1		Tuesday, 14 October 2025	1		and April 2021. From the correction I have understood
2	(10	.00 am)	2		that that's not right and you provided a correction.
3		DAC VICTORIA EVANS (sworn)	3		Sir, with your permission, I'm just going to read
4		Questioned by MR MOSS	4		the correction into the record for what we should
5	SIR	R ADRIAN FULFORD: Please have a seat.	5		replace at the start of paragraph 32. So you have asked
6		Yes, Mr Moss.	6		for a correction to be made as follows:
7	MR	MOSS: Thank you, sir.	7		"At the time of AR's referral in December 2019, the
8		Just start by giving us your full name, if you	8		CTP Prevent network was using the Prevent Policy
9		would?	9		version 2.0, released in May 2018, titled 'Policy for
10	A.	Victoria Evans.	10		Prevent Practitioners: Management of CT/DE Risk within
11	Q.	Thank you. Could we have on the screen, please, your	11		the Community' [same reference]. A further version was
12		statement, so CTPHQ000006. This is your statement to	12		brought into effect on 28 August 2020 and was in use at
13		the Inquiry. You have indicated that there is one	13		the time of the February 2021 and April 2021 referrals.
14		correction that you wish to make, I think. Could we	14		This updated version reflected the 2008 [sic] policy but
15		deal with that now. Could we look please at page 7 of	15		updates and builds upon the previous content."
16		the statement and it is paragraph 32. Can we just have	16		Then the wording continues. Is that your
17		that expanded, please. You say there that:	17		correction?
18		"At the time of all three referrals"	18	A.	Yes, except you said 2008 policy and it's 2018.
19		So December 2019, February 2021, April 2021:	19	Q.	
20		" the CTP Prevent network was using the Prevent	20		contents of the statement true to the best of your
21		Policy version 2.0, released in May 2018"	21		knowledge and belief?
22		Then you say the third version was brought into	22	A.	They are.
23		effect in August 2020. That has the inconsistency on	23	Q.	Thank you. If we can go back to the first page of your
24		its face that a policy was brought in, in August 2020,	24		statement, please, you explain in paragraph 4 of your
25		but the old one was still being used in February 2021	25		statement that you are currently the Senior National 2
1		Coordinator I think the acronym is SNC for Prevent	1	Q.	
2		and Pursue; is that right?	2		the ambit of your evidence, is this right, as you make
3	A.		3		clear in your statement, that neither you personally nor
4	Q.	And working within Counter Terrorism Policing	4		Counter Terrorism Policing Headquarters had any direct
5		Headquarters. I don't need to go through it, you very	5		involvement in the handling of the three Prevent
6		helpfully set out the dates of your predecessors, so	6		referrals for AR?
7		that we have the dates and the post holders for the	7	A.	That's correct.
8		whole time in which AR had some involvement with Counter	8	Q.	I think what you can assist with, in your role as the
9		Terrorism police. But I think you took over this role,	9		Senior National Coordinator is to look at the policies
10		is this right, in May 2024?	10		that were in place at the time and the training that was
11	A.	That's correct.	11		in place at the time and the role of CTPHQ in overseeing
12	O.	Thank you. You have been a police officer, just looking	12		that sort of policy and guidance?

13 at the terms of your history, if we go over the page to

14 paragraph 5. Over 20 years' experience, including as

15 an Assistant Chief Constable in both Cambridgeshire

Constabulary and I think also a period in Dyfed-Powys? 16

17 A.

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18 Q. Relevant to some aspects that we've been looking at in

the Inquiry as well, you were previously the National

20 Police Chiefs' Council lead in the implementation of the

Manchester Arena Inquiry recommendations in relation to

22 emergency response?

23 Α. Yes.

24 Q. Just keep your voice up a little?

25 Apologies, yes.

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13 A. That's correct.

14 Q. Thank you. Your responsibility as SNC covers Prevent 15 and Pursue and I think that you have an equivalent

16 colleague who deals with the aspects of Protect and

17 Prepare. So you have two of the CONTEST strands within 18

your policy responsibilities?

19 A. I do.

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20 Q. Thank you. Can we look, as my next topic, please, at 21 the meaning of Counter Terrorism Policing Headquarters

22 and how it sits within the Counter Terrorism Policing

23 network. So it is paragraph 7 of your statement, going

24 into paragraph 8.

What is meant by the Counter Terrorism Policing

1 network, c	an you just	explain how	it works?
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- 2 A. So the Counter Terrorism Policing network is
- 3 a collaboration and we work on behalf of the chief
- 4 constables of England and Wales and work closely with
- 5 Police Scotland and Northern Ireland. So we're not
- 6 an organisation *per se* but we are a network that is set
- 7 up under a Section 22A agreement and we work on behalf
- 8 of all of those Chief Constables to deliver the response
- 9 to Counter Terrorism Policing and the CONTEST strategy
- 10 in a policing context.
- Q. Thank you. So looking at the numbers I think there are 11
- 12 nine regional Counter Terrorism Units or Counter
- 13 Terrorism Intelligence Units; is that right?
- A. Yes, in England and Wales. 14
- Each of those regions will have a number of police 15 Q.
- 16 forces within it?
- 17 A.
- Q. One of those would take the role of the lead force and 18
- 19 would host the regional unit?
- 20 Broadly, yes. It's slightly different in each region
- 21 but that's broadly the concept.
- 22 Q. Thank you. In this case, obviously, we have been
- 23 dealing with Counter Terrorism Policing North West,
- 24 hosted by Greater Manchester Police, I think?
- 25 Α. That's correct.

## 1 "[It] is best understood as a coordinating feature

- 2
- 3 Is that right?
- 4 A. That's correct.
- 5 Q. So for the uninitiated, should we be clear in our minds
- 6 that in that role of coordinating, you said it provides
- 7 the strategic support and coordination, that's very
- different, isn't it, to a directing headquarters. 8
- 9 I don't think CTPHQ directs what the individual Counter
- 10 Terrorism Unit should do in respect of individual
- 11 referrals or individual Prevent cases?
- 12 A. So we would provide policy and guidance but the
- 13 operational delivery and the day-to-day operational
- 14 oversight is the responsibility of the CT head on behalf
- 15 of the Chief Constables of that region.
- 16 Q. Thank you. With possibly very rare exceptions that we
- 17 probably don't need to go into, the running of
- 18 a referral and the decision-making would be for the
- 19 local Counter Terrorism Unit, in this case CTPNW?
- 20 A. That's correct.
- 21 Q. But you would expect them to be following the guidance
- 22 and practice and policy that may be set down by CTPHQ?
- 23 A. We would, if they choose to deviate from that because
- 24 there is a specific nuance in their region, then they
- 25 would obviously record that decision and account for

Q. Thank you. We don't need to go into too much detail in 1

2 relation to this but, just so that we have a feel for

- 3 it, how does it work in London?
- 4 A. So, London has a regional unit which is SO15 or Counter
- 5 Terrorism Policing London, who performs that function,
- 6 but we also have what we call CTPHQ, so Counter
- 7 Terrorism Policing Headquarters.
- 8 Q. Leave the HQ for a moment. Just in terms of the
- 9 regional equivalent, so there's a London-wide and that's
- 10 effectively SO15.
- 11 A. That's correct. 12 Q. So the language may be slightly different but you still
- 13 have that consistency of a regional Counter Terrorism
- 14 Unit for London?
- 15 A. That's correct.
- 16 Q. Thank you. Forgive me, I interrupted you. You were
- 17 helpfully going to go on then to deal with CTPHQ and how
- that sits within the network? 18
- 19 A. Thank you. So CTPHQ is hosted by the Metropolitan
- 20 Police but it is made up of officers seconded from up
- 21 and down the country and we work on behalf of the
- 22 network to provide that strategic support and
- 23 coordination. So we sit as an overarching entity to
- 24 support the network.
- 25 **Q.** Thank you. In your statement at paragraph 10, you say:

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- that under their own local operational control.
- Q. Thank you. Then CTPHQ, I think, not acting entirely 3 independently because, as we heard in evidence yesterday
- 4 from Ms Ellsmore, the overall framework and policy is
- 5 set by the Home Office?
- A. That's correct. 6

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- 7 Q. But whereas the Home Office, as we heard from
- 8 Ms Ellsmore, has a more -- my words not hers -- hands-on
- 9 role in guidance and training for other Prevent
- 10 agencies, local authorities, and so on, would it be
- 11 right that CTPHQ fulfils much of that function, so far
- 12 as the police is concerned, in giving guidance and
- 13 policy?

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- 14 A. CTPHQ would lead the operational policy for policing
- 15 but, as outlined yesterday by my Home Office colleague,
- 16 we do work collaboratively and consultatively as we
- 17 develop that policy and guidance.
- 18 Q. Thank you. If we look at paragraph 16, you say:
- 19 "... CTPHQ continually seeks to enhance the 20 network's capabilities [and] Learning is drawn from
- 21 a variety of sources, including, but not limited to,
- 22 academic research, internal and external reviews of 23 major incidents, and relevant recommendations from
- 24 assurance bodies, inquests and public inquiries."
  - How does that work in practice?

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A. So, in practice we have what we call capability leads, 1 2 across a number of areas, and we have one that 3 specifically focuses on interventions, which Prevent is 4 a part of, and that would be gathering through our own 5 learning. So business assurance processes, Dignate 6 Reviews, Prevent Learning Reviews, we also scan 7 nationally and internationally for learning and 8 relevance material that may then influence our policy. 9 We work with the Home Office who also gather some of 10 that information.

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So there's a variety of mechanisms and sources where we gather that information from and then we will consider whether that needs to make changes to policy or training

- 15 Thank you. Can I ask a preliminary question, at the Q. 16 risk of getting ahead of myself: how do you, at your 17 level of seniority, strike the balance between 18 continually adapting and changing and improving, and 19 having so many versions of policies that those on the 20 ground can't keep up?
- 21 A. So, clearly, we need to take that into consideration and 22 that's where we will broadly look at themes. So, 23 actually, are there themes where we can retrain and 24 update? I would flag, because I'm conscious, the 25 versions of our policy documents, there is one in

2 see multiple iterations. Not all of those iterations 3 and published and shared with the workforce. They are 4 working copies and versions of that document. So even 5 when we are in quite high numbers, it isn't the case 6 that the workforce have received every single iteration 7 of that. Each policy will be different but broadly they 8 will only receive once that policy is finalised and 9 there are substantive updates in it. That's evident 10 here, in that we were working on the 2018 policy, that 11 was in place and not updated until 2020. So a two-year 12 period. 13 Q. I follow. Thank you.

particular, where we are on version 3.6, and you will

So far we have touched particularly on, at a high level, guidance and policy. What's the position in relation to training? Is there a common standard, a common content for the training, even how much discretion do the local units have and how much is set by CTPHQ?

20 A. So there is a common foundation course for Prevent. At 21 the time of the referrals that we are talking about, 22 that was called the Prevent Foundation Course, I believe 23 the terminology was. That was a central product that 24 had a core content and, similarly now, there is 25 an updated version of that course and that is still

a centrally-owned product by our organisational development unit who are the training leads across CTPHQ.

We also deliver ad hoc training and inputs through our capability lead, which is a headquarters function. But, equally, local CT heads and their teams have the ability to deliver local training, based on the policy and products that exist if they feel there is something that they want to do within their own local teams. So there are layers of training but there is a foundation course that is national.

12 **Q**. Thank you. So when there is a development of policy -and let's take as an example the way in which the policy on mixed, unstable or unclear ideology became amended or given greater emphasis, we will come back to the joint 2019 letter -- presumably CTPHQ would think about the foundation course training and might amend the foundation course training, yes?

19 A. Yes, that's correct.

20 Q. What about those who have already been through the 21 pipeline and have done the foundation training: is there 22 some mandated top-up training or annual refresher 23 training that also comes down from CTPHQ, or are the 24 local CTUs left to ensure that that sort of update 25 change in policy is trained to their staff?

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A. So it depends on the level of change. So if by way of 2 example the 2018 policy, which was a new policy and 3 a substantive document that I refer to in my statement, 4 that was rolled out through sort of national 5 get-togethers, as it were, where teams were pulled 6 together and then also cascaded through the regional 7 Prevent coordinators. It will be hosted on a specific 8 site on our intranet, so officers and staff can access 9

> We also then have a multiple other ranges of mechanisms so we will host online training events. We have what we call Prevent Bitesize, which are -- it's an interactive online platform. So it does depend on how significant the nature of the policy change is.

Currently, we have a process now where there is what we call a notification that goes out to regional Prevent coordinators, which is documented and audited with the instructions of how they cascade that and, in addition, we may hold national training events. So it does vary.

20 Q. Thank you. I know it is second nature to you but the 21 Regional Prevent Coordinator, is that effectively the 22 senior officer in each CTU who is responsible for

23 Prevent?

24 **A**. It is, yes.

25 Q. Their rank would normally be?

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1	Α.	It varies depending on CTUs and CTIUs, they are usually
2		chief inspector or police staff equivalents.

- Q. Thank you. Can we turn then, please, against that background just to understand to your role just a little
- 5 bit more. Against that background, what is your
- 6 responsibility against that role that CTPHQ has?
- 7 A. So as the Senior National Coordinator for Pursue and
- 8 Prevent I'm the senior officer who oversees that
- 9 strategic coordination and direction. As you've
- 10 referenced, I also have some other specific roles around
- 11 incident response and have the ability to take national
- 12 command of an incident, if it is necessary to ensure
- 13 that we resolve the threat but that's probably less
- 14 relevant to this scenario.

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- 15 Q. Often in very senior leadership roles such as yours,
- 16 when you take over and you learn what's been happening,
- 17 you might form a view, "For me taking on this role, this
- 18 is something that I know needs to improve, needs to
- 19 change". Did you form those views in May 2024, when you
- 20 took over? What was top of your to-do list on
- 21 a strategic level?

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- 22 A. I think the reality is the Prevent system had already
- 23 changed and evolved. It is a continually evolving
- 24 mechanism, as is Pursue. What was a very live topic and
- 25 still is, for all of us in Counter Terrorism Policing,

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is the very large breadth of the threat and the number of children and young people that we see within our case work across the board and the impact of online content and how that impacts on that.

That wasn't a new thing, a substantial amount of work had been done before my tenure but that was a very live issue and continues to be for all of us.

- 8 Q. The broad concept of mixed, unstable or unclear 9 ideology, does that straddle those two areas of 10 particular concern: children and young people as a high 11 number of the caseload; and the potential for the 12 radicalising effect of online content?
- 13 A. So we don't actually use the term "mixed, unclear or 14 unstable" anymore. We stopped using that, I would say, 15 probably about 2022/23.
- 16 Q. I understand but I'm using it because it was the 17 terminology that was used originally and we can look at 18 how it's been picked up and changed and has more 19 subgroups but just focus on that envelope of concern for
- 20 the moment, regardless of the label?
- 21 A. It certainly can form part of that. It's not the only 22 factor because we do see some children and young people 23 who have a very fixed ideology and in probably a more
- 24
- traditional sense but, equally, the breadth of harmful 25
  - content that children and adults and vulnerable people

can access online certainly contributes to the concern.

- 2 Q. Thank you. If I fall into what you may think is the
- 3 error of referring to mixed, unstable or unclear
- 4 ideology, will you take it as referring, in modern
- 5 terms, to the different classifications, including those
- 6 who may be labelled as violence-fascinated individuals?
- 7 A. To some degree. Violence-fascinated individuals are not
- 8 all necessarily relevant to Counter Terrorism Policing
- 9 because it is a very broad term.
- Q. I'm just talking in terms of labels. If I use "mixed, 10
- 11 unstable or unclear", will you take it, unless
- 12 I indicate otherwise, that I'm referring to a number of
- 13 the current classifications that would all come within
- 14 that old banner; do you follow?
- A. Absolutely. 15
- 16 Q. Thank you. Turning then to CONTEST and Prevent. Much
- 17 of this ground has been covered with other witnesses.
- 18 If we just look at paragraph 8, as a brief refresh in
- 19 your statement, please. So the bottom of page 6:
- 20 Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare. You've made clear
- 21 that Prevent is about preventing individuals from
- 22 becoming terrorists but also about rehabilitating those
- 23 already involved in terrorism, those two strands; is
- 24 that correct?
- 25 A. That is correct.

Q. I want to turn to the Prevent Duty Guidance in this respect, please, the 2015 version that was in place at the time. So it is CTPHQ000011, please. What I'm interested in here is how the strategic objectives have changed.

So if we can go within that -- so this is the 2015 version, Deputy Assistant Commissioner, all right?

8 A. Yes.

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9 Q. If we could go to page 4, please, we see on the bottom 10 half of the page, under paragraph 6, the yellow 11 highlighting perhaps doesn't make it so easy, but:

12 "The 2011 Prevent strategy has three specific 13 strategic objectives:

"Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it;

"Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support; and

"Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to address."

If you just keep those in mind for a moment. Could we have on screen CTPHQ000012, to look at the 2023 equivalent. So after all of AR's referrals. So this is the 2023 Prevent Duty Guidance and it's page 8, please, paragraph 17, in the top right. Post-Shawcross that

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1 becomes: 2 "The objectives of Prevent are to ... 3 "Tackle the ideological causes of terrorism. 4 "Intervene early to support people susceptible to 5 radicalisation. 6 "Enable people who have already engaged in terrorism 7 to disengage and rehabilitate." 8 Yes? 9 A. That's correct. 10 Q. While one sees that obviously the overall objectives are similar, there are significant differences between those 11 12 and, in particular, the first bullet point, as we look 13 at it in the 2023 version, appears to have narrowed down 14 to place the emphasis on tackling the ideological causes

16 A. It does, yes.

of terrorism, yes?

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17 **Q.** What was your understanding as to the reason for that18 change?

A. So that was detailed in the Shawcross review that it was
 felt that Prevent should refocus on probably its sole
 purpose when it was first created around ideological
 causes. That was the view of the review.

Q. Your professional assessment of that now, looking back
 on it, particularly in the context of our current case,
 looking at somebody who might be described as having

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our workforce. We, as I say, are focused on the susceptibility and the vulnerability of being drawn into terrorism and that can be a very broad range of factors.

Q. Thank you.

It might be thought that the emphasis in the second bullet point on early intervention was a forward step and a helpful one, and that links, doesn't it, with the phrase that you used in relation to acting upstream. Should we understand that what you mean by that is that you are not necessarily looking for a TACT offence --- preparation of a TACT offence with a clear ideological cause because, if the person who is being referred has reached that stage, that's likely to be in Pursue, yes?

14 A. That's correct.

Q. By "upstream", should we understand that you are looking at hopefully an earlier stage, where the person being referred may be in a position where they are susceptible to being radicalised and you are trying to effect interventions before they go further down the dangerous terrorist river?

21 A. That's correct.

22 Q. Can you give us your blunt assessment of this? Are
 23 these sort of changes to how the fundamental strategic
 24 objectives of Prevent -- these sort of changes from year
 25 to year -- are they difficult for CTPHQ to manage in

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a fascination with extreme violence but without a clear ideology: was that a positive change or a problematic one, do you think?

4 A. I think in operational reality, our approach didn't 5 dramatically change because what our officers were 6 concerned with was the vulnerability and now 7 susceptibility to being drawn into terrorism, and our 8 policies, the DIF and all of the documents that 9 supported it, still reflected that, because we were 10 working very much upstream, there could be a broad range 11 of things that could impact on somebody being 12 susceptibility or vulnerable into being drawn into 13

terrorism. So whilst I accept that at a very high policy level the nuance is there, it didn't dramatically change our operational application of the vulnerability

and susceptibility to being drawn into terrorism,

17 because the threat is broad.

18 Q. So if it were to be suggested that the narrowing down in
19 the first objective may have been unhelpful in placing
20 undue emphasis on ideological causes, should
21 I understand from your previous answer that, while you
22 see that as a linguistic nuance, operationally you don't
23 think it had that effect?

