

Witness Name: Sarah Callon

Exhibits: 52

Dated: 21/08/2025

## THE SOUTHPORT INQUIRY

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### FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF SARAH CALLON CHILD AND YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICES LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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I, Sarah Callon, Senior Manager of the Child and Youth Justice Services Department of Lancashire County Council, 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 18 July 2025. I am providing this statement in my capacity as the Senior Manager of the Child and Youth Justice Service Department ("CYJS") employed by Lancashire County Council ("LCC") to explain the department's dealings with AR.
2. I qualified as a Social Worker in 1999, having achieved a Diploma in Social Work (awarded by CCETSW) alongside a BA (Hons) in Applied Social Studies. I later completed an MA in Criminology, Rights and Justice in 2005, followed by a Diploma in Management Studies in 2010. My career has been dedicated to youth justice, with experience across several local authorities and the probation service at both front-line practitioner and manager level. I joined Lancashire Youth Justice Service in 2008 where I held various management roles over a 11-year period, including Practice Manager and Team Manager. In these roles, I led on a wide range of operational and strategic initiatives, including partnership working, audit and inspection readiness, learning and development, performance management, commissioning, and service delivery. In April 2019 I moved to Blackpool Youth Justice Service to take up the role of Service Manager. During my time in Blackpool,

I led the service through a period of improvement, providing strategic leadership and driving practice development. In April 2021, I returned to Lancashire following a successful application for a Senior Manager position. As a Senior Manager, I am responsible for leading the vision, strategy, and performance of the service, ensuring alignment with council priorities and statutory obligations. I provide strategic leadership to foster a high-performance culture focused on continuous improvement, effective service delivery, and organisational sustainability. My role includes overseeing the development and implementation of policies, systems, and practices that support operational excellence and workforce development, while ensuring robust performance monitoring and staff management. I actively promote collaborative working across teams, partners, and agencies, contributing to the council's strategic direction and upholding its values and reputation. Central to my approach is engaging with children, young people, and families to ensure their voices shape service design and delivery, responding promptly to concerns and feedback. I champion cross-agency collaboration to deliver inclusive, value-driven services that meet the diverse needs of Lancashire's communities, continuously evaluating and refining service effectiveness to ensure equality of opportunity and improved outcomes.

3. This statement is divided into three sections, addressing the following:
  - Section One: "Corporate Structure, Role, Responsibilities, Personalities and Tools" – this section includes provides background to the department and a number of other issues intended to assist the Inquiry.
  - Section Two: "Engagement with AR" – this section provides a detailed factual chronology of the department's involvement with AR between February 2020 and February 2021.
  - Section Three: "Reflections and Recommendations" – in this section I provide reflections on the case generally including any points of learning and potential recommendations which may be helpful for the Inquiry to consider.
4. I was not employed by LCC during the relevant period and did not have any direct involvement with AR or his family.

**Section One: Corporate Structure, Role, Responsibilities, Personalities and Tools**

## Statutory Framework

### Crime and Disorder Act 1998

5. Section 37(1) of the Crime and Disorder Act (“CDA”) 1998 provides that the principal aim of the youth justice system is to prevent offending by children and young persons. Section 37(2) imposes a duty on all persons and bodies carrying out functions in relation to the youth justice system to have regard to that aim.
  
6. Under Section 38(1) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, local authorities have a duty to cooperate with local police forces and probation services to ensure there are appropriate youth justice services available in their area. Under Section 38(4), “youth justice services” includes a wide array of services, including but not limited to:
  - the provision of persons to act as appropriate adults to safeguard the interests of children and young persons detained or questioned by police officers
  - supervising rehabilitation programmes
  - giving and supervising cautions and conditional cautions
  - recommending bail packages
  - placement of remanded children in local authority accommodation
  - recommendations for pre-sentence reports
  - implementation of referral orders
  - supervising youth rehabilitation orders
  - supervising detention and training orders; and
  - supervising any licence requirements.

7. Under Section 39(1), local authorities must establish one or more youth offending teams (“YOTs”) for their area. In accordance with Section 39(7), it is the duty of the YOT to co-ordinate the provision of youth justice services for all those in the authority’s area who need them and to carry out functions assigned to the team in youth justice plans.
8. Under Section 40(1) the local authority must formulate and implement an annual plan (a “youth justice plan”) setting out how youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded and how the YOTs are to be composed, funded, operate and what functions they are to carry out. These plans are submitted to the Youth Justice Board (“YJB”).
9. Under Section 40(3) the functions of the functions assigned to a YOT are:
  - To take reasonable steps designed to encourage children and young persons not to commit offences (in accordance with paragraph 7(b) of Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989)
  - To provide or arrange for the provision of services for the purposes of encouraging children not to commit criminal offences (in accordance Section 15(2)(g) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014)

#### Sentencing Act 2020

10. Section 83 of the Sentencing Act 2020 sets out the legislative provisions for “Referral Orders”. Section 83(1) defines a referral order as an order which requires an offender to attend each of the meetings of a youth offender panel established for the offender by a YOT and comply for a particular period with a programme agreed between the offender and the panel. This forms the referral order contract (also referred to as a “youth offender contract”).
11. Under Section 86 (2) a referral order contract cannot be for a period of less than 3 months or more than 12 months.

12. Under Section 91(4), the youth offender panel must consist of at least one member of the YOT and two people who are not members of the team. In practice this is usually the YOT case manager and two volunteers.
13. Section 92 sets out the requirements of the offender to attend youth offender panel meetings. Under subsection (3), if the offender fails to attend the panel can either adjourn the meeting or refer the offender back to court.
14. Section 96 sets out requirements to agree a referral order contract with the offender. It sets out that a panel meeting will be convened at which the panel must seek to reach agreement with the offender on a programme of behaviour whose principal aim is to prevent re-offending. The panel must produce a written record of the programme in plain language which is signed by the offender and a member of the panel. Once the record has been signed, the terms of the programme, as set out in the record, take effect as the terms of a "youth offender contract" between the offender and the panel.
15. The compliance period for the contract is set out under Section 97. The compliance period begins with the day on which the contract takes effect, i.e. the day on which it is signed. The overall period is for the period specified in Section 86 which is determined by the court on sentencing.
16. Under Section 99, the YOT must arrange progress meetings of the youth offender panel (also referred to as a "referral order panel"). Section 100 goes on to explain that during those meetings the panel will review the offender's progress, discuss any breach of the contract and consider any variation of the contract. If the offender is considered to be in breach of the contract subsection (3) provides the power for the panel to refer them back to court.
17. In accordance with Section 101, a final panel meeting will take place at the end of the contract. Under subsection (3) the panel must review the offender's compliance with the contract, decide whether the compliance with the contract justifies the conclusion that the offender has satisfactorily completed the contract and give the offender written confirmation of the decision. Under subsection (4), this has the effect of discharging the referral order. Under subsection (5), the panel decides that conclusion is not justified, it must refer the offender back to court.

18. The functions of the YOT in this process are set out by Section 106. The YOT must:

- arrange for the provision of such administrative staff, accommodation or other facilities as are required by the youth offender panel
- make arrangements for supervising the offender's compliance with the youth offender contract
- ensure that records are kept of the offender's compliance, or failure to comply, with that contract

19. The programme of behaviour for a referral order contract is outlined in Schedule 3 of the Act. The programme may require the offender to:

- make financial or other reparation to any victim
- attend mediation sessions with any victim
- carry out unpaid work or service in or for the community
- be at home at times specified in or determined under the programme
- attend a school or other educational establishment or a place of work
- participate in activities specified in the programme
- meet persons specified in the programme at times and places specified in or determined under the programme
- stay away from places specified in the programme
- stay away from persons specified in the programme.

20. In respect of the "activities" specified in the programme, these can include activities designed to address the offending behaviour, offer education or training, or assist with rehabilitation in the case of persons dependent on drugs or alcohol.

21. Under Schedule 3(5), the programme may not provide for electronic monitoring or any physical restriction of the offender's movements.

22. Finally, Schedule 4 sets out the powers of the panel to refer an offender back to court. The principal reasons for referring an offender back to court are:

- Failure by the offender to attend panel meetings (Section 92(3))
- Breach of contract (Section 100(3))
- Order not discharged at the final meeting (Section 101(5))

23. If the court is satisfied the has failed without reasonable excuse to comply with a youth offender contract, the court can make an order extending the length of the compliance period but not to more than 12 months and order the offender to pay a fine not exceeding £2,500.

### **The Youth Justice Board**

24. The YJB is an executive non-departmental public body sponsored by the Ministry of Justice which is responsible for overseeing the youth justice system in England and Wales. It is the only statutory body with oversight of the entire youth justice system. Their responsibilities and priorities include:

- Using information and evidence to form an expert view of how to get the best outcomes for children who offend and for victims of crime
- Advising the Secretary of State for Justice, government departments, local authorities, those working in youth justice services and other organisations about how well the system is operating, and how improvements can be made
- Identifying and sharing best practice
- Commissioning research and publishing information in connection with good practice

- Monitoring the youth justice system and the provision of youth justice service
- Supporting improvement of youth justice services in local communities
- Influencing development of policy and practice to advance adoption of Child First throughout the youth justice system

25. As part of their role the YJB provides various guidance to YOTs. During the period under consideration by the Inquiry, the applicable YJB national guidance was as follows:

- National Standards Youth Justice Services 2019 [Exhibit SC1, LCC001739]
- Referral Order Guidance dated 2018 [Exhibit SC2, LCC001752]
- AssetPlus Guidance [Exhibit SC3, LCC001732]

26. In addition, the YJB offers Case Management Guidance available on its website. We are not in possession of a copy of the applicable Case Management Guidance at the time. I will provide more detail about the other policies I have listed under the sections titled “Risk Assessments” and “Referral Orders” below.

27. The YJB’s guiding principle for the youth justice system is “Child First”. This is an evidence base which informs the Child First Decision Making Framework. Briefly, this advocates:

- Being child-focused and acknowledging structural barriers
- Promoting children’s strengths through supportive relationships and a future-focus, empowering them to develop their identity in a way that enables them to make a positive contribution to society
- Collaborating with children to encourage active participation, meaningful engagement and wider social inclusion

- Encouraging a childhood away from the youth justice system by using early outset support, including diversion and minimal intervention to avoid and minimise the stigma of criminal conduct

### **Structure of the Child and Youth Justice Services Department**

28. CYJS is sometimes referred to as the Youth Offending Team or "YOT"; these terms are synonymous and used interchangeably. During the period under consideration by the Inquiry, CYJS sat within "Adolescent Services, Fostering and Adoption" which falls within the remit of Children's Social Care. The Head of Service for CYJS at the relevant time was Barbara Bath, supported by the Youth Justice Senior Manager Carolyn Entwistle. The department is made up sub-teams, which I will detail below. The work undertaken with AR fell within the remit of the "Operations" team, which was overseen by a Team Manager, Maria Lewis, and three Practice Managers covering different geographical locations. Colin Clements was the Practice Manager for the area AR fell within. I have attached an organogram setting out the structure of CYJS at the relevant time as [Exhibit SC4 **LCC001762**] The team has since been restructured.

29. CYJS is a multi-agency service that is co-ordinated by the local authority and overseen by the YJB. This is a statutory partnership, and the team is made up of staff from social care and education, the police, the National Probation Service and local health services. The structure, policy environment and ways of working of youth Justice Services have evolved considerably since their creation through the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

30. The service completes an annual youth justice plan (in line with Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998) which seeks to ensure developments across each of the functions to enhance service delivery and continuous improvement. The improvement plan is completed in line with performance data, audit outcomes, inspection findings and national research and developments. Lancashire has embedded a variety of service changes in line with national developments and practice. I attach the Youth Justice Plan in place for 2019-2020 as Exhibit SC5/ **LCC001753**

31. CYJS priorities are:

- Preventing offending
- Diverting children from the youth justice system
- Reducing re-offending and harm
- Reducing the number of children entering custody
- Increasing victim and public confidence

32. The service works with children aged 8-18 who have either committed an offence or identified as being at risk of doing so. The service has embedded a child-first, restorative and trauma informed ethos into its work and strives to reduce the impact on victims and communities of crime by supporting children to maintain positive, healthy, pro-social futures.

33. The service has a key focus on the prevention and diversion of children out of criminal justice processes, offering the right help at the right time. For those children who do receive a formal criminal justice outcome, we work with partners to support children to try and repair what has happened and enable them to access support to exit the criminal justice system at the earliest possible point. The purpose and aim of the service can be described across the following three functions.

#### Prevention

34. The Lancashire CYJS Prevention Service offers early support to prevent children aged 8-17 from entering the criminal justice system. It seeks to achieve this through a stepped approach, offering a range of targeted intervention, group work, bespoke pieces of support and professional consultation. In addition, the prevention service can offer support, consultation, assessment and intervention to Children's Social Care / Children and Family Wellbeing service for children that may be displaying Harmful Sexual Behaviour.

#### Diversion

35. Referrals into CYJS Diversion Service come from the Police following the commission of an offence. CYJS Diversion Service aims to divert children from formal criminal justice processes. When the Police have issued a Community Resolution outcome and a referral, the Diversion Service will complete a screening to decide whether children need support and which service is best placed to deliver this. For example, in some instances, where a child is supported by a Children's Social Care practitioner and there is an established relationship, this practitioner may be better placed to offer this support.
36. The CYJS Diversion service also work with children who are being considered for an Out of Court Resolution. Referrals are received by the Police, when a child has admitted responsibility for committing a criminal offence. The CYJS Diversion service undertake an assessment using the YJB Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool and develop a report that is used to inform a joint decision and outcome between CYJS and the Police. Children can receive non statutory outcomes that include No Further Action and Community Resolution. Children can also receive statutory outcomes that include Youth Caution and Youth Conditional Caution.

