

Witness Name: ROBERT CORREY

Exhibits: RC/01 – RC/06

Dated: 26 August 2025

## THE SOUTHPORT INQUIRY

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### FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF ROBERT CORREY

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I, **ROBERT CORREY**, will say as follows:

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. I am Police Staff Robert Correy employed by Lancashire Constabulary.
2. This witness statement is made to assist the Southport Inquiry (the "**Inquiry**") with the matters set out in the Rule 9 Request dated 10 July 2025.

#### **INTRODUCTORY MATTERS**

3. I joined Lancashire Constabulary as a Police Control Room Operator ("PCRO") on 1 September 2020, aged 41 years. My duties as a PCRO primarily involved working within the Force Control Room ("FCR") taking calls from members of the public who were reporting incidents to the police and dispatching officers to incidents on the radio. I still work within the FCR, but I am now on the intelligence support unit which mainly deals with Automatic Number Plate Recognition ("ANPR") work.
4. After leaving school I completed a catering management course at Blackburn College and then, at the age of 18, I moved down to London to become a chef. I also worked as front of house and as head concierge at a hotel in London. In 2004, I moved to Leeds where I obtained employment as a hotel reception manager. In 2005, I moved back to the

Lancashire area and worked in human resources for Integrate, which is a social care charity.

5. In 2007, I worked for the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (“NACRO”) where I was involved in the restorative justice side of their work. In 2010, I began employment with Runshaw College to assist people with learning disabilities, helping them to get employment. When the funding ended for this in 2012, I got a job with the Gold Medal Travel group but left this role in the Spring of 2020.
6. Prior to reading the documents to which I will shortly refer, I could not remember my involvement in this matter. I didn’t even put two and two together when the dreadful events occurred in July 2024. I didn’t realise I had been involved in this matter until August 2024, when I was informed by my then Team Leader.

#### **FACTUAL NARRATIVE OF INVOLVEMENT**

7. On 21 March 2023, I was working as a PCRO within the FCR. The shift I was working was from 07:00 until 19:00.
8. At 16:30, I took a call from Ms Cheryl or Sheryl Smith from Presfield High School (“Ms Smith”). Ms Smith contacted Lancashire Police to ask for a welfare check to be conducted. When a member of the public contacts police to report an incident, unless it is a re-call for a previous log, general enquiry or something so immediately obviously not for police (such as someone calling 999 to report their TV is faulty), I create an incident log to record the details and the decisions that I make. In this instance I opened an incident log to record the details of this call, and this was given reference number LC-20230321-0958. I exhibit this incident log (LC-88) as **RC/01 – LANC000026**. The call was recorded, and I exhibit the audio recording of this call (LC-89) as **RC/02 – LANC000095** I exhibit the transcript of the telephone call made by Ms Smith (LC-90) as **RC/03 - LANC000095**.
9. Ms Smith explained to me that she was asking for a welfare check to be conducted on AR as they had not seen him since 25 May 2022. She stated that Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (“CAMHS”) had seen him in January 2023, and his parents had advised the school that AR was not attending because of his mental health.
10. I opened the log as a “Concern for Safety”. This is the incident type most suitable for a welfare check request, and, upon creation, automatically opens the Right Care Right

Person ("RCRP") question set. It is from this question set that I will have taken the questions that I refer to in this statement. RCRP had only been in operation for a short period of time. I would conduct several RCRP question sets per day, and I estimate that around a quarter of the RCRP calls would be from schools. In my experience, the majority of RCRP calls are from hospitals, for example, people walking out of A&E and the hospital then contacting the police to see if we can find them and then bring them back.

11. I worked through the question set as can be seen from the transcript (LC-90) and the incident log (LC-88). Questions asked included: whether the call was from a partner agency; whether there was an immediate risk to life or serious harm to an identified person or the public; whether the risk relates to a medical issue; whether there was a crime being reported or suspected; and whether we needed to act now in relation to a child who was being subjected to or who was at risk of imminent significant harm.
12. After completing the question set, as set out in the log and can be seen from the transcript, I advised Ms Smith that the police would not be able to attend and conduct a welfare check as this was the outcome of the RCRP question set. The answers given to the question set determines whether we should deploy to the request and on this occasion the system determined, based on the answers given, that it did not meet the threshold for police deployment.
13. At 16:40, the call was ended. As the incident log was initially opened as a concern for safety, rather than me being able to close the log as normal, this type of log is sent to an FCR team leader for review and closure. In this instance the incident log was picked up by Police Staff 11803 Pip Holden-Pyke and then closed.
14. I have been asked about my understanding of Lancashire Constabulary's RCRP as regards police attendance at welfare checks. My understanding is that RCRP was brought in because police were attending incidents that were better suited to other agencies, and this was diverting police resources away from incidents that required police attendance. Accordingly, a question script was created for call handlers to determine whether police were the most appropriate public agency to attend a particular incident.
15. It is my understanding that whether RCRP determines that police should attend welfare checks ultimately comes down to the answers given to three critical questions on the pop up question set in STORM. If any of the three questions are answered positively, then

RCRP will generate a police response. Those three questions are automatically stamped on the incident log by STORM and are:

- a. Is there an immediate risk to life or serious harm to an identified person or the public?
- b. Is there a crime being reported or suspected?
- c. Do we need to act now in relation to a child who is being subjected to or is at imminent risk of significant harm?