24 **A.** I don't believe it did because we didn't communicate that as a change of direction in any significant way to

terms of what you have to put into policy and what youhave to train and teach?

3 A. I think any reviews and the recommendations are helpful 4 because they are normally in response to something, 5 whether that's a significant incident, a change in the 6 threat mechanism, so they are helpful. Our job is then 7 to ensure that we translate them into something that is 8 operationally workable and doesn't confuse or create too many updates for the workforce and we are able to do 9 10 that because the definition or the -- apologies, not the 11 definition, but the approach of being susceptible or 12 vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism allows us to 13 have a very flexible decision-making framework.

14 Q. I'm conscious, of course, that the learned Chair is
15 tasked with looking at what further reform may be due
16 but it is right to explore with you this issue a little
17 bit. Does the number of changes and the pace of them
18 cause a problem; is that itself a difficulty?
19 A. Not dramatically because Mr Shawcross' review was 20.

A. Not dramatically because Mr Shawcross' review was 2023. This is now -- so they are not so frequent that they cause significant changes. I think what is always important with any recommendations is us to have the ability to understand what is the outcome we are trying to achieve and then have the flexibility to decide how we can deliver those operationally within what is a much

1 larger counter terrorism system.

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Q. Thank you. I want to move, as my next topic, please, to look at some of the CTPHQ policies specifically. Again, much of this ground has been covered but I want to focus on the national level policing policies.

So could we start, please, with the May 2018 CTPHQ Policy for Prevent Practitioners. That's at CTPHQ000014.

Could we go, first, to page 5, please. We see there, in the middle of the page, Deputy Assistant Commissioner, that there are further objectives for Prevent, which are different to the strategic objectives that we were looking at a moment ago.

What's the purpose of having a differently expressed list of strategic objectives?

16 A. So those are specifically for policing, whereas the 17 Government CONTEST strategy clearly impacts on all of those who have a duty and also is a public-facing 18 19 document. These are strategic objectives for 20 operational policing colleagues.

21 Q. Thank you. If we go to page 14 within this, please. 22 So, within the Policy for Prevent Practitioners, we see 23 a section 6 on the Police Gateway Assessment. We've 24 heard a reasonable amount of evidence about this. By 25 way of brief recap, at a high level of summary, would it

1 different, more detailed research, and it comes 2 afterwards but, in fact, you are telling us that all of 3 the DIF or aspects of the DIF were expected to be done ahead of the PGA? 4

5 A. Yes, and there is a document -- forgive me, it is 6 produced in my statement and I think it is probably 7 exhibit 15 or 16 -- which is the DIF guidance, which 8 came out shortly after this. That was in the play at 9 this time and was known to practitioners, so they would 10 have been aware that DIF was required.

11 Q. Thank you. I'm going to come to an aspect of the DIF in 12 due course.

13 You have touched on the test and it was intended, 14 was it not, to be, at this stage, the first threshold, 15 a relatively low test for getting through the threshold? 16 A. That's correct.

17 Q. A decision, as we've covered with others, to be taken by 18 the CTCO?

19 A. By the CTCO but then the supervisor has 20 a responsibility --

21 Q. Then the sergeant will look at it and approve or 22 question, yes?

23 Α. So it's a recommendation from the CTCO, supervised by 24 the sergeant.

25 Q. What it is not is a decision for the FIMU? 23

1 be fair to say that this is the first threshold that

2 a CTCO would have to apply and it would come at the

3 stage after the FIMU has done the deconfliction

4 exercise?

A. Stage 1 is the deconfliction exercise, stage 2, which is 5 6 the CTCO conducts an initial assessment using the 7 Prevent Gateway Assessment and then applies the 8 reasonable grounds to suspect test, for it to move to 9 the next stage.

10 Q. Thank you. So, if we see the box at the bottom:

> "The PGA has been designed as an initial assessment and triage tool and as such should not require additional research with partner agencies. The Dynamic Investigation Framework (DIF) and the Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF) come after the PGA and both require more detailed research."

17 Yes?

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18 A. It does. It's actually -- the DIF came in shortly after 19 this policy was published and was used as part of the 20 Prevent Gateway Assessment at the time of the first 21 referral, which is why one was filled in.

22 Q. That's exactly why I wanted to take you to this because, 23 on some of the policies, would you agree, that's quite 24 confusing because, if you were to look at this, you 25 would think there's the PGA, and the DIF is something

A. That's correct.

2 Q. Of course, the FIMU will be providing information, 3 a readout of the intelligence or lack of intelligence, 4 which you would fully expect the CTCO to take into 5 account in making his or her recommendation, yes?

6 A. They take it into account, yes.

7 Q. But not the role of the FIMU to direct what the overall 8 outcome should be of the PGA?

A. No, the FIMU conducts the deconfliction assessment in 10 line with Annex B and that is effectively the Pursue 11 relevance test, as we would call it now -- referred to 12 by them as CTD then -- and then the CTCO is looking for

13 that different consideration, which is Prevent

relevance, which is a much lower threshold because we 14 15 are not talking about investigation and Pursue

16 standards

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17 Now, we have been exploring with the individual involved 18 witnesses and with CTPNW corporately examples of how, in 19 AR's referral, it might be suggested that what was at 20 least written by the FIMU may have overreached. I don't

21 seek your comment on exactly what happened in AR's case

22 but I do seek your assistance on whether that is

23 a problem that you recognise, that the distinctions 24

between the role of the FIMU and the CTCO are perhaps

25 not always as clear and as well understood as they 24

- should be? 1
- 2 A. I think the roles are distinctly defined in the guidance
- 3 in a number of different documents, and still are. The
- 4 Pursue test is a specific one, as you referred to
- 5 earlier, as to whether somebody needs to go forward for
- 6 further investigation. The Prevent test is different.
- 7 I'm fairly confident, from speaking to practitioners,
- 8 that they understand those roles and then their
- 9 responsibilities of the decisions they have to make
- 10 against the tests they have to make.
- In other reviews -- I'm not asking about AR's case now, 11
- 12 but in other reviews -- have you looked at the paperwork
- 13 in relation to Prevent referrals and seen examples of
- 14 where the FIMU's language may be suggesting that a case
- 15 might be suitable to be closed or where language around
- 16 a lack of CT/DE (counter terrorism/domestic extremism)
- 17 intelligence is at risk of being equating with nothing
- 18 of Prevent relevance?
- 19 A. I would have to -- I wouldn't want to mislead the
- 20 Inquiry and say whether I have seen that specifically or
- 21 not in other reviews. I think the difference being the
- 22 language they use may lead to that consideration. But
- 23 the CTCOs do understand their responsibilities and the
- 24 decision. So irrespective of what the FIMU writes, the
- 25 CTCO should, and is clear through policy and guidance
- 1 done by the local authority Channel coordinator?
- 2 A. Yes.
- 3 Q. But if you were not in Dovetail, that would be done by
- the CTCO? 4
- 5 A. I believe so, yes.
- 6 Q. Thank you. If we just look at the Dovetail policy,
- 7 please. CTPHQ000045. It does add a layer of complexity
- 8 but, if we look at the flowchart on page 8 -- and if
- 9 that could just be enlarged, please -- if we see at the
- 10 bottom left, the stage reached that passes initial
- 11 screening and police have suspicion of a vulnerability
- 12 to radicalisation, which requires further consideration
- 13 by multi-agency panel, that would be the PGA stage?
- 14 A. Yes, so that's the reasonable grounds to suspect
- 15 decision at the end of the PGA.
- 16 Q. And "No, the exit process", is shorthand for the
- 17 recommendation checked by the sergeant; would you agree?
- 18 A. The recommendation should be checked by the sergeant
- 19 whether it is a positive or an exit.
- 20 Q. Yes, but sticking with what the exit process would
- 21 involve -- I will come onto if it was recommendation
- 22 going forward -- but the exit process would involve, in
- 23 fact, two stages, the recommendation and the check by
- 24 the sergeant?
- 25 A. Yes.

- 1 and training, as to what their role is and what
- 2 assessment they are making.
- 3 Q. Assuming that the CTCO has the experience and knowledge
  - not to over-defer to what may look like a direction from
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- 6 **A.** Yes, that could always be a risk. However, then you
- 7 have layers of supervision to check and support
- 8 decision-making.
- 9 Q. Thank you. The outcomes from the PGA -- again, I'm
- 10 going to take this briefly because we have explored it
- 11 with others -- recommendation for closure, as you have
  - dealt, with to be checked by a supervising sergeant.
- 13 It could go forward to multi-agency led or
- 14 a police-led process or police-led partnership, yes?
- A. Yes. 15
- 16 Q. The stage 4, if it go through to a multi-agency led
- 17 outcome, is that where, in the old terminology, the
- 18 Vulnerability Assessment Framework would come in?
- 19 That's correct.
- 20 Q. Who would then do the Vulnerability Assessment
- 21 Framework, have I understood it correctly, would depend
- 22 upon whether or not the unit was within the Dovetail
- 23 trial or not?
- 24 Α. That's correct.
- 25 If you were within the Dovetail trial, the VAF would be
- Q. If we follow the arrow up, Dovetail cases then, in the
- 2 old way of doing things, you'd have to get the
- 3 information onto the system, CMIS, that the local
- 4 authority could use; is that right?
- 5 A. Yes.
- 6 Q. That agreement, as you have indicated, that it should go
- 7 to the local authority for information gathering will
- 8 itself have to be approved by the sergeant?
- 9 A. As part of that gateway decision, yes.
- 10 Q. Then you see that the local authority Channel
- 11 coordinator is the person who is gathering the
- 12 information from all relevant partners --
- 13 A. Correct.
- 14 Q. -- looking at whether there's sufficient information for
- 15 consideration as to whether it should be adopted by the
- 16 panel, yes?
- 17 A. Correct.
- 18 Q. But then, in fact, it goes back to the police under
- 19 Dovetail, for the police to make the formal decision at
- 20 the next level as to whether it is suitable to be
- 21 referred to the panel?
- 22 So legislation dictated that the Section 36 decision was Α.
- 23 a police decision. I think my Home Office colleague
- 24 covered yesterday there was a slight amendment to the
- 25 legislation at some point but, ultimately, the police

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1 would take into account all of the information and 2 assess at reasonable grounds to believe at that point.

- 3 Q. Thank you. So if we had an extension of this for 4 non-Dovetail cases, it would be a similar process but 5 carried out by the police?
- 6 Α. But still multi-agency information gathering.
- 7 Q. Thank you. The review of Dovetail as a pilot found that 8 there was friction in some sites between the Counter 9 Terrorism police and the local authority. First of all,

10 are you familiar with that?

- A. Only having seen reference to it in documents, as part 11 12 of the review of this case.
- 13 Q. It's not something that you have personal knowledge of?
- A. No. However, I would say I wasn't in the network at the 14 time of that process. So I wouldn't necessarily have 15 16 seen it if it was evident then.
- 17 Q. Thank you. Against that background, I'm going to come 18 back to the Dignate Review of AR's referrals in a little 19 bit more detail later in my questioning but can I ask 20 you a preliminary point about it, please. It's 21 CTPHQ000028. So, this is a Counter Terrorism Policing 22 Headquarters' badged report and, if we go, please, to 23 page 3, you can see that this is the "Executive

24 Summary". I wonder if we can just have the final bullet 25 point highlighted, please.

1 Executive Summary, a finding of the review commissioned 2 by CTPHQ that, from the facts in these cases, there was 3 enough to get any of the three referrals through PGA 4 into Dovetail information gathering; do you agree with

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- 6 A. That was the assessment of this review and also the PLR.
- 7 Q. Do you agree with it?
- 8 A. I do.

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9 Q. Thank you:

> "From there, the [local authority] coordinator would have gathered the VAF and multi-agency information. However, each time the case was entirely police led ..."

Then these words:

"... seemingly with a reluctance to share the risk/decision-making with the Dovetail lead."

Then it goes on to say:

"It has been observed in some Dovetail sites, CTCOs making a decision at PGA, based on the Section 36 threshold, rather than that of suspect, therefore more cases being closed at PGA than in other regions, which didn't have Dovetail in place."

Do you understand upon what evidence the Dignate report concluded that there was a seeming reluctance in AR's referral to share the risk decision-making with the Dovetail lead?

It said this:

"These cases took place at a time when Dovetail was in place in the region, this may have contributed to some of the decision-making and this is explored further in the learning observations at the end of the report. Since its inception in 2012, Channel has been managed and led by Counter Terrorism police, typically Prevent officers. However, in 2016 a new approach (known as Dovetail) was trialled to move ownership of Channel into local authorities. The new local authority led Channel approach did not change the process of Channel referrals or delivery but changed where some of the functions of the process and delivery were managed."

Just pausing there. That's exactly what I have been looking at with you; would you agree?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Thank you:

> "The trial took place in nine local authorities and ceased in 2024."

20 We remind ourselves that you took up post in May 21 2024:

"It is apparent from the facts in these cases that there was enough to get any of the three referrals through PGA into Dovetail information gathering." Just pausing there. That seems to be, within the

A. It was just based on the reviewer's observations, would 2 be my assessment. I haven't explored in depth why they

came to that conclusion.

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4 Q. Can you just help us with this: the Dignate process, was 5 that effectively a detailed desktop review or did it 6 involve interviews of the officers concerned?

7 A. It is a detailed operational desktop review. It didn't 8 include detailed interviews with those who made the

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10 **Q.** So, we should understand that to be a view formed by the 11 Dignate reviewer or reviewing team, based on the 12 documents that they had assessed?

13 A. It's difficult for me to say because I wouldn't want to 14 speak for them. A number of our colleagues in our 15 interventions capability have worked within Prevent for

16 a period of time, so it could have been their general 17 knowledge about the outcomes of the Dovetail pilot and

18 review, as opposed to something specific. It would be

19 unfair of me to speculate because I don't know.

20 Q. I think what you can tell us in terms of process is that 21 that wouldn't have come from direct discussion with the

22 officers or the sergeants involved?

23 That's correct. I believe.

24 Q. Thank you. That can come down from the screen. We are 25 looking here at how the system used to work in a region 32

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such as CTP North West where Dovetail was involved.

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To the interested outsider, the system does seem quite a complex one; would you agree?

- A. I think I can understand to somebody not within the system that it appears complex, I think like many police and multi-agency processes, there are a lot of parts and connecting parts that make up the process. So I do appreciate it can look complex. That's why we have policy training and guidance and our staff are subject matter experts in the area they work in.
- Q. As part of that complexity, you have not just a multistage process, some of it led by police, some of it involving different agencies and multi-agency, but you also have, strapped on top of that, different threshold tests at different stages and then a trial which amends, in some areas, who does the tasks.

Are you able to give a view as to whether the complexity of the process in general terms does create operational challenges -- and I'm going to ask you this in the context -- and this isn't a reflection in my question on any individual from whom we have heard evidence -- but in the context, perhaps, of less-abled staff within the cohort who are working as ground level. Is it not an awful lot to take on and to follow?

25 A. I think the reality is, as described by my Home Office

colleagues, it is about six stages and each is quite clearly defined. The reasonable grounds to suspect and believe tests are very familiar to police officers, they feature in an awful lot of legislation, including even their powers of arrest. They are familiar terminology. So, the reality is it is a stage process that helps us triage what are a very broad range of referrals from the public and referrers, which is what we then want to be able to distil down and understand the risks.

So some of the nuances of what you need to consider to make those decisions are complex because radicalisation and counter terrorism and safeguarding and vulnerability is complex. But the actual structure and the number of decision-making points, I wouldn't say is any more or less complex than an awful lot of other decision-making processes that we deal with in policing and broader safeguarding.

Q. What about -- because I think you are seeking to give a level of reassurance that complex to the outsider but. once you understand it and once you are trained in it, that they are familiar tests and it's understood -- what about to the agencies on the outside? Do you think that the other agencies, education to take an example, local authorities to take another, healthcare providers: do you think in general terms that they have a sufficient

- 1 understanding of these complexities to be able to work 2 effectively with Prevent? 3
  - A. I think that's very difficult to answer because the level of knowledge will vary from local authority area to local authority area, depending on how often the individuals interact with Prevent in their roles. Clearly the Home Office lead the training for those who have a duty to co-operate.

I would clarify, when I say and give reassurance that the actual process isn't that complicated, what I would say is we ask our practitioners to make very difficult and finely balanced decisions. So that's not to suggest that the decisions they have to make are simple. I was just really saying the actual steps in the process can be broken down and are straightforward to work through. The decisions are very difficult.

17 Q. I may come back to that in a different context. Thank 18 vou.

> Where the decision is against accepting somebody at the PGA stage, would you agree that, in most cases, it is important to look at updating and informing the referrer, if it is a school, for example, or a healthcare provider?

- 24 A. Sorry, could you repeat the question?
- 25 If the decision, as it was in AR's case, is this person

1 is not going to be taken through for consideration for 2 Channel, so the case is going to be closed, if the 3 referral has come from a school or healthcare provider 4 or from local frontline police, is it important to 5 liaise with the person who made the referral, to explain 6 what the outcome has been?

A. It's important to liaise with the person who made the referral to understand the facts to conduct the assessment. Whether then the officer needs to respond 10 back to them, that can vary. It would be clearly 11 preferable but I would suggest, if there's any 12 suggestion that there's an outstanding risk and action 13 that needs to be taken by that referrer, for 14 an argument, if you are referring that back to that 15 person to then continue support because it is not 16 suitable for this process, then that would be 17 particularly important.

Q. Important in that context because if there are continuing vulnerabilities that may include a risk of violence to others. In terms of understanding who is going to take forward the mitigation of the risk, it's really important then that the referrers understand clearly if Prevent is not taking the case forward?

24 **A**. So policy reference what we call onward signposting and 25 that can either be back to the original referrer or to

other agencies. It also depends on what the broader
context of the case sits within. So if there are
already live engagements by those agencies and they are
aware, for instance, in strategic discussions -- so how
that's communicated will depend on what steps are being
taken throughout the whole process.

- 7 **Q.** All of that is true but, without discourtesy, what's the
  8 answer to my question: is it not important in the sort
  9 of case where there is ongoing vulnerability and a risk
  10 of violence to others, that if Prevent is not going to
  11 take the case forward that the other agencies are
  12 informed of that?
- 13 A. If there is an ongoing risk or something that they needto be aware of, absolutely.
- 15 Q. There may be all sorts of other cases but, in thatscenario, that would be important to communicate?
- 17 A. Yes, if there is a risk, yes.
- 18 **Q.** Thank you. In that context, I'm not talking here about
  19 a cold call from a member of the public, saying, "I've
  20 heard something that's a bit concerning", I'm talking
  21 about professionals who make a referral in, of course
  22 there may be exceptions where the sharing of information
  23 may be sensitive, and so on, but, in broad terms, the
  24 Prevent process would be prepared to share with fellow
- 25 professionals, teachers, clinicians, local authorities, 37

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social care, the fact that Prevent have looked at the case and were not taking it on?

14 October 2025

3 A. Generally. Again, it can depend on the circumstances, 4 if there is particular sensitivities or vulnerabilities 5 as to why that wouldn't be appropriate. So a lot of 6 these decisions are then case specific on the 7 circumstances because Prevent is not a punitive process. 8 So it is important that we signpost on, make people 9 aware of risk but, equally, it's important that we don't 10 unintentionally create a situation where Prevent is seen 11 as a marker against somebody. So there are nuances to 12 those engagements. But where there are partners that we 13 are regularly engaging with as part of these 14 considerations as part of the multi-agency information 15 then, clearly, we have information sharing agreements 16 with them.