### Operations

37. The CYJS Operations team works with children between the age of 10-17, who have been sentenced to Statutory Court Orders. This includes Community and Custodial sentences. When a child is made subject to a court order, services must work in partnership to ensure holistic and co-ordinated packages of support for children and their families. Offending behaviour by children is first and foremost a safeguarding need. The CYJS work in partnership with other services to provide support for children and families to meet their needs and manage safety to others. The duration of involvement is set by the length of the court order. The frequency of appointments with children and their families is determined by the assessment and can range from once a fortnight, weekly, twice weekly or up to 6 days per week if a child receives an Intensive Supervision and Surveillance requirement.

### **CYJS Role Prior to Conviction/Sentencing**

38. Our role can start prior to conviction and sentencing. CYJS commission an appropriate adult service via Child Action North-West. This service is for children where their parent/carer is unable to attend at the police station or if they are a Child Looked After. CYJS have roles in supporting children on court bail as well as remand to youth detention accommodation. The service would also complete pre-sentence reports if requested to do so by the court. Referral orders can be given without the need of a pre-sentence reports. The court would only request a pre-sentence reports if they were considering custody to be the outcome for the child.

39. In AR's case, CYJS had no role prior to his conviction. This is likely to be because the court did not consider a custodial outcome, and a pre-sentence report was therefore not required.

### **Local Policies and Procedures**

40. In addition to national guidance issued by the YJB, CYJS use the following policies which are relevant to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference:

- The Effective Case Management Oversight Framework – it has not been possible to locate the final version in place in 2019, but I attach the version currently in force [Exhibit SC6, LCC001714]. I believe this is more comprehensive than what was in place at the time.
- The Managing Risk in the Community Procedure in place at the time, dated March 2019 [Exhibit SC7, LCC001738]. This has since been replaced by the Keeping Children and People Safe Procedure [Exhibit SC8, LCC001730].
- Two documents relating to the adjusted process for Referral Orders during the Covid-19 pandemic [Exhibit SC9, LCC001745] and [Exhibit SC10, LCC001749].
- The Referral Order Report and Contract Guidance which is currently in force [Exhibit SC11, LCC001741].

41. CYJS did not have a specific policy relating to knife-crime. This would be encompassed by other policies. It would not be practical to have individual policies

covering all potential offence categories. CYJS have in place an overarching policy in relation to keeping children and others safe in the community, which covers all aspects of harmful related behaviour.

42. In respect of neurodiversity specifically, support is available to CYJS from colleagues in health services seconded from NHS Trusts. As I will go on to explain, children who are referred to the YOT under a court order or statutory assessment undergo a physical and emotional health screening completed by a health practitioner which will identify any potential learning or health needs or barriers to engagement. YOT also have formal working arrangements in place with CAMHS [Exhibit SC12, LCC001751] as well as access to a Speech and Language Therapist and a Clinical Psychologist as required. This was in place at the time and remains the case now. There has been significant development in this area since the relevant period, which I will detail later in this statement.

### **Training and Supervision**

43. Senior managers and team managers are required to be qualified social workers and register with the relevant professional body (currently Social Work England). All case managers are either social work qualified and registered with the relevant professional body or qualified probation officers.

44. All team members undergo an induction which includes specific guidance on areas such as the completion of assessments in accordance with national guidance, safeguarding, and general practice for working with children. It has not been possible to locate the induction plan in place prior to 2019, but I attach to this statement:

- Appendices to the Staff Induction Plan dated 2020 [Exhibit SC13, LCC001720]
- Staff Induction Plan dated 2021 [Exhibit SC14, LCC001715]
- The most recent Staff Induction Plan updated in 2024 [Exhibit SC15, LCC001728]

45. By way of further training material, I attach the following:

- The CYJS Training Matrix for the year 2020-2021 [Exhibit SC16, LCC001746]
- The AssetPlus and YJB training PowerPoint for case managers [Exhibit SC17, LCC001756]
- The most recent CYJS Training Matrix for the year 2025-2026 [Exhibit SC18, LCC001747]

46. In 2020, staff also received specific training from a Clinical Psychologist to assist with communicating with children with a variety of different needs, including the following sessions:

- The first 2 years - the impact of attachment on behaviour
- Helping young people who have experienced bereavement
- Why young people struggle with Anger and what can help?
- Understanding why young people self-harm
- Developmental Trauma - How does adversity shape development?

### **Record Keeping and Case Management Systems**

47. At the time CYJS used the Careworks Care Director case management system. This had been the case management system in place since the YOT was established. Briefly, the system would allow users to attach documents as “paperclips” and record all contacts. It would be normal practice for a user to summarise or copy and paste an email, rather than attaching it.

### **Referral Orders**

48. AR first became known to the department in February 2020 when a referral was made by the Court after AR had been charged with multiple offences. I will set these offences out in more detail later in this statement but briefly, they were all connected

with an incident on 11 December 2019 when AR attended the Range High School and attacked a student.

49. On 19 February 2020 appeared at Merseyside Youth Court having been charged with assault occasioning actual bodily harm (ABH), possession of an offensive weapon (a baseball bat) in a public place, and possession of a bladed article (a knife) in a public place. AR pleaded guilty to each charge and received a 10-month referral order [Exhibit SC19, LCC000025].

50. A referral order is the most common sentence for 10 to 17-years-olds. It can be given when a child pleads guilty and is convicted by the court for the first time. In these instances, it is the only available sentencing option apart from custody. Children can receive a second or subsequent referral order as a sentencing outcome, in certain circumstances.

51. The length of the referral order is determined by the court, with consideration from the Sentencing Council guidelines for sentencing children and young people. As set out earlier in this statement, the length of a referral order can be between 3 and 12 months. A referral order panel will determine the requirements of the referral order contract.

52. Post-sentence, if an assessment is not already available, the CYJS will assess the child using the YJB assessment toolkit, AssetPlus. This will inform the drafting of a report to a referral order panel, providing key information about the child and relevant information about their offending behaviour. Further information about assessing children is included later within this report.

53. Children and their families/carers are invited to attend and to work with the referral order panel, which is comprised of volunteers, and the supervising officer to develop and agree a 'contract' which will include a range of goals, activities and interventions.

54. The referral order panel should take place within 20 days of the sentence. The signing of the initial referral order contract represents the start of the order, rather than the sentence date. The aim is to assist the child to understand how they can build on their strengths and interests, achieve positive outcomes for the child and support the child to live a safe and crime-free life and make a positive contribution to society.

55. When developing the contract, the panel should consider what is a proportionate response in terms of the expectations placed on the child, their wishes, feelings and interests as well as the implications for the victim. The case manager will present information about the child to inform decision-making.
56. As with other court orders, the referral order requires professionals to provide support to the child to facilitate their journey towards a positive and offence free future. Examples of support might be reintegrating a child into education, training or employment or working to resolve conflict within their family or community. This work will also be included in the contract agreed by the panel.
57. The YJB National Standards for Youth Justice Services in place at the time set out the role for CYJS in various scenarios, including in the community court disposals such as referral order, including the following [Exhibit SC1 LCC001739 pg.12-13]:
- Engaging with the child, parents and carers and establishing a meaningful relationship with the child
  - Assisting the child to build a pro-social identity to enable sustainable desistance
  - Explaining the child's rights and responsibilities under the terms of the court order
  - Supervising the court order in line with the YJB approved assessment framework
  - Producing a plan focusing on enabling a pro-social identity and desistance from offending, public protection, mitigating any prevailing issues relating to safety and wellbeing, and building on positive elements in the child's life
  - Ensuring that assessments are dynamic and ongoing and take into account the child's broader context, previous offending, impact on victims, public protection, safety and wellbeing, and factors that influence desistance from crime

- Coordinating interventions with any other relevant specialist or agency, specifying the intending outcome and commencing interventions promptly
- Ensuring reviews occur as required to reflect significant changes in the child's circumstances inclusive of engagement and compliance with orders

58. The YJB Referral Order Guidance in place at the time further outlined the role of the YOT case manager as follows [Exhibit SC2, LCC001752 pg.20-21]:

- The case manager is responsible for ensuring the contract is monitored and the case is supervised to the required standard. The case manager must regularly assess the child's likelihood of reoffending and progress using the AssetPlus framework and that case and statistical information is appropriately recorded.
- The case manager must ensure that any reparation undertaken by the child is risk assessed, that there are appropriate health and safety provisions and that it is within the terms of the agreement contained in the contract.
- The case manager must ensure that all parts of the contract are delivered within the period of the order and that any failure to comply by the child is notified to the panel within the appropriate timescales. Any decision made by the panel about a referral back to court must be acted upon appropriately and in a timely fashion, including applications for revocation of the order on the basis of exceptional progress.
- Case records detailing all activity should be maintained.

### **Alternative Routes of Referral**

59. There are non-criminal justice referral pathways into the CYJS Prevention service.

### Community Support

60. CYJ Prevention service works with our wider partners across the County to ensure community-based support, in places that are accessible for children and families. CYJ Prevention service can offer bespoke and targeted pieces of work in communities and schools to respond to identified need in that particular area. The service runs a 'Your Choice' groupwork programme, providing education and support around a range of topics including knife-crime, exploitation and anti-social behaviour. The service works alongside partners to provide a places and spaces response to concerns around Anti-Social Behaviour and links to risk of exploitation.

#### Consultation and Intervention

61. Where preventative support is requested regarding a child that is already open to Children's Social Care/Children and Family Wellbeing service (CSC/CFW), with case management oversight, CYJS Prevention service will provide a consultation. If there is an identified additional need for specialist CYJS intervention, this will be provided by a CYJS Worker, utilising the information gathered from the completion of a CYJS screening document. The lead agency for the child remains CSC/CFW and CYJS will bolt-on to this support, contributing towards CSC's/CFW's assessment and/or plan. The intention of this model is to complement the established professional relationships already in place for the child and avoid duplication of assessments and plans between agencies. 'Moving On' planning is an important component of this approach and CSC/CFW will remain involved whilst CYJS complete their intervention. Continuation of involvement with appropriate services are to be agreed jointly with services and the child and family.

#### Assessment and intervention

62. Children can be referred to CYJS Prevention Services by Police, CSC and CFW with a request for assessment and intervention. If the screening highlights that no other services are involved and CYJS specialist input is required, an assessment into the child's needs will be completed. The assessment will be completed by a CYJS Prevention Social Worker/ Senior CYJS Worker. These assessments will draw conclusions as to most appropriate next steps and most likely lead to a co-created plan with the child and family. The child's intervention should be completed with clear moving on planning present throughout the input.

63. Children can be supported by CYJS Prevention and Diversion on more than one occasion. For those being considered for criminal offences, Children can receive more than one formal Out of Court Resolution outcome, and consideration can be given when there is the presence of a past conviction. When these situations occur, a consultation is held between the Police Officer in the case (OIC) and the CYJS seconded Police Officer. The consultation will consider mitigating and aggravating features and determine the appropriateness of a referral. The result of which can be that a referral is accepted for an Out of Court Resolution, or that a charge and prosecution is necessary.

### **Risk Assessments**

64. Children who are open to the Child and Youth Justice Service on statutory court orders, including referral order, are assessed using the YJB assessment model, AssetPlus.

65. Good quality assessment is the foundation of effective youth justice practice. It is vital:

- to identify and meet the needs of children
- make a plan tailored to the needs and circumstances of each child
- identify factors to support positive outcomes for the child such as inclusion in education and importantly desistance from offending
- identify safety and well-being concerns
- identify the child's strengths, interests, activities and support networks which can help them to develop a positive mental picture of themselves and their place in society

66. Assessment is a process of information gathering from the child, their parents/carers and other professionals who have supported them. It is undertaken before any work commences with the child and is the start of a dynamic and cyclical process. This

process leads to the planning of work, supervision of the child and a review of progress.

67. Assessments also inform the preparation of pre-sentence reports that inform sentencing decisions and they advise referral order panels on the content of contracts.
68. Assessment is continuous, as you get to know the child and their parents/carers you will continue to gather new information. The child and their parents/carers should play an active role, they will have important information to offer that is both verbal and non-verbal. You will also want to test your understanding of their circumstances with them for accuracy. Assessment should provide a comprehensive picture of the child within the context of their environment, situation and circumstances to understand what support they require to move towards a positive self-image. Home visits are an integral part of this, and at least one should be undertaken for each assessment.
69. Assessment helps to understand the child's vulnerabilities and needs, and to identify any barriers to positive outcomes. To do this a CYJS practitioner should:
- ensure the child and their parents and carers understand the purpose of the assessment and how it will be used
  - engage the child and their parents or carers to discuss and identify what is important to them, their needs, future goals and aspirations
  - review information from existing documentation e.g. previous assessments and pre-sentence reports
  - obtain relevant information from other sources such as children's services and health and education professionals to inform the assessment; ensuring that these are evidence based
  - undertake at least one home visit and assess the environment in which the child lives and its potential impact upon them

- consider whether the child is the victim of exploitation of any kind
- take into account diversity, including sex, race or other life and cultural experiences
- recognise that a child's diversity and any experiences of discrimination will inform the practitioners understanding of the child's reality and in turn how best to engage with them
- consider the child's age, maturity and any particular speech, language, health or learning needs they have, to understand what is appropriate for them
- consider whether the child has experienced adverse childhood experiences in their early years and upbringing which may have resulted in trauma, may have had an impact on their well-being and is likely to influence their behaviour
- find out about the child's strengths, interests and factors which can support positive outcomes
- identify any harm the child may pose to themselves or others
- ensure that assessment is an on-going dynamic process and is kept up to date particularly if circumstances change or new information becomes available

70. Assessments are undertaken in accordance with guidance issued by the YJB [Exhibit SC3, LCC001732]. At the relevant time, the YJB defined serious harm as "death or injury (either physical or psychological) which is life threatening and/or traumatic and from which recovery is expected to be difficult, incomplete or impossible" [Exhibit SC3, LCC001732 pg. 133].

