

Witness Name: Sharon Barrett

Exhibits:27

Dated: ...August 2025

THE SOUTHPORT INQUIRY

FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF SHARON BARRETT

I, Sharon Barrett, will say as follows:

Introductory matters

1. This witness statement is made to assist the Southport Inquiry (the "Inquiry") with the matters set out in the Rule 9 Request dated 24 July 2025.
2. I am a Senior Family Support Worker (FSW) employed by Lancashire County Council ("LCC"). My role involves overseeing Family Support Workers (FSW) and supporting them in decision-making, assisting in home visits and delivering training. Laura Davidson was my line manager she passed away on 4 September 2021 and Della Heaton is now my line manager.
3. I hold Level 6 Qualifications in Professional Supervision and in Professional Practice from Lancaster University. I also completed an Autism Awareness course from Lancashire County Council in 2011.
4. I started working in SEND schools in 1996, then moved on to work with children with SEN needs in mainstream schools on a 1-to-1 basis. I held the latter role for about five years and worked in residential social care at the same time for four years. I then moved into Children's Centres as a Group Worker, later progressing to FSW and then Senior FSW. Whilst I was at the Children's Centre, I was employed by NHS but was TUPE'd over to LCC around nine years ago. I have been a Senior FSW for around 15 years.
5. I also have a qualification in Leadership and Management for Children's Centres. This is very specific to managing people in Children's Centres, but it is still relevant to the CFW service in terms of the skills learnt.

My Role and the structure of Child & Family Welfare

6. The Family Intensive Support (FIS) team is one of 4 teams that come under the Children & Family Wellbeing Service at LCC. The other teams are Targeted Youth Support (TYS), Community and Neighbourhood.
7. This structure has been in place since approximately, 2021 when there was a re-structure that coincided with a family safeguarding rollout.
8. The service that the FIS team offer is part of the LCC's early help offer. CWF delivers part of LCC's Early Help offer alongside partner agencies.
9. There is an Integrated Service Manager (ISM) which manages all 4 teams within the West Lancs CWF service. Each team has a Team Leader (TL). The FIS TL was Laura Davidson until September 2021 and then became Della Heaton.
10. Within the FIS team there are 4 seniors of which I am one and I oversee about 5 FSWs now but the number can fluctuate between 4 and 6.
11. FIS provides early help and targeted assistance to families requiring support in the West Lancs area. Support is given to families who are assessed at level 3 on the LCC's Continuum of Need (CON).
12. I need to explain a little bit about the LCC CON. If the risk is assessed at Level 4 than it moves up to Children's Social Care, a statutory service. If the need is assessed at level 3 then the family is referred to FIS if they consent. If the need is assessed at level 2 the family's needs will be met by universal services plus. Level 1 on the CON relates to all our families who have universal needs such as health and education.
13. Referrals come into the MASH – which is the multi-agency service hub. The family's need is assessed by a social worker within the MASH and then stepped across to the relevant service. The other route into CFW is if the family is stepped across following an assessment by CSC.
14. If the referral is assessed at level 3 and consent is gained from the family then it will be allocated to the FIS team.
15. We have a senior that looks at our tray, each of the seniors takes turns to monitor the FIS tray. The senior can highlight matters such as a case that the senior thinks might not be for us. If we feel it isn't suitable for FIS we ask the TL for advice. The seniors are area focused. In FIS we are patched, a lot of other teams in CFW aren't patched. So once accepted by the West Lancs FIS team the referral is sent to the senior dedicated to the area and that senior will allocate to a FSW within their patched team.