17 Q. We don't need to go into the precise mechanics about 18 markers and how markers can work, in some cases, on the 19 PNC, beyond knowing that that is something that can be 20 done. One of the issues that arises in this case, in 21 relation to AR's referrals, is police officers on the 22 frontline after the referrals not being aware that AR 23 had been referred into Prevent and certainly not knowing 24 that that happened on three occasions. In general 25 terms, is there a difficulty with frontline constables,

response officers, being able to access that information? Is there any security or Counter Terrorism Policing concern about that being something that's quite visible on police records?

A. So we obviously work and utilise different systems because we are in the counter terrorism system for obvious reasons. We don't routinely place markers on individuals when they are in assessment processes and they've not been adopted by Prevent because we have many thousands of people who are referred into Prevent each year and actually are then exited out of Prevent because there's no concern. So that would be really inappropriate to place Prevent markers on individuals who had been in good faith referred to the system but weren't to be considered.

There are mechanisms to share and break out intelligence into force systems if it needs to be broken out. Again, the sensitivity would depend on the context of the referral and any wider information as to what could be shared.

Q. But in AR's case, against a background of serious
 criminal offending, where there had been a serious
 assault with one adapted weapon used and a knife
 carried, against a background that had been raised in
 a Prevent referral of researching school shootings and

1 asking about imagery of severed heads and of guns, all 2 of that was known and then there was a further concern 3 raised at the strategy discussion in December about 4 an interest in the Manchester Arena attack and it having 5 been a "good battle". Leaving aside for one moment 6 whether that should or shouldn't have led to being 7 adopted at the PGA stage, that sort of a case, where 8 there are concerns that there are mental health 9 vulnerabilities but there was information of concern, if 10 it didn't meet the threshold, it is something that would 11 have been valuable for frontline officers to know,

12 wouldn't it? 13 A. Yes, it would be valuable. Your point about -- I think 14 an awful lot of that had been shared in the strategy 15 meeting where local police colleagues and, obviously, 16 with a criminal investigation ongoing, which, again, 17 would have had information that would have been 18 available to frontline colleagues. I'm not aware of 19 exactly --

Q. Forgive me, you say that but part of the complexity of
what we have to look at is the fact that that was in
a strategy discussion but it didn't filter down, it
seems, in Lancashire Constabulary record keeping to
records that would have been readily visible to
frontline officers. Now, there is a local police force

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issue about that but I'm asking you, for the moment, to put that to one side and look at it from a CTPHQ process.

Essentially, I suppose it comes to this: is there a case for CTPHQ recalibrating how it approaches closed referrals to play a part in making sure that on police systems it is more visible to frontline officers that somebody has been referred into Prevent but not taken on?

10 A. I think it is certainly something that we can look at
 11 and should test our current policies and process to
 12 ensure whether that's effective or not.

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- 13 Q. Because faced with a decision about -- simplifying the 14 actual circumstances on the ground but faced with 15 a decision about how to exercise discretion, in 16 circumstances where AR was later found to be carrying 17 a knife, it stands to reason, doesn't it, that 18 information about Prevent, that there may have been 19 enough to look at somebody for Prevent, is in itself 20 relevant information to how that discretion should be 21 exercised?
- A. I think it's helpful for frontline officers to have as
   much information as they can to inform their decisions,
   whether under discretion or under use of powers.
- ${\bf 25}~{\bf Q}.~{\bf Would}$  this be fair, that, of course, there may be

1 individual cases that need to be looked at, where it may 2 be difficult, but if, on the whole, the Prevent process 3 is prepared to share with outside professionals that, 4 "A case has been looked at and has been closed but there 5 are remaining vulnerabilities and we need to keep an eye 6 on the risk", there wouldn't seem to be good reason for 7 that not to be shared with frontline police officers? 8 A. I think there is a difference between sharing it with 9 named individuals who are actively working and 10 supporting an individual in a case, versus putting 11 a very broad marker on systems in case the nuance of 12 that is lost. But, clearly, as I say, that requires us 13 to check our current processes and ensure that we 14 consider what the current sharing is and whether that's 15 sufficient. 16 Q. Thank you. But your evidence is that that is something 17 which you would agree perhaps needs to be at least 18 looked at but is it for that reason that it being 19 available to police forces in that very wide way, there 20 might be some concern about that, compared to a narrow 21 group of professionals who are directly involved? 22 A. I think it would be difficult for me to say 23 specifically. I think we need to explore what the cause

information is getting to who it needs to, but that there are no unintended consequences or risks around those things, as with any process.
Q. Thank you. So could we go back, please, to CTPHQ000014. This is back in the 2018 Policy for Prevent

Practitioners, Deputy Assistant Commissioner. Could we just go to page 8. Can I just raise with you a brief point about the training requirements. You mentioned the foundation course and, in the middle of the page, we see that the requirement is:

"CTCOs will complete the National Prevent Foundation Course within six months of starting the role."

We don't need to turn it up but, sir, for your note, I think at page 10, there is the equivalent for sergeant supervisors.

Understanding real world issues about training courses being put on and the need for them to be perhaps at set times and they can't be put on for individual officers, is that acceptable, do you think, that somebody can start the CTCO role without having done the foundation course, for as long as six months, and we have heard that, in individual cases, Constable Thompson's was longer. Is that acceptable, do you think?

25 **A.** That was the policy position at the time. It is now

that it should be completed as soon as practicable and there are online courses, if it's not sooner. Clearly, my preference would be that people are trained as soon as possible. I would add though that they would have the support of their peers, their supervisors and be shown how to conduct the process and given that mentoring and support when they arrived in role, even if they hadn't conducted that role but, clearly, the sooner

and effect of each action is, to make sure that it's

safeguarding the public, most importantly, and the

Q. The duality that that could be the case for the CTCO and
 the sergeant meant that, at least theoretically, you
 could have a CTCO making a recommendation and a sergeant
 approving it, with neither having gone through the
 foundation course?

A. That is possible, yes. I would expect then local
 supervisors and local leaders to understand the training
 needs of their workforce and be alive to that and be
 supporting them appropriately and also those officers to
 use their general and basic policing skills, national
 decision-making model in understanding risk and
 safeguarding to support them in their decision-making.
 Q. The current practice that you mention, the requirement

Q. The current practice that you mention, the requirement that it be done as soon as practicable and that there are online courses if necessary, on the face of it, that sounds a positive step. Is any check actually done and

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(11) Pages 41 - 44

- 1 audit done of how quickly after appointment CTCOs are
- 2 currently doing their foundation course?
- 3 A. So that would be the responsibility of the CT heads
  - through their operational ownership of their individual
- 5 regions. There are central records as to who has
- 6 completed courses and the numbers that are held within
- 7 the ODU.

- 8 **Q.** Do you know what picture those central numbers paint?
- 9 A. I would have to get those -- I'm sorry, I don't know 10 that detail here today.
- Thank you. The 2018 policy was then updated in August 11 Q.
- 12 2020. Perhaps we can just deal with this before we take
- 13 our morning break. So CTPHQ000117.
- 14 A. Apologies, could I just add, for reassurance around
- 15 training, we have now brought in the PATH, which is the
- 16 new assessment framework and that was mandatory training
- 17 for all staff, so I can here today give that assurance
- 18 on those numbers because I do know that to be correct,
- 19 that all staff had to go through that mandatory
- 20 training, and it's now built into the foundation
- 21 training.

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- 22 Q. On the PAF?
- 23 A. So as far as the current risk assessments, all staff
- 24 have completed that.
- 25 Q. That's helpful, thank you. In relation to the updated

  - Q. Thank you. If we go within this to page 38, could we
  - have the top quarter of the page highlighted. We see,
- 3 again, the complexity, but I'm not going to ask you more
- 4 about that. We have dealt with that. We see
- 5 "Information, intelligence direct referral" coming in at
- 6 the top, "Partner referral, local intel/other CT or
  - non-CT". Then we have the deconfliction stage with the
- 8 FIMU assessment. It says there:

"Create a new case as soon as a referral is received and then FIMU/CTCO/gatekeeper completes mandatory checks. The RADO process then determines suitability."

12 That reference to the RADO process then determining 13 suitability, in one sense, is this fair, that's accurate

- 14 because, if the RADO outcome was in favour of needing
- 15 a Pursue response, so criminal justice, in simple terms,
- 16 type response, it wouldn't be suitable for Prevent?
- 17 A. That's correct or, if it was considered, it would need
- 18 to be considered for different mechanisms. So for
- 19 Prevent, as a multi-agency, it wouldn't be suitable.
- 20 Q. But even here, in the modified language, in trying to
  - get away from the language of "CT/DE", saying the RADO
- 22 process then determines suitability, is there not still
- 23 a risk that, at least in this flowchart, that the FIMU's
- 24 role is prone to be misunderstood because the RADO
- 25 process, in another sense, shouldn't be determining the

- 1 version, I think, here, is this where you were
- 2 mentioning your point about version 3.5, and so on. So
- 3 version 3.5, it may be, but it's not like an IT update.
- 4 This is the first version of the updated policy that
- 5 would have gone out to members of staff?
- 6 A. I believe that's correct, from the next page, yes.
- 7 Q. Thank you. You say that this -- in your statement --
- 8 substantively reflected the 2018 policy but clarified
- 9 some of the language used within it, including removing
- 10 the "CT/DE" references; is that right?
- 11 A. That's correct.
- 12 Why were they removed, to your understanding?
- 13 It was in recognition that the phrase "CT/DE" was
- 14 something we were no longer using and it could be
- 15 misinterpreted, so a particular focus on either UK-based
- 16 concerns or international concerns, and we moved to the
- 17 broader term around Pursue or CT relevance and then
- 18 Prevent relevance. So it was to remove any
- 19 misinterpretation of the terminology.
- 20 Q. Thank you. So current language, and I think that
- 21 continues now, does it, that one should now be seeing
- 22 Pursue or CT relevant, juxtaposed with Prevent
- 23 relevance, where the Prevent relevance is a much broader
- 24 category?

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25 **A**. That's correct.

- 1 suitability for Prevent at all?
  - 2 A. No, the RADO process is a separate process in the
  - 3 intelligence world and that's deciding on those
  - 4 outcomes. I think I can understand your point, looking
  - 5 at it as somebody from outside of the system. I think
  - 6 those within the counter terrorism system understand
  - 7 that there is a FIMU process and there is a Prevent
  - 8 process and whenever you condense or summarise words,
  - 9 you are going to loose some of the granular detail that
  - 10
    - is in the more detailed documents.
  - 11 If we look at CTPHQ000114, please. This is the NSIM,
  - 12 the National Standards for Intelligence Management,
    - Annex B for Prevent. If we go to page 3, the learned
  - 14 Chair has seen this with a previous witness.
  - 15 At the bottom of the page, please, under section 4, 16 I'm not going to read it all out because, as I have
  - 17 said, we have had it read into the record previously,
  - 18 but this is making clear that the RADO outcome, even in
  - 19 layperson's terms, the bottom outcome, RADO 6,
  - 20 specifically does not mean that the case is not suitable
  - 21 for Prevent and this was warning against FIMUs giving
  - 22 intelligence a grading of RADO 6 and then not passing it
  - 23 onto Prevent, wasn't it?
  - 24 **A**. That's correct. Annex B was brought in, my
  - 25 understanding is, in 2018, I don't have the specific

1		date, to address the fact that there needed to be
2		absolute clarity that the FIMU needed to pass those
3		referrals with those outcomes onto Prevent so that the
4		Prevent tests could be conducted.
5	Q.	Taking your point about any flowchart condensing
6		language may have these, are you really confident that
7		these distinctions were understood at this time in 2020?
8	A.	As confident as I can be. I think and it's very

- A. As confident as I can be. I think -- and it's very difficult to say the level of understanding in every individual in large teams but I'm confident that it featured in training, the policies were updated appropriately and the people understood their roles and
- 12 13 then you have supervision to support that process. 14 MR MOSS: Thank you.
- 15 Sir, I'm going to turn to a different document, 16 still on the same topic but I wonder if that might be 17 a moment to take perhaps a 10-minute, mid-morning break? SIR ADRIAN FULFORD: Certainly. We will sit again between 18 19 11.25 and 11.30.
- 20 (11.16 am)

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21 (A short break)

effectively, to help them.

22 (11.28 am)

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- 23 MR MOSS: Thank you, sir. Deputy Assistant Commissioner, 24 can I seek your assistance next, please, with more CTPHQ 25 policy. So I want to look, please, at the CTCO and
- 1 necessarily be something they'd be looking at every 2 single day but it means they have got sufficient 3 granular information to help them work through something 4 that's specifically tricky. It is a toolkit,
- 6 Q. Again, I just want to understand a bit of reality about 7 this. Would be fair that this is a bit of a manual that 8 they might turn to guite often in their early months for 9 guidance?
- 10 A. I would have thought so. It would depend on the 11 individual's knowledge, confidence. It would be 12 different for each individual, I think it's fair to say.
- 13 Q. Potentially again, allowing for individuals working in 14 different ways, but if you had a difficult case, a good 15 thing to refer to?
- 16 It would certainly help, as would a number of the other Α. 17 policy and guidance documents.
- 18 Q. The fact that it took two years and, I think, three 19 months from first inception to publication, can we draw 20 anything from that?
- 21 A. I mean, I think it's probably reflective of the 22 complexity and the desire to try and have everything in 23 one document, so that there is a one-stop shop, that 24 will often mean that if something new emerges, they

would then pause and add it in. Clearly, you have to 51

CTCO's supervisor policy guidance. CTPHQ000034, please. 1

2 So the "Case Officer Guide", as it is entitled:

3 "One-stop shop for CTCOs and CTCO supervisors."

4 If we look at page 2. Could we have the version

- 5 history. So, again, picking up on your comments
- 6 earlier, does it look like the way we should read this
- 7 is that everything until 3.5 "Publish" is an internal
- 8 draft going through checks, taking on feedback and being 9 produced?
- 10 A. That's my understanding, yes.
- 11 Q. We take it from that that it was first published on 12 25 August 2020?
- 13 I believe so, yes. Α.
- 14 Q. So notably between AR's first and his second and third 15 referrals, yes?
- 16 A. That's correct.
- 17 Q. Described as a one-stop shop for CTCOs and their 18 supervisors, one just notes, I think, that you will be 19 familiar that this is 170 pages long and 13 annexes
- 20 within that. What's your reflection on that?
- 21 A. So, this is a guidance document to support 22 practitioners. It sits beneath the overarching policy
- 23 documents which are shorter and describe that high level
- 24 process. Its aim is to help and support them with what
- 25 are very complex and difficult decisions. It wouldn't
- 1 get to an end point where then you stop and you publish.
- Q. Thank you. Without going through contents pages to 3 prove a negative, I think you will be able to confirm
- 4 that, at this stage, there was no policy guidance or
- 5 specific provision about repeat referrals?
- 6 A. There was no specific policy, that's correct.
- 7 Q. So, there the standard threshold, the suspicion
- 8 threshold, or the reasonable suspicion threshold, would
- 9 be applied but nothing over and above that emphasised
- 10 about the need for a particular care with repeat
- 11 referrals?

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- 12 A. Not specifically referenced but the expectation is that 13 a CTCO looks at all of the breadth of information and
- 14 that includes checking systems for not just Prevent
- 15 systems but policing systems to understand the totality of an individual and consider the holistic and
- 16
- 17 cumulative risks that present.
- 18 Q. Thank you. If we just look at page 38, to deal with one 19
- matter. In relation to conducting the PGA stage, 20
- I think, in relation to visits, the general guidance was
- 21 that it wouldn't be normally necessary to conduct
- 22 a visit ahead of a PGA assessment?
- 23 A. That's correct because it's an initial triage and then
- 24 an assessment but the policy does allow that, if one is
- 25 felt necessary, with supervisor support, it could be

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1		conducted.
2	Q.	Thank you
3		page:
4		"Relev
5	A.	Yes, there
6	Q.	"It may be
7		immediate
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9		in these cir
10		given to wh
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12		There
13		"The C
14		really not e
15		something
16		not contact
17		subject cor
18		So sor
19		wouldn't be
20	A.	Generally,
21		I think it wa
22		meeting, so
23		CTCO nee
24	Q.	Thank you
25		we look at
4		- cc

25 Q.

ank you. So if we see right at the bottom of the "Relevant exceptional circumstances." s, there is a section. may be appropriate ... if there is a suspected mediate risk to life or limb, or any very urgent or ute safeguarding risk [given as an example] although these circumstances, consideration should first be en to whether the subject needs to be referred with gency out of Prevent into another unit or agency." There is also reference to (b): "The CTCO and CTCO supervisor may feel that there is ally not enough detail to make an assessment but mething in the referral raises their concerns and that t contacting the subject risks losing contact with the bject completely." So some exceptions to that but, generally, a visit uldn't be expected before the PGA stage? enerally, no. I am conscious, I believe, in this case, nink it was set as an action from the strategy eeting, so clearly there was a wider context that the CO needed to consider. ank you. Page 24, please, within this document. If look at the foot of the page, this is all in a list offensive weapons" -- some kinds of bladed weapons were included within that -- "or who tries to acquire any weapons illegally online", was being flagged. I'm not going to read out all the detail but that was certainly something to be looked out for; would you agree? "(xi) Someone who carries any sort of weapon illegally,

2 3 4 5 6 A. Correct. 7 Q. 8 even if the ownership of the weapon is legal in itself 9 within the UK. This could be on the street, in 10 an educational establishment or in any public space." 11 Yes? 12 A. Yes. 13 Q. "(xii) Someone who intentionally seeks out or shares 14 real beheading, murder or torture videos, particularly if they are also religious, political or racially/hate 15 16 based connected videos." 17 Also guidance that: 18 "This can include other extremist, terrorist or 19 egregious and graphic or real violent content, 20 particularly if this material has not been produced by 21 a lawful news media outlet." 22 Repeated, very gory degloving injuries, would you 23 agree that that would come within (xii)? 24 Α.

If we go to the next page, please, and (7), right at the 55

of what the CTCO should be looking out for. So one sees 6, "Prevent relevance". So I'm just going to the foot of the page so that you have the header for context. If we go over the page and if we can focus on (viii): "Someone who seems to be obsessed with, or who has apparently fantasised about, committing murder or mass murders (like school massacres, rampages, shooter attacks or similar) ..."

"(1) This is particularly concerning if they have also made notes, drawn up a 'hit list' or diagrams of attack plans, even if on the face of it these lists seem sketchy or juvenile, and even if on the face of it the person concerned does not appear physically capable of acting on these lists/plans.

"(2) For Prevent what a subject believes they are capable of is often just as relevant as what we perceive them to be physically capable of."

That was, would you agree, giving detail about that type of interest in violence, falling within what Prevent officers should be looking out for?

21 A. Yes, it's flagging it as something they need to 22 consider, as part of their risk assessments.

23 Q. Thank you. Then, just so that we don't overlook it, if 24 we can just scroll down a little bit to have (x), (xi) 25 and (xii) on the page, "Someone who owns illegal

1 end, in bold: 2 3

"Any combination of the above factors and indicators should be considered very strongly as a potential Prevent referral, after deconfliction with a FIMU to ascertain Pursue relevance."

Would you agree all of that was clear in the CTCO guidance, at least in the August version?

8 A. Clear in the guidance that they need to consider all of 9 those factors, absolutely.

10 Q. It's not just clear in the guidance that they need to 11 consider all of those factors, the wording is considered 12 very strongly as a potential Prevent referral. Also, if 13 there is a combination of those, it's looking towards 14 referral, they are due very strong consideration?

A. That's what the policy asks people to consider. 15 16 Clearly, the job of the CTCO then is to take into 17 account the context and balance all of that information

18 and make their decision.

19 Q. Thank you. Turning then to the role of ideology within 20 Prevent, and I'm obviously concentrating on 2019 to 21 2021. Within the same document, can we go to page 104, 22 please. I appreciate that these are documents from

23 before your time --

A. It's fine, I'm familiar with them.

25 Q. -- and you're assisting, you are familiar with them.

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Can we look at (3), please. So under "Notes". I'm going to give you a moment to refresh your memory from that, rather than reading it all out. (Pause)

So would you agree that the content there is probably directly reflecting and intended to reflect the messaging that had gone out in the joint letter, in the summer of 2019?