71. Vulnerability or public protection concerns can arise as a result of:

- the behaviour of others e.g. through adverse childhood experiences, intimidation and exploitation

- events such as transitions or changes in living arrangements
- The child's own behaviour e.g. self-harm, risk taking, substance misuse

72. In conclusion, an AssetPlus assessment will assess a child's needs and risk, predicting their Likelihood of Re-offending, Risk of Serious Harm to others and Safety and Wellbeing. The AssetPlus Guidance in place at the relevant time invited practitioners to apply these risk judgements "in the near future". The term 'near future' is used because clinical judgements based on knowledge of a young person's situation and circumstances tend to be more accurate when considered in the short-term. In practice, CYJS case managers apply risk judgments for a period of 6 months into the future. The assessments are reviewed in Lancashire on a 3 monthly basis, or sooner if there is a significant change in circumstances.

## **Section Two: Engagement with AR**

73. As set out above, AR first became known to the department in February 2020 when has subjected to a referral order by the Court. The team were provided with CPS documents including details of the charges, a case summary and one witness statement prepared by the arresting police officer [Exhibit SC20, LCC000021].

74. The CPS case summary outlines that on 11 December 2019 AR attended the Range High School in Formby. AR had previously been expelled from the school. It was alleged that he had run along a corridor towards a group of 6 Year 9 pupil, producing a hockey stick as he did so. It was alleged that he swung the hockey stick above his head, towards the group, striking the victim on his arm. He was retained by a member of staff. Whilst waiting for police to attend, AR was said to have been very calm and insistent that his actions were not wrong. It was alleged that the accused stated that he had attended the school to look for another pupil to attack. It appears that on the arrival of the police, AR volunteered that he had a knife in his backpack.

75. AR was the cautioned and arrested on suspicion of a Section 47 assault, possession of a bladed article on a school premises and possession of an offensive weapon. He made no reply to the caution. His home address was searched by police but nothing was seized.

76. There is nothing within the CPS papers provided to YOT which provides any explanation as to why AR was in possession of a knife or what he had intended to use it for.

Initial Involvement with the Youth Offending Team ("YOT")

77. Following his referral, AR was allocated to a case manager, Anna Croll. The records reflect that on 26 February 2020 an assessment meeting was conducted at AR's family home, but no further details are recorded [Exhibit SC21, LCC000488, pg. 31]. The purpose of an initial assessment meeting is to start to gather information to support the AssetPlus completion. The worker would also explain the processes to the child and family that would follow. This would include explaining things like CHAT health assessment, self-assessments, referral order panel meetings. The initial assessment meeting could be different for each child depending on the child's needs and whether they have had previous involvement with the service.

78. On 4 March 2020 Anna Croll attended a multi-agency strategy meeting along with attendees from Children's Social Care, Acorns and the Range High School [Exhibit SC21, LCC000488, pg. 30-31]. The notes reflect that Acorns School reported that they were sending work home, but it was not being returned. It was also noted that the school "didn't know the risks" and therefore AR was being educated at home.

79. On 5 March 2020 the team received an email from Acorns school attaching their Child Protection Online Monitoring System ("CPOMS") records for AR [Exhibit SC22, **LCC000017**]. These records outline a number of incidents and concerns Acorns had about AR's behaviour. This included things like AR searching school shootings, misbehaving and being disruptive in class, and making concerning comments. It also recorded that a referral to Prevent had been submitted in December 2019. It does not appear that YOT received a copy of the referral itself. However, it is apparent from later AssetPlus Assessments that case managers were broadly aware of the basis of the referral.

80. A meeting was arranged between AR's case manager, Anna, and his father to take place on 17 March 2020 but this was ultimately cancelled due to government advice to avoid all non-essential contact at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. On 24

March 2020 there was an internal discussion to establish the most appropriate means of contacting AR during lockdown. It was acknowledged that the team needed to find an arrangements that worked for the family in light of AR's suspected Autism Spectrum Disorder ("ASD"), his potential speech and language therapy needs

**DPA**

It was agreed that the best way forward was to make contact with AR via telephone and video calls.

81. Supervision calls took place on a weekly basis moving forwards [Exhibit SC21, LCC000488, pg.26]. I have not detailed every contact between CYJS and with AR within this statement but I have outlined any contact or documents which are particularly relevant. There were a number of occasions on which AR or his parents missed meetings which had been arranged. It appears on such occasions there was not resulting enforcement action and the meeting was re-arranged. This is ultimately a matter of discretion for the individual case manager. In some instances, it appears that non-compliance was attributed to AR's neurodiversity. For example, there was an occasion where AR refused to speak with the case manager because his father had mowed the grass in an area where his pet hamster was buried. I have not identified any other instances where AR or his parents failed to cooperate with CYJS or the terms of the referral order. Risk Assessments completed later in the chronology, which I will go on to outline, suggest AR and his family were cooperative.

#### Referral Order Initial Report

82. On 24 March 2020 an initial panel meeting was conducted with AR by his case manager, Anna. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, referral order panel meetings would usually take place in person and involve a panel of volunteers, the case manager and the child to jointly agree the terms of the referral order contract. In this case, as Covid-19 restrictions were in place, it was not possible to conduct in person meetings with volunteers. At this stage the department was not set up for full agile working and this resulted in a detached experience for children subject to referral order at this early stage without direct interaction with volunteers. As the pandemic progressed, we moved towards case managers sitting with the child and dialling in to the panel. In AR's case, given the meeting was at such an early stage at the beginning of the pandemic, it is likely feedback was provided by the panel in writing. The record of this meetings states that Anna explained what was expected of AR and the terms of his contract [Exhibit SC21, LCC000488, pg. 26]. Unfortunately, we have been

unable to locate a copy of AR's referral order contract. I will address this later in this statement.

83. A "Referral Order Initial Panel Report" was prepared by the YOT case manager, Anna Croll [Exhibit SC23, INQ000452]. The following was recorded within the "key information":

*AR has previously attended 'The Range' school in Formby but was expelled in October 2019 after it was discovered that AR was taking a knife into school due to bullying. AR was then educated at 'The Acorns' school in Ormskirk until this incident and after that had been educated from home. AR is described as academically able however, he his behaviour appeared to deteriorate around the end of his time at 'The Range' and The Acorns describe that he displayed disruptive behaviour in class. AR states that he did not like the 'Acorns' school due to the amount of monitoring. AR's father feels that the level of work given to AR wasn't appropriate. At this moment in time 'The Acorns' will not allow AR back into school until a risk assessment has taken place. AR's family are now exploring the possibility of an Education and health care plan.*

*AR is currently being seen by forensic CAMHs after a referral was made by the criminal justice liaison and diversion team when AR was arrested for this offence. AR has previously had referrals to CAMHs which were rejected and AR accessed other support. AR is now on a waiting list for exploration of a diagnosis of ASD. AR does not feel that he has ASD however, a number of professionals have expressed concern that AR does display traits of ASD.*

*AR does not have a history of Children's Services involvement. AR was referred to Children's Services in October 2019 however, the matter was referred to Child and Families Wellbeing service but it was reported that there was little engagement. Following this offence the family were referred to Children's Services. The family have closed to Children's Services and will be receiving support through child and families wellbeing.*

*AR does not appear to have many positive uses of time. AR enjoys watching TV and going on his computer but he appears very socially isolated. AR describes not having many friends and now he is not in school he will have limited opportunities to engage*

*with his peers. AR's parents would like to get him involved in clubs but AR is reluctant to do this as he reports that he has not been allowed to do this before.*

*Prior to this incident AR has not had any involvement in the criminal justice system.*

84. The following was recorded under "Offence Information":

*AR was interviewed about the offence and cooperated fully. AR describes that he had been bullied for a number of weeks at his previous school. At this time AR was attending the Acorns school in Ormskirk. He informs that on the day of the offence he took a taxi to his former school 'The Range'.*

*AR got to the school and entered school premises. At this point a teacher had seen AR and attempted to stop him as he was aware that AR was no longer a pupil and shouldn't have been in school. AR describes that the teacher was chasing him but he did not stop. AR then took a hockey stick from underneath his jacket and struck another young person.*

*When describing his actions AR stated that he had gone to school to confront a young person who had been bullying him whilst at his previous school. AR states he had told adults about the bullying but they hadn't done anything about it. AR looked for the other young person but couldn't find him as he wasn't in school that day. At his point AR is described as taking a hockey stick out of his coat and attacking a group of year 9 pupils. AR struck one of these pupils causing reddening to his hand and arms. At this point he was restrained by teachers and taken to the head teachers office.*

*AR was asked if he had previously had any trouble with the young person who he attacked which he denied. When asked about actions AR stated they were wrong as that young person hadn't done anything to him. AR told the police that due to the teacher following him he decided to attack the other young person as he knew he would get into trouble so may as well do something to get in trouble for.*

*When AR was stopped and taken into the school office it was discovered that he had a knife in his bag. AR informed the police that he had taken the knife with him. AR*

*told me that he wasn't sure why he had the knife as he hadn't planned to use it. He did admit to wanting to assault the other young person who was not in school.*

*AR does appear to recognise that his actions were wrong. AR appears to struggle to think about how the victim would have felt and appears to think that they would be ok as they had received compensation.*

85. Under "Parent/Carer views", it was recorded that AR's parents were disappointed, but that AR's father felt that being at the Acorns school had contributed to the offence.

86. The key areas of intervention were identified as follows:

- *AR appears socially isolated. He reports to not have many friends and does not do any activities. AR has stated that he doesn't want to do any activities. This leads to concerns around his emotional health and wellbeing.*
- *AR is not in school at this moment in time.*
- *AR does not appear to fully understand the consequences of his actions and how his actions have affected others.*
- *AR carried weapons into school on at least two occasions. It is likely he does not understand the potential negative impact of his actions.*
- *AR potentially has ASD which is being explored.*
- *AR struggles to recognise the impact of his actions.*

87. The final section of the report summarises the case manager's views on the likelihood of reoffending, the risk of serious harm, safety well-being levels and frequency of contact. In respect of **risk of re-offending**, the case manager assessed AR as "medium". The rationale is recorded as follows: "*AR appears to have reacted to a situation that he could not manage appropriately. On the occasions that we know about when AR has carried weapons this has been in response to a certain perceived threat. Although this doesn't justify his actions it does provide some*

*insight into when AR may engage in offending behaviour. This also provides some insight into triggers for his behaviour which could potentially be managed with communication between professionals. AR is not known to have engaged in antisocial or offending behaviour outside of school. There are few times when AR doesn't have appropriate adult supervision and little time spent outside the family home therefore, he has limited opportunity to engage in offending behaviours."*

88. In relation to **risk of serious harm**, it was acknowledged that there is no doubt that AR may have caused serious harm if he had found his intended victim or continued to attack the student involved. It was noted that AR's history of carrying knives was of concern, but that he did not use a knife in the attack. The case manager opined that AR's lack of antecedent history or involvement in other offending behaviour meant that it was unlikely that AR was at imminent risk of harming others.
89. The case manager noted that AR's negative behaviours appeared to happen in a school environment and in response to a specific situation he was finding difficult. The case manager acknowledged that the victim of this attack was random, as AR was unable to find his intended victim, which raise a risk of harm to others. However, the case manager considered that if AR returned to school he would be more closely monitored and that measures could be put in place to reduce the risk. It was noted that because AR was extremely isolated, the imminence of him being in situations where he could harm others was reduced. This links to the fact that a motivational factor for AR's offending was his sense of injustice through being bullied, which was not present while he was not in school.
90. The case manager noted that AR had previously been referred to Prevent due to accessing materials around the harming of others but noted that Prevent had closed the referral "due to having no further concerns". It was noted that AR did not appear to have carried out any behaviours related to these searches.
91. The case manager recorded that AR's potential diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder may have affected how he related to others, his understanding of how his victims might feel, and that he might also struggle to resolve conflict with peers appropriately, which may have contributed to the offence. The case manager did record a concern that AR was isolated from his peers.

92. I will provide some reflective comments on each of the AssetPlus Assessments in the “reflections” section of this statement.

#### Initial Risk Assessment April 2020

93. An initial Asset Plus Assessment was conducted in April 2020 [Exhibit SC24, LCC000447]. This is a lengthy document, but I will summarise the key points as follows:

94. It was noted that AR possibly had a diagnosis of ASD, which was being explored. Later in the document it was recorded that there were physical and mental health concerns in relation to AR, as well as speech, language, communication and neurodisability concerns. He had no previous disposals or convictions prior to the incident at the Range.