16. My duty as a senior is to carry out the allocation process by looking at all the information provided by the MASH referral and any history we have on the case. I then have a meeting with the allocated FSW.
17. If the family have come via the MASH process and do not have an assessment by CSC, FSWs carry out their own assessment now called an Early Help assessment and arrange the Team Around the Family (TAF). The FSW is the lead professional in a multi-agency setting at level 3.
18. During our assessment, we look at areas of need within the family. We can offer self-help support and low-level support to families. We can draw in other services like CAMHS if there is a mental health need. We can either engage services with the family or show them how to access services. It is very important to stress that we are a consensual service so we can't do anything the family does not consent to.
19. FIS supports any need a family has beyond a universal need, a universal need can be a GP, school etc, services everyone can access.
20. We were a time limited service, but that has changed although I cannot remember when exactly. Originally, early help was to be offered for a 12-week period. If the matter was still open at 20 weeks, we would be looking to close the case down to longer term services. We are no longer a time limited service and cases remain open until the level 3 needs of the family are met, or consent is withdrawn.
21. As a Senior FSW, it is my role to guide discussions and assist FSWs with their cases, but they are the key worker.
22. My role as a supervisor includes regular supervision meetings but also extends beyond those meetings such that any key worker can approach me in the office to ask any questions they may have about their cases and seek guidance. I am available to pick up the phone or speak to the FSWs in the office about their queries.
23. I sometimes step in to support FSWs as well, where maybe a lack of experience, the FSW is not feeling confident, or if someone was off sick.

Factual narrative of involvement

24. There are four different episodes in which I was involved. I met AR on several occasions, and I did some direct work during Louise Lewis's period of involvement. This was because Louise was unsure how best to support the family, so I stepped in to assist. I would also attend TAF meetings.

First involvement – supervising Andrea Fontaine - March 2020 to June 2020

25. In the period from March 2020 to June 2020, the lead professional for AR was Andrea Fontaine. Andrea was a FSW, and I was her line manager at the time.
26. Ann Cookson who worked in FIS was involved working with AR and his family during the period of FIS involvement in October to December 2019, so I was able to have conversations with her about AR's case and previous referrals. I knew that AR had taken a hockey stick into school to attack a pupil. I understood that the agencies had stepped in and assessed the risk to be medium but with a low level of probability. There didn't seem to be concerns about AR being involved in extremism, but AR's behaviours were linked to his 'black and white' thinking and his possible ASD. He did not have a formal diagnosis of autism at the time.
27. I was aware of the previous Prevent referral when the case was passed to CFW and my involvement beginning.
28. CFW are able to refer children to CYJS if they have concerns around offending behaviour. However, CFW could not have made the referral into YOT as AR had been charged and convicted of an offence. YOT (now CYJS) were already involved with AR.
29. After the hockey stick incident, AR was not allowed to return to the PRU (Acorns) as the school wanted to properly assess the risk before AR was allowed back. He was being sent work to complete on-line. There were also questions over where his EHCP was up to. I attached as **SB/01 (LCC000973)** an email from me to Andrea dated 31 March 2020 saying delete the email after she had digested the contents. What I meant by that was not to add the email to the EHM general notes **SB/02 (LCC000226)**. The emails from the school didn't need to go on the EHM general notes as we were going to discuss their contents as part of a supervision. The EHM general notes are AR's notes, it's his story. The emails I was asking Andrea not to add to the notes concerned a discussion whether it was for FIS or SEND to do the risk assessment prior to AR's return to school. Andrea needed to know about it, but the information didn't need to go onto the EHM general notes. The email itself was retained on LCC's system.
30. In the subsequent supervision Andrea and I discussed the school's concerns about AR's return in September, and the support he needed from us but at that point we could not do the work with him because of lockdown and the fact we could not meet him face-to-face. He refused support that could have been delivered on-line.
31. I also recall that dad refused to sign the documentation regarding the provision of education during the lockdown, as he thought it meant that AR had to be home-schooled. Andrea went out to see dad and clarified that AR would not be home-