- 8 A. In part, yes. It's referring there to TACT, as in the 9 legislation --
- 10 Q. Yes.

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- A. -- and what that says. But, actually -- and I wouldn't 11 12 know the page -- I think in other parts of this document 13 is also refers more broadly to the fact that a specific 14 ideology is not required for Prevent. So it's part of 15 that explanation of not being ideologically focused and 16 considering a wide range of factors.
- 17 Q. So, the definition of TACT, I entirely understand why 18 you draw attention to that, but the reference to the 19 fact that TACT doesn't stipulate that you have to 20 a longstanding or deep-seated or fanatical belief and 21 that people can support or enact TACT offences without 22 a clear understanding of the ideology, and the reference 23 that "individuals whose ideological motivations are 24 unclear, mixed or unstable but who still demonstrate 25 a connection to, or personal interest in, extremism,

highlight and reinforce that part of the existing policies and bring them to people's attentions.

This occurred at the same time as some of the work on mixed, unclear or unstable was developing and you heard from my Home Office colleague they were obviously concerned in that area. So the intersection was there and, coupled together, it was felt that it was appropriate to draw people's attention to this, to ensure that they were clear that, from a strategic point of view, that was something that should be considered as part of Prevent considerations.

12 **Q**. Thank you. So if we look at page 2 and I think we find it most helpfully really in the fourth bullet point, so if we can have the top third of the page:

> "We have seen many similar and often overlapping Prevent case examples, including individuals who ...

"May be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism out of a sense of duty, or a desire for belonging, rather than out of any strongly held beliefs."

That's the final. The fourth one:

"Are obsessed with massacre or extreme or mass violence without specifically targeting a particular aroup."

On any view, it's drawing more attention to that subset, would you agree?

terrorism, or mass murder, should be given the same consideration for support and intervention as those whose concerning ideological motivations are more consistent and obvious", that distinctly resonates with that earlier 2019 letter; would you agree?

6 A. It does, yes.

7 Q. If we look at the letter, CTPHQ000034, so that's how it 8 seems to get -- sorry, CTPHQ000134.

letter from CTPHQ's point of view?

9 Having looked at how it got translated into the CTCO 10 manual, from the CTPHQ perspective, because we can see 11 that the joint signatory to this was Chief 12 Superintendent Adams, the then National Coordinator for 13 Prevent at CTPHQ, what was the context that led to this

15 A. My understanding from speaking to the headquarters team 16 is that there were a number of drivers. We were 17 receiving feedback from within the network, so from our 18 practitioners, that they were starting to see mentions 19 and interest in school massacres, school-style 20 shootings, as were prevalent in the United States and 21 that was becoming something that they were coming 22 across. Now, whilst all of the policy and the DIF that 23 was in process at the time had references to, I believe, 24

school shootings and mass killings at that point, there 25 was a recognition that we wanted to, I suppose,

A. It is.

2 Q. On page 4, fifth bullet point there -- I read the fifth 3 bullet point out earlier and I should have done the 4 fourth but here it is the fifth:

"Consider the possibility of an individual's obsessive interest in public massacres of any kind as a possible signal of vulnerability."

Again, the same point being re-emphasised?

9 That's correct.

10 **Q.** As we know, though, the letter at the same time was 11 emphasising that there was no change in the definition 12 of terrorism and no expansion of the role of Prevent; 13 are you familiar with that as part of this letter?

14 A. I'm familiar with the paragraph, yes.

15 Q. Again, appreciating that your post came later, from May 16 2024 onwards, looking back at this now, do you recognise 17 a risk that this letter was trying to, as it were, ride 18

two horses?

A. I understand that point. My interpretation of that paragraph -- and, clearly, I wasn't the author of the letter -- was to -- I believe to highlight that there wasn't a change in the legislation. So clearly Section 36 is a legislative point in the duty about that decision of reasonable grounds to believe that people

25 are susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. So

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1 that's how I personally interpreted it, that people 2 absolutely must consider these as factors as part of 3 their considerations but it was highlighting to 4 people -- because often what we will get asked is, "Does 5 that mean the duty has changed?" And that's how 6 I interpreted that paragraph. So rather than perhaps 7 riding two horses, just giving that clarity. But I may 8 be mistaken because that was just my view on reading it. 9 Q. But the emphasis, that in one sense may be

9 **Q.** But the emphasis, that in one sense may be
10 understandable, on "no change in the definition of
11 terrorism and the remit of Prevent", that brings back
12 into play the definition of terrorism in the Terrorism
13 Act and the need for it to have an ideological cause.

14 A. To some degree, but we then come back to the Pursue and 15 the Prevent differences. The Prevent test is much 16 further upstream and isn't specific to the Section 1 17 definition, in the sense we are talking about being 18 susceptible or vulnerable to radicalisation, not meeting 19 the legal definition for a Pursue sense. So I do 20 understand the point but the letter was sent to Prevent 21 practitioners, working within the context of Prevent.

Q. Can we just go back to the first page of the letter,
 please. Looking at the date of the letter, June 2019,
 and bearing in mind how this entered into the CTCO
 guide, which was August 2020, of obvious interest to us

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is the fact that AR's first referral came between those two dates.

Other than the letter itself, which you would have expected to be cascaded, can you give us the general picture of what was done to drive home these messages and to avoid any confusion in terms of CTPHQ, between the summer of 2019 and when it came out in the first edition of the CTCO guide?

9 **A.** So my understanding is that the regional Prevent 10 coordinators would have disseminated this through to 11 their teams. I would stress this wasn't a new policy 12 position. So the DIF that was in existence at the point 13 of this letter and prior to it featured the categories 14 and the detail around school shootings and massacres. 15 So this was really just reaffirming and highlighting 16 something that was already present within policy. So, 17 I haven't got records of exactly how it was communicated 18 out by each team, but my understanding is that it was 19 built into training but these factors were already 20 within the training because it was something that 21 existed in consideration for CTCOs anyway. The letter 22 was really just re-highlighting something that was 23 already in existence.

24 **Q.** The DIF 2019?

25 **A.** Yes, and it was utilised, I believe, on -- there was 62

a DIF created for the first referral, as I understand it. Apologies, someone may correct me, if I'm wrong,

3 I understand there was a DIF utilised in the first

4 referral and that it was in place in 2019.

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Q. At times you're slightly softly spoken and you're also making the mistake in courtesy of turning towards the Chair and me, it's the two mics in front. Just keep your voice up, just a little.

So CTPHQ000110. I promised that I would come to the DIF.

A slightly different document on our screens but before we leave the first page and go to the passage that I think you have in mind, can we just note that -- if we can have the top quarter of the page highlighted, please -- whereas the earlier document we were looking at was suggesting that the DIF was for something after the PGA, here, consistent with what you said, the Dynamic Investigation Framework is headed as being "For Prevent Gateway Assessments and to support PLP case management plans", yes?

21 A. That's my understanding, yes.

Q. Again, that's something that, if the DIF was meant to be
 used for Prevent Gateway Assessments, should have been
 absolutely clear, shouldn't it?

25 A. Yes, I believe it was. Again, it was in the sequencing

of how updates have gone out to the team. I wasn't present at the time but I am assured that the DIF -- it

3 was known and the DIF was utilised for the Prevent

4 Gateway Assessment.

5 Q. Thank you.

A. I will check my records and, if I'm correct, I will come
 back to the Chair and correct but I believe the DIF was
 used for the first referral.

Q. Understood. Then, you have said a number of times this was something that was in existing policy, and it may be that what you had in mind was at page 6. If we can go to (x), paragraph 5(x), under "Ideology", you are meant to describe any hateful or extremist causes, ideas or behaviours, et cetera, and then (x), within the list:

"A concerning fascination with extreme violence or the tactics of terrorism, mass-casualty attacks or school massacres *per se*, even in the absence of a unifying ideology or narrative ... reason for this interest. May also be indicative of a subject who requires support through Prevent. The context needs to be explored around this interest. An obsession like this, combined with complex needs or grievances, might be suggestive of a higher risk subject. Explore and explain circumstances."

Yes?

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1	A.	That was certainly one of the references I was	1		paragraph 1(a)(i):
2		highlighting.	2		"Mental health issues:
3	Q.	Thank you. Resonating with AR?	3		"Mental ill health and disorders can increase
4	A.	Yes.	4		an individual's vulnerability towards being targeted by
5	Q.	Thank you. That can come down from the screen, please.	5		groomers, or being coerced towards terrorism offences,
6		I want to turn next to the intersection between	6		or (in some contexts) self-radicalised towards
7		Prevent and mental health and neurodivergent conditions.	7		extremism."
8		Could we go back to CTPHQ000034, please, starting with	8		It would appear, as a result of that, it goes on to
9		page 1. Just again, because I'm jumping from document	9		say:
10		to document quite a lot, so we are back with the	10		"Identifying mental health issues is crucial to
11		one-stop shop for CTCOs, and can we go to page 87,	11		planning successful support and intervention plans."
12		please.	12		Yes?
13		So, while we have got it on full screen, do you see	13	A.	That's correct.
14		that this is Annex 1 "Completing the DIF"?	14	Q.	So, as several witnesses have touched upon, I am sure
15	A.	Yes.	15		you would agree, that it requires a careful individual
16	Q.	On the basis of the evidence that you've already given,	16		analysis as to what the mental health conditions are and
17		we should be here thinking about the DIF being something	17		how they are affecting the individual, to assess whether
18		that should be completed ahead of the PGA?	18		they might be within the category of individuals for
19	A.	As part of it	19		whom a mental ill health or a mental health disorder
20	Q.	As part of the PGA.	20		could, in effect, increase the risk of being susceptible
21	A.	rather than ahead of it.	21		to radicalisation?
22	Q.	If we could then have the bottom half of the screen	22	A.	I think, as stated further down in the document, those
23		"Complex needs and vulnerabilities", flagged. So within	23		factors can be an increase in risk, they can be
24		this, certainly in this first edition in August 2020, do	24		a protective factor. Your point around exploring and
25		we see under "Complex needs and vulnerabilities", 65	25		understanding the nuance for an individual is critical. 66
1	Q.	So, is the answer to my question: yes?	1		after because I'm going to come back to it. By sticking
2	A.	That it should be considered	2		with my phrase, "risk concern cohort within autistic
3	Q.	Yes, it needs a careful analysis of the individuals	3		spectrum disorder", that's flagging two things: one is
4		because I don't want to generalise, it's not going to	4		potential susceptibility to recruiters or groomers
5		be mental health condition equals increased risk but	5		taking advantage of the autism?
6		it needs to be carefully analysed for the individual to	6	A.	That is possible, yes.
7		see whether they fall into the cohort of those for whom	7	Q.	But it is also flagging that those with autism spectrum
8		a mental health condition may increase the risk; is that	8		disorders may have other vulnerabilities and grievances
9		fair?	9		connected to the condition, which may mean that they are
10	A.	That's correct, yes.	10		more susceptible to radicalisation or
11	Q.	Specifically, you were rightly reading ahead, further	11		self-radicalisation?
12		down the page, we see in relation to (a)(ii)(1):	12	A.	So this section is highlighting, as you say, the need to
13		"Autistic Spectrum Disorders:	13		consider all of those details as part of the risk
14		"Research around radicalised people with ASD	14		assessment. But, equally, not to make an assumption
15		(particularly by the Radicalisation Awareness Network)	15		that somebody with any of these conditions is
16		discovered that certain characteristics can make people	16	_	therefore that is quite wrong.
17		with ASD more vulnerable to radicalisation and violent	17	Q.	It's quite wrong, we don't need to speak about that.
18		extremism in the 'right' context."	18		Nobody is suggesting autism equals increased risk. I'm
19		I think in quotes because, in a sense, it's the	19		not suggesting it, which is why I said I would come back
20		wrong context, but we follow what's meant:	20		to the second part:
21		"For example, they may be deliberately targeted and	21		"However, traits of ASD can be either a risk or
22		influenced by recruiters [et cetera] or they may have	22		a protective factor, depending on the individual and
23		other vulnerabilities and grievances connected to the	23		their unique circumstances."
24		condition in their context."	24	Α.	Yes?
25		Just pausing there. I'm not ignoring what comes 67	25	A.	That's correct. 68

Q. So: 1

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"Considering which traits are more prominent in the individual will assist the CTCO in making a more accurate assessment and effective case management plan ..."

Yes?

7 A. Yes

8 Q. So what you would expect is not an assessment which, in 9 effect, says, "This behaviour can be put down to 10 autistic traits". You would expect an analysis of whether the individual, with their individual mental 11 12 health conditions and how it is affecting them, whether 13 they come within a cohort, whether that might increase 14 the risk or may even be a protective factor?

15 A. That needs to be balanced and considered, yes.

16 Q. How do you get that assistance?

17 A. So, the Vulnerability Support Hub was one of the options 18 as could be seeking further information from partners 19 who are involved in the case. You could gather from 20 a number of different places but, at that time, the 21 Vulnerability Support Hub was one of those options, as 22 referenced in the policy.

23 Q. In light of questions and answers that we had with 24 DCS Kenwright yesterday, in fact, the guidance is 25 absolutely clear, at this stage in August 2020 at least,

CTPHQ000110 gives, for the DIF for 2019, the equivalent? SIR ADRIAN FULFORD: Thank you very much. MR MOSS: Thank you.

Can we turn to the role of open-source intelligence internet and device investigations. At the stage of an analysis by a CTCO, leading to the PGA, what was the general expectation in terms of the open source social media and internet use checks that you would expect to be done?

10 A. So, I believe at that time, certainly of the first 11 referral, it was referenced in the 2018 policy as 12 something to be conducted at the PGA stage. On 13 occasion, it may be conducted by the FIMU, if there was 14 something in a referral that they felt needed that 15 check, and then clearly a CTCO couldn't repeat that 16 check because that would be not necessary and 17 proportionate. But I believe it was referenced in the 18 2018 policy, but not in any more specific or granular 19 detail than flagging a need for open-source checks.

20 Q. Can we look at CTPHQ000034, again. So, back in the 21 one-stop shop, August 2020 version. At page 94, could 22 we have the middle of the page expanded, please. 23 "Internet and social media leakage", there's quite

24 a long list there, which I won't read out, of what to 25 consider but, potentially, quite extensive list of

1 hence the need for more expert input from the

2 Vulnerability Support Hubs, yes?

3 A.

4 Q. That is the diametric opposite from the person who is 5 being referred is getting assistance with mental health 6 through the outside mental health providers; it is 7 looking at the Prevent availability of Vulnerability

8 Support Hubs, to give expert input to help analyse the

9 risk of harm to others?

10 A. So the Vulnerability Support Hub can do a number of 11 things. It can help give expert advice to inform risk

assessment --12

13 Q. That's what I'm interested in here. Forgive me, focus 14 on the aspect that I'm asking about, because we 15 appreciate it can do other things, but in this context, 16 the guidance is encouraging the Vulnerability Support 17 Hub to be used to assess whether somebody with autism 18 spectrum disorder is likely to be within the cohort of 19 those who may have increased risk?

20 A. It is.

Q. You would expect that to be followed? 21

22 A.

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23 Q. Thank you. If we just go through, please, to the very 24 bottom of the page. Can we just go over the page.

Sir, for your note, Mr Goss reminds me that

1 things to be on the lookout for, based on -- it's 2 referred to as internet and social media leakage but, 3 presumably, one should understand that as what might be 4 capable of being viewed from open source?

5 A. I believe so, yes.

6 Q. In terms of where responsibility for this lay, you 7 mentioned, I think, that even in previous guidance this 8 had been flagged up and it might be conducted by the 9 FIMU. Was there a clear understanding of what the 10 responsibilities were between the FIMU and the CTCO as 11 to who should be conducting this sort of check to look

12 for this sort of material?

A. So open source, as a term, was specifically referenced 13 14 in the 2018 CTCO guidance. A FIMU may have -- it would 15 depend on the content of the referral. If that was 16 an enquiry they needed to conduct to make their Pursue 17 assessment then, clearly, I would expect them to conduct 18 that. But in terms of then the CTCO's role, it is 19 referenced in guidance.

20 Q. So if we could look at CTPNW000088, please. Could we 21 start just on the front page. You see that this is 22 a "Historic Case Review" by, I think, the Deputy

23 Regional Prevent Coordinator for CTPNW. If we go to

24 page 2, we will see what it is a historic case review 25

about.

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(18) Pages 69 - 72

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So, as a result of the dreadful murders that we are dealing with, there was the commissioning in CTP North West of a review of CTP North West Prevent cases recorded between July 2023 and July 2024, which had been closed, where either school massacre or fascination with extreme violence was the subject matter. Do you see that there?

8 A. I can see that, yes.

- **Q.** Then if we go to page 5, we see that in the assessment 10 that CTPNW did as to compliance with national policy, that some 17 cases were found -- original emphasis --12 "not", underlined, to have complied with national 13 policy; do you see that there?
- 14 A. I do, yes.

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15 Q. Then "missing III" accounted for the majority of these 16 cases being present in 15 of the 17, and that's the 17 acronym for the Internet Intelligence Investigation:

> "The III policy was officially published on 21 October 2022 but its distribution was limited to an email to RPCs. CTPHQ have accepted that the policy was not then integrated into National Prevent Policy or guidance nor any of the mandatory Prevent training courses. As a result, CTPNW were not aware of its existence until CTPHQ conducted a business assurance visit in November 2024, finding III missing in their

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I'm not aware of the detail of exactly what instruction was sent to the RPCs but, obviously, this confirms an email was, nor am I aware as to why then they wouldn't have circulated, but it certainly highlights that that process has not been successful from the findings of this.

Q. Coming back to almost to where we started, do you remember, Deputy Assistant Commissioner, that I asked you about your top priorities when you came in and one 10 of the two things that you asked the Chair to be aware 11 of was the effect of the internet and how pervasive it 12 is. So the III checks, in doing work on open-source 13 material, is pretty fundamental, isn't it?

A. It is and, as we say, there was a policy that gave guidance on that. The business assurance that is referred to there is a product that I commissioned following the PLR and the findings, to ensure that we understood what our current position was in the network around a number of different themes and concerns that were found across the reviews, to then ensure that action was taken to resolve those.

22 Q. As the SNC, if you were to go out tomorrow and do a spot 23 check in any of the regional CTUs to check whether 24 proper III checks had been done, what would be your 25 confidence level that it had been done?

reviews. It was fully expected, therefore, that this review would find the same."

That does not appear to be describing a happy state of affairs?

- 5 A. It certainly is describing gaps in the awareness of the 6 2022 policy and was also highlighted in, I believe, 7 either the PLR -- or both the PLR and the Dignate 8 Review, and there is currently ongoing work to review 9 that 2022 policy and ensure that there is absolute 10 clarity on that position across the network.
- 11 Q. In fairness to CTPHQ, it seems to reflect that it had 12 been distributed in the sense of an email going to RPCs 13 but that seems to be describing an ineffective carrying 14 through of policy into what the regions should actually 15 be doing. So an email goes out with a policy but it 16 doesn't then get replicated in National Prevent Policy 17 and guidance and, indeed, CTPNW seem effectively to have 18 been almost unaware of it?
- 19 A. So the policy was a separate policy. As is often the 20 case, we will circulate separate policies and then when 21 we review the policy as a whole, we will condense it 22 into the one overarching document, similar as is the 23 case for the repeat referrals policy. They are separate 24 and will be then added into the broader policy document 25 when it is reviewed as a whole.

A. I'm aware from conversations I've had with Regional 2 Prevent Coordinators and CTPHQ that III policy is 3 something that is far more actively in discussion and 4 aware of. I would not like to speculate as to

5 percentage, that's why we will continue to conduct 6 business assurance to check the effectiveness of those

7 processes but it is certainly something that I would 8 expect the awareness to be higher.