95. Under “risks and concerns” AR scored “medium” for ROSH judgment, 48% on the Youth Offender Group Reconviction Scale (“YOGRS”) and “medium” for likelihood of reoffending. Briefly, the YOGRS is an algorithm which aims estimates the probability of reoffending using a prescribed calculation based on a number of factors. This is explained in detail in the YJB Asset Plus Guidance 2014 at pages 222-223 [Exhibit SC3, LCC001732].

96. Under “previous safeguarding or public protection incidents” the following was recorded: *“In October 2019 [AR] rang childline to say he was being bullied and as a result had been taking a knife into school. It is not thought that [AR] had the intention of being proactive in harming anyone and he had taken this in to defend against one particular pupil.”*

97. Under “concerns regarding a specific known victim” it was noted that AR had planned to attack a particular person.

98. Details of his care history were recorded as follows: *“AR has only had limited involvement with Children's Services. The first referral came in October 2019 when AR had rung ChildLine stating that he was being bullied and taking knives into school. This was referred to Child and Families wellbeing service but it does not appear that the family engaged well. It appeared the family engaged when they wanted to which was often in response to incidents at school especially if AR was*

*excluded. After the incident in which [AR] attacked another pupil at school (December 2019) he was referred for a full C&F assessment. The assessment concluded that all basic care needs were met and the family be stepped down to Child and families wellbeing services.”*

99. AR's targets were recorded as follows:

- *To understanding how my actions have effected myself and others*
- *To keep in touch with YOT during the virus outbreak by telephone or in person when lockdown restrictions are eased*
- *To understand the implications, law and consequences of carrying and using weapons*
- *To look at positive uses of time outside the family home*

100. Under “Personal, Family and Social Factors”, it was noted that AR's home life appeared quite stable. His parents appeared very supportive. They were concerned about his education and were pushing for him to be in education. It was noted that they could struggle to implement boundaries such as getting AR to do his school work at home. It was also recorded that AR appeared quite isolated and that he attributed this to his parents not letting him go out of the house. Later in the document it is recorded that AR had a positive relationship with his father, but that some professionals had raised that AR's father did not fully recognise the impact of AR's actions and consequences.

101. There is a section to complete on how the person relates to others. It was recorded that AR could converse with adults but would sound flat and very matter of fact. Under “difficulties” it was noted that AR was isolated and had no friends. It was recorded that his parents were concerned about his social isolation but that he did not want to go outside. The record suggests that when asked about this, AR responded that previously his parents would not let him out and questioned why they would want him to go out now.

102. Under "Speech, Language, Communication and Neuro-disability" it was noted that a number of professionals had raised the possibility of AR having autism. Potential traits included struggling to maintain eye contact, keeping his head down, speaking with a monotone and flat voice and being very black and white in his thinking. It was noted that he had been referred for an ASD assessment and was on the waiting list. He was also being seen by CAMHs.
103. Under "Lifestyle, identify and behaviour" it was noted that AR inappropriately used technology and had previously searched for beheading and school shootings on the internet. It was noted that he had been referred to Prevent and this had been closed. It was further noted that he did not appear to have many positive uses of time and appeared to lack opportunities to socialise with people his own age.
104. Under "Self-Identity" it was noted that AR had stated he was bullied in school which may have affected his mood and self-esteem. It was recorded that it was one of the reasons behind him carrying weapons.
105. Under "Thinking and Behaviour" it was recorded that AR appeared to lack a full understanding of the consequences of his actions.
106. With regards to his education, it was recorded that AR was on the role at Acorns School, which was a Pupil Referral Unit, following his permanent exclusion from the Range due to taking a knife into school. AR was not permitted back into Acorns until a risk assessment had been completed. It was noted that the Acorns were awaiting the YOT's risk assessment before they could consider carrying out their own risk assessment to let AR back into school. It was recorded that AR's father was extremely concerned about the lack of education AR was receiving. He did not feel that Acorns was an appropriate school for AR and did not meet his needs.
107. Under "Description of Offences" the following was recorded: *"AR appears to have had the intention of going to the school to get revenge on a young person who he states had been bullying him for a long time. AR appears to have been going to get revenge as he felt that no one had done anything about the bullying. This does appear to have been planned the night before when AR ordered a taxi."*

108. In respect of AR's attitude towards his offences: *"AR appears to recognise that his actions were wrong but appears to lack a deeper understanding about why his actions were so wrong. AR appears to feel that the consequences of his actions are now done. AR appears to recognise he could have seriously hurt his victim but shows little regard for this therefore, I would question if AR knows the full implications of his actions. This was also questioned by the CJLD practitioner who interviewed him in the cells. AR appears to have quite a superficial understanding of what the consequences could have been. AR's parents understand how serious AR's offence was to an extent however, do try and mitigate his actions by stating that he was angry at being sent to the Acorns and that the bullying hadn't been dealt with."*
109. Regarding AR's attitude towards the victim of the offence the case manager recorded: *"AR appeared to attack a random young person when he couldn't find his intended victim and showed little regard for the consequences."*
110. The case manager included the following reflections in respect of AR's pattern and attitude of offending: *"This is the first time that AR has become known to the Youth Offending team therefore, it is hard to establish a pattern of offending. During the assessment process the YOT have been informed of concerning behaviour by AR that was not criminalised. AR made childline aware in October 2019 that he had been taking a knife into school and this had happened in excess of 10 times. AR has then taken a knife out with him for this incident. AR is not thought to have taken knives into the community however, has taken them onto The Range High School premises twice however, never used or produced the knife. This offence was an escalation in that behaviour as AR has harmed someone with an adapted hocked stick." "AR appears to show a lack of concern about the incident and carrying knives. This appears to have also been the case when he has spoken to Social Workers and the CJLD team. AR appears to now understand his actions were wrong and stated this to the case manager. This may be because he has been spoken to by professionals and understood the implications of his actions. However, it may be because he has recognised that others feel his actions were wrong therefore, has felt that he should vocalise his intentions were wrong without this truly being his view. AR is also being investigated for ASD therefore, this may effect his views on his actions. AR does not take pride in his actions. His tone when discussing the offences was very 'flat' and matter of fact therefore, I do question if he truly understands the*

*implications of his actions and if he does have ASD.” “AR does not see the negative consequences for his victim”.*

111. Under “Other Behaviours of Concern” it was recorded: *“AR has been aggressive towards others in school. AR has been searching for extremist material in school such as school shootings and beheadings however, he has been assessed by Prevent who have closed the case. AR has previously stated he wanted to cause serious harm to his intended victim however, he does not appear to want to pursue this now.”*

112. Under “Opportunities” it was recorded that the YOT would work with AR to support his understanding of consequences. Children and Family Wellbeing would provide support by putting activities in place for AR and helping co-ordinate other services, such as education and CAMHs. CAMHs would support AR’s emotional wellbeing and investigating a diagnosis of ASD. There would be future support opportunities for Education, but it was noted that the school had limited contact with him at that time due to his offence.

113. Under “Motivations for Behaviour” it was noted that AR felt the intended victim had got away with bullying him and he had intended to get revenge. He had previously taken a knife into school due to this person. It was opined that all of AR’s offending behaviour appeared to revolve around the difficulties he had at school and his perceived mistreatment by the young person and the school. It was noted that he struggled with social relationships and appeared very isolated.

114. The case manager assessed a number of factors under “factors affecting desistance”. These are factors which may increase the risk of re-offending, not the risk of harm. Anna recorded the following when identifying the factors likely to have the strongest influence on AR’s behaviour:

- “Engagement and participation”: it was noted that a number of professionals could offer help but this factor was assessed as “medium” on the basis that AR’s family did not always engage with professionals.
- “Speech, language and communication”: this was assessed as a strong factor on the basis that AR displayed negative behaviours when around peers or social situations he may not know how to resolve. It was noted that AR

struggled with interpersonal relationships and may get into conflict with others when difficult situations arose.

- “Social and community”: AR was extremely isolated from his peers and had no friends. The case manager expressed concern that if AR did have autism he would have less social interaction and consequently would learn less about how to appropriately interact with peers. This was rated “moderate”.
- “Learning and education”: it was noted that AR’s current lack of education meant he lacked positive uses of time.
- “Thinking and behaviour”: it was noted that AR had reported to have taken weapons into school on at least 10 occasions. The case manager noted that this was concerning as AR may choose to use weapons should a difficult situation arise. However, she assessed this factor as “moderate” on the basis that AR had not used these weapons despite having the opportunity to do so, which she felt indicated that AR may have some inhibitions to using weapons. In addition, it was noted that AR had been reviewing extremist behaviour online. He had been open to Prevent, but the referral was closed. It was noted that AR had taken an interest in watching macabre footage such as beheadings and shootings but that there was no indication AR had made any plans to carry out these offences. The case manager noted AR was “interested in these types of events” and had previously mentioned the genocide in Rwanda. He had made comments in school about teachers being killed, but the case manager remarked that this appeared to have been a flippant comment after being in trouble. This factor was marked as “weak” as there did not appear to be any offence paralleling or indication that AR would commit acts like this”.

115. Under “Nature of behaviours” the case manager included observations about the risk of violence:

- Against peers: it was noted that AR had been in physical altercations with pupils in school when he had been unable to manage difficult social situations or perceived they had been bullying him. It was noted that AR may take weapons into school if he had an altercation with another pupil. The case

manager felt this was most likely to occur in school, due to AR's limited socialisation outside of school. She noted that it was more likely to happen when AR was unable to resolve conflict positively or felt a situation was unfair. The case manager recorded this was unlikely to be imminent as AR was not in education at the time.

- Against staff/people in authority: it was noted that AR had taken weapons into school. He had not harmed or threatened staff, but it was noted that he may harm them in the course of altercations of other students.

116. The case manager explained her rationale for the Risk of Serious Harm (ROSH) judgment as follows: *“When considering the risk of serious harm there is no doubt that AR had the potential to cause serious harm to both his intended victim and his eventual victim. AR has stated to other professionals he intended to cause serious harm but in reality didn't think he would or could have. When considering risk of serious harm I have also considered the imminence of any situations where AR may cause serious harm. AR has a short antecedent history therefore, the likelihood of becoming involved in offending behaviour is lowered. AR has been in some fights at school however these have not involved weapons or caused serious harm. AR is not known to have been involved in any situations in public where he could cause serious harm and this appears at the moment to be confined to a school environment. Since AR is not in school this also decreases the risk of serious harm. I acknowledge that this became a 'random' attack as AR couldn't find his intended victim however, AR did not cause him serious harm. AR has searched for extremist footage on the internet however, there is no indication that he was planning to copy any of this behaviour or an indication that he was planning to carry out this behaviour. AR has been assessed by Prevent and they have ended their involvement.”*

117. The case manager's rationale for the Likelihood of Reoffending judgment was recorded as follows: *“When considering risk of reoffending I have assessed AR as 'low' risk. I have considered that AR has limited antecedent history. AR appears to only have become involved in offending behaviour in response bullying. This appears to be because AR couldn't appropriately manage the situation. At this moment in time AR is not showing indications that he is involved in offending behaviour in the community or in the family home. His offending appears to revolve around the school*

*environment and difficult peer relationships. AR is not in school therefore, his opportunities to engage in negative behaviours in a school environment are limited. AR does appear to have appropriate boundaries and supervision which is another desistance factor.”*

118. These assessments were countersigned by Colin Clements, the Operations Practice Manager on 28/04/2020.

#### CHAT Assessment

119. On 14 April 2020 a CHAT Assessment was prepared. A CHAT Assessment is a physical and emotional health screening completed by a health practitioner within the YOT [Exhibit SC25, LCC000453]. The document reflects that both AR and his father described AR as having longstanding social anxiety particularly in the company of others he did not know. He had become more socially anxious since attending High School and hardly ever left the house. He had been referred to CAMHS for an autism assessment. His father described AR as being inflexible/concrete in his thoughts and frank in his manner. He would often refuse to do things he did not like. He would sometimes misinterpret non-verbal communication such as facial expression. He would get very frustrated at school and used anger/temper as a defence. AR accepted a referral to Anne Simpson, a seconded CAMHS practitioner.

#### Email thread with Acorns

120. 14 May 2020 Joanne Hodson, Deputy Headteacher and SENCO at Acorns, forwarded an email chain to Anna Croll and Andrea Fontaine [Exhibit SC26, LCC001466]. The chain concerned information from AR's father that he would not complete his schoolwork. Anna replied the same day advising that she had spoken to AR and his father earlier in the week around encouraging him to do school work. Within the email, Anna also confirmed she had completed AR's AssetPlus Assessment. She noted that a previous email had suggested that she was to prepare a risk assessment to be used by all agencies. Anna clarified as follows: *“I have completed AR's Assetplus which is the Youth Offending team's assessment tool. I note a previous email stated that I was completing a risk assessment to be used by all agencies. This was not agreed. It was agreed that I would complete our*

*assessment tool and the conclusions would be shared with agencies. I have agreed with my manager that I can share a summary of our assessment. As mentioned in the meeting this will not cover risks specific to any environment. It covers my assessment of AR's risk of reoffending, risk of serious harm to others and the risks to his safety and wellbeing. I will endeavour to share this before the meeting next week."*

#### TAF Meeting and subsequent emails

121. On 19 May 2020 a virtual Team Around the Family ("TAF") meeting took place. This meeting is not well documented in the YOT records but has been recorded by other LCC colleagues attending the meeting [Exhibit SC27, LCC000061]. The meeting was attended by AR's father, staff from Acorns, Andres Fontaine (Child and Family Wellbeing Key Worker), Anna Croll and Janet Ramsey (Educational Psychologist). During this meeting, Anna fed back that she had been maintaining weekly contact with the family and engaging in challenging conversations around AR's behaviours, but that this had been difficult due to the pandemic restrictions. She explained that it had been identified that AR would benefit from work on social interactions and appropriate responses but it was felt that this needed to be face to face. The Educational Psychologist's notes of this meeting [Exhibit SC28, LCC001018] reflect that Anna also told the group that AR had difficulty understanding "where boundaries lie" and what was an appropriate or inappropriate response. She would be working with him on appropriate responses and consequences of behaviour in normal circumstances. She assessed him at being at a "medium risk" of serious harm, but felt the risk was minimal at that time due to the current restrictions. A trigger for AR was social environments. It was also noted that AR had been referred to Prevent but was deemed to be "no risk".