16. I should point out that during the process of preparing this statement I have learnt that the drop-down questions on the STORM log system are not the same as the equivalent questions in the prevailing RCRP policy dated January 2022 and which was subsequently changed in October 2023.

17. I have been asked whether I agree that it is important when assessing risk to understand all relevant circumstances of the case. I would agree that if something is a matter for the Police then I, as the call handler, need to obtain as much information as I can.

18. I have been asked why I did not ask the caller for information about the student's name or age. As the RCRP question set automatically opens at the start of the STORM incident log, it had already been established that this wasn't a police matter before these questions would have arisen. I had no reason, therefore, after completing the RCRP question set, to obtain such details. I was aware of the approximate age being 11+ due to the caller reporting from a High School.

19. I have been asked whether I ran any checks on the address that I was given by the caller, such as looking for previous logs or markers on STORM. The Standard Operating Procedure ("SOP") indicates that after completing the RCRP question set, the call handler should perform any necessary intel/PNC checks. I did not see that any checks were necessary as RCRP had determined it was not a policing matter due to there being no imminent risk. Any previous matters such as markers, historic calls or previous incidents would not indicate anything which could be described as imminent, and the caller had no information to suggest anything imminent. If the circumstances reported had met the criteria for a police deployment or had moved the call on from a concern for safety to a crime being reported or other policing matter, the intel/PNC checks would then have become necessary and been performed.

20. I have been asked why I did not ask the caller for information about how often or how recently they had attempted to see the subject of the call. As above in respect of the student's name or age, I had already received my answer from the RCRP system that this was not for the police. Additionally, in terms of how recently there had been contact, the caller had volunteered the information that CAMHS had seen the student in January 2023. In terms of how often the school had attempted to see the subject of the call, the details provided by the caller indicated that the school had been to the house on more than one occasion and referred to "every time we try to go over to the house...". I also knew that the last time the school had seen the subject of the call was on 25 May 2022. If the RCRP system had told me that this was a police matter, I would have asked more questions, such as the name and date of birth of the subject and parents, further information on the action already taken by the school and CAMHS, as well as any future actions planned. I would also be looking at previous information that we hold on police systems in relation to the individuals and the address.
21. I have been asked why I did not ask the caller for information about engagement by other agencies. As above, by going through the question set I had already got my answer from the RCRP system that this was not a matter for the police. The caller had already indicated the involvement of CAMHS and she herself was calling on behalf of / as a representative of the education system and these were the two agencies I felt were best suited to dealing with the matter. They would have been the agencies suggested.
22. I have been asked why I did not refer the caller to any other agencies for support. As in my response at paragraph 21, I had already determined that this was not a police matter and that CAMHS and the education system were the appropriate agencies and were already involved. Therefore, there was no reason to refer Ms Smith to any other agencies. I would also like to add, having listened to the recording of the call, that where I advise that there will be no police attendance, the caller seemed to immediately lead the call towards a natural conclusion and thanked me for speaking with them and asked for my details. On reflection, I also would not have felt the need to take the call back to my recommendation of another agency given that Ms Smith had already specifically indicated the involvement of, and provided information relating to, the very agency that I would have recommended, namely CAMHS.
23. In respect of the entry at 16:33:36 on the incident log (LANC000026/LC-88), I have been asked why I marked the answer to the question 'Does the risk relate to a medical only issue' as 'Yes' on the basis of mental health needs, when the script specifies that mental

health does not fall into medical issues. I do not know why I selected 'yes'. This should have been a 'no' and I apologise for this error. Had I pressed 'no', as I should have done, my understanding is that it would have removed the ambulance service from the potential other agencies to suggest (such as CAMHS) however correctly pressing 'no' rather than 'yes' absolutely would not have changed the outcome in terms of police involvement.