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10 turning away from how embedded the policy has been and 11 how understood it has been -- so CTPHQ000034 and back on 12 page 94, please. If we look back at the list in the 13 middle of the page, please, plainly, in a Prevent case

Q. Thank you. If we can go back, please, to CTPHQ000034,

14 that goes through to consideration for Channel and is 15 adopted, where consent is given and the subject is

16 a child, as we have explored with other witnesses, there 17 may be work that can be done both with schools and with

18 family members to review social media and internet use

19 in the home and at school?

20 A. Certainly, if permission is given, that is definitely --

21 Q. So assume that consent is given?

22 That is definitely an option, as is some of the sort of 23 cyber awareness type products that Home Office 24 colleagues have referred to.

25 Work done with the subject of the referral himself or

- 1 herself, in terms of education about risks but also
- 2 a degree of monitoring by consent could be achieved
- 3 within a Prevent referral that's taken on?
- 4 A. It's an option that could be considered.
- 5 Q. If consent is not provided and if there is no police
- 6 power because of a criminal investigation that is
- 7 ongoing, so you don't have the devices seized because of
- 8 a criminal investigation, getting an understanding and
- 9 a Prevent referral of these sort of items at (b) is
- 10 extremely challenging, isn't it? You can get
- 11 open-source checks but what they are doing beyond what
- 12 can be visible on open source is going to be very
- 13 challenging in the absence of consent?
- 14 A. So Prevent is not an investigation tool. That would be
- 15 Pursue, so we are confined by powers and, obviously,
- 16 taking into account people's human rights, and all of
- 17 the complexities of the legislation. So, in Prevent,
- 18 consent would be the route to understand that.
- 19 Q. You are getting somewhat ahead, if you don't mind me
- 20
- 21 A. My apologies.
- 22 What I'm interested in is the difficulty of making
- 23 an assessment of these items in (b), in the absence of
- 24 consent. I mean, that's going to be a real challenge if
- 25 all you can see is open social media accounts.

  - 1 very challenging for the CTCO to get an understanding of 2
    - this, in the absence of consent. So how much of
  - 3 a handicap to the work of Prevent is it that, at the PGA
- 4 stage, you might have very little visibility of what
- 5 a child is doing online because you haven't yet got to
- 6 the stage of deciding whether to take them on and you
- 7 don't yet know whether consent is going to be
- 8 forthcoming? Just in terms of how much of a problem
- 9 this is to making reliable assessments?
- 10 Α. More information in this space would definitely be
- 11 helpful but it is normally one of many factors. So,
- 12 there are normally other things that you can take to
- 13 then help your decision to decide whether a case needs
- 14 to go through or not. But if there is information that
- 15 we can't see that contains risk, then we can only make
- 16 decisions on what we have. So more information is
- 17 always helpful.
- 18 Q. In the cases that do get through this threshold and are
- 19 taken on, but where consent is not forthcoming and you
- 20 get into a police-led process, don't go into operational
- 21 details that wouldn't be appropriate, but is there
- 22 a challenge there also, if you're in the police-led
- 23 process, on getting visibility of online, non-open
- 24 activity by children?
- 25 Α. Clearly, a police-led case is -- one of the factors is

- A. I think this and a number of other areas we've touched 1
- 2 on goes to the heart of the very difficult decisions
- 3 CTCOs have to make.
- 4 Q. Appreciating that these are ultimately political
- 5 matters, but can I seek your views as to whether there
- 6 should be a specific power to aid CTCOs and the Prevent
- 7 process, so that they can see non-open-source internet
- 8 use, specifically in the case of children?
- 9 A. I think obviously from a policing point of view, we
  - utilise the powers in the legislation that's available
- 11 to us. I would say it is always better for us to have
- 12 as much information as possible to properly assess the
- 13 risk and anything that helps us to do that is clearly
- 14 preferable, but any powers that then lead us to look at
- 15 content need to be balanced very carefully with people's
- 16 necessity for proportionate justifications.
- 17 Q. Of course, civil liberties and human rights
- 18 considerations?
- 19 A. So it's a very fine balance and probably not one that
- 20 policing should make any decisions on. We would
- 21 obviously utilise any powers --
- 22 Q. I've made clear it's not for you to make the decision
- 23 but, respectfully, what you can assist the Chair with is
- 24 how much of a problem, a disadvantage, a challenge is
- 25 it -- and that's why I was asking you, it's going to be
- 1 not having consent. So the same applies to whether you
- 2 have consent in the Prevent space or in the police-led
- 3 space.
- 4 Q. So a hindrance on mitigating risk in police-led cases
- 5 like that and, if so, to what extent?
- A. The same considerations, whether it's in the police-led 6
- 7 space or -- so it's the same as I described as in the
- 8 Prevent space, I would suggest.
- 9 Q. Thank you. Perhaps with this addition that the very
- 10 withholding of consent might be an additional concern
- 11 that would lead you to really want to be able to see
- 12 what they might be doing online?
- A. I think clearly we would like anybody that's referred 13
- 14 into Prevent to have consent from parents or adults.
- 15 There's a number of factors as to why people will choose
- 16 not to give consent.
- 17 Q. You can't go further than that?
- 18 A. I wouldn't like to speculate.
- 19 Q. Thank you. I'm going to move away from that topic and
- 20 just look very briefly at some other limitations on
- 21 Prevent. I'm asked to explore with you just the issue
- 22 of resourcing, which I will do briefly. I said I would
- 23 come back to how demanding the role of the CTCO is. 24 Would you agree that, in general terms, it requires
- 25 officers with good skills and dedication because it is

1		a de	m	ar	ndin	g role?
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A. Absolutely.

Q. Obviously, carrying a caseload, both of doing
 assessments but also of then involvement in cases that

5 have been taken on, yes? The CTCO is not just making

- 6 assessments they are also dealing with the multi-agency
- 7 interventions at a later stage?
- 8 A. They are, yes.
- 9 Q. Can you give us a broad understanding of how that
- 10 reflects in terms of resourcing? So retaining CTCOs,
- 11 the difficulty of recruiting them to the role,
- 12 difficulties of getting staff of the right calibre, what
- 13 are your impressions in that area?
- 14 A. So, we are able to recruit and retain staff in Prevent.
- 15 Clearly, it is a very difficult and high-pressured
- 16 environment but the staff are very committed to it.
- 17 I liken it to any roles where similar decisions are made
- in safeguarding, where people are having to balance very
- 19 difficult complex risk assessments, coupled with
- 20 vulnerability, but ultimately their desire is to protect
- 21 the public and make the right decisions.
- 22 So, we are able to recruit staff. The challenges 23 will look different in different regions, depending on 24 the sort of forces that are made up in those areas. So

it's difficult to give a one assessment for the whole

## 1 network.

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I think there is a reality that our officers and staff absolutely understand the importance of the decisions they make when they consider these cases.

Q. Nationally, are the roles full or are there gaps andvacancies beyond the natural short-term vacancies?

- 7 **A.** I believe predominantly we are only in the natural range of vacancies but that will vary from region to region.
- 8 of vacancies but that will vary from region to region.
  9 Q. Obviously, as we heard in relation to PC Thompson
- Q. Obviously, as we heard in relation to PC Thompson
   herself, who left on promotion to sergeant, there will
- be a natural rotation as officers progress their
- 12 careers. But is there a particular problem with churn,
- 13 with people leaving sooner than one might expected in
- 14 this sort of role?
- 15 A. I'm afraid I don't have that specific detail to hand to
- answer that now, I can obviously respond in writing to
- the Inquiry in more specifics. There will always be
- 18 churn. Some people -- we will have individuals who
- leave because perhaps the role isn't for them or the
- pressure of the role but, equally, we have some people
   who have been in Prevent for many years. It varies from
- 22 individual to individual and region to region.
- Q. But as you sit there now in your SNC role, that's notan item that you know is on your significant worry list
- 25 in terms of there is a particular problem with retention

- 1 or churn for CTCOs, in particular?
- 2 A. It's something we keep a very careful eye on,
- 3 particularly given the demands of the role, the
- 4 increases in volume and, as I say, the complexity of the
- 5 role. So it's something I am very minded to ensure that
- 6 the CT heads are supported with.
- 7 Q. Thank you. Can I turn to a different topic now. The
- 8 CTPHQ role in relation to AR. We have dealt with the
- 9 fact, I think, that there was no involvement of CTPHQ in
- 10 the referrals themselves. After the attack, you deal
- 11 with this in your statement but it's right, isn't it,
- 12 that there was never a declaration that this was
- 13 a terrorist incident?
- 14 A. That's correct, this was not declared a terrorist
- 15 incident.

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- 16 Q. DCI Pye from Merseyside Police explained in his evidence
- 17 that this was because there was no evidence that AR
- 18 engaged in his awful acts of violence to advance
- 19 a political, religious, racial or ideological cause; is
- 20 that right?
- 21 A. That's correct.
- 22 Q. Whose role is it to actually make that determination,
- 23 whether to declare it a terrorist incident or not?
- 24 A. It's my role.
- 25 **Q.** No doubt, that being the case, you would have been kept 83

carefully informed, yes, of the developments in the investigation in AR's case?

- 3 A. Absolutely. We worked very closely with Merseyside4 Police throughout.
- 5 Q. Being kept carefully informed of all of the
- 6 investigations, both counter terrorism and policing, is
- 7 it right that there was never a stage reached when there
- 8 was evidence of that terrorist type of ideology for AR?
- 9  $\,$  **A.** There was no evidence found to show or suggest that the
- 10 attack was, as you say, motivated to advance
- 11 a political, racial, religious or ideological cause.
- 12 What I would say to that is I completely appreciate for
- the survivors, the communities, that doesn't in any way
- 14 lessen the horrificness of the attack.
- 15 Q. That doesn't change the trauma or the awful level ofviolence but from a technical --
- 17 A. Absolutely not. But from a technical point around
  18 a definition, not a reflection of the horror that his
- 19 acts caused.
- 20 **Q.** It may be helpful in that context for you just to help
- to explain why the findings of the academic paper that contained the Al-Qaeda training manual, why that did not
- 23 change that assessment. Can you just explain that?
- 24 A. Absolutely. So the Section 58 offence, which is
- 25 effectively possession of that material, doesn't require

that motivation -- it is a liability offence: you are in possession of something that could be useful.

The evidential assessment, which was carefully thought through by Merseyside and our teams, was that that document may have aided the methodology utilised, the mechanics of the attack, forgive me, for being -for using that phrase -- but it didn't nor did any other evidence show that the motivation of the attack met the Section 1 definition

- 10 Q. None of my questions, just as none of your answers, are 11 designed in any way to diminish the awfulness of what happened --12
- 13 No, absolutely not. Α.

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- 14 Q. -- but it is important that I just explore with you, as 15 the Head of Counter Terrorism Policing Headquarters in 16 this area and as the person who would have made the 17 judgement call, it's just important I explore these 18 items with you?
- 19 A. In very simple terms, we never identified the "why".
- 20 Q. The holding of an Al-Qaeda training manual, and you use 21 the words carefully about informing the mechanics of the 22 attack, should we understand that the assessment was 23 that, dreadfully and shamefully, that fitted in with 24 AR's fascination with extreme violence and, when seen as 25 a whole, there was not an indication that he was holding

"Inevitably then, I am forced to raise the question of whether it makes sense to refer to Prevent individuals who have no clear ideology, given that acts of violence committed by such people would not be regarded as terrorist in nature. Reflecting on Prevent's referral data for the year 2020-21, the Home Office analysts cautioned against reading too much into the data showing large numbers of MUU referrals. They pointed out that it could be that practitioners are now classifying as MUU cases that previously would have been identified with other specific ideologies, such as

If we could look, please, secondly, at page 66, at paragraph 4.106. Sir William was noting here that:

"Local practitioners claimed that there was sometimes a lack of suitable services available, such as ADHD clinics, Asperger's clinics and behavioural clinics or general support for those with learning difficulties. I was further informed that children with autism were being processed through the Channel system when they ought to have been supported more appropriately by

eliding but they do seem, reading them now, to be somewhat pulling in a slightly different direction from 1 that manual because he had, for example, an Islamist 2 extremism agenda?

3 A. That's correct, I don't believe -- and our assessment 4 was that it was in relation to that violence fascination 5 and that was in keeping with the other horrific content 6 that was found during the investigation and not 7 an ideological motivation.

8 Q. We dealt with this with DCI Pye but it was some time 9 ago, I think you agree in broad terms that what you 10 rightly describe as the "other horrific content" that 11 was found during the investigation included content that 12 would be grossly offensive to Muslims?

13 A. Absolutely. There was content that would be grossly 14 offensive to many different communities and the public 15 more broadly.

16 Q. Thank you. Can I turn away from that important topic 17 and look at changes made since. This is a change not 18 since the attack but between AR's referrals and the 19 attacks and we have referred to Sir William Shawcross' 20 review. Can we look at that, please. HOM000071. This 21 is the 2023 review.

> May we just please, within this, look at page 56, and 4.57. For reasons of time, I may be at risk of over simplifying this but, if we look at paragraph 4.57, Sir William said that:

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alternative services." Those two passages, which I may be at risk of

the joint letter, which had flagged up the importance of this type of ideology and from some of the guidance that we have seen in relation to the importance of looking at autism. Do you see the potential for that tension?

A. I do see the potential. As I highlighted earlier, our indicators and risk factors didn't change in respect of those. We still saw those things as factors that needed to be carefully considered by CTCOs. Your point in relation to mixed, unclear or unstable, I referred to earlier around part of the reason we removed that terminology because people's understanding of what they categorised as mixed, unclear or unstable could be differently interpreted and confused. Therefore, we removed that terminology and asked our practitioners to be more flexible and the tools were more flexible, so they could highlight more of the things that may be evident in a case, and that may include multiple ideologies, it may include no ideology, but other risk factors and vulnerabilities to allow that flexibility so their decision-making wasn't hindered by references to that as a category.

22 Q. But acting on this report, if we go back to the Prevent 23 Duty Guidance, the updated post-Shawcross version at 24 CTPHQ000012 please, page 12, and paragraph 34, so 25 picking up halfway through:

"Prevent activity across all extremist ideologies				
and radicalisation concerns. Where frontline				
professionals have identified a concern that they				
consider requires a referral into Prevent, it is				
important that they can indicate why this risk is				
relevant to Prevent. As Prevent is a counter terrorism				
capability, the presence or possible presence, of any				
terrorist or terrorism linked ideology will be				
an important consideration."				

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Now, in fairness, it's not saying it is essential and there won't be a Prevent risk in other cases but, again, do we see here signs of something of a tension that perhaps has not been fully resolved between the post-Shawcross intention of emphasising the importance of terrorist ideology with the aims of the June 2019 letter?

A. Obviously, time between June 2019 and 2023, time had

18 passed and even more so now, another policy. I think 19 the bit I would highlight there is it's talking about 20 Prevent activity, looking across all extremist 21 ideologies and radicalisation concerns and that's what 22 we encourage our practitioners and anybody referring in 23 to consider, it's that susceptibility to radicalisation. 24 Ideology is one factor. It is by no means the only 25 factors. Yes, it's an important consideration because

different threshold stages.

I think, in particular -- sir, again, this is one of 3 your note and not for bringing up on screen, 4 CTPHQ000127. Not for the screen, but for the Chair's 5 note, please.

6 SIR ADRIAN FULFORD: Thank you.

7 MR MOSS: That there are indicators of concern that are 8 quite specifically set out within the PAF. I think 9 you'll be familiar with that.

10 Α. There are specific indicators for people to consider, 11 yes, and it provides a flexible framework to support 12 CTCO decision-making.

Q. Would this be fair, more directional than previous tools 13 14 because they give more specific indications of what to 15 look for and there's a more directional requirement to 16 record things under certain headings?

17 A. I would hesitate to say directional. It gives them 18 a very firm structure to work through to record their 19 considerations and their decision-making --

20 Q. I think we're talking about the same thing. The 21 structure --

22 A. It is a structured decision-making tool.

23 -- requires attention -- that's really what I was 24 meaning, that the structure requires -- it's directional 25 in that sense, that there is a specific structure that

1 if somebody is already at a point where they are showing 2 a strong leaning to an ideology, that is something that 3 would definitely be important and require consideration but so do all of the other factors that potentially give 4 us information to assess that susceptibility to 5 6 radicalisation. Obviously, this is a Home Office 7 document and they have updated their Home Office 8 policies as a result of that review, and it hasn't,

9 I believe, been updated since that point.

10 Q. Rolling forwards to the current time. You mentioned 11 earlier in your evidence, and I think again I promised 12 to come back to it, the Prevent Assessment Framework, 13 the PAF, and for practitioners, as we have understood 14 it, the PAF is now used as a common tool at different 15 stages, including at the PGA stage?

16 A. That's correct, yes.

17 Q. I won't repeat matters that I dealt with, with 18 Ms Ellsmore yesterday, but is it right that the training 19 that you mentioned in relation to the PAF has been 20 rolled out so that all CTCOs would have received it?

21 A. The PAF is an accredited tool so, without having 22 completed the training, which is pass or fail, you 23 cannot use the tool.

24 Q. It has that advantage of being a single assessment 25 rather than being a multiple different assessments at

1 requires the CTCO to work through a list and it is not 2 a sort of tick-box exercise: you've got to do the

3 analysis under each of those headings?

4 A. It definitely helps them guide through that analysis. 5 The decision is still their own. It is a framework to 6 aid those decisions.

7 Q. Thank you. I will come back to that just briefly at the 8 end of this section. There has also been a new policy on repeat referrals, CTPHQ000010, please. If we just go 9 10 to page 2:

"Addendum to policy and guidance. Multiple referrals: risks, supervision and accountability ..."

Again, I know you'll be familiar with this. Page 5: "A message from the SNC ..."

15 Α. From me, yes.

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16 "The 2023 addendum came as a result of increased 17 learning from academia, feedback from intelligence 18 colleagues, findings from our business assurance 19 processes and recent Prevent Learning Reviews."

Then in bold:

21 "The addendum highlighted the cumulative risk that 22 multiple referrals, defined as two or more referrals, 23 can pose within our casework."

24 Yes?

25 Δ Yes.

Q. This flags up again, in bold, does it not, in the 1 2 message from you that:

> "Multiple Prevent referrals ... is itself a risk factor that must be considered."

Α. That is correct.

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- 6 **Q.** The multiple referrals here, to try to deal with 7 a technicality, that wouldn't include, would it, two 8 agencies reporting, at about the same time, about the 9 same risk, it is more about different stages in relation 10 to different events or different concerns?
- A. Well, you'd expect all of that to be considered. If two 11 12 agencies referred at a very similar time, it's likely 13 that those would be pulled into one assessment, 14 therefore, would be a single record. So if they were 15 very close together, it would be dealt with because it 16 would form part of the assessment --
- 17 Q. That wouldn't count, yes.
- 18 A. -- but, ultimately, the expectation and requirement is 19 that the CTCOs look across any referrals that have come 20 in and use all of that information to then inform 21 decision-making.
- 22 Q. It's not strictly a question about repeat referrals but, 23 just in general terms, does the identity of the agency 24 making the referral make a difference: are police 25 referrals given more weight than school referrals?