122. On 20 May 2020, AR's case manager, Anna, received an email from Joanne Hodson, the Deputy Headteacher and SENDCO of Acorns [Exhibit SC29, LCC001479, pg.17] along with LCC colleagues from CFW and Inclusion. The email read as follows:

*Good morning, I need to share my concerns with you following the TAF meeting yesterday for AR, and I would appreciate your input as fellow professionals. • Neither Dad nor AR seem to have moved on in their thinking in the 6 months since the*

*incident. • Dad seems to be of the opinion that AR carried out the attack because of events at The Acorns, specifically the "fight" that he continues to refer to. • Dad stated that AR is concerned over the level of monitoring at The Acorns. AR is annoyed by it and Dad doesn't know how he will respond. "It agitates him and his reaction is not the AR we know at home". • Dad does not see any value in any of the work we do at The Acorns, he seems to think our pupils all have learning difficulties. He does not accept that AR is with us for a specific reason. • He is of the opinion that AR needs to be at a mainstream school supported by a TA. I did state in the meeting that AR would not be able to go to a mainstream in the immediate future, but I'm not sure whether Dad accepts this, as he repeated the request later in the meeting. • Dad seems to perceive that AR is the victim rather than the perpetrator. He excuses his behaviour, even excusing him carrying a knife "because he was frightened". Anna did point out that this was still not an appropriate response, but Dad did not seem to accept this and seeks to deflect blame. • Dad stated that he is "A very good child, very respectable, but "If you do something to me, I do something to you harder"". Dad agreed that AR needs help in learning that this is not an appropriate response, but then stated that AR can be immovable and once he's made his mind up that's it. This concerns me as potentially any work we do with AR might be undermined by Dad. • So far we have had complete non compliance with school work provided. Dad expressed his concerns that The Acorns do not teach AR in the way he likes to learn, which again is deflection as he has been offered a lot of support, including daily phone calls and emails and individual support from senior teachers via Microsoft Teams. • Anna discussed that YOT considered that there was medium risk of serious harm but because of lockdown imminence wasn't there. If we do bring AR back in 1-1 with a specialist teacher, we will then have opportunity and imminence. In view of the meeting yesterday, I feel that AR poses to us all as a school has increased rather than reduced. I have a duty to both staff and pupils in raising my concerns with you. Can you let me know your thoughts, please?"*

123. AR's Key Worker from CFW responded to the email as follows:

*"Good morning, Thank you for your email raising concerns. I appreciate there is concern and frustration around the perceived mind-set of Alphonse and AR. This can be challenged through conversation with Alphonse, which I am happy to do. However, I don't feel that this increases the risk posed by AR, because there is appropriate parenting in place. In terms of Alphonse wanting mainstream schooling*

*for AR, he also mentioned the possibility of an alternative provision being suitable, but at the end of the meeting was in agreement with, and showed an understanding of, AR returning to Acorns on a 1:1 basis, and awaiting the decision in regards to the EHCP request. In any case, Alphonse's view of his son's temperament and behaviour, and his expression of his preferred educational placement, does not, in my opinion, influence the risk level. As discussed in yesterday's meeting, Anna's risk assessment is not the basis for AR's return to education. Therefore I think it would be beneficial to have a copy of your risk assessment to be able to see exactly where within school the risk lies and what measures can be put in place through the TAF process to support it. Perhaps we could arrange a TAF meeting for the week following half term, as I feel it would be beneficial for these concerns to be raised during the meeting to allow appropriate challenge on some of these issues. This gives Alphonse an opportunity to respond to the challenge and provides AR with an opportunity to contribute his thoughts, feelings and wishes. I can appreciate that all necessary strategies need to be put in place to ensure everyone's safety, however there does not appear to be any new or additional information shared that would suggest an increased risk."*

124. On 22 May 2020, AR's YOT case manager, Anna, responded to the email as follows:

*"Hi all, Thank for your email raising concerns. Apologies for the delay in replying. My thoughts and observations are below. I have also included in this email my summary of my assessment of AR. AR has been assessed using the Youth Justice Assetplus framework. With regards to the email raising concerns I echo what Andrea has said. Although Alphonse's mind set in relation to the offence isn't conducive to helping AR to understand the mistakes but we can continue to challenge this as I did in the TAF and as Andrea has offered to do in the future. I am also happy to have those conversations with father. We can also work with AR to understand this too. When I spoke to him he appeared to realise to an extent that his actions weren't acceptable but it is an area for further work. I will also point out that given our definition of serious harm I would still assess AR as medium risk of serious harm. Although I would agree that there is an increased opportunity to commit offences or serious harm I do not assess that this would push him into the realms of high risk by our definition. However, should new information come to light our risk assessments are reviewed regularly and when significant new information or incidents occur. If your*

risk assessment concludes that AR can not be in a classroom or school environment it may be beneficial to discuss this with AR and Alphonse so they full understand that decision and have the opportunity to challenge this appropriately. It will also need to be considered what provision would meet AR's needs as the current provision doesn't appear to be meeting AR's needs. I do recognise that AR hasn't been completing work and been compliant with school however, it needs to be considered if there are alternative arrangements that can be made. Here is a summary of the Assetplus that I completed: RISK OF SERIOUS HARM: MEDIUM When considering this I have taken into account the definition of serious harm which is 'some risk identified but the offender is unlikely to cause serious harm unless circumstances change'. When considering risk of serious harm I have assessed AR as medium risk of serious harm. When considering risk of serious harm I note that AR hasn't caused serious harm in the past and has a short antecedent history however, there are concerns that AR has carried knives in the past and used offensive weapons (hockey stick). Given AR's lack of remorse at the time of being arrested there are concerns that he doesn't understand the severity of his actions which would be reinforced by father's views. AR is able to vocalise that his actions were wrong but it is unclear if he has a deeper understanding of this or if he has adjusted his views to what he feels others want him to say. AR has a potential diagnosis of ASD which may affect how AR sees situations. AR may not understand the potential serious harm that he could cause towards others. At this moment in time AR has few interactions with peers which limits his opportunities to learn appropriate social responses rather than resorting to negative responses. I am concerned that should AR feel a sense of injustice, grievance or conflict that he does not know how to respond to in a positive way that he may try to take matters into his own hands and resolve them in an inappropriate way which may harm others. RISK OF REOFFENDING: LOW I have considered that AR has an extremely short antecedent history and appears to centre around October to December 2019 where on two occasions he was found with weapons. AR appears to struggle with peer relationships and appropriate responses to conflict. AR is currently being assessed for ASD which would affect how he perceives peer relationships and his interactions with his peers. Should AR find himself in conflict with peers he may struggle to understand how to resolve these issues without resorting to conflict. AR does not appear to fully comprehend the consequences of his actions. AR stated he attacked the other young person as he knew he would get in trouble anyway but failed to see that if he complied with requests to leave the building he would have been in less trouble. It is concerning

*that AR may not comprehend the consequences of his actions as he may not make fully informed decisions that may dissuade him from engaging in negative behaviours. AR's use of the internet has previously been a cause for concern due to the content that he was accessing. However, AR has been assessed by Prevent who do not believe there is a risk however, AR could be vulnerable. Should AR spend increased time on the internet on inappropriate sites he could be at risk of grooming into offending behaviour. At the moment AR does not interact with his peers due to the Covid 19 pandemic and not being in education therefore, any opportunities to engage in negative behaviour are reduced. SAFETY AND WELLBEING: MEDIUM When considering Risk to AR's safety and wellbeing I have assessed him as 'Medium' risk. AR is very isolated and appears to struggle to make appropriate relationships with peers. It is suggested by some professionals that AR may have a diagnosis of ASD which may put him at risk of bullying from his peers as he may struggle to relate to them appropriately or not react in a 'normal' way to a situation. When considering physical wellbeing AR has carried weapons in the past which puts him at risk of harm from the emotional impact of using the weapons or physical harm from being harmed with his own weapon. AR's internet has sometimes been inappropriate which may lead to both physical and emotional harm. AR has been accessing inappropriate content online which may affect his emotional wellbeing. This also puts him at risk of grooming from others online. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions."*

#### Educational Psychologist Input

125. On 21 May 2020 Anna had a discussion about AR with an Educational Psychologist [Exhibit SC30, LCC001019]. The notes prepared by the Educational Psychologist reflect that Anna told her that AR would give succinct answers with no inflection or interest. He was not engaging with his peers. He did not really understand the consequences of his actions. He had not received a charge for taking a knife into school prior to the offences for which he was convicted in December. He had looked at inappropriate materials online. Prevent had said he was vulnerable but took no further action. His referral order had started on 24 March 2020, the date of the initial panel meeting and he was required to work with a YOT worker.

#### Updated Risk Assessment

126. The AssetPlus Risk Assessment was reviewed in June 2020 [Exhibit SC31, LCC000448]. Most of the detail within this document is carried over from the previous iteration completed in March 2020. This is not unusual as the AssetPlus assessment is a working document which develops over time. Under “risks and concerns” AR scored “medium” for ROSH judgment, 42% for “YOGRS” and “medium” for likelihood of reoffending. The following additions were made from the previous iteration:

- Under “patterns of offending” it was noted that AR’s father appeared to mitigate and minimise AR’s actions by attempting to justify that AR had a knife in his position, and that he blamed the response on bullying
- Under “victim awareness” it was recorded that AR did not see negative consequences for his victim
- Under “factors against desistance” it was noted again that AR’s father attempted to minimise AR’s offending behaviour
- Under “tailoring interventions” it was noted that AR was being spoken to over the phone, rather than in person, and that he had been building relations with the team

#### Change in Case Manager

127. In June 2020 AR’s case was handed over as his case manager, Anna, was due to leave the team. She left the following handover note for the new case manager on 17 June 2020 [Exhibit SC21, LCC000488, pg.11]: *“Case summary to assist handover. AR is a 13 year old boy who lives with his mother (Leticia), Father (Alphonse) and brother Dion. AR’s parents and family are Rwandan and came to the UK for work. Mother is a scientist at the hospital and father is a taxi driver. They originally settled in Wales which is where AR was born. They then moved to Banks for work. AR states he preferred living in Wales. AR’s brother: [DPA] [DPA] uses a wheel chair and this can sometimes mean that his father needs to care for him. AR is with the Youth Offending team on a 10 month Referral order for an offence where he had gone into his former school after being excluded with the intention of harming a child who he feels had been bullying him. When the child was at school AR attacked another YP as he felt he was going to get in trouble*

anyway. AR was assessed by CJLD in the cells and it was felt there was a lack of remorse. AR is being assessed for ASD after concerns were raised by a number of professionals. AR has previously had private intervention for his emotional health. AR is open to CAMHs and they have been liaising with Anne Simpson. AR's education appears to be an issue. AR was excluded from mainstream school in October 2019 following AR calling childline and telling them he was taking a knife into school as he was being bullied. AR was transferred to the Acorns in Ormskirk. When AR committed his offence the decision was made that he would stay at home and work be sent to him. The police had stated that AR couldn't return to education until CSC had put plans in place. There was a meeting in March 2020 whereby school stated that they couldn't assess ARs risk until YOT had done their assessment. This assessment was shared with school. School stated AR could go back in a TAF meeting in May however, the day after they stated they felt it was too risk. This was challenged by Andrea Fontaine about why this was not brought up in the meeting and discussed a further meeting to discuss schools risk assessment. After this school attempted to arrange one to one sessions with AR. However, AR's father stated he did not want AR to go back to school until after the summer holidays due to Covid 19. AR was assessed by CSC after the incident. They felt there was no role for them as AR is appropriately parented. This was stepped down to Andrea Fontaine at CFW who has recently (June 2020) ceased her involvement as he role was to support AR's transition to education but he is no longer going back to school prior to September. School have raised concerns that father appears to mitigate AR's behaviour. Alphonse appears to justify that AR had taken a weapon into school because he was scared. This was challenged by Anna Croll from YOT stating this was not an appropriate response. AR is currently in the process of being assessed for an EHCP. Janet Ramsay has had conversations with Anna Croll about this."