24. I have been asked whether I consider that the THRIVE+ assessment (completed at 16:36:21 to 16:36:55) is of adequate quality. I will review each of the ingredients of THRIVE from a policing perspective to assist the Inquiry's understanding:

- a. Threat: From a policing perspective, there was no threat of something happening for police attention. I accept that there was a threat to the subject student's education, but I don't think this is a police matter. The caller specifically referenced parental involvement. There was no suggestion that the parents might have committed any offence towards the subject.
- b. Harm: From a policing perspective, there was no harm. Again, I accept that there was a risk of harm to the subject's education but again I don't think this was a police matter.
- c. Risk: From a policing perspective, there was no risk. There was an apparent risk to the subject's education but again I don't think this was a police matter.
- d. Investigation: this means which steps have or will be taken. I had decided that police resources would not be deployed based on the RCRP question set and there was no need for police to investigate the threat or risk to the subject's schooling.
- e. Vulnerability: all we knew was that the student had unspecified mental health issues, was not attending school and that the parents had said he could not be seen because of his mental health needs. Vulnerabilities of that nature are not a policing matter.
- f. Engagement: this refers to whether the caller knows what the police are going to do: Ms Smith was made aware that the police would not be attending. She had reported that the student's parents had referred to mental health needs and she had specifically referred to the involvement of CAMHS.
- g. Plus or "+" stands for Prevention and Intervention: this might be something like giving interim crime prevention advice. There was no such advice I could give other than to

refer Ms Smith to other agencies, but which she had already reported were already involved.

25. I acknowledge that my THRIVE+ assessment looks brief. This is due in part to the environment I worked in being extremely busy and I might have had the bell ringing in the FCR with 999 calls in the queue for policing emergencies meaning that my documentation of my assessment did not contain as much detail as I would have liked. I would like my THRIVE+ entries to have been detailed and to have contained as much information as possible. However, it would not have changed the outcome of the call as the THRIVE+ assessment is completed at the end of the call and the decision on deployment in accordance with RCRP had already been made prior to this.

26. I have been asked whether I consider that it is accurate to say that there was no threat, harm or risk when a school was reporting having been unable to see one of its pupils for almost a year. I consider that it was accurate from a policing perspective but, as indicated above, not from the perspective of AR's education or mental health / well-being. Ms Smith had confirmed that there was no imminent risk of harm. Therefore, and given the passage of time prior to the matter being reported, it was not my understanding (at the time and having re-listened to the call) that there was any indication from what Ms Smith was reporting of any imminent threat, harm or risk, from a policing perspective. If it was a police matter, either because a crime was being reported or because it had met the RCRP threshold for police attendance, I would have looked at the address markers, previous calls and added more detail.

27. I have been asked whether I consider that 'MH' is sufficient information as regards vulnerability in this case. To my knowledge, everyone in policing knows what 'MH' means, and it is the standard abbreviation used when referring to Mental Health. For the reasons explained immediately above, from a policing perspective I was not made aware of any other factor that gave rise to a vulnerability, or which needed to be recorded on the log.

28. I should add that all calls are graded by the call taker and put into 'received' state as quickly as possible. The available grades with their target response times are:

- a. Emergency: 15 minutes
- b. Priority: 1 hour
- c. Routine: 8 hours
- d. Standard: 48 hours

- e. Telephone resolution: don't deploy a police officer
- f. Police generated: incident created by a police officer not by a member of the public

29. I have been asked whether I consider that my handling of this call was in accordance with any relevant training/policy/guidance on THRIVE+ assessments. The THRIVE + assessments that I entered on this call were not as detailed as I would have liked them to be, for the reasons I have previously explained.

30. I have been asked whether I consider that I displayed adequate professional curiosity in this case. I believe that I was sufficiently professionally curious, given that after following the specific RCRP question set it was not a policing matter. Further, there was no serious or imminent concern raised by the caller.

31. Having regard to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference and the expectation on all witnesses to give a candid account, I have been asked whether there are any other relevant matters that I wish to draw to the Chair's attention.

32. I do not wish from my above answers to give the impression that I was blasé about this matter or was not trying to do my professional best to help. I feel it is important for the Chair to know that the police receive numerous calls to the FCR which are not policing matters, and which should not really be made. Excessive call volumes degrade our ability to respond to true police emergencies. By 16:30 on this date, I have been advised that there were 1,006 '101' calls and 549 '999' calls to the Lancashire Police Control Room. To provide some context, the next log I created after this incident related to a wanted person who needed to be arrested by police.

33. I also struggle now to remember any details beyond those contained in the log and transcript. To give some context, this call about AR was entirely unremarkable and did not stick in my mind for any reason. I have taken thousands of calls which also have not stuck in my mind. There are only a handful of calls that I do actually still remember, and those were remarkable calls which include:

a.

A large, bold, black logo consisting of the letters 'I', '&', and 'S' in a serif font, centered within a dashed rectangular border.