Absolutely not. If anything -- and I think my Home 1 2 Office colleague, Cathryn, touched on it -- family 3 members, when they refer in, because they are the people 4 who are closest to individuals and it can take an awful lot of courage for a family member to report a concern 5 6 of this nature in, it's not that they are given more 7 weight but, clearly, we recognise that that is a very 8 significant thing for somebody to do. But every 9 referral, irrespective of where it comes from, is judged 10 on its merit. No agency, or even family members, are 11 given more weight. We consider the content. 12 Thank you. So back on this particular subject, if we Q. 13 could look at page 8, please. The detail is in your 14 statement and Ms Ellsmore has dealt with it as well. 15 But if we go to page 8, we see the "Enhanced oversight 16 for multiple referral cases". Can you just give us the 17 thumbnail of what the enhanced oversight now is? 18 So the enhanced oversight is that an inspector must be 19 informed when a case comes in, so that they then review

20 the referrals and then, similarly, there is that the 21 inspector should have oversight of the case management, 22 and also then they would be part of that closure. It 23 highlights there the Regional Prevent Coordinator must 24 be sighted if there are multiple referral cases that 25 have not been referred into Channel or PLP. 94

So, effectively, if a multiple referral case doesn't meet the Section 36 decision for reasonable grounds to believe, we ask that those cases are highlighted to a Regional Prevent Coordinator so that the person within the region or who has that operational oversight, so that they can reassure themselves that the reason for that decision-making is appropriate and proper. Q. So that's going significantly over the sergeant, who

- 8 9 would be normally expecting to approve that; it is going 10 for a more senior officer? 11 A. It is. There was a repeat referrals policy that 12 pre-dated this, so there was a policy in existence and
- 13 I believe, from memory, that did have inspector 14 oversight in it, but the oversight that is within this 15 current interim policy is even more enhanced. 16 Q. So we haven't gone to the interim one but I think, as 17 a result of other events, there was guidance on this and
- 19 A. It is. We are currently in the process of carrying out 20 business assurance to understand what is the 21 effectiveness of each piece of this policy and then 22 consider how we include it into the full policy review 23 that's ongoing. But it will include the increased 24 oversight in some way, shape or form.

this is the strengthened version?

25 Thank you. You deal in your statement in paragraph 54 95

- 1 with the development of an improved tracker. I think 2 the technical name for it is the Prevent Case Management 3 Tracker enhanced, PCMTe; is that right?
- 4 A. That's correct.

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- 5 Q. Just give us the thumbnail of that in terms of why 6 that's an improvement?
- 7 A. So it's a far more improved system in that it is electronic, it guides both the CTCO and the supervisor 8 9 through the processes required. It is a more robust 10 system for tracking the cases through. It has 11 an activity section. So, in a similar way to an action 12 tracker, activities can be recorded and the outcome and 13 the rationale for those activities should be recorded, 14 and a case cannot be closed unless each of those 15 activities is resolved with an outcome, and that outcome is justified. 16

It also ensures and pushes through the relevant 18 supervision that's required. It does other things over 19 and above that. It's effectively a far more robust --20 Q. One of the issues that came up yesterday in evidence 21 with DCS Kenwright was whether there ought to be 22 a system whereby, if, for example, an action has been 23 set of a referral to a Vulnerability Support Hub and. 24 for some reason -- human error -- it's not been done, 25 that you couldn't actually move to recommendation for

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- 1 closure because there's an outstanding action. Is the 2 tracker enhanced actually designed in that way that you 3 physically can't move to that stage if a referral that's been referred to, which should be in action, hasn't been 4 5 completed?
- 6 A. Provided the system has been used to record each of 7 those as individual activities, that I just referred to, 8 then if those activities remain open, it can't move 9 forward. So that's -- it definitely provides a more 10 robust to approach to monitoring those activities which 11 are set and an action would effectively be an activity.
- 12 **Q**. That's dependent upon the CTCO correctly using the 13 system to identify an action point as a formal activity 14 on the system, if I've understood your evidence 15 correctly?
- 16 A. That's correct. I mean, I think that's true of all 17 systems to be fair. It requires the human input and the 18 system to be used correctly. But having said that, it 19 still guides the supervisor through a more structured 20 review process. So it still provides assurance in that 21 wav.
- 22 Q. Thank you. Moving on then to improvements and changes 23 in relation to unclear ideology and violence-fascinated 24 individuals. If we can have on screen, please, 25 CTPNW000016. If we can just go to page 2, please. Can

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headquarters, there have been online training sessions. You can imagine this is something that our Prevent workforce absolutely know and understand and I have, when I've been in regions on visits, spoken to CTCOs and supervisors. I am confident they know and understand that these policies exist and, clearly, because both this and the repeat referrals have had an enhanced level of supervision, there are actually supervisors who again are familiar with the policies and provide those checks and balances.

Q. Thank you. We don't need to turn back to it because we will keep this document on the screen, if we may, but in paragraph 60 of your statement, you said this:

"The 2025 interim policy serves to reiterate the position expressed in the June 2019 ... joint letter and to provide guidance to practitioners around their decision-making when dealing with this cohort of subjects."

Now, I'm not going to suggest to you for one moment that this guidance is not consistent with the June 2019 policy but when you say it serves to reiterate the position expressed in the June 2019 guidance, that's a little bit of an understatement, isn't it?

24 **A**. I'm not sure it's an understatement. I believe that 25 policy reaffirms the position in 2019, as set out in the we identify the document. So:

"Fascination with extreme violence and mass casualty attacks: interim referrals policy."

Can you just help us with the interim nature of this policy. Is it going to be made permanent?

Α. So like the repeat, both of these policies were policies that I commissioned and required to be enacted quickly to ensure that there was absolute clarity for the network as to what was expected of them. They are additions to the broader Prevent Policy and my desire would be that all of these things are contained within one policy.

As I highlighted with the repeat referrals, it's also necessary to check and test that a policy is working and actually delivering the outcomes we want it to and, currently, these policies are going through business assurance to check that they are actually achieving the outcomes and the aims that we require them to before they are placed into full policy and we'll make any amendments before that happens.

- 21 Q. This is a policy from this year, how do you know that 22 this has actually reached CTCOs and has been embedded in 23 their practice, that they've been trained on it or at 24 least required to read it and understood it?
- 25 **A**. So there have been communications both from RPCs and

1 letter. It also reaffirms the position of a number of 2 3 4 5 6 7 categories of individuals.

Q. Insofar as this type of policy document ever is, this 9 was an expression of concern, from you as the Senior 10 National Coordinator, wasn't it, an appropriate 11 expression of concern?

12 **A.** It was me wanting to ensure that those practitioners that had been updated in relation to this matter, so that they could make their decisions based on this policy.

17 Q. Again, if I may suggest, the appropriate message from 18 you, if we look at page 5, what were you seeking to 19 deliver in this message?

20 A. Seeking to highlight the importance of the policy and 21 not only -- what I would say is this policy highlights 22 the broader concerns around the changing threat that we 23 have been seeing over a number of years, which has been

24 highlighted to the network through a number of policies,

25 which is we are operating in an environment where

other minor amendments that have been made around these

topics more generally. So I suppose what I'm referring

to there is it absolutely reinforces the July letter, it

also brings together in one place all of the subject

matter that helps people make decisions around these

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13 working in Prevent understood all of the parts of policy 14 15 16

1 violent material, horrific online material, can have 2 an impact on our casework and it really just strengthens 3 the message about the importance of that. Throughout 4 a period of time, we have instigated child-centred 5 policies within CTP. We have referenced in evidence 6 a number of amendments made to policy to highlight all 7 of these concerns. So it's really just a strong message 8 from me to the network of the importance of using all of 9 these tools and these policies appropriately to manage 10 risk to support CTCOs in the very difficult decisions 11 they have to make.

Q. If we look, Deputy Assistant Commissioner, please, together, at the third paragraph and the fifth line:

"From the date of this policy, Prevent officers [your words] must treat these referrals with the same level of diligence and risk management as referrals where there are clear concerns with terrorist ideologies."

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- 20 Q. That was not an accidental choice of language on your 21 part, was it?
- 22 Α. No, it wasn't. It was to reflect the learning that we 23 had received from Dignate Reviews, from business 24 assurance. It was -- I suppose it reflects your point 25 around making sure we are clear with practitioners. So

might be the first time that some of our workforce are reading and hearing this because they weren't actually working within Prevent at that time.

So this is simply reaffirming all of those positions and ensuring that they know that that is absolutely current and those are those points.

- Q. I appreciate there's an element of damned if you do, damned if you don't, because if you don't give a clear strong message, that will be picked up and I understand that. But do you see the concern that might be raised that this has taken a long time to firmly embed?
- 12 A. I do see the concern you are flagging but, as I say, 13 this isn't the first time that those categories -- they 14 have existed within our policies and process. I would 15 also flag that when we use the term "violence-fixated 16 individuals" or "fascination with extreme violence", the 17 VFI term is one that we have used currently, in the past 18 12/18 months, to describe what we are seeing more 19 broadly in the threat picture. It is something I have 20 referenced publicly. The Director General of MI5 has. 21 We are seeing a different threat picture.

Some of those people then are drawn and susceptible into terrorism. Unfortunately, some of them go into other forms of criminality. It's about the broader challenge that we have as a society with some of our 103

1 my language was intentionally clear to ensure that 2 people understood what this policy was trying to ask 3 them to do.

4 Q. It may be an unfair question, and you'd be entitled to 5 say so, given that you have been in post since May 2024, 6 but does it concern you that we are six years on from 7 the joint letter and that, as a broad organisation and 8 process, there is still the need within Prevent for the 9 Senior National Coordinator to be giving a message with

10 this clear and appropriate authority and urgency --

11 prevent officers must treat these referrals with the 12 same level of diligence, et cetera -- because one might

13 have hoped that that would have been effected well

14 before now?

15 A. I'm not suggesting it hadn't been effected and that 16 those messages hadn't gone out previously. We have 17 referenced various points in policy and training where 18 those messages will have been clearly delivered. But, 19 as you would expect, after the reviews that we'd 20 received and such a horrific event, as happened in 21 Southport, it's absolutely appropriate that I, in my 22 role as Senior National Coordinator, reaffirm the 23 previous messages. Some of our workforce will not have

24 been within the system when those previous updates were 25 given, we are going back over a six-year period, so this

1 children and young people being impacted by lots of 2 influencing factors, including harm online.

3 Q. Thank you.

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Sir, for your note, and, Deputy Assistant Commissioner, can I just invite you to accept that this is what we find in the detail of this, that we see, for example -- we don't need to turn these up -- but page 6, emphasis on the fact that the absence of a terrorist ideological motivation doesn't appear to reduce the potential risk?

11 A. That's correct.

12 Q. That's highlighted.

13 Sir, for your note, also at page 6, these cases need 14 to be given particularly careful consideration.

15 Correct. A.

16 Q. Page 10, emphasis on the fact that Prevent relevance is much broader than Pursue relevance? 17

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. Page 11, any such case must be referred to a Prevent 20 inspector, who must have oversight pre-closure, if the 21 recommendation is for closure?

22 A. That's correct.

23 Q. And must also be referred to the CT Clinical Consultancy 24 Services, the successor to the Vulnerability Support 25

Hubs, yes?

- 1 A. That's correct.
- Q. There is also at page 16 highlighting the risk ofdisguised compliance in these cases; would you agree?
- 4 **A.** Yes.
- 5 Q. Beyond those steps that obviously you have been closely
- 6 involved in of repeat referrals and emphasising the need
- 7 for a particular care and higher supervision and
- 8 oversight of the cases around VFI cases, are there any
- 9 further measures that you can identify that are
- 10 practicable, that would help to ensure that such cases
- 11 are given appropriately careful scrutiny in Prevent?
- 12 A. I mean, the policy is coupled with embedding this
- 13 through training, enhanced empathy. It's one of
- 14 a number of things and we are also, as referenced in my
- statement, actively working on the recommendations that
- were detailed in the Dignate Review, the PLR and Lord
- 17 Anderson's review. So those are by no means the only
- 18 actions being taken. We are exploring different policy
- 19 changes and also working with Home Office colleagues to
- 20 ensure that we consider all of the things that will help
- 21 deal with these cases.

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- 22 Q. Thank you. I want to turn briefly to reviews. So three
- 23 to touch on, one in more detail. You were involved,
- 24 I think, first of all in the commissioning of the
- 25 independent Prevent Learning Review after the attack; is

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decision-making by CTCOs."

Then we see the headings there, the assessments made and opinions of the FIMU, flagging to the risk of pre-empting of influencing:

"The question of ideology and the lack of it is the central theme through the handling of all three referrals."

Dealing with that aspect:

"There may have been an overemphasis on the presence of ideology, to the detriment of considering AR's susceptibility. These two elements may have been separated and addressed in isolation rather than considered together."

Then there's a reference to the joint letter and reference to some considering the joint letter to be ambiguous. Obviously, the reviewer wasn't able to explore that with Constable Thompson:

"This emphasis on ideology can exist today and careful consideration needs to be given to referrals and cases where individuals are highly susceptible/easily influenced but lack a defined ideology. Since April 2024, there has been a change in categorisation of ideologies for all referrals and cases. If these new categories were applied today, his case could now fall into one of two new categories, either no ideology,

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1 that right?

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- 2 A. That's correct.
- 3 Q. CTPHQ000055. You, as others have done, have flagged two
  - limitations to this. One, it was done quite urgently so
- 5 to a short timescale, and it was also while matters were
- 6 sub judice, so the reviewer was not able to speak to the
- 7 CTCO really and the various sergeants or the FIMU
- 8 analysts?
- 9 A. That's correct, but I and my senior Home Office
- 10 counterpart both agreed that it was an urgent
- 11 requirement to understand if there was anything that we
- 12 needed to act upon to ensure that we change policy and
- process to protect the public, and then we could conduct
- more detailed reviews at the appropriate points in the
- 15 future

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- 16 **Q.** Thank you. If we go, please, within this to page 34.
- 17 "Conclusions":
  - "Overall, the reviewer considers there to have been a high level of compliance by the Prevent officers with process timescales, assessment completion and adherence
- 21 to policy that were in place at the time. But although
- 22 processes and policies have been largely followed
- 23 correctly, it is the subjective decisions that have come
- 24 into focus. Identified throughout the review are
- 25 a number of factors that may have impacted on

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1 other susceptibility to radicalisation identified or

- 2 fascination with extreme violence or mass-casualty
- 3 attacks."
- 4 Would you accept all of that?
- 5  $\,$  A. Yes, I think all of this was written without having
- 6 heard the granular evidence --
- 7 Q. Of course, subject to those.
- 8 A. -- and we will obviously now examine that carefully and
- 9 understand if there's more findings that we need to
- draw, having heard the CTCO and supervisor's accounts of
- 11 what they did and didn't balance in their
- 12 decision-making.

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- 13 **Q**. Can we have 3, at the bottom of the page:
  - "Lines of enquiry that were not completed:
- 15 "... potential risk from repeat referrals."
  - We've touched on that. Can we go over the page, please. There is assurance dealt with:
- "The previous ... Case Management Tracker ... wasclosed to all personnel other than authorised police
  - closed to all personnel other than authorised police users."

That's a slightly wider issue that I don't need to go into for my questioning for you but I don't want to be said to have overlooked it.

Then:

"Police-led partnership

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i no ideology,

"This case also raises questions regarding the initial use of police-led partnerships instead of referring to Channel. This was done to enable a visit to take place."

The reviewer's comment is:

"this seems unnecessary as the policy allowed for visits to take place during the PGA process if appropriate, by exception."

Then this:

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"Considering all of the above, in the reviewer's opinion, there were sufficient concerns with the first referral to warrant the case remaining open and being referred to Channel, especially in light of the condoning of the [Manchester Arena] attack. Channel is available to support individuals vulnerable or susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. There is not any need to prove a definitive terrorism connection for Channel, only that the individual is potentially at risk of being drawn into terrorism."

As the SNC, do you agree with that assessment, that there was sufficient concerns with the first referral to warrant the case remaining open and being referred to Channel?

24 A. My assessment is that there was sufficient for it to 25 move past the PGA stage into the multi-agency

> and operational review against policy, not that the PLR wasn't but they are practitioners within our headquarters department, who are going through with a fine-toothed comb all of the policy and just add some richness really.

There was also the passage of time, so we were able to do it slightly slower and gather all of the documents and information available. So it was really to close the loop of all of the referrals that we would normally do in these circumstances. It was just in a different order to how it would be done, if it wasn't such a significant incident.

Q. If we just go to page 11, please, the final area of my questioning. There are identified a number of learning outcomes. I am not going to overlook "Learning observations" 1 and 2 but they deal with aspects that I don't need to specifically question you about. If we go down to the bottom half of the page, please:

"Learning observation 3. Device downloads and internet history. Devices seized after the assault allegation ... were examined ... but the results and/or downloads themselves were not requested by the CTCO ..."

Do you agree that is a learning point?

- 24 A. It is a learning point.
- 25 Q. The school browser history not being checked, that's 111

1 information gathering. That would have then allowed all 2 of the available information to be assessed and a 36 3 decision to be made. It's difficult to predict what 4 they would or wouldn't have got out of that process for 5 the Section 38 decision but I think the reasonable 6 grounds to suspect test to move past PGA for 7 consideration, yes, I feel that's the case.

8 Q. Does it follow that, in your assessment, that the first 9 referral in AR's case should have cleared the PGA stage, 10 based on what was known and what could have been known?

A. I believe it should have moved past the PGA stage. As 11 12 I say, it's difficult to then predict what would have 13 followed, without knowing what information would have 14 been gathered, but I think it would have aided the 15 decision-making.

16 Q. Thank you. Then, we mentioned the Dignate report 17 already and we've had it on screen, CTPHQ000028. Can 18 you just help with why there was this second review, 19 iust briefly?

20 A. So, in normal circumstances, a Dignate Review would come 21 first but because this case was so significant and it 22 felt appropriate that there should be an independent 23 review immediately, to ensure that I and my counterparts

24 in the Home Office could get that independent feedback.

25 The Dignate Review however can be a much more granular

1 a learning point?

A. As you can see, the policy position is quoted within the 3 document. My understanding is the officer considered 4 those but perhaps the action wasn't concluded in the way 5 that would have been helpful and best practice.

Q. So it is a learning point? 6

7 A. Absolutely.

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Q. Thank you. If we can go over the page, please:

"Learning observation. School massacre as an ideology. The closure rationale for all three cases focused on the lack of a distinct CT/DE ideology. However, guidance, albeit new at the time of the first referral, stated that school massacre/mass violence should be treated as an ideology in itself. As well as searching for school shootings on the internet, [AR] acted out behaviours indicative of a school massacre ideology by attending his old school to attack pupils with a knife and apparently admitted to having a list of targets ... It appears this was not identified as a potential ideology or Prevent relevant risk and therefore does not feature in decision-making during the three cases. A more careful assessment of these factors could have resulted in the case being progressed

Do you agree with that as a learning observation?