128. John Fitzpatrick took over AR's supervision sessions. As Covid-19 restrictions had eased, John was able to conduct some of the sessions face to face from July 2020. This included completing the following in person sessions [Exhibit SC21, LCC000488, pg.7-8]:

- "No Knives, Better Lives" on 21 July 2020
- "Victim awareness and victim impact" on 7 August 2020

- “Emotional regulation method anger management” on 20 August 2020

129. Based on the records it is not possible to say exactly how these sessions were conducted or what they covered. A large amount of material is available to case managers which covers a wide range of topics. It is likely that the “No Knives, Better Lives” session incorporated material from the following website:

<https://www.noknivesbetterlives.com/>

130. It is at the discretion of the case manager to complete sessions and activities in a way which meet the needs of the referral order. As is set out in the YJB Referral Order Guidance, the aim of interventions should be to prevent reoffending and panels can draw on a wide range of interventions including positive activities tailored to the individual case, considering the level of and type of offending. The interventions should address the issues contributing to the child’s offending behaviour and additionally support any desistance factors and the child’s transition to a safe and crime free life [Exhibit SC2, LCC001752 pg. 43]

131. There is no prescribed process for this. Every child is different, and part of the case manager’s role is to find the best way to work with the child. The content and delivery of those sessions will therefore depend on things such as the nature of the offence, the age of the child and how they are best able to receive and retain information. This is a “child first”, relationship-based process.

132. On 9 September 2020, AR’s supervision visits were reduced to once per fortnight after a discussion with his parents during which they said they had no concerns about AR. As of 21 September 2020, the visits were further reduced to once per month as AR was in the final three months of his referral order [Exhibit SC21, LCC000488, pg.6-7]. The reduction in contact frequency is in line with the scaled approach promoted by the YJB’s AssetPlus Guidance [Exhibit SC3, LCC001732 pg.160].

#### Review Panel Report September 2020

133. The notes reflect that on 24 September 2020 there was a referral order panel meeting. There are no further details in the record as to what was discussed during the meeting [Exhibit SC21, LCC000488, pg.5]. On the same day, a “Referral Order

Panel Report" was prepared [Exhibit SC32, LCC000454]. The first section of this report was completed by AR as follows:

- *Things that I have completed from my contract over the last 3 months are: kept in touch with YOT, knife crime, victim awareness, anger management.*
- *The things that are helping me to stay out of trouble are: don't know, away from people who could make me angry.*
- *Things in my life that have got better are: nothing has changed.*
- *Things that have got worse or are still a problem are: nothing has changed.*
- *Things that make it difficult to stay out of trouble are: nothing.*
- *My goals for the further: don't know.*
- *My goals for the next three months are: two continue to maintain contact with the Youth Offending Team. To continue to attend education as required.*

134. AR's case manager, John, completed relevant sections of the report as follows:

- *Update on progress: AR began his order at the start of the lockdown and due to this AR's referral order has looked very different. AR has been spoken to on the phone instead of attending supervision sessions AR's order started during the lockdown via a remote panel and AR was given one condition which was to keep in touch with the Youth Offending team. Since lockdown restrictions have eased AR has been seen at home. AR has completed interventions on knife crime, Anger managements, victim awareness and consequential thinking. AR has not been in any further trouble with the police.*
- *Restorative Justice Interventions: At this point in time no restorative interventions have been completed. Unlikely to be able to complete due to Covid 19 and AR's suspected autism.*

- *Parent/Carer views: AR's father feels that AR is a good boy and his behaviour was effected by long term bullying. He states he understands why AR committed his offence. AR's parents advised no further concerns of his behaviour.*
- *What strengths or opportunities for change have been identified: AR has a supportive family who want to make sure he has a good education. AR appears to relate well to visual things such as TV programmes or video games.*
- *What are we worried about key areas of intervention: no concerns at this time.*
- *Risk of serious harm: low*
- *Risk of reoffending: low*
- *Safety and wellbeing: low*
- *Frequency of contact: AR has been contacted approximately once a week. The scaled approach would now dictate that AR is seen or spoken to monthly.*

#### Update from School

135. On 23 October 2020 John Fitzpatrick sought an update from Maggie Allred, one of AR's teachers, about AR's hours and engagement [Exhibit SC33, LCC001480]. The same day, she replied "*Excellent attendance and works hard in every session. Can give more detailed report if needed?*". In response, John asked her to confirm how many hours AR attended and whether he had any friends at school. Maggie replied as follows: "*He is on High Support Tuition on 1to1 for one hour every day 2.30-3.30 with myself as teacher. From our point of view the risk is steadily reducing as far as we can observe. In September he was taught 1to1 with 2 staff present (myself and another member of staff). From mid October this is now 1 member of staff (myself). The school is now busier at his tuition times so he sees lots of other students on arrival and departure and seems to be coping well with this. We had an integration plan to introduce other students into the room but this has been*

*stalled as the school had to close for 2 weeks due to Covid end of September. Rest assured we realise how important it is that he learns to get along with peers appropriately and safely and we will move forward on this when staffing and available students allow. We have discussed actions and consequences through use of English Language sources for GCSE which has proved useful I believe. I will discuss further with Mrs Hodson about the use of more direct support for reintegration (such as social stories, making good choices etc) so he feels happy and confident to move forward socially."*

### Updated Risk Assessment

136. The AssetPlus Risk Assessment was updated by John Fitzpatrick in December 2020 [Exhibit SC34, LCC000449]. This was the first substantial change in the assessment of AR's level of risk. Under "risks and concerns" AR scored "low" for ROSH judgment, 36% for "YOGRS" and "low" for likelihood of reoffending. Other notable developments from previous iterations are as follows:

- Under "how young person relates to others" the following was added: *"school are taking efforts to encourage and support AR to interact with young people"*
- Under "physical health" the following was added: *"AR has completed work on knife crime and states he will not carry a knife again in the future"*
- Under "use of technology" the following was added: *"no evidence of any further inappropriate use of technology"*
- Under "learning, education and employment" it was noted that Acorns had fed back that the risk was *"steadily reducing"*
- Under "patterns of offending" it was noted there was no evidence of any further reoffending or concerning behaviour since the original offence
- Under "victim awareness" it was recorded that AR had completed sessions on victim awareness and had demonstrated some awareness of how the victim may have been impacted

- Under “other behaviours of concern” the following was added: *“at review no reports of any concerning behaviour since the start of the order”*
- Under “resilience and goals” it was noted that outside of school AR did not have any friends that he associated with
- Under “missing” it was recorded that Acorns were working toward integrating him into classes with other people, and that the family had engaged well with the YOT
- Under “engagement and participation” the following was recorded: *“Due to covid 19 I was unable to see AR in person and he struggled with the telephone contact. When the lockdown restrictions were eased and I was able to see AR at home he has engaged well. AR is more comfortable engaging in person than he is on the phone.”*
- Under “factors for desistence” it was added that AR had been attending school daily
- Under “factors against desistence” it was added that AR did not appear to have any friends that he associated and spent all his spare time in the family home
- Under “patterns of behaviour” it was added that there had been no evidence of any further reoffending

Disclosure made by AR

137. On 19 January 2021 AR’s case manager, John, completed the last visit on his referral order. During the visit AR disclosed that his father had hit him. This was recorded in the notes as follows [Exhibit SC21, LCC000488]:

*“As we entered AR's dad went upstairs and I went in to the living room to speak to AR. I asked him if he was ok and he said no. I asked him what was wrong and he said that his dad had hit him. I asked him what had happened. AR said that he was threatening to break his dad's laptop and his dad tried to get it off his so AR kicked*

*his dad 'in the balls'. He said his dad then hit his face. AR did not know if it was an open palm or fist but he said there was no cuts or bruising. I spoke with AR about his behaviour and that it was not ok to threaten to break his dad's laptop."*

138. The following day, John discussed the disclosure with Colin Clements as his supervisor. I recorded the following in the notes [Exhibit SC21, LCC000488]:

*"Case discussion with John. John attended a final visit with AR as his Order is very close to closure. During this visit AR reported that his Dad has assaulted him. It is a rather complex situation but Dad was present when this allegation was made, he explained it in a different way and that he was the one who had been assaulted by AR. AR did not elaborate as to how he has been assaulted but Dad stated that AR had kicked him between the legs. John and I discussed appropriate responses in relation to this. AR has no visible injuries and the way in which he and Dad spoke of the incident makes it difficult to understand the true extent of what has happened. Having heard the information, I do not currently consider there to be immediate child protection concerns, as there is no evidence of physical injury to AR. That being said, there is still a concern with the allegation that has been made and this may well fall under section 17 threshold. I have asked John to share the information with school and CFW as they are both involved with AR and his family. I have asked John to ask if there are any other concerns from those agencies, with a view to developing a more thorough evidence base to then submit a section 17 referral to CSC. John spoke with the CFW worker who was aware of the situation as they had undertaken a visit after the event. They are in agreement with our considerations for a referral under section 17. Questions remain over whether this has indeed met thresholds, however it is still a relevant course of action as there would then be evidence in a chronology, should future allegations be made".*

139. On 20 January 2021 John contacted Joanne Hodson at Acorns school, who advised she never had any concerns in this area. John also spoke to AR's CFW Key Worker, who said she would speak to the family [Exhibit SC21, LCC000488, pg.2].

140. On 26 January 2021 the CFW Key Worker confirmed that she had spoken to AR's father, who confirmed that he hit AR in response to being kicked. She explained that they had discussed this at length and that they would not be making a safeguarding referral. On 28 January 2021 John had a further discussion with the

key worker about this during which they agreed that a safeguarding referral was not required [Exhibit SC21, LCC000488, pg.1].

141. The incident was recorded in the final AssetPlus Assessment, which I will detail below. Given the nature of the altercation and the information provided by AR and his father, I would not expect any further action to be taken in the circumstances. The circumstances did not indicate that AR was a serious risk to others at that time and would not have materially affected the case manager's judgment of risk.

#### End of Referral Order

142. On 18 January 2021 a "Referral Order Final Panel Report" was prepared by AR's case manager, John [Exhibit SC35, LCC000089]. The section completed by AR was completed as follows:

- *Things I have completed from my contract over the last 3 months are: I have kept all my appointments with the Child and Youth Justice. I have reviewed how I am dealing with my anger. I have been attending my education.*
- *Things that are helping to me stay out of trouble are: being at home, being distracted, watching TV.*
- *Things that make it difficult for me to stay out of trouble are: nothing.*
- *Things in my life that have got better are: it's been a long time since the offence.*
- *Things that are still difficult are: nothing.*
- *My goals for the future are: I would like to go to university.*

143. John filled out the report as follows:

- *Key information about the child and any changes: At the end of his order AR continues to live at home with his parents and brother. At the end of the Order*

*Maggie Allred High Support Teacher at Acorns School advised that AR has excellent attendance and works hard every session.*

- *Update on progress: AR has engaged well on his Order. Due to Covid the initial part of the order was completed via the telephone. AR is suspected to be on the autistic spectrum and he struggled with the phone calls and so once Covid restrictions were lifted he was seen in person at home. AR engaged well and he completed all the interventions required on his Referral Order contract. AR has not missed any appointments.*
- *Update on Restorative Justice Interventions: Due to Covid 19 AR has been unable to complete reparation.*
- *Parent/ Carer views: AR's parents advise of no concerns with AR's behaviour either at home or at school.*
- *Any ongoing support needs and things to be considered for exit planning: AR has a supportive family who want to make sure he has a good education. For AR to keep attending education as required and for his parents to support and encourage AR to attend. AR appears to relate well to visual things such as TV programmes or video games.*

144. During AR's final supervision meeting on 19 January, a "Referral Order Contract Exit Plan" was created [Exhibit SC36, LCC000092]. The progress with AR was recorded as "*As per his referral order contract Ael has completed interventions on Knife Crime, victim awareness, anger management and consequential thinking. AR has been see*". This sentence appears to be unfinished. AR's exit plan was recorded as follows:

- *To make sure I don't commit crime I will: I will control my anger and try to think about the consequences of my actions.*
- *The help still available to me is: Parents, Acorns School.*

- *To help you achieve your targets your parent/carer will: support AR in all areas of his life.*
- *How will I know I am doing well? I will be attending my education as required and not be engaged in any further offending behaviour.*

145. An end of referral self-assessment was completed by AR's parents [Exhibit SC37, LCC000091], albeit it is not clear from the form which parent completed it. The form was completed as follows:

*Q: Has the support given to you or your child helped you as a parent/carer?*

*A: Yes*

*Q: If yes, please state what you found helpful*

*A: AR received help and advice from YOT to keep out of trouble.*

*Q: Has there been any change in your child's behaviour?*

*A: Yes*

*Q: If yes, what is different?*

*A: happier, more communicative*

*Q: What did you feel has helped your child the most during their time with the YOT?*

*A: third party to speak to.*

*Q: What do you feel has been less helpful?*

*A: None.*

*Q: I feel a bit worried about what happen when my child finishes at the YOT?*

*A: No*

*Q: Do you think the YOT has provided your child with the services and help he/she needed?*

*A: Yes*

*Q: Would you like more information about other services that could help you or your child?*

*A: No.*

*Q: is there anything more the YOT can do for you?*

*A: No.*

146. An end of referral assessment was also completed by AR [Exhibit SC38, LCC000090] as follows:

*Q: What things in your life have got better?*

*A: It has been a long time since the offence*

*Q: Have any things in your life got worse? If yes, what?*

*A: Don't know*

*Q: What's been good about coming to the YOT?*

*A: It's been ok.*

*Q: What's been bad about coming to the YOT? Why has it been bad?*

*A: Nothing really.*

*Q: Think about the things you have been doing at the YOT. What helped you sort any problems in your life?*

*A: Anger management and victim awareness*

*Q: I worry about what might happen after I finish at the YOT.*

*A: No.*

*Q: I know where to get help if I need it in the future.*

*A: Teacher*

*Q: Who will help you with any problems after you leave here?*

*A: Teacher*

*Q: What other help do you think you will need? How can the YOT help you get this?*

A: No.