- schooled, but education provision would be through online resources until schools could reopen.
32. The referral to our service was in relation to AR's independence, school attendance, family dynamics and his anxiety/ASD.
 33. Early Help support was appropriate for AR given his risk profile and needs that were identified at that time.
 34. As a service we never saw any extremist values or presentation. There was some aggression towards dad but that is what we would expect to address within the scope of the service, particularly for children on the spectrum. Whilst the service had concerns around his perception of right and wrong and his extreme reactions, there were no concerns around *extremism*. Further, because AR was not being asked to go to school, there was a de-escalation in his behaviours. AR had previously attempted to harm others in school, but AR was not going into school due to the COVID restrictions. Although there was a medium risk of harm, the risk of re-offending behaviour actualising was low.
 35. There are some further emails in June 2020 **SB/03 - (LCC000998)** when AR is offered an early return to school but there are issues with getting him to school due to the restrictions. Acorns wanted AR to complete some 1-1 teaching before he was allowed back into a classroom with others.
 36. The case was closed over summer 2020, because there was nothing that could have been put in place to support AR at the time due to the pandemic restrictions, which were particularly restrictive in Lancashire. Face-to-face visits could not be provided, and AR would not engage over the phone or online. Both parents and AR said they were fine, so a decision was made to close until school resumed in September 2020. YOT would continue to work with AR because of the court order.
 37. The school had offered AR an earlier return to school in the summer terms with CFW offering support during the school day, but the parents refused. A lot of our families did the same with their children remaining off school during the lockdown.
 38. The document at **SB/04 - LCC000293** is an EHC plan completed by SEND not an assessment completed by CFW. The CAF assessment **SB/05 - LCC000306** (now called an Early Help Assessment) was produced at the beginning of the next period of involvement by Andrea when the case was re-opened.
 39. The episode closure is dated 9 June 2020. AR was not engaging with the service, so consent was revoked. AR's parents made the decision to end consent. The family were

told that they could always refer back to the service or to Children’s Social Care if safeguarding risks arose. Case closures are always sent for supervisor approval.

Second involvement Andrea Fontaine - September 2020 – February 2021

- 40. The case was re-opened to FIS on 14 September 2020 and allocated to Andrea as she had previously been involved and knew the family, I allocated the case to her.
- 41. The first episode record is dated 14 September 2020 **SB/06 - LCC000303**. It contains information pulled from the contact record when the case is reopened. This is done by other professionals outside the CFW. At the time CFW sat at level 2b on the CON. Low-level Early Help was level 2a, CFW was at a level 2b, and CIN (CSC) was level 3. The needs were assessed the same it was just given a different number on the CON.
- 42. As is FIS’s practice an assessment was needed and Andrea as the key worker was to produce the assessment. Months had passed since the previous assessment in April 2020, and the situation had changed. The service had received emails from the school raising concerns around AR’s risk to others, so it made sense to re-examine the position and see whether specific support was needed in this respect. The assessment is only reflective of the period in which the assessment was completed.
- 43. The initial CAF assessment was started on 22 September 2020 and completed on 28 October 2020 a copy is **SB/07 - LCC000306**. Although it is not clear the document was written by Andrea, and it then falls to me to approve the plan within the assessment.
- 44. The CAF assessment was used to identify AR’s needs and the key goals going forward. The document identified AR’s needs in respect of social communication, family dynamics, relationships and accessing education.
- 45. The CAF assessment records that there are no safeguarding concerns for either AR or his brother at home and their basic needs were met by their parents. The parents were supported by a group in Southport called Parenting 2000. In relation to the December 2019 incident, it was reported that AR had completed the work around it with YOT. The focus for FIS was supporting AR’s emotional needs, which was to help his education, emotional needs and family relationships. The EH plan was as follows:

Identified issue/concern/need	Action/support to reduce need/concern	By whom?	When? (Select from Calendar)	Desired outcome	How do we know when desired outcome has been	Update on progress	Outcome

					achieved (including child's views)?		
Axel is currently presenting as very anxious and he does not leave the house	3 x direct work sessions around managing anxiety and to work towards accessing some amenities in the immediate area surrounding his home.	Key worker & Axel	30- Nov-2020	Axel will have some strategies to help him manage his anxious feelings. Axel will work towards being able to go to the local shop	feedback from Axel and key worker		
Axel struggles with peer interactions and social situations.	3 x Direct work sessions around, communication, social interactions and managing relationships	key worker & Axel	30- Nov-2020	Axel will be able to manage peer relationships better, meaning he can access more options in terms of education.	feedback from family and professionals		
Axel reports to not have a very good relationship with his dad at the moment. Much of	3 x direct work sessions with Alphonse and Axel around problem	Key worker, Axel	30- Nov-2020	Axel will show improved communication	Feedback from family and Key worker		

the disagreements are from mismatched communication styles and Axel's eating habits	solving and communication with each other.	and Alphons e		with his dad which will have a positive impact on their relationship			
Axel is suspected to be on the Autistic spectrum as was referred to community paediatrician regarding this.	Follow up with community health to obtain current status of their involvement and current status regarding Axel's diagnosis pathway.	key worker & Health	30- Nov- 2020	Axel will be on the pathway for ASD assessment and health services will be updated on the current circumstances.	feedback from health		

46. All the family contributes to the assessment including AR who added:
Axel has completed a radar with key worker. He has shared that he felt that previous professional intervention was so focussed on the assault and weapon charge, that no one took the time to find out his feelings or what was going on with him. Axel has stated he feels anxious a lot and doesn't leave the house.

47. CFW were concerned about AR's poor school attendance and his social isolation. The school were also concerned about attendance and about AR's risk of reoffending, the potential for AR to carry and use weapons. The TAF process is crucial as it allows all agencies to feed into the Early Help Plan and inform other agencies what they think ought to be the key goals. The Early Help Assessment considered these risks.

48. In January 2021 CYJS notified FIS **SB/08 - LCC000488**, that AR had reported being assaulted by his father, but they had not made a safeguarding referral. AR had admitted to kicking his dad between the legs first, at which point his dad hit him almost

as a reaction to being kicked between the legs. AR's dad was very apologetic and understanding that hitting his son was wrong and unlawful.

49. Part of our work was building the relationship between Dad and AR, part of that is helping to facilitate change, we know when parents start trying to enforce parental changes, teenagers quite often do things like this. In the agencies' view it was not over chastisement, it was reactionary by dad. He knew it was wrong, and he said that he wouldn't do it again. We made it clear that if anything like that happened again, we would be making a safeguarding referral. AR was aware that he could press charges if he wanted to.
50. It was appropriate that CYJS had let us know and they agreed with us that the incident did not meet the threshold for a safeguarding referral to children's social care.
51. The final Early Help Plan **SB/09 - LCC000093** is produced following the CAF assessment. The decision to step down was made on the basis that AR reported to Andrea that he was no longer feeling anxious. AR was receiving 1-1 support in school and involved with CAMHS. AR's needs were being met by the services and agencies involved. It is unlikely that the service's involvement will completely remove the need for support services, but it is about de-escalating risk and bringing agencies together to provide the longer-term support.
52. The case is stepped down in February 2021 and our involvement ceased, with all the agencies' involved in agreement.

Third involvement Louise Lewis - September 2021 – 14 March 2022

53. The case was stepped down to CFW again from CSC in September 2021. A detailed C&F assessment **SB/10 - LCC000247** was produced by Stacey Haydock a social worker in Children's Social Care Duty and Assessment Team in September 2021.
54. We would have had access to the paperwork. I cannot recall exact details but there was not a proper handover, as Stacey left before this could happen. In any case, we got all the information needed but it was not done through the usual means.
55. The closure record to CSC dated 27 September 2021 (**SB/11 - LCC000120**) references a case discussion held with CFW on 27.9.21 "who agreed to take the case". I cannot remember if it was with me.
56. AR was assessed to be at a Level 3 on the CON, this was equivalent to a Level 2b in the CON used at the time of the previous episode. Previously, CIN was Level 3 and