1	A.	I agree it's a learning observation. I would flag that
2		the officer conducting this review didn't speak to the
3		individual officers, so they were making those
4		observations
5	Q.	I think earlier we'd made clear
6	A.	On the desktop
7	Q.	I hope I drew that out that it was a desktop review?
8	A.	Absolutely, so we've obviously heard the officer account
9		for their own considerations in those matters.
10	Q.	With that caveat, without going through all of the other
11		learning observations, were there any learning
12		observations from the Dignate report where you thought
13		"The reviewer has got that wrong, that's not
14		an appropriate learning observation, that's not
15		something that could have been done better"?
16	A.	I think all of the learning observations are
17		appropriate, based on the information they were
18		considering, and broadly chimed with those that were
19		found by the PLR. As I say, we will now review now
20		we have the more granular understanding of the officers
21		accounts, we'll consider if there's any further learning
22		observations that we need to draw, having heard these
23		and, obviously, that's not to pre-empt the Chair's
24		recommendations but, just to be swift, we will obviously
25		see if there is anything that we urgently need to pick 113

ught, re οw ficers' iese uslv 1 2 upon, if there are gaps in the understanding in police 3 practitioners. 4 MR MOSS: Thank you. 5 Sir, I have sought to cover the areas raised but I'm 6 just turning to my left. I'm seeing shaking of heads. 7 Sir, do you have any further questions for this

come from that threshold review are then taken and acted witness? SIR ADRIAN FULFORD: I don't. Ms Evans, you have dealt with an enormous amount of material this morning. I'm very grateful to you. THE WITNESS: Thank you, sir. SIR ADRIAN FULFORD: 2.00 pm? MR MOSS: Thank you, sir. (1.11 pm) (The short adjournment) (2.00 pm) **NICHOLAS HUNT (sworn)** Questioned by MR GOSS

8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 SIR ADRIAN FULFORD: Thank you very much. Please have 21 a seat. 22 Yes, Mr Goss. 23 MR GOSS: May it please you, sir. Could you start by giving 24 us your full name, please. 25 Α. Nicholas Hunt. 115

up there as well. 1 2 Q. Thank you. There's obviously Lord Anderson's report as 3 well and we are going to get an update in relation to that. When one takes all of those things together, how 4 confident would you be that a referral in relation to 5 6 somebody who is a violence-fascinated individual would 7 now be handled better? A. Considering the PAF that has been brought in, the new 8 9 policy, the raised awareness, I am more confident that 10 those would be handled better and would likely progress through the system, unless there was a very good reason 11 or rationale not to, that had been appropriately 12 13 supervised and checked, as per the policy. 14 We dealt with Ms Ellsmore -- I think you were able to 15 hear it -- yesterday about the threshold end-to-end 16 review that was done where at page 7, paragraph 17, 17 there was an indication that practitioners may still be 18 confused about these matters and that's very recent, 19 a May 2025 report. Does that cause you concern? 20 Clearly, that's a concerning statement. My team and 21 I will work importantly with Cathryn to understand what 22 that specifically means in relation to police 23 practitioners because I think, as was outlined, 24 "practitioners" is a broad group of people in that 25 context and we will ensure that any findings that have 114

Q. If we could have HOM000202. That's your very short 2 witness statement for the Inquiry, which you signed on 3 page 2 on 8 October? 4 A. That's correct, yes. 5 Q. The reason that that is such a short statement is 6 because in it you adopt paragraphs 192 to 293 and

7 Annex B of Ms Ellsmore's witness statement, which we have at HOM000078, because you can speak more directly 8 9 to that than she can?

10 A. That is correct, yes.

11 Q. Should we take it then that, although those paragraphs 12 are in her statement, we can treat them as your words 13 for the purpose of this afternoon?

14 A. Yes, you can.

Q. Just then to deal with your experience and role and why 15 it is that you are able to address the topics we are 16 17 covering today, you are a Deputy Director and the Head

18 of Firearms and Weapons Policy Unit in the Home Office's

19 Public Safety Group?

20 A. That's correct yes.

21 Q. You have held that role for the past four years from 22 October 2021?

23 I was Head of Firearms Policy from October 2021 and 24 I became responsible for knives and offensive weapons

from January 2024. 25

- 1 Q. Thank you. Earlier posts, include being the Lead on
- 2 Knife Crime within the Home Office between 2014 and
- 3 2019?
- 4 A. That's correct, yes.
- 5 Q. I think between December 2019 and October 2021, you were
- 6 the Secretary to the Daniel Morgan Independent Panel?
- 7 A. That's correct, yes.
- 8 Q. Thank you. Could we have HOM000078 and page 57 up
- 9 please. Can I ask about the Home Office's general role
- 10 in respect of knives and offensive weapons.
- 11 You set out there at paragraph 194:
- 12 "The Home Office is the [central] Government
- department with ... responsibility for the legislation
- 14 and policies to tackle knife crime [and offensive
- 15 weapons]."
- 16 A. That's correct, yes.
- 17 Q. That includes the sale, purchase and possession of
- 18 knives and other such weapons?
- 19 A. It does, yes.
- 20 Q. It involves, both as a matter of legislation but also of
- 21 policy, working with other Government and
- 22 non-Governmental agencies, law enforcement, charities,
- 23 local Government --
- 24 A. It does a range of players, yes.
- 25 Q. Presumably, also with other elements of Government,
  - 117
- 1 across time, this is a table of police-recorded
- 2 knife-enabled crime, excluding the numbers recorded by
- 3 Greater Manchester Police due to issues over their
- 4 statistics. If we look at the penultimate row, we can
- 5 see that the total numbers of police-recorded
- 6 knife-enabled offences dropped from 2010 to 2014, then
- 7 rose steadily and significantly from 2014 to March 2020?
- 8 A. Yes.
- 9 Q. There is then a fall in 2020 to 2022, which I suspect
- 10 you would agree primarily attributable to the pandemic?
- 11 A. To the pandemic, yes.
- 12 Q. It then begins rising again before a small drop from
- 13 2023 to 2024, to year 2024 to 2025?
- 14 A. That's correct, yes.
- 15 Q. What we have at page 103, and I can deal with these very
- 16 briefly, another way of looking at the same problem --
- 17 because you can perhaps show all sorts of things with
- 18 statistics, but if you approach it from two angles we
- 19 might get a better overall impression -- these are the
- 20 figures from the NHS for admission to hospital for
- 21 injuries caused by assault with a sharp object?
- 22 **A.** Yes
- 23 Q. Just over 3,500 such admissions in the year ending March
- 24 2025?
- 25 A. That's correct, yes.

- 1 Ministry of Justice, Department for Education --
- 2 A. A wide range of departments, yes.
- 3 Q. Youth Justice Board?
- 4 A. Indeed yes.
- 5 Q. You flag there that other bodies, like individual police
- 6 forces, the National Police Chiefs' Council, the College
- 7 of Policing and the CPS have separate roles and
- 8 responsibilities in this area, particularly operational
- 9 decisions and police and prosecution guidance?
- 10 A. Yes, they do. Yes.
- 11 Q. Could we go to page 80, please, and just to situate
- 12 ourselves with the scale of this issue, the year ending
- 13 March 2025, police recorded just over 50,000 instances
- 14 of knife-enabled crime?
- 15 A. Yes, that's correct.
- 16 Q. That included 204 knife-enabled homicides and, bearing
- in mind the period year ending March 2025, that of
- 18 course included the dreadful murders of Elsie, Bebe and
- 19 Alice?
- 20 A. Yes.
- 21 Q. That 50,000 instances of knife-enabled crime also
- 22 included nearly 20,000 cases of assault with injury or
- 23 with intent to cause serious harm?
- 24 A. Yes.
- 25 **Q.** If we could go to page 101, please. In terms of trends 118
- 1 Q. A similar, not perhaps exactly the same, but a similar
- 2 pattern going back in these figures to April 2012 of
- 3 a rise, a fall -- sorry a fall, a rise, a fall for the
- 4 pandemic, and then something of a slight rise and
- 5 a recent slight fall?
- 6 A. That's correct, yes.
- 7 Q. The other thing that this information gives us is
- 8 a sense of the extent to which the harm and destruction
- 9 that these offences cause is focused on young people?
- 10 A. Yes
- 11 Q. Because what we can see from here is that between
- 12 a third and 40 per cent of such admissions are those in
- 13 the age group 0 to 24 --
- 14 A. Yes.
- 15 Q. -- and then the remainder above 24?
- 16 **A.** Yes.
- 17 Q. I think reflecting the severity of this problem, from
- 18 2022 there has been a serious violence duty imposed on
- a number of bodies, including police, local authorities,
- 20 health agencies, Youth Offending Teams, Fire and Rescue,
- 21 Probation?
- 22 A. To work together, yes.
- 23 Q. To work together?
- 24 **A**. Yes
- 25 Q. So the serious violence duty is not something that we

- 1 should see as akin to the Prevent duty, which has
- 2 a focus on individuals susceptible to radicalisation?
- 3 A. No, it's a different concept.
- 4 Q. It is more of a coordination function?
- 5 A. Yes.
- 6 Q. A duty to co-operate --
- 7 A. Yes.

- 8 Q. -- for those agencies to work together and to produce
- 9 a strategy?
- 10 A. That's correct. It is a bring them together, to work
- 11 together, to build a plan together for the overall area,
- 12 rather than focusing on individuals.
- 13 Q. I'll come later on to some of the initiatives that might
- 14 form part of those strategies. Before I do that could
  - we just get the legal framework around the purchase and
- 16 possession of knives and offensive weapons, both in
- 17 respect of adults and children.
- 18 Could we have page 58 of this document, please, and
- 19 paragraph 200, please. Can I start with specifically
- 20 bladed and pointed articles, rather than offensive
- 21 weapons more generally. First of all, there is no
- 22 distinction between what is permitted in respect of
- 23 possession of bladed or pointed articles for those over
- 24 18 and those under 18?
- 25 A. There isn't, no.

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- 1 Q. Save in respect of some specific kinds of weapons, and
- 2 I'll come to those, there is no current offence of
- 3 possessing knives or other bladed or pointed items in
- 4 a private place?
- 5 A. No, there isn't. No.
- 6 Q. In terms of some of those specific examples, there is
- 7 the Restriction of Offensive Weapons Act 1959.
- 8 Originally that prohibited the sale of what are known as
- 9 flick knives and gravity knives?
- 10 A. Yes.
- 11 Q. Then since 2019 and the Offensive Weapons Act, that also
- 12 prohibits their possession?
- 13 A. It does, yes.
- 14 Q. Then there are also weapons whose possession in private
- is prohibited under Section 141 of the 1988 Criminal
- 16 Justice Act. We see that in 205.
- 17 A. That's correct, yes.
- 18 Q. Just to give us a flavour of the sorts of weapons that
- 19 that covers, they are defined in a statutory instrument
- 20 under the Act: curved swords, zombie knives, belt buckle
- 21 knives, foot claws, push daggers, butterfly knives,
- 22 cyclone knives. There's a whole range.
- 23 A. There's a long list. I think it's about 22 in total,
- 24 yes.
- 25 Q. That schedule to the order that sets these all out has

1 Q. It is, as you say there, an offence to have a bladed or

- 2 pointed article in a public place without good reason or
- 3 lawful authority?
- 4 A. That's correct, yes.
- 5 Q. There is then a further similar offence, dealing with
- 6 having a bladed or pointed article on educational
- 7 premises?
- 8 A. That's correct, yes.
- 9  $\,$  **Q.** That essentially deals with the issue that a school
- 10 might not be a public place --
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 Q. -- for the first offence?
- 13 **A.** Yes.
- 14 Q. You then also have Section 139AA, an offence of
- 15 threatening someone with a bladed or pointed article or
- 16 an offensive weapon in a public place or on school
- 17 premises?
- 18 **A.** Yes.
- 19 Q. So it's a step up: not just having it but threatening
- 20 someone with it?
- 21 A. About threatening as well, yes.
- 22 **Q.** Each of these offences applies to any article with
- 23 a blade or point, except for a folding pocket knife,
- with a cutting edge of less than 3 inches?
- 25 A. That's right, yes.

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- 1 been regularly amended in response to changing trends?
- 2 A. It has been, yes.
- 3 Q. Would you agree with this, that the legislative history
- 4 in this area, prohibiting particular items even in
- 5 private because of their particular dangerousness or
- 6 nastiness, has been something of a cat and mouse game,
- 7 where a gap in the existing legislation is identified
- 8 because of a particular type of weapon emerging, further
- 9 legislation being passed to address it, and then the
- 10 kind of weapons that are used evolving to get round that
- 11 prohibition?
- 12 A. I can see why that might be thought with this particular
- 13 piece of legislation. It's introduced to allow
- 14 Parliament to decide that a particular weapon should be
- 15 added to the list. So I can see why it might be
- 16 portrayed in that way but it is an effective power for
- 17 removing weapons from circulation once it is added to
- 18 the particular list.
- But I understand it might portray some kind of cat and mouse game, I understand the point you're making
- 21 there. So one of the things that we're trying to do in
- 22 the Crime and Policing Bill currently going before
- Parliament is introduce a new offence around possession
- 24 to -- with intent to -- unlawful violence which covers
- 25 both --

14 October 2025

1	Q.	We'll come to that offence, Mr Hunt. Could we have
2		ILT000042 and page 2, just to get a sense of the way in
3		which the current regime prohibits an item.

This is part of that statutory instrument. If we could look towards the bottom of the page and if we could go across to the top of page 3, paragraph (sa) which deals with a zombie-style knife or zombie-style machete. It's quite a recent addition to this schedule.

9 A. It is, yes.

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- 10 Q. "A bladed article with a plain cutting edge, a sharp,pointed end.
  - "(iii) A blade of over 8 inches in length."

It tells us how to measure the blade. Then one or more features specified in paragraph 1(a), and which is not a weapon that falls under paragraph 1(s).

Paragraph 1(a), page 5, please, if 1(a) could be enlarged. Just reminding ourselves that there only needs to be one of those features but it could be a serrated cutting edge, more than one hole in the blade, spikes, more than two sharp points in the blade. You end up with quite technical definitions of quite specific types of weapons that have to fall into that description in order to be prohibited?

A. That's correct. That's the approach that's been taken
 and we consult on that as well to make sure that we can
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- 1 try and identify what we are trying to prohibit as
- 2 exactly as possible before it -- for the legal
- 3 definition which falls into the order.
- 4 Q. Yes, because there's obviously a risk of unintended
- 5 consequences if you inadvertently define a knife which
- 6 is prohibited by a description which would also include,
- 7 for example, a bread knife?
- 8 A. That's what we are trying to avoid by bringing in other
- 9 types of knives which don't need to be part of the
- 10 order, that's correct.
- 11  $\,$  **Q.** Away from knives and bladed items, and so in terms of
- 12 offensive weapons generally, again, no distinction
- 13 between under and over 18s in terms of what it is lawful
- 14 to possess in public or private?
- 15 A. There's no difference, no.
- 16 **Q.** Key statute here, Prevention of Crime Act 1953 defines
- an offensive weapon as any article made or adapted to
- 18 cause injury or carried with the intention of such use?
- 19 A. That's correct.
- 20 Q. So, depending on the facts, that could cover a bow and
- 21 arrow, a sledgehammer or, indeed, a hockey stick?
- A. It could do. It very much depends on the facts of thecase.
- 24 Q. It makes it an offence to have an offensive weapon in
- 25 a public place without reasonable excuse but places no 126
- controls on possession in a private place, such as the home?
- 3 A. Yes, that's correct.
- 4 Q. Then there is also a bespoke regime in respect of crossbows under the Crossbows Act 1987?
- 6 **A.** Yes.
- 7 **Q.** That is focused on the sale and purchase and possession
- 8 of crossbows by those under 18?
- 9 A. That's correct. That's only for crossbows, yes.
- 10 Q. A conventional bow and arrow, if I can use that term to
- 11 distinguish them from crossbows, the sort that one might
- see in the Olympics, is quite capable of causing serious
- 13 and even lethal injury if misused, isn't it?
- 14 A. It can be, yes.
- 15 Q. But save where that would fall within the offensive
- 16 weapons category because of intent, there are no
- 17 controls on conventional bows and arrows?
- 18 A. There are no specific controls on bows and arrows, no.
- 19  $\,$  **Q.** Why are crossbows and conventional bows treated
- 20 differently?
- 21 A. I think crossbows are linked to -- they're involved in
- 22 crime. Over the last 10 or 12 years I think they've
- 23 been linked to about 14 or 15 separate homicides. They
- are relatively easy to use, compared to conventional
- bows and arrows and today they increasingly look and 127

- 1 resemble firearms. In many ways they fire off. Whereas
- 2 bows and arrows have very rarely been used in crime,
- 3 that they are relatively cumbersome and require a high
- 4 degree of skill to fire as well, compared to crossbows,
- 5 which are comparatively easy to use.
- 6 Q. I think there may have been a case in July this year
- 7 where there was a conventional bow and arrow, a compound
- 8 bow used, in an attempted murder, a domestic --
- 9 a domestic murder?
- 10 **A.** But those are relatively rare, compared to crossbows.
- 11 Q. We will come onto purchase and sales of these various
- 12 items but are there any other provisions you would like
- to draw attention to in respect of possession of
- 14 weapons?
- 15 A. We have covered the Prevention of Crime Act 1953, that's
- the general provision but, otherwise, no, thank you.
  - 17 Q. What there isn't then in the current law, as regards
  - 18 possession of bladed items, is any prohibition on the
- 19 simple possession of a machete?
- 20 A. There isn't, no.
- 21 Q. Even for those under 18?
- 22 **A.** No.
- 23  $\,$  Q. We know that in this case, although AR ultimately used
- 24 a kitchen knife on 29 July 2024, he made considerable
- 25 efforts to obtain machetes?

- 1 A. Yes.
- Q. Could we look at HOM000134 and page 45, please. Just
   while this comes up, this is the College of Policing
- 4 "Problem Solving Guide for Knife Crime". Are you
- 5 familiar with that?
- 6 A. I am, yes.

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7 Q. What the College of Policing has said there:

"Informed by the four As framework -- Attractiveness Availability, Affordability and Accessibility -- we found that the attractiveness of certain knives, such as machetes, appears to outweigh the difficulties of sourcing them, (availability and accessibility), or the risks of being arrested in possession of them

From the graphic below, we can see machetes were the largest or joint largest weapons used in knife-enabled murders in London for the period that they analysed.

I think you were here at the Inquiry for ACC Winstanley's evidence in respect of Lancashire --

20 A. I did hear that, yes.

(affordability)."

21 Q. -- when he said:

"Rarely a day goes by when we look at our morning summaries and there hasn't been an incident the day before where somebody has either been attacked or threatened with a machete."

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their popularity for that very purpose?

A. We don't have data from retailers about the uses but we understand, as you no doubt -- you went through the evidence with the retailers, that there are a number of people who say there are legitimate uses for machete knives, whether in forestry or agriculture.

In terms of the data and use of machetes in crime, the most authoritative figure we have is the homicide index, and for 2024, out of around about 260 homicides involving knives, I think 18 were involving machetes, which is obviously 18 too many, but it gives you a feel that that's around 7 per cent of the overall total.

But in terms of other crimes, we haven't got data on the use of machetes in other types of knife offences.

Has there been consideration given, given, I appreciate, what you say about the data, but given what the College of Policing appear to have identified in this report, given the anecdotal evidence that we have from Mr Winstanley, has there been any consideration given to whether a prohibition on the possession of machetes, either at all or for under 18s might be a good idea?

either at all or for under 18s might be a good idea?
A. In 2023, there was serious thought given to
a prohibition on machete knives, which led to
a consultation in April that year talking about
prohibiting certain types of machetes and, essentially,

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1 A. Yes.

Q. It's fair, isn't it, to describe machetes as a popular
 weapon for those who are intent on threatening or
 carrying out unlawful violence?

- 5 A. They've got a lot of appeal, yes.
- 6 Q. We've heard evidence from sellers of machetes.

7 Mr Wheeler of Knife Warehouse estimated that in 2023 his

- 8 company sold around 100 a year. Mr Bullock of
- 9 Springfields estimated his company sold around 1,000
- 10 a year. That's, of course, only two sellers. Machetes
- 11 aren't items that typically require regular replacement?
- 12 A. I wouldn't have thought so, no.
- 13 Q. Appreciating that this is no doubt a far from scientific14 approach, do those kind of figures seem, at first blush,
- 15 consistent with the demand for machetes being solely for
- 16 purposes such as land clearance, agricultural use,
- 17 perhaps camping?
- 18 A. I couldn't say. We don't have that kind of data but19 whether that's a large number compared to the demand for
- 20 them, I just couldn't say.
- Q. I mean, there is a key question, isn't there, whether
   the demand for machetes for legitimate purposes is, in
- fact, hugely outweighed by the supply of them, which
- 24 would suggest that they might well be being
- 25 predominantly purchased for unlawful purposes because of 130

1 trying to test the ground about where the line could be

drawn in terms of which machetes could be banned and
 which would remain available for legitimate use. The

4 conclusion of that consultation was that to bring

5 forward a ban for zombie-style machetes, as one with no

6 legitimate use whatsoever.