147. On 21 January 2021 John and Colin had a supervision meeting to discuss next steps in light of the upcoming closure of AR's case due to the end of his Referral Order. The notes reflect that we discussed that the family would continue to receive support from CFW and that he was undertaking virtual schooling. No further needs were identified. It was noted that AR might benefit from positive activities, as he spent all his time in the family home, however due to lockdown there were not opportunities for this [Exhibit SC21, LCC000488].

#### Prevent Referral

148. On 2 February 2021 John Fitzpatrick received a copy of a Prevent Referral made by Acorns in respect of AR via an email from Janet Lewis, the Designated Safeguard Lead at Acorns. The contents of the email read: *"Please find attached a Concern Form for AR for your information that was sent yesterday. Apologies as I was not aware that you were still involved with AR"*. John replied to the email on 9 February 2021 to confirm that AR had closed to CYJS on 21 January 2021 [Exhibit SC39, LCC001510]. I will comment on this further in the "reflections" section below.

#### Updated Risk Assessment

149. AR's AssetPlus Risk Assessment was updated on 2 March 2021 [Exhibit SC40, LCC000450]. The final referral order panel meeting had already taken place on 21 January 2021 and the referral order finished on 24 January 2021. This marked the end of CYJS statutory intervention. Case closure assessments are often done following the formal end of statutory intervention as they can administratively take some time to close.

150. The updated AssetPlus Assessment is substantially similar to the previous iteration prepared by John in December 2020. Under "risks and concerns" AR remained at a "low" risk of serious harm and "low" for likelihood of reoffending. His YOGRS score was 33%. The key differences appear to be as follows:

- Under "care history" it was recorded that AR had reported being hit by his father and that CFW had been contacted.

- Under “patterns of behaviour” the following was added: *“There has [been] no evidence of any further reoffending sine the original offence. AR has successfully completed his Referral Order. After the end of the order School advised that another young person had shown them messages [that] AR had sent them regarding 2 attachments copied from AR’s Instagram account to your attention. He appears to still be in contact with some pupils from our school, one of whom brought this to our attention. Although there is nothing strikingly dangerous in this message in this message, it contains some details concerning Colonel Gadaffi, which might raise some potential radicalisation concerns, particularly if AR has been posting, or discussing other similar material. A referral was made to Prevent. See paper clip 01.02.21”*. The “paperclip” refers to the multi-media section of Careworks where the service can upload relevant documents for saving on the child’s record). The document dated 1/2/21 was the second prevent referral [Exhibit SC41, LCC000891]

#### End of Statutory Intervention

151. The conclusion of the referral order on 24 January 2021 marked the end of statutory intervention and there was no further contact with AR or his family after this date. The last point of contact with AR was his end of intervention self-assessment. The period of the referral order is set by the court, after which time CYJS has no power to compel any participation. In some circumstances CYJS do offer voluntary participation after the conclusion of a referral order, but this usually only applies in circumstances where the individual has another offence progressing through the courts. In this case, as AR had been deemed to be a low risk and there were no signs of re-offending, I would not have expected voluntary participation to be offered.

#### **Section Three: Reflections on events**

##### Rapid Review

152. Following the tragic events of 29 July 2024, the Lancashire Children’s Safeguarding Assurance Partnership undertook a Rapid Review which CYJS participated in [Exhibit SC42, LCC001258]. As part of the exercise CYJS prepared a

chronology of key events which highlighted areas of good practice and areas of learning [Exhibit SC43, LCC001740]

153. The following areas of good practice were identified:

- In the early stages of AR's case, there was evidence of the case manager undertaking partnership working to enhance family-based support from CFW and Education re-integration as the AR had been excluded from a pupil-referral unit at point of his referral into CYJS.
- A multi-agency meeting took place early on which informed the initial AssetPlus Assessment. However, the content of that meeting was not well documented within the CYJS contact records.
- Throughout the period of the referral order, the assessments were reviewed at appropriate intervals and again at the point of closure. The closure assessment identified that health services and CFW remained involved.

154. The following points of learning were identified:

- It was noted that Acorns school had asked for a copy of the CYJS Asset Plus Assessment to inform their risk assessment as to whether AR could return to school. The full assessment was not provided, but a summary of the risk judgment was. This was an appropriate way for the case manager to provide information about the risk which was relevant to the school without providing the additional detail contained within the lengthy AssetPlus assessment. It was acknowledged during the Rapid Review that there should be further consideration of how agencies share risk assessments during the initial stages of assessment. LCC is currently considering the best way to achieve this. Part of the difficulty is that the various departments work under different statutory and assessment frameworks and analyse different types of risks.
- The contacts recorded did not always clearly show the impact of work completed with AR and how progress had been reviewed in line with the referral order contract. The telephone contacts in particular were brief and without depth of information.

- During his last appointment, AR alleged that his father had hit him around the face. This was further discussed with CFW to build picture on whether to refer the incident into CSC. The conclusion having discussed with agencies and with AR's father was not to referred onto CSC. However, it was unclear from the records what ongoing work would be completed by other agencies to address this incident.

155. CYJS continue to reflect on and learn from this case and I would like to offer the following additional reflections:

### Knife Crime

156. It is worth noting however that given the nature of my job, I am unusually exposed to youth offending and knife crime. I would say that knife crime amongst teenagers in Lancashire and elsewhere has been a historic problem and is not a new phenomenon. However, I am not aware of any reliable statistics about it. I think this is likely due to the way in which knife crime is detected, such as searches, and whether the individual is ultimately prosecuted. I would say that a more recent development is the types of knives children and teenagers are carrying. Historically, they tended to carry smaller knives, like kitchen knives. In recent years we have seen a general increase in children and teenagers carrying very large knives including swords or machetes. These are the types of knives that would never have been available for children to purchase in a shop but could be purchased online. In addition to the change in the types of knives children are carrying, they are increasingly exposed to knife and other violent crime via material online and this is a complex problem.

157. LCC is currently working with the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN) and EmPower (LCC's Exploitation team) to develop a Serious Violence Toolkit. The toolkit, building on the evidence available from the Youth Endowment Fund ("YEF"), will develop a suite of learning and development for staff to ensure they are supporting children at risk of Serious Youth Violence in an evidence-informed way. The toolkit is designed to be an operationalised approach to evidence.

158. A survey was distributed amongst CYJS, Targeted Youth Support and EmPower staff ascertain practitioner confidence in delivering interventions with align with YEF's Best Bets evidence base. Focus groups with staff, children and parents

have also taken place UCLAN analysing the findings and developing resources and learning/development events to plug gaps.

159. As a starting point, UCLAN are designing a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) approaches workshop, supporting staff to be more connected with the evidence base around CBT techniques. The ultimate aim is for the toolkit to be multi agency with contributions from wider services who can also access the materials.

160. CYJS works collaboratively with partners to offer responses to serious youth violence in both the preventions space and wrap-around support to children at a statutory level. CYJS are leading a task and finish group to refresh the Serious Violence Strategy to ensure a distinct focus on the safeguarding of children and young people as a direct means to reduce risk pertaining to Serious Youth Violence. In addition, the task and finish group will engage with Community Safety Partnerships (“CSPs”) to ensure their action plans and associated activity are aligned with safeguarding focus. The statutory oversight of these actions will sit with CSPs and also the Contextual Safeguarding Oversight Group.

#### Record and Case Management Systems

161. In 2023, CYJS changed our case file recording system provider. This saw the migration of data from the legacy system to the new, which should have allowed for the full transfer of documents stored within a child's file. There were a number of deficits with the system which mainly related to data submission issues. Prior to implementation a full migration had taken place and user acceptance testing had been completed. Checks were made across the whole system, however due to the volume of records migrated checks on each individual record migrated could not be completed. On reviewing the papers in this case, it is apparent that some documents are no longer accessible, such as the referral order contract.

#### Notetaking

162. It was noted within the Rapid Review that record keeping was a concern in this case. CYJS have since development an Effective Case Management Oversight Framework which has led to improvements in the quality of recording on files and there are quality assurance measures in place to monitor this. CYJS now also has in

place detailed guidance on case recording principles, which I attach as Exhibit SC45,

**LCC001713**

### Referral Orders

163. The work of Youth Justice Services is inherently complex, particularly when working with children who have experience trauma and who have additional learning or neurodiverse needs. There are some relevant limitations when working with children and families, both in terms of achieving outcomes but also structural limitations with the court orders. When a child receives a referral order, the length of the order is determined by the court and this sets the period of time that the Youth Justice Service will be working with the child and their family. This can bring about a limitation as the conclusion of that order would ordinarily result in the closure of that child and family. There are some circumstances where the Lancashire CYJS will make an offer of voluntary support, this is usually considered when there are new criminal matters pending, with a high probability that the child would receive a further court order. Lancashire CYJS develop moving on plans (exit plans) with children to ensure that unmet needs are met with relevant referrals and that families have information, advice and guidance to care for their child. Specific to referral orders, they become a spent conviction at the point of completion.

164. In this case I have been unable to identify with certainty what the agreed terms of AR's referral order contract were as it has not been possible to locate the document. The referral order plans and AssetPlus Assessments do give some indication as to the work being undertaken with AR. I would say that at that time referral order objectives were very generic and lacked specific focus, but this was in line with national guidance. As a department we have done a lot of work around the templates we use for referral orders to encourage more specific referral order contracts and to work with children to develop their own plans. I attach the CYJS internal "Referral Order and Contract Guidance" dated 2025 [Exhibit SC46,

**LCC001741**

165. I have included below CYJS internal data regarding the effectiveness of referral orders. This table sets out the number of referral orders submitted to CYJS each year between 2019 and 2024 and the percentage of children who did or did not reoffend within the following 12 months.

Year	Total Referral Orders	Number of children who did not reoffend within 12 months	Number of children who did reoffend within 12 months	% of children who reoffended
2019	90	70	20	22.2
2020	76	64	12	15.8
2021	51	40	11	21.6
2022	49	40	9	18.4
2023	73	57	16	21.9
2024	88	76	12	13.6
<b>Grand total or average</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>18.74</b>

### Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic

166. It is relevant to note that the coronavirus pandemic had a significant impact on local and national services, which is relevant to the period that the Public Inquiry is considering. This had an impact on Youth Justice Services and how they met with children, as practitioners followed regional and national restrictions. This is likely to have had an impact on children, which could have been particularly challenging for those who have neurodiverse needs. The pandemic impacted on the referral order panel processes, unfortunately this created a situation where panel members could not meet face to face with children. Instead, there was a mechanism where referral order panel volunteers would read a report about the child and provide feedback with the referral order contract objectives. The pandemic impacted on opportunities for children to have normal, healthy social interactions with peers, in schools and within community groups. This had a further impact on the function of referral order panels and how Youth Justice Services facilitated continuous service provision, within the regional and national restrictions.

### Risk Assessments

167. There are some limitations when assessing children within the Youth Justice System and how long those assessments remain valid. Children's behaviour and judgements around risk can change over time and assessments should be dynamic. When a child is open to Lancashire CYJS, assessments are reviewed every three months. However, if there is a significant change in circumstances, a practitioner is expected to undertake a review to capture that change and how it impacts on risk judgements or the child's plan. The YJB published a practitioner user guide for

AssetPlus in 2014 (although no longer in publication). The document provides a comprehensive overview of the assessment model and a practical guide for practitioners. Specific to risk of harm to others, the AssetPlus invites practitioners to consider if there is evidence that the young person may commit offences and/or behave in ways that hurt/harm other people in the near future or at certain times/events?". When practitioners answer this question, they are invited to consider the possibility of harmful behaviour in the 'near future'. The guidance goes on to support practitioners with understanding that the near future relates to a period of 6 months. There are therefore limitations to the length of time that an assessment may be considered to be valid, as this could be 6 months from the completion date. As identified above, Lancashire CYJS will review children's assessments to ensure there is a dynamic assessment of the child. When a child closes to the service, there are no further reviews and the accuracy of the closing assessment should only be considered from the perspective of when it was completed.

168. Risk assessments are carried about by individual case managers and are therefore subjective. Risk assessments are always subject to a secondary review by a more senior team member. At the time, secondary reviews were undertaken by the relevant Practice Manager, which in this case was Colin Clements.

169. Having reviewed the AssetPlus Assessments completed by Anna Croll and John Fitzpatrick, they were completed in line with the YJB national guidance in place at the time taking into account relevant risk factors and professional judgment. Given the nature of his offence and the level of harm suffered by the victim, AR did not meet the criteria for a "high risk" of serious harm under the YJB's guidance [Exhibit SC3, LCC001732 pg.133].

170. In the first AssetPlus Assessment completed by Anna Croll, AR was recorded as a "medium" risk of serious harm and re-offending. This reflected that he posed a potential risk to other pupils, in light of his offence, but did not pose an imminent risk as he was not attending school. AR remained at "medium" until the assessment completed by John Fitzpatrick in December 2020. At this time, AR was reassessed and recorded as a low risk of serious harm and reoffending. This judgment of a reduction in the level of risk appears to have been informed by AR's engagement in sessions, the absence of any reoffending during the relevant period, and information received from the school that they felt the risk was steadily reducing. In light of the information received I would regard it as reasonable that AR was perceived to be a

low risk at the conclusion of his referral order. I appreciate that this may be difficult to understand, given what AR ultimately went on to do.