- Early Help were Level 2b. Although it looks like risks have intensified, it hadn't, it was just that the continuum of need changed.
57. I allocated the case to Louise Lewis and supervised her throughout this episode.
 58. It was decided to do a CAF assessment even though we had the C&F assessment because we wanted to include DR's voice. Louise prepared the CAF assessment **SB/12 - LCC000321** (now called an Early Help assessment) which sets out the services that TAF ought to provide to the family, including but not limited to the services on offer from CFW. Although CFW are the lead professionals during this episode, each agency has responsibility for safeguarding and delivery. CFW essentially act as a convener.
 59. In the C&F assessment CSC had referred to Stepping Stones, which are parenting sessions delivered to parents of children under 11. Given that this is not appropriate for AR, Louise in her assessment changed the course to Triple P parenting sessions, which is ultimately what AR's dad was referred to. He was also referred to Riding the Rapids course which was an ASD-focused course offered to the family by CAMHS. I do not know whether AR's parents attended this course, but I do know that CAMHS were providing family therapy at the time too.
 60. TYS was a new service at the time. We decided to offer AR the services of a TYS worker, Carl Coughlan who was experienced in supporting teenagers. The main work would be done through Carl, but Louise Lewis would be there as the FSW to support the family generally. TYS is led by professional youth workers with specific qualifications aimed at targeted youth support.
 61. Whilst Louise drafted the Early Help assessment, met with the family and convened the TAF meetings I had a supervisory role throughout this period.
 62. The CFW supervision forms are completed monthly at each supervision meeting. Some of the comments in the supervision form will be Louise's comments and concerns and some will be mine.
 63. In supervisions, I discuss lots of matters with the key worker, including things that are not live issues now. Just because something is raised and suggested does not mean that it needs to be actioned, but raising it is to ensure that the key workers is aware of potential risks. The supervision form involves horizon scanning and hypothesising.
 64. My personal involvements were often when dad emailed me directly. On 27 September 2021 he emailed concerning the C&F assessment **SB/10 - LCC000247** completed by Stacey Haydock. His only comment on the assessment was that DR's university was

incorrectly recorded. It was not for me to amend the C&F for such a minor change that would not have had any substantive impact in the support offered.

65. Dad asked me to attend the TAF meeting in October 2021. I think he saw me as a constant throughout changing key workers. I had to talk to dad about my role a lot. I explained that my job was not to do the key work but supervise the key workers. Dad was quite hierarchical in that he would want someone more senior present.
66. On 12 October 2021 I copied an email to Louise that listed proscribed terrorist groups that I had received from the CFW Quality Review Service **SB/13 - LCC000977** and said, "*we need to look at this with [AR's] parents*". It was not because I had live concerns. Instead, it was because there had previously been concerns about the risk of extremism and radicalisation. I cannot remember specifically having a conversation with the family around the proscribed terrorist organisations, but I did have specific conversations with family about what to do if any of AR's behaviours escalated.
67. It was part of the EH plan to request support for AR from a TYS. A senior FSW has to make the request. I thought it was worth trying a referral to this relatively new service, to see if that shifted the dial in any way. I did think that Carl Coughlan would be a great fit as he is a politician as well as a TYS and shares AR's interests in politics. In my email dated 14 October 2021 **SB/14 - LCC000780** asking for TYS's input I gave a pen picture of AR as follows:

Hi Debs,

We have had a step down for Axel who is a 15 year old with ASD, FIS team are working on Parenting and accessing an appropriate school place but the step down has also identified the need for work to be complete with Axel around social isolation. Family feel that a TYS worker would be helpful so that Axel can develop a relationship with a worker who is not also working with parents as this has caused a lot of conflict in the past. I feel that given Axels interests and vast knowledge of politics Carl would be a great fit for the family, if he has space available.

Louise Lewis is the case holder and is lead professional. Also for your information although the step down did not identify this there are some concerns about how extreme some of Axels views are and the risk that this could pose so we may also need to referrer to prevent.

Hopefully you will be able to help by allowing a direct piece of work to take place with worker. Thanks for your consideration.

Sharon Barrett

68. In terms of AR's extremism, the risk remained unassessed, as I understood the referral was still open to Prevent. We couldn't say there were no concerns as the outcome was clearly pending. I was aware of Prevent's involvement and had asked for information from them. We were mindful of the historical risk of extremism, but we had not been provided with any further information in that respect.
69. I only saw AR on his computer on one occasion and there was no concerning content as he showed me what he was looking at. He would use his computer downstairs and would have whatever he was viewing in plain sight of the family. AR would listen to music through his headphones. Similarly, he did not have a smartphone on which he could access the internet, only a basic cellular phone which can text and call.
70. In my view, AR had extreme reactions but also extreme views, for example, AR's thinking was along the lines of "if my mum and dad give me apples, they hate me and have never loved me, because I don't like apples". AR would reach certain extreme conclusions and was very rigid in his thinking. AR is autistic, very bright, lacking in communication skills and understanding of other people's perspectives. I did some work with AR around other people's perspectives. I did an exercise with him and his dad where I put a figure '9' on the floor and asked him and his dad to look at it from different perspectives. He struggled to understand that the number '9' could be perceived to be a number '6' from someone looking at it from a different perspective. While AR was interested in politics, there was no specific indication that he held extreme political views. We had concerns about his extreme views, in that he saw things in a '*black and white*' manner.
71. On 22 November 2021 Louise and I were contacted by CAMHS to supply our Emergency Duty Team phone number **SB/15 - LCC000975** to AR's family so they could make contact in an emergency. A couple of incidents had happened in November 2021, where the police had been called by AR's parents due to his behaviour. AR had got into several verbal altercations with his dad and had poured milk on him; I understood that AR was not causing physical harm. AR was also receiving family therapy from CAMHS at the time. The behaviour he was displaying such as, throwing items and pouring milk on his dad were less than what had been seen in previous episodes of CFW involvement.
72. In the supervision form from November 2021 **SB/16 - LCC000401**, one of the key tasks was to chase up a response regarding the Prevent referrals.

73. Just before the supervision in December 2021 **SB/17 - LCC000404**, I found out that Prevent had closed their case. Prevent deemed that their thresholds were not met. I never got a direct answer from Prevent. I heard that the referral was not being taken further through other agencies.
74. We had the information that the referral to Prevent had not met their threshold and we weren't seeing any behaviours that would warrant a further referral to Prevent.
75. I had done the introductions for Carl Coughlin to the family when he became the TYS worker in November 2021. In the CFW supervision notes from December 2021, one of the key actions agreed is to chase progress with TYS. TYS was just getting up and running at the time and I had wanted progress to be made more quickly so I did contact Carl Coughlin's supervisor to check on progress.
76. In the January 2022 CFW supervision **SB/18 - LCC000405**, I asked Louise to get DR involved with the support package. DR's voice was unclear at this stage, and I wanted to "*look underneath all stones*" to make sure we had the complete picture and were not missing anything, e.g. potential abuse at home. DR did acknowledge that AR's behaviour was not great, and he did not raise any major concerns beyond expected behaviour for an autistic young person with anxiety.
77. The supervision from February 2022 **SB/19 - LCC000409**, notes that AR has secured a school place at Presfield and is keen to attend. AR had almost completed his sessions with TYS, and a referral has been made to the Transitions Team in Adult Social Services. This would deal with his SEND needs up to the age of 25 and ensure the appropriate support was in place. Transitions referrals can be made from age 13 onwards.
78. The case was closed on 14 March 2022, and the closure form states that the reason for closure is "All Needs Met". AR was deemed to be at Level 2 on the CON. **SB/20 - LCC000155**. Dad did not want the case to close but once it was explained to dad that he would still be receiving support through CAMHS, school and SEND etc, he came round to the fact that the case needed to be closed to CFW. There is some disparity in the records, but that is because dad's voice changed. AR agreed with the closure.
79. At case closure, it was deemed that all actions in the EH plan had been met, and that the necessary support could be provided through the EHCP. AR had a place at school, work had been completed around community resources, Triple P had been completed by dad, AR started to attend school again and the Transitions referral was completed. All other tasks could then be delivered through the medium of AR's EHCP.

The bus incident

80. Shortly after closure on 14 March 2020, AR went missing from home on 17 March 2022.
81. Both Lousie and I received an email from Sam Steed CAMHS dated 17 March 2022 **(SB/21 - LCC000989)** the email asked us to get in touch as AR had gone missing from home. We received a later email the same day saying that he had been found by the police and returned home.
82. On 23 March 2022 I was copied into an email from Louise **(SB/22 - LCC000910)** which responded to an email from Gillian Anson, an Early Help worker, who works in the CCSH (the Early Help section of the MASH). Gillian is not part of CFW. She noted a referral had come back in for AR about frustration with an Instagram account. Gillian could see that Lousie had been AR's worker but that the case had recently been closed to CFW. Louise responded to say that the case was closed to CFW, but that AR was being supported by his EHCP and CAMHS.
83. I was on annual leave from 21 March 2022 to 25 March 2022, but Della Heaton was covering for me. I note that Lousie refers the matter to Della who also notes that the case is closed to CFW.
84. This was the only information that we received. I understand that the incident was far more serious, and a police report was later uploaded to the CSC system but as the case was closed to us, we would not have been able to see the full police report. Even if I had been aware of all the facts it would not be my decision (or anyone in CFW) to refer the matter back to FIS.
85. The case was not reopened to FIS and this was a decision taken by the MASH. From the little information we had received the parents had followed the correct safeguarding advice in calling the police. If an episode is open, the police referral and its information would be passed to CFW to put us on notice, but as the episode was closed, the information about the fact that AR was found with a knife was not cascaded down to us. We were just told he had gone missing.

Fourth involvement –Ashleigh Williams - April 2023 and concludes in September 2023

86. The referral from Presfield comes in through MASH on 23 March 2023 who look at it, then have a certain number of days to allocate. As stated, we are a consensual service and MASH had not been able to contact dad to get his consent to the referral. MASH then wrote to dad and dad then called MASH saying he wanted support, and the referral was sent to us. MASH assessed AR to be at level 3 on CON.

87. AR had not been attending school for nearly a year. Presfield had attempted to conduct home visits, which had been refused. A professional from Sefton Council went to see the family but mum refused the visit. The police deemed that the threshold for a welfare visit was not met, which prompted Presfield to refer to CFW for support. **SB/23 - LCC000186** and **SB/24 - LCC000188**.
88. I allocated the case to Ashleigh Williams who had not previously been involved with AR. I set up a joint home visit to introduce Ashleigh to the family.
89. Dad emailed me and Ashleigh introducing us both to the professionals involved with AR at the time, namely Presfield High School and CAMHS.
90. The referral to CFW was on the same grounds as previous referrals, i.e. concerns around AR's anxiety, independence skills and school attendance.
91. Ashleigh contacted the agencies working with AR and the family; drafted the Early Help assessment and devised the Early Help plans. TAFs were arranged and chaired by Ashleigh.
92. At the beginning of our involvement, AR was engaging but he ceased engaging.
93. Ashleigh kept trying to engage with AR. Even at one point talking to him through his bedroom door but this proved unsuccessful.
94. We also asked for support from TYS as Carl Coughlan had been involved with AR successfully before.
95. I recall advising Carl and Ashleigh to attempt to engage AR and try different methods to contact him. Carl Coughlan decided to write a letter to AR as he could not make physical contact with AR. The letter **SB/25 - LCC000419** dated 17 July 2023 was addressed to AR and the thought process was that he may be more interested in picking it up and reading it. It was simply another attempt to engage AR and resume contact.
96. I was on long term sick form 6 July 2023 until 16 August 2023 and then on a phased return from 17 August 2023 until 4 September 2023.
97. Ashleigh also had a period of sick leave, and I chaired the last TAF meeting on 13 September 2023, **SB/26 - LCC000365**. Following the last TAF meeting, the case was stepped down to Level 2 and closed to CFW. Presfield, SEND and CAMHS would continue to be involved with AR. I recall there being a conversation about delivering education outside of school, as AR had a choice at this stage in terms of how he wished to engage with education.
98. It was the TAF consensus to close the case to FIS due to lack of engagement and consent from the family and AR. We are a consensual service, if we don't have consent

we can't process the case. At the time of closure, the parents were not prepared to do any further parenting work and AR wasn't engaging, so it was stepped down to level 2. After the closure, the school would take on responsibility as lead professional and carry on the TAF meetings.

99. On 11 September 2023 **SB/27 - LCC000971** my supervisor at the time, Della Heaton, sent me an email which asks me to close AR's case as there was no engagement and lack of consent. This was just a reminder to administratively remove the case from the system.

100. There was nothing else that FIS could have done as a service due to lack of consent. AR was 17 during this episode. If he was unwilling to engage, there is not much else that the service can do as we have no statutory powers. There were no section 47 concerns at the time so we could not escalate the case.

Dealing with other agencies involved

101. In terms of the Prevent referrals from Acorns School, I was aware of the referrals but not of the exact timings nor the exact details. I also did not know the Prevent outcomes. The EH assessment by Louise – **SB/12 - LCC000321**, refers to the April Prevent referral, but we had no detail, and we did not know the outcome. In addition, there had been a CSC assessment of AR since that referral which had not highlighted any required work from CFW around the Prevent referral.

102. CFW engaged with Acorns through TAF meetings and emails. The school was aware of our contact details and my role as supervisor.

103. In terms of information-sharing from Prevent and the police forces, I did not have direct contact with Prevent or the police forces at that time. I assumed that any information that CFW ought to have known would have been cascaded to us.

104. I was not involved in AR's transition from Acorns to Presfield.

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.

Signed: **Signature**

Dated: 21/08/2025

Index to the Witness Statement of Sharon Barrett

Exhibit No.	Inquiry reference no.	Document Description	LCC reference
SB/01	LCC000973	Email dated 31/3/2020	LCC000973
SB/02	LCC000226	EHM General notes	LCC000226
SB/03	LCC000998	Emails dated June 2020	LCC000998
SB/04	LCC000293	EHC plan	LCC000293
SB/05	LCC000306	CAF assessment	LCC000306
SB/06	LCC000303	Episode record dated 14 September 2020	LCC000303
SB/07	LCC000306	CAF assessment 28 October 2020	LCC000306
SB/08	LCC000488	CYJS notification	LCC000488
SB/09	LCC000093	Early Help Plan	LCC000093
SB/10	LCC000247	C&F assessment	LCC000247
SB/11	LCC000120	Closure record 27 September 2021	LCC000120
SB/12	LCC000321	CAF assessment	LCC000321
SB/13	LCC000977	Email dated 12 October 2021	LCC000977
SB/14	LCC000780	Email referral dated 14 October 2021	LCC000780
SB/15	LCC000975	Email form CAMHS 22 November 2021	LCC000975
SB/16	LCC000401	Supervision November 2021	LCC000401

SB/17	LCC000404	Supervision December 2021	LCC000404
SB/18	LCC000405	Supervision January 2022	LCC000405
SB/19	LCC000409	Supervision February 2022	LCC000409
SB/20	LCC000155	Episode Closure 14 March 2022	LCC000155
SB/21	LCC000989	Email form CAMHS 17 March 2022	LCC000989
SB/22	LCC000910	Email from Louise Lewis dated 23 March 2022	LCC000910
SB/23	LCC000186	Contact record 23 March 2023	LCC000186
SB/24	LCC000188	Episode record 4 April 2023	LCC000188
SB/25	LCC000423	Letter from Carl Coughlan dated 17 July 2023	LCC000423
SB/26	LCC000365	TAF meeting notes 13 September 2023	LCC000365
SB/27	LCC000971	Email from Della Heaton dated 11 September 2023	LCC000971