7 Q. We've seen the effect of that conclusion. Can I just

8 test this a little, particularly as regards those under

9 18: do you think there is an inconsistency between the

10 treatment of crossbows and the treatment of machetes,

11 given that the possession of one of them by an under

12 18-year old, the possession of a crossbow by an under

13 18, is an offence in and of itself, whereas the

14 possession of a machete might or might not be but is

15 dependent on factors such as intent?

16 **A.** I understand how you are drawing out the difference

17 between possession in private of the crossbow and

possession in private of a machete. In public, though,

19 we treat it the same but, in private, I can see why you

are making that distinction.

21 Q. They would be treated the same in public because22 a machete would be treated as an offensive weapon?

23 **A.** Yes.

24 Q. Because you would expect a police officer on the ground,

25 if they find a 15-year old in possession of a machete to

1	be treated	as having	it for	intent?

- 2 A. Exactly. You have no good reason for carrying that3 particular knife.
- 4 Q. If they say they are off the allotment, the police
- 5 officer might find themselves in a little difficulty?
- 6 A. Might query that, yes.
- 7 Q. Without wanting to labour the point, unlawful violence,
- 8 particularly involving young people with machetes, on
- 9 any view, is far more common than unlawful violence
- 10 involving young people, involving crossbows?
- 11 A. And I have started to talk about earlier, we are
- 12 bringing forward a new proposed offence in the Crime and
- Policing Bill where we are making it illegal to possess
- 14 in private --
- 15 Q. I promise you we will come to that, Mr Hunt.
- 16 Can I turn to purchase and sale of the various kinds
- of weapons. We have just been dealing with crossbows.
   Dealing with them quickly, it is an offence under the
- 19 Crossbows Act to sell or indeed to hire one to somebody
- 20 under the age of 18 whether in person or remotely?
- 21 A. That's correct, yes.
- 22 Q. I think there are current proposals in the Crime and
- 23 Policing Bill to bring controls and restrictions on
- 24 remote sales of crossbows to under 18s -- or remote
- 25 sales of crossbows generally, rather, in line with the
- 1 there are some other related offences created in the
- 2 Offensive Weapons Act. There is an offence committed by

- 3 the seller when a knife is delivered into the hands of
- 4 somebody under the age of 18 at a residential address?
- 5 A. Yes
- 6 Q. Then, in Section 39, there is an offence on the part of
- 7 the deliverer where that occurs?
- 8 A. Yes.
- 9 **Q.** In both cases, the offence is committed when the parcel
- 10 is received by somebody under 18?
- 11 A. It is, yes.
- 12 Q. There is, in both cases, an all reasonable precautions
- 13 and due diligence defence?
- 14 A. Yes, there is.
- 15 Q. We have obviously heard evidence from a number of remote
- sellers of knives. No doubt, the responsible ones will
- 17 seek to do their best to comply and you have highlighted
- in the statements substantial guidance for sellers about
- 19 what appropriate systems are to meet the due diligence
- 20 defence.
- 21 Would you agree though, and I understand you
- 22 attended the evidence of the weapon sellers --
- 23 A. I did, yes.
- 24 Q. -- would you agree there appears to have been a variety
- of approaches taken to those requirements?

- 1 age-verification requirements that apply to bladed
- 2 articles?
- 3 A. That's correct, yes.
- 4 Q. Not an offence though to sell a conventional bow and
- 5 arrow to somebody under 18 or to do so remotely, and we
- 6 discussed reasons for the difference in approach?
- 7 A. Yes.
- 8 Q. Could we have HOM000078, page 62, please. While that's
- 9 coming up, it's an offence to sell various pointed or
- 10 bladed articles, including knives, to somebody under the
- 11 age of 18?
- 12 A. It is, yes.
- 13 **Q.** There is a defence to that offence, if the seller proves
- 14 they took all reasonable precautions and exercised all
- due diligence to avoid the commission of the offence?
- 16 A. Yes.
- 17 Q. Then, as regards remote sellers, if we could go to
- page 63 please, and paragraph 221, there are further
- 19 specific conditions that have to be met to establish
- 20 that all reasonable care and due diligence --
- 21 A. That the defence can be made out, yes.
- 22 Q. You have set those out there. We have looked at them in
- evidence previously. I'm not going to go through them
- 24 in detail.

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- Could we go to page 65 and paragraph 226 because
- A. I agree there was a range of responses.
- 2 Q. In places, there was something of an incurious or even
- 3 perhaps irresponsible approach that led to AR, on
- 4 multiple occasions, being able to circumvent
- 5 age-verified purchase requirements by using
- 6 identification that didn't belong to him?
- 7 **A.** Yes.
- 8 Q. Or, in the case of Amazon, for age verification for
- 9 purchase for the knife used in the attack, he provided
- 10 false details, ie the details of his father, which were
- 11 checked with Experian and that was regarded as
- 12 sufficient?
- 13 A. I heard that, yes.
- 14 Q. There was no requirement that the details submitted for
- age verification of the purchase matched the details of
- 16 the purchaser under that system?
  - 17 **A.** No
- 18 Q. Mr Boumphrey for Amazon, which is, of course, one of the
- 19 largest online retailers, accepted that that
- 20 age-verification process meant almost any child that
- 21 could use a computer would be able to pass it?
- 22 A. Yes, I heard that.
- 23 Q. What was your reaction to hearing that evidence, please?
- 24 A. It was very concerning evidence to hear, that a supplier
- 25 like Amazon was prepared to say that and had that view

- of its system. It was pleasing to see that they have since made changes to their system, which appears to be
- 3 much more in line with, for example, the guidance set
- 4 out in the statutory guidance issued by the Home Office,
- in terms of the checks that should be made. But it wasconcerning to hear.
- 7 Q. That is a verified purchase. In respect of age-verified
- 8 delivery, it appears that the purchases that AR made
- 9 appear to have led, on more than one occasion, to AR  $\,$
- 10 receiving directly weapons, despite being under 18.
- 11 **A.** Again, that's very concerning. The legislation requires
- that the package be handed over to somebody 18 and over
- and that the packaging is clearly labelled "18 plus,
- 14 a bladed article", so that the person receiving it knows
- what's contained in the package.
- 16 Q. Some of this is obviously down to individual suppliers
- 17 and individual couriers and how they take steps to
- 18 comply with their existing obligations. I think you
- 19 would accept that the regime that the Offensive Weapons
- 20 Act 2019 created for age-verified purchase and delivery
- 21 of weapons remotely was not watertight?
- 22 A. I would agree on that. Looking back in retrospect, in
- 23 terms of the detail about the age verification controls,
- 24 I agree.
- 25 **Q.** If we could have HOM000125 on page 2, please. In fact,
  - 137
- 1 requirements on age-verified purchases?
- 2 A. Yes.
- 3 Q. So they would have to involve provision of both
- 4 an official form of identification, passport, driving
- 5 licence, and so on, and also a current photograph such
- 6 as a selfie-type photograph?
- 7 A. It does, yes.
- 8 Q. So that confirms that the ID belongs to the purchaser?
- 9 A. The person, yes.
- 10 Q. Secondly, it requires that the person who makes the
- 11 purchase is also the person to receives the delivery?
- 12 A. It does, yes.
- 13 Q. So what we heard about checks on the electoral roll or
- 14 with credit agencies being used as part of the age
- 15 verification process, under the Crime and Policing
- 16 Bill's changes, that would no longer be an acceptable
- 17 form of age verification?
- 18 A. No, they would have to show either a driving licence or19 a passport.
- 19 a passport.20 Q. It could perhaps be used in conjunction
- 20 **Q.** It could perhaps be used in conjunction but it would not
- 21 by itself be enough?
- 22 A. It wouldn't, no.
- 23 Q. Likewise, the provision of the selfie-type photograph,
- 24 alongside an official form of ID, is intended to
- 25 mitigate against the use of false identification?

1 if we just have page 1, just so we can situate

- 2 ourselves. This is the announcement in February this
- 3 year of the measures which we're going to come to in the
- 4 Crime and Policing Bill?
- 5 A. Yes
- 6 Q. If we go to page 2 -- sorry, start of page 3, top
- 7 paragraph. The description by the Home Office of the
- 8 regime in place, prior to the changes that the Crime and
- 9 Policing Bill is intended to enact, was described as
- 10 having lethal loopholes in the sale of knives online,
- 11 which are allowing dangerous weapons to end up in the
- 12 wrong hands?
- 13 A. Certainly, the age-verification controls weren't as
- strong as we are now proposing to do by introducing the
- 15 checks, yes.
- 16 Q. This is the Home Office's own language in this press
- 17 release, isn't it?
- 18 A. Yes, I know.
- 19  $\,$  Q. It's the Home Office's own description of its own
- 20 legislation?
- 21  $\,$  A.  $\,$  It is. We recognise that there were failures in terms
- of the age-verification controls at the time.
- 23 Q. The Crime and Policing Bill seeks to address that. I'm
- 24 not going to go through clause by clause, you'll be
- 25 grateful to hear but, first, it imposes stricter
  - 138
- A. It is, yes.
- 2 Q. Both of those steps, dealing with false identification
- 3 and ensuring that the purchaser is the same as the
- 4 person receiving the delivery, might be thought to be
- 5 really quite obvious gaps in the system that the 2019
- 6 Offensive Weapons Act brought in; is that fair?
- 7 A. If I can just provide a little bit of context to what
- 8 was happening in 2018/19. Insofar as the sales
- 9 provisions on sales of knives were brought up to date to
- 10 reflect the increasing move to remote sales, to online
- sales of knives, and the legislation was updated to
- 12 reflect that. The regional proposal consulted on in
- 13 November 2017 was actually to ban all online sales of
- 14 knives completely.
- Following the consultation on that exercise,provisions were brought forward to ban the delivery of
- 17 bladed products to residential addresses, bladed
- 18 products being knives with cutting edges which might
- 19 cause serious injury. During the passage of the bill in
- the houses of Parliament, motions were brought forward,
- 21 which were agreed with the Government, to allow bladed
- products to be delivered to a residential address,
- 23 subject to the defences being met, which were introduced
- into the bill at that point in time.

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We didn't go so far as to prescribe the actual

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- 1 nature of the age-verification checks to be undertaken 2 by retailers because we would rather prescribe that --3 the argument that retailers themselves should be able to 4 establish the age-verification checks consistent with 5 their business model. We also didn't want to put 6 something onto the face of the bill that might be 7 rapidly dated at the time that the bill was going 8 through. So that's why -- what now seems to be gaps or 9 loopholes in the law, that's why we are now trying to 10 amend the law to kind of fill the gaps which might have 11 been perceived to be the case when the bill was 12 introduced 2022 and the measures introduced in April
- 14 Q. Thank you. Those gaps, therefore, have now been 15 identified and addressed through the Crime and Policing 16 Bill, and that is likely, for responsible sellers, to 17 provide, one would hope, significant assistance in 18 ensuring that both purchases and deliveries are properly 19 verified and to the right person?
- 20 A. Yes, we hope so.

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21 Q. That still leaves an issue over the irresponsible 22 sellers, doesn't it: either companies focused on the 23 sale of knives who simply pay little or no regard to 24 their legal obligations or informal sellers, for

25 example, through social media? 141

1 A. As the Inquiry are probably aware, we commissioned 2 a review of online sales of knives led by a senior 3 police officer, Commander Stephen Clayman, the National Police Chief Lead on Knife Crime, and he brought forward 4 5 a number of different recommendations, one of which was 6 the establishment of a dedicated police team to help 7 enforce the law in this area, particularly the measures 8 that the Government was bringing forward around the q sales of knives, to kind of bolster and make sure there 10 was a much more robust law enforcement approach. 11 Secondly, if I can just move on to it as well, again

subject to Parliament agreeing, the Crime and Policing Bill increases the sentences for sales of knives, and what's really important about that is it gives police greater investigatory powers because it would no longer be summary only offences. They have greater opportunity to investigate crime.

- 18 Q. In terms of enforcement, we'll talk about the claim and 19 review shortly, when looking at how these offences are 20 committed, the recipient of a knife who is under 18 has 21 no incentive to report that they have been given 22 a knife, been delivered a knife, been able to purchase 23 a knife in breach of the law, do they?
- 24 **A**. No, they don't. No.
- 25 Because the offence is only committed with the knife is 142
- 1 actually handed to somebody under 18, both the person 2 carrying out the delivery and, indeed, the seller may 3 well not realise that an offence has potentially been 4 committed?
- 5 A. Possibly not, no.
- 6 Q. Neither of them, if they did realise that an offence had 7 been committed, would particularly have an incentive to 8 self-report --
- 9 A.
- 10 **Q.** -- and hold their hands up to it, would they?
- 11 A.
- 12 Q. Particularly when dealing with an irresponsible seller, 13 they simply aren't going to care that they're in breach 14 of the law, in any event?
- A. That might be the case. 15
- 16 Q. So, on the fundamental structure of the legislation, 17 these are offences which are extremely difficult even to 18 detect, let alone to investigate or prosecute?
- 19 A. Possibly so, but that's not unique. But I understand 20 the point you are making by the delivery chain that you 21 sketched out, yes.
- 22 Q. The Inquiry has heard evidence that Ageo Limited, 23 trading as Hunting and Knives, sent somewhere in excess 24 of 2,500 packages via a complex supply chain, 99.9 per cent of which contained knives should have been 25

- aged-verified deliveries but none of which were, and we can't say how many of those were actually delivered to someone under 18 and would therefore have involved the commission of an offence. Is that something that concerns you?
- A. It was very concerning when I heard the evidence being given about that particular delivery chain. Section 42 of the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 requires the person making arrangements for the overseas seller to make 10 arrangements to make sure that they are taking due 11 diligence and reasonable precautions to make sure that 12 those knives that they are receiving from the overseas 13 seller are delivered into the hands of somebody over the 14 age of 18. So the legislation is there but I understand 15 the point you are making; it is very concerning.
- 16 Has there been consideration, it sounds as though there Q. 17 may have been, given to imposing much more significant 18 restrictions on the remote sale of knives and other 19 offensive weapons, either at all or to people under 18? 20 It sounded as though that was consulted on some years 21 ago?
- 22 A. It was consulted on some years ago. The idea was consulted on. There wasn't that much support for the idea, particularly in Parliament as well, and so measures brought forward which significantly tightened 144

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- 1 the law, with respect to remote sales but oddly, as we
- 2 know look back, didn't go far enough, but the measures
- 3 that we are now bringing forward in the Crime and
- 4 Policing Bill will help fill some of that. It will fill
- 5 that particular gap but I understand the point you're
- 6 making.
- 7 Q. They tighten the regime for purchase and delivery but it
- 8 is still an activity, the remote purchase of knives,
- 9 that can be engaged in lawfully?
- 10 A. It is. In addition to Crime and Policing Bill, in a way
- 11 to help regulate the sector as well, we are also giving
- 12 very serious consideration to licensing or registration
- 13 of knives, which again was an idea put forward by
- 14 Commander Clayman in his report, and the Government is
- 15 committed to consult on that later this year.
- 16 Q. I was going to come to that. The licensing of sellers
- 17 of knives has some precedent in this field because
- 18 firearms can only be sold by a registered firearms
- 19 dealer, can't thev?
- 20 A. That's correct, yes.
- 21 Q. So that means that there is, first of all, a requirement
- 22 that the dealer is a fit and proper person?
- 23 A. Yes.

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- 24 Q. You can have various individuals who are prohibited
- 25 persons, for example because of prior convictions, and 145

3 of what sales have been made, you can have reporting

equally it means that there is scope for licensing

conditions. You can have a register that has to be kept

- 4 obligations?
- 5 A. Absolutely, yes.
- 6 Q. So you say that is -- I think you said that the
- 7 Government was intending to consult on that later this
- 8
- 9 A. That's -- indeed.
- 10 Q. Would you be able to keep the Inquiry up to date on the
- 11 progress of that consultation?
- 12 A. Absolutely, yes.
- 13 Q. There are other possible alternatives, as well, short of
- 14 an outright ban on remote sale of knives. One would be,
- 15 for example, to limit or prohibit the remote sale of
- 16 pointed knives; would that be an option?
- 17 A. That could be an option. I'm not sure how acceptable
  - that would be to the wider general public, in terms of
- 19 the range of knives which might be covered by that
- 20 description. But it could be an option.
- **Q.** Another might be perhaps a narrower class of knives: 21
- 22 machetes. They could be in a category where they can be
- 23 purchased by legitimate use by somebody going to
- 24 a bricks and mortar store; you can't buy them online?
- 25 **A**. That could well be something. It is not something we 146
- 1 are actively considering but, again, it's an area which 2
  - we keep under review all the time. One of the things
- 3 I say, coming back to the offence, is one of the reasons
- 4 that the offence that we are proposing in the Crime and
- 5 Policing Bill to introduce deals with a situation where
- 6 a farmer in Northumbria might have a legitimate use for
- 7 a machete, clearing a farm, well away from a power
- 8 source, whereas somebody living in a flat in an inner
- 9 city area may have less reason to have a machete, which
  - is why we are keen to test the offence --
- 11 Q. I'm certainly not suggesting, Mr Hunt, that any of these
- 12 are going to be a complete solution to what is obviously
- 13 a complex and multifaceted problem. I'm simply putting
- 14 them up for consideration and for your response. But
- 15 these are options, aren't they, that fall some way short
- 16 of a complete ban on the remote sale of knives but that
- 17 would impose additional challenges on those seeking to
- 18 obtain knives for unlawful purposes?
- 19 A. They would do. For example, provided the bricks and
- 20 mortar shops apply the right checks when selling
- 21 machetes, but yes, they would.
- 22 Q. It's much easier to deal with bricks and mortar shops,

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- 23 you know where they are and you can send a police
- 24 officer or a trading standards official -- not you, but
- 25 one can send a police officer or trading standards

- 1 official round to check; it's much harder to deal with 2 somebody selling a knife on Facebook?
- 3 A. Indeed. It's an interesting suggestion.
- 4 There are also offences, as regards the sale of knives,
  - under the Knives Act 1997, which relate to unlawful
- 6 marketing of knives. You cover those in
- 7 paragraph 218 -- or Ms Ellsmore covers those in 218 of
- 8 the statement
- 9 Summarising: it is an offence to market a knife in 10 a way which indicates or suggests that it is suitable
- 11 for combat or is otherwise likely to stimulate or
- 12 encourage violent behaviour, involving the use of the
- 13 knife as a weapon?
- 14 A. Yes.

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- 15 Q. Again, we have heard something about some of the
- 16 advertising online of knives in the Inquiry: knives with
- 17 product or brand names such as "Predator", "Cold Steel"
- 18 and "Walking Dead"; an all-black machete, where the
- 19 colour was described as being "useful to avoid scaring
- 20 the fish"; knives described as having a "pointed tip for
- 21 stabbing", and one described as "useful as a stabbing 22 weapon".
- 23

I'm not going to go so far as to ask for your view on whether or not those, or any of them, would amount to an offence. Does it suggest to you a sector where there

- is proper and responsible regard for how knives areadvertised and for the obligations under the Knives Act?
- 3 A. Certainly those examples are very concerning, yes. It 4 does suggest that there is an issue there in terms of 5 what's being advertised. Again, I keep going back to 6 the review of online sales and knives. But it was quite 7 a comprehensive review done just 12 months ago or less, 8 and it did touch upon this, about the Youth and Knives 9 Act 1997, and it was described as challenging to law 10 enforcement, and so one of the ways that we have been 11 looking to deal with that is focusing on the weapons 12 themselves, rather than unlawful marketing, which is

One of the things we ought to try and do with the new police team being put together is that it would build up a particular expertise in a broader area of sales and knives issues, for example the unlawful marketing as well.

why, for example, the ban on the zombie-style machetes,

the ban on ninja swords -- rather than focusing on the

unlawful marketing