this as meeting the threshold for Channel/Dovetail and I felt the appropriate agencies were in place to provide the relevant support at that time. The violence he had used was towards another pupil who he stated was bullying him was an issue that could be managed by other agencies including those already involved.

88. I didn't consider that AR met the threshold set out in the joint letter on unclear mixed or unstable ideology. I concluded that he was just showing an interest in the news and current affairs. As stated, with reference to the joint letter itself, I don't ever recall seeing the precise content of it. It was likely that this was discussed during the team briefings as supervisors would discuss key messages during these meetings, but I am not able to recall the exact details of this.
89. If all 3 referrals had consistently related to the same theme this would have had an impact on my assessment, particularly in relation to whether AR had a fascination or obsession with that theme. However, it still does not mean that I would refer a case to Channel as an assessment would need to be made as to whether it met the threshold for such a referral.
90. I balanced my assessment of AR's ideology against the other components of the PGA using the information available to me at the time and from his previous referrals. I also took into consideration his complex needs which I did not consider sufficient to meet the threshold for Prevent. I understood that his Autism could potentially make him more vulnerable to radicalisation, but I did not assess there to be any sufficient concerns or escalations. As no sufficient risk had materialised, I was satisfied there was no requirement for a Prevent intervention and his needs were met by the school and the implementation of the Educational Health Care Plan.
91. I did not feel that there were reasonable grounds to suspect that AR was vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism in any of the referrals or the information available to me at that time. I considered the test applied at the PGA stage, taking into consideration lack of or unclear ideology throughout my decision making.
92. I did consider AR's autism and how this may affect the risk he presented. However, I didn't feel it impacted on the risk to such an extent that Prevent intervention was required. I understand that potentially somebody with autism can be more susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. Even though I had noted concerns that he showed a lack of remorse, a lack of empathy and his views on current affairs may have been influenced by his autism, I still considered that all necessary support to manage those issues was in place via other agencies. My opinion was that the concerning aspects of his behaviour were largely influenced by his neurodiversity/mental health issues, rather than Prevent concerns.

93. I did feel that other organisations were in place to take responsibility for managing AR's risks. All these organisations were in place from the outset and involved with AR as demonstrated by their attendance at the first strategy meeting. I was aware that despite the closure of the referrals, these other agencies would continue to work closely with AR such as the School, CAMHS, CSC and further police/criminal justice involvement in connection with the incident in the school. All those agencies were aware to make a further referral should any concerns arise in the future. Overall, there were adequate protection measures in place to meet any potential risks, and the previous referrals did not meet the threshold for Prevent.
94. I was never made aware of an incident involving AR on the 17th March 2022. By this time I had left my role in Prevent. I don't feel I can comment on whether these circumstances would have triggered a referral to Channel.

Involvement with other agencies

95. As the three referrals were closed, there was limited engagement with other agencies. I therefore don't have any issues or concerns to raise regarding my interaction with the events under investigation. Any frustrations or problems would normally arise in the context of live ongoing cases.
96. I would expect agencies to work together and share information appropriately. The expectations and requirements would be made clear throughout the Channel or PLP process by the chair. All agencies should therefore be aware of the expectations in relation to information sharing and the importance of attendance at any Channel or PLP meetings. I would expect information to be fed back to me during the meetings or directly to me if time critical. All agencies would also be aware of their duty under the Counter Terrorism Act 2015. I would always ensure that agencies were able to contact me directly.
97. The agencies that were in place I would expect to communicate and liaise with each other in any event.

Reflection on events

98. Based on what I knew at the time, I feel that my decision making and rationale were correct and in accordance with my training and experience and I felt that I was making the right decisions at the time.

99. However, reflecting on events with hindsight is difficult. If there was anything I could have done personally differently to reduce the risk of these awful events occurring, then I would of course now do it and if it's determined that any decisions I made were in fact wrong then I am sorry. However, the decisions I made were taken in good faith to the best of my ability. My decision making was based on the circumstances, information and training I had received to that point. It was my honest held belief that the issues presented to me were being appropriately addressed by other agencies. With the benefit of hindsight it would have been worthwhile to progress AR's case to Channel Coordinator for information gathering and to allow the multi-agency channel panel to convene to discuss the case. I do not know whether this would have made a difference to the outcome.
100. However, I did not progress matters in this way as I did not feel I had sufficient reason to suspect that AR was vulnerable to radicalisation. I also felt that he was being supported by the agencies required to address his needs.
101. As stated, I cannot even begin to imagine what the families and those directly involved are going through, this tragedy has affected so many people. There are no words that can describe the pain and loss for those who are suffering. Those beautiful innocent children who were cruelly taken away will always stay in everyone's hearts and minds.
102. There is not a day that goes by without me thinking about that devastating incident, I carry such sadness in my heart which will stay with me always. The grief, pain and suffering the families must be going through are inconceivable. As a mother I'm appalled by what happened.
103. I can only hope that any lessons learnt will mean that more can be done to prevent anything like this from ever happening again.
104. I feel that the training provided to me at the time was on the whole adequate. However, I do feel that improvements could have been made in the following areas:
1. When I started in the role I was paired up with an inexperienced officer which I feel impacted on my learning and development. I do not criticise him but, I would suggest that officers new to Prevent would benefit from working with an experienced member of the team initially and for a reasonable amount of time.

The CTCO role in Prevent is demanding and your knowledge and skills are continuously developing, experience is key to becoming competent in this specialised role.

2. To have completed the Prevent Foundation Course sooner would have assisted as I waited a significant amount of time to attend this. It would have been beneficial to have received this training earlier to assist me and provide me with the necessary skills required for the role.
3. I attended PGA/DIF training due to changes that were implemented, follow up sessions were not delivered, and the session attended was not adequate to reinforce this learning.
4. During my time in Prevent there were constant updates and changes to working practices. I don't feel that these were always made clear or delivered in the most effective manner. A lot of changes were discussed in team meetings, however this was not always effective as it was an extremely busy department and key messages and information may have been missed. I feel that dedicated time to deliver this information would have been a more effective option without the distraction of the workload, however I appreciate this is not always possible due to the demands of the role.
5. Resources were always stretched due to the high demand and complexity of the work. This was a busy role and any improvements that can be made can only assist with managing this.

Improvements

105. I do not feel able to comment on any relevant improvements made since these events.
I moved away from CT in July 2021 to take up roles in other areas of policing.

Other matters

106. There are no other matters that I wish to bring to the attention of the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signature

Signed

Dated 28 August 2025