### Information Sharing

171. Having reviewed the records it does not appear that information was shared with CFW or Acorns school when AR's school was closed. If information was shared, it has not been recorded. At the time AR's case closed, there was an expectation that relevant information would be shared as part of the exit planning for a child and to ensure that relevant agencies still involved with the child are aware of any concerns. However, at the time, this was not included in the formal practice guidance for practitioners to follow. The current framework guidance makes clear that a multi-agency meeting should take place as part of the moving on stage if a child has complex needs or multiple services are involved.

### Progress during AR's Referral Order

172. I have set out the statutory powers in relation to referral orders at the beginning of this statement. In general terms there are very limited tools and interventions available to the department if someone has not progressed during the course of a referral order. If an individual was deemed to be in breach of their referral order, they can be referred back to court. This is not a straightforward process and would ordinarily only be considered in circumstances where the individual did not comply with the terms of the order by failing to attend appointments.

173. Individuals missing occasional appointments are unlikely to be considered to be in breach of their referral order, particularly if there were sufficient reasons and the meetings were rearranged. This is supported by the YJB Referral Order Guidance [Exhibit SC2, LCC001752 pg. 46 "dealing with non-attendance"]. CYJS focus on reducing barriers to participation, and referring to court for breach should be avoided where possible. In general, you are less likely to gain effective participation from an individual by referring them for breach. In this case, it appears that AR did occasionally miss appointments and this was considered attributable to his neurodiversity. Such appointments were rearranged such that he was deemed to be sufficiently compliant with the terms of the order.

174. Save for referring someone back to court, there are no other interventions available to the team. The degree of progress someone is deemed to have made is very subjective. An individual who attended all their appointments but did not actively engage with the process any further would technically be complying with the order. This would not be considered a sufficient breach to warrant court action.
175. In circumstances where an individual is referred back to court, the only recourse available to the court is extending the referral order to a maximum of twelve months or re-sentencing for the index offence. A court cannot compel positive engagement or participation. The only exception to this would be if the individual committed another offence during the course of the order, in which case further court action could be taken.
176. It should also be noted that even in cases where a child is deemed to be a high risk of serious harm or risk of re-offending, the role for CYJS is very limited once the period of statutory intervention has concluded. In such circumstances I would expect risk information to be shared with any key stakeholders. Depending on the agencies involved, we may continue to assist partners by providing insight and guidance to those agencies following closure. Serious violent or sexual offenders could be referred to the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements ("MAPPA") which is a statutory framework for managing the risk posed by high-risk offenders. However, AR would not have met this criteria.

#### AR's Prevent Referrals

177. With the benefit of hindsight, YOT could have provided more support to AR and his family in relation to the issues raised in the first Prevent Referral, such as safety planning to assist his parents with monitoring his search history. However, this would have been limited to very basic advice based on our experience with online offences, such as the possession of indecent images. CYJS do not have the training or resources available to provide detailed advice to parents on the risk of online harms and this may be an area for further development. In addition, the focus of the assessments and the work undertaken by the case manager would primarily focus on the needs of the referral order contract given that is the remit of CYJS statutory intervention. The referral was appropriately recorded within the AssetPlus Assessments.

178. Over the last five years there has been a growing awareness of the risk of online harms. A good example is the growing influence of Andrew Tate. I am confident that if similar circumstances were to arise now, the child and family would be offered words of advice and guidance and potentially safety planning, depending on the nature of the referral. It should be noted that there is no specialist technological input available to CYJS, such as monitoring someone's activity online, unless it specifically relates to the offence. This is usually used in cases concerning sex offences with a technological element but the legal power to do this is exercised by the police. CYJS does not have any legal powers to monitor someone's online activity.

179. The second Prevent Referral was received after the referral order had ended. The referral does not indicate any immediate danger but shows that AR was engaging in politically motivated content. The referral was reflected within the final AssetPlus Assessment. It could potentially have been explored more in the "future behaviours" section to focus on risk behaviours. As YOT's period of statutory intervention had concluded, it would be very difficult for any further action to be undertaken. Had the case been referred to Channel, it is possible that the case would have been referred back to YOT for further insight and participation in multi-agency discussions.

180. YOT now have someone on the pan-Lancashire Channel panel to regularly link back to the team and offer support and guidance in respect of Prevent needs. This was not in place at the time. There remains a gap for children who are considered by Prevent but not ultimately referred to Channel as these referrals are not necessarily discussed with CYJS or other local authority departments. It would be helpful for multi-agency partners to have guidance about what to do in cases where a child has been referred to Prevent but has not progressed to panel in order to manage the risk.

181. In cases where CYJS consider a child should be referred to Prevent, this would initially be discussed with LCC'S Counter Terrorism Officer, Tom Sweeney, who would then discuss the referral with Counter Terrorism Policing.

#### Opportunities to refer AR back to YOT

182. My understanding is that following the closure of AR's file with YOT, there were no signs of him potentially reoffending until March 2022 when he was found carrying a knife on a bus. Given AR's history and previous conviction, this should at the very least have triggered a referral back to the YOT to consider whether there were any further interventions which could be offered. This would usually be done by the police but could also have been done by CSC referring in via Prevention and Diversion.

#### Departmental Improvements since 2021

183. In addition to the improvements I have mentioned elsewhere in this statement, I would like to make the Inquiry aware of the following developments and improvements which have take place within the department since 2021.

184. The service has developed an Effective Case Management Oversight framework which has led to improvements in the quality of recording on children's files and quality assurance measures to monitor this [Exhibit SC47, LCC001714]. This framework allows for a more detailed reflective oversight opportunity, which is reviewed throughout the child's journey within the service. This can include other partner agencies as necessary. A core component within this is the development of clear moving on/exit plans. There is management oversight for every child preparing to move from their non statutory or statutory programme, with a co-created moving on plan with the child and their parent or carer.

185. The service has embedded a trauma informed approach within the service provision providing consultation and multi-agency formulation meetings with the Clinical Psychologist.

186. The service has established and embedded an intervention working group which has informed good practice across the service. An interventions group continues to drive innovative ways of working with children in a child-first, trauma-informed and restorative way in order to meet children's needs. Where we feel that an intervention is outdated or a new type of offence is emerging, the group explores new interventions, practice and evidence-based research which we will consider implementing. This is essential given how quickly adolescent culture changes and develops. Part of our role is to keep up to date and react to those changes. A good

example is the increase in driving offences and dangers related to the use of e-bikes and e-motorbikes.

187. CYJS have developed a new family support strategy which has been embedded. The approach uses strength-based practice and motivational interviewing to empower families to make and maintain positive change. The service works alongside children and their parents and carers to help build strong foundations and develop resilience. The service offer to children and families is in line with CYJS Vision, Mission, Values and Core Principles; Child First, Trauma Informed, Restorative.
188. The service has developed a communication passport which is completed with the child and their parent or carer, following completion of the Enhanced Communication Tool and consultation with the Speech and Language Therapist. The communication passport is shared when a child appears before the court to assist the judiciary in understanding a child neurodiversity needs.
189. There has been significant development within the department around working with children with neurodiversity. In January 2024, we also trained four CYJS staff the National Autism Training programme provided via the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families which focuses neurodiversity. Plans are in place for this to be rolled out to more staff later in 2025. This training should specifically develop staff skills with neurodivergent children and young people.
190. Also in 2024, the service developed a more thorough Joint Working Protocol with Specialist Learning Disability Services [Exhibit SC48, LCC001736]. A toolkit has been established for CYJS staff supporting children with learning disabilities which includes guidance on identifying learning disabilities and communicating with children with learning difficulties [Exhibit SC49, LCC001735] as well as a flowchart highlighting the pathway for consultations with health services [Exhibit SC50, LCC001737]
191. Knife crime was highlighted by children in Lancashire voting in 'Make your Mark' (2021), as the second highest priority, alongside mental health of children. In 2022, CYJS contributed to the development of the Violence Reduction Network's Youth Violence Strategy [Exhibit SC51, LCC001754] pg. 68-73]. Based on a response to information in relation to the violent crimes involving knives in the Preston area,

Education, Police and Community Safety established Multi Agency Support Panels (MASP) to prevent and reduce violent crimes.

192. Serious violence is specifically covered in the Youth Justice Plan for the year 2025-2026. This is in line with the strategic objectives set out within the Youth Justice Board Strategic Plan 2024-2027. The plan [Exhibit 52, LCC001761 pg. 34-35] sets out that CYJS will collaborate and plan with other local services to prevent and reduce serious violence by:

- Ongoing partnership work with the Lancashire Violence Reduction Network, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Community Safety Partnerships.
- Contributing towards Lancashire Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership's action to develop and deliver multi-agency around early identification of the risk of serious youth violence and exploitation.
- Revised Joint Response to Serious Violence Duty between CYJS, Targeted Youth Support and EmPower Contextualised Safeguarding Team.
- Ongoing representation at the Contextualised Safeguarding Oversight Group, with a particular focus around prevention of serious violence and exploitation.
- Continuing to work alongside UCLAN to develop a serious violence toolkit offering evidence-based resources and responses to children at risk of serious violence and their families.
- Continuing to contribute to the Lancashire strategic assessment for community safety partnerships as outlined in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. To continue to work alongside district CSP's to address key strategic community safety issues.

### **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: 21/08/25

**Index to the Witness Statement of Sarah Callon, CYJS**

<b>Exhibit No.</b>	<b>Inquiry reference no.</b>	<b>Document Description</b>
SC1	LCC001739	YJB National Standards Youth Justice Services 2019
SC2	LCC001752	YJB Referral Order Guidance dated 2018
SC3	LCC001732	YJB AssetPlus Guidance 2014
SC4	LCC001762	Youth Offending Team Structure Chart April 2020
SC5	LCC001753	Youth Justice Plan 2019-2020
SC6	LCC001714	Effective Case Management Oversight Framework Guidance 2025
SC7	LCC001738	Managing Risk in the Community Procedure 2019
SC8	LCC001730	Keeping Children and People Safe Procedure
SC9	LCC001745	Referral Order Panel Process due to Covid
SC10	LCC001749	Volunteer Panel process during Covid
SC11	LCC001741	Referral Order Report and Contract Guidance 2025
SC12	LCC001751	Working Arrangements with CAHMS 2017-2020
SC13	LCC001720	Appendices to the Staff Induction Plan dated 2020
SC14	LCC001715	Staff Induction Plan dated 2021
SC15	LCC001728	Staff Induction Plan updated in 2024
SC16	LCC001746	CYJS Training Matrix for the year 2020-2021
SC17	LCC001756	AssetPlus and YJB training PowerPoint for Case Managers
SC18	LCC001747	CYJS Training Matrix for the year 2025-2026
SC19	LCC000025	Referral Order February 2020
SC20	LCC000021	CPS documents February 2020
SC21	LCC000488	IYSS YOT Contacts Summary Print Record
SC22	LCC000017	CPOMs and chronology of concerns from Acorns School – March 2020
SC23	LCC000452	Initial Referral Order Report, March 2020
SC24	LCC000447	Asset Plus Assessment April 2020
SC25	LCC000453	CHAT Assessment and Intervention plan April 2020
SC26	LCC001466	14.05.2020 Email thread with YOT about AR not completing work and risk assessment
SC27	LCC000061	Meeting Outcomes 3 June 2020
SC28	LCC001018	TAF Meeting AR
SC29	LCC001479	20.5.2020 Email thread sharing concerns with professionals following TAF meeting
SC30	LCC001019	Notes of discussion with Anna Croll
SC31	LCC000448	AssetPlus assessment review stage June 2020

SC32	LCC000454	Referral Order Panel Report September 2020
SC33	LCC001480	23.10.2020 Email thread with YOT re update for AR
SC34	LCC000449	AssetPlus assessment – review stage December 2020
SC35	LCC000089	Final Referral Order Panel Report – January 2021
SC36	LCC000092	Referral Order Contract Exit Plan January 2021
SC37	LCC000091	Self assessment – parent January 2021
SC38	LCC000090	Self assessment AR – January 2021
SC39	LCC001510	02.02.2021 Email thread with replies from YOT and CFW
SC40	LCC000450	AssetPlus assessment – Closure March 2021
SC41	<b>LCC000891</b>	Copy of prevent referral submitted by Acorns school – February 2021
SC42	LCC001258	Rapid Review Report
SC43	<b>LCC001740</b>	CYJS Rapid Review Chronology
SC45	<b>LCC001713</b>	Case Recording Principles 2024-2025
SC46	<b>LCC001741</b>	Referral Order and Contract Guidance dated 2025
SC47	<b>LCC001714</b>	Effective Case Management Oversight 2025
SC48	<b>LCC001736</b>	Joint Working Protocol with Specialist Learning Disability Services
SC49	<b>LCC001735</b>	CYJS Learning Disability Toolkit
SC50	<b>LCC001737</b>	Flowchart pathway for consultations
SC51	<b>LCC001754</b>	Youth Justice Plan 2023-2024
SC52	<b>LCC001761</b>	Youth Justice Plan 2025-2026