**I&S**

b.

**I&S**

c.

**I&S**

#### **INVOLVEMENT WITH OTHER AGENCIES**

34. Insofar as I was involved with other relevant agencies, I have been asked for my reflections on dealing with them in relation to the events under investigation. I have been asked to address matters such: as any joint working arrangements; information sharing and the effectiveness of communication; and the degree of openness between agencies. The call taker role would not normally be involved with other agencies, only with the informant making the call. If an incident was a Police matter, the log would be sent to the dispatcher. It would then be possible at that stage for the facilitator (a separate role within the FCR to assist the dispatcher) to have some limited involvement with other agencies. However, this was not the case in this incident as it was not for Police.

#### **REFLECTION ON EVENTS**

35. I have been asked whether, on reflection, I consider that (a) I and (b) Lancashire Constabulary could have done more or done things differently as regards my involvement with AR. I have been asked to address this both with the knowledge that I had at the time and, if different, now with the benefit of hindsight and/or wider understanding of the events. As I have set out above, I followed the RCRP question set and determined that this was

not a policing matter. Even with the knowledge of the tragic events that took place the following year, this call, based on all the information given, was still not a Police matter.

36. I felt at the time that the guidance and training I had been provided was adequate. I have been made aware during this process of some inconsistencies between what was in the training documents (exhibit RC/05), the RCRP policy in force at the time and what is included in the SOP on STORM (RC/04). The policy document states that while PNC and Connect (an intel system) will NOT be checked where RCRP has determined an incident is not for police attendance, SMART STORM checks will be conducted on all logs. The SOP however states that 'necessary' Intel/PNC checks should be completed. As a call taker I relied on the STORM system I was using and had no reason to consider that this was inconsistent with policy or training. The SOP indicates that any necessary PNC/Intel checks should be completed. As RCRP had already indicated that this incident would not be a police matter I did not feel that any checks were necessary. I exhibit the RCRP SOP (LC-205) as **RC/04 – LANC000286**. I exhibit the RCRP training document (LC-206) as **RC/05 – LANC000284**. I exhibit the RCRP Policy in place from January 2022 until October 2023 as **RC/06 – LANC000162**.

37. I have never, since I joined the Force Control Room, known Lancashire Constabulary to have adequate resources. It is almost always the case that we do not have enough police officers to attend all the incidents which are proper policing matters, and I believe that RCRP is a genuine attempt to better use and deploy the scarce policing resources we have.

## **IMPROVEMENTS**

38. I have been asked whether I am aware of relevant improvements that have been made by Lancashire Constabulary since these events and to include a brief description of what the improvements have been; whether, in my experience, the improvements have been effective, and why; and a brief outline of the training / guidance with which I have been provided. I'm not aware of any improvements but I haven't worked in a call handling role since September 2024 so I would not necessarily know. I would also not be provided any further training or guidance on RCRP since moving roles.

39. The Chair is tasked with making recommendations but ensuring, through engagement with relevant practitioners, that the recommendations are practicable. I have been asked to set

out any improvements that could be made relevant to my own area of involvement that would be practicable and make an effective difference.

40. Whilst I do not think it would have changed the outcome of my call, I feel it would be worthwhile for the RCRP policy, training, question set and SOP to be consistent with each other.

41. As far as I am aware, other agencies were given guidance by Lancashire Constabulary when RCRP was introduced. The guidance included what kind of things would be for a police welfare check and which other agencies may be more appropriate for other types of incidents and concerns. It was my experience that agencies and callers made their welfare check requests to police anyway, potentially to satisfy their own policies, sometimes having approached the correct agency but been unsatisfied with timeframes involved or having failed to meet that agency's necessary criteria. I believe that some agencies, professionals and other members of the public sometimes view the police as an agency which will attend everything if no one else will do so or will do so within a timeframe they feel acceptable.

**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: 26.08.25

**Index to the Witness Statement of Robert Correy**

<b>Exhibit No.</b>	<b>Inquiry reference No.</b>	<b>Document description</b>
RC/01	LANC000026	Incident log LC-20230321-0958 dated 21 March 2023 (LC-88)
RC/02	<b>LANC000095</b>	Audio recording of call made by Ms Cheryl or Sheryl Smith dated 21 March 2023 (LC-89)
RC/03	LANC000095	Transcript of telephone call made by Ms Cheryl or Sheryl Smith on 21 March 2023 (LC-90)
RC/04	<b>LANC000286</b>	Right Care Right Person Standard Operating Procedure (LC-205)
RC/05	<b>LANC000284</b>	PowerPoint slide provided during Right Care Right Person training (LC-206)
RC/06	LANC000162	Right Care Right Person Police dated January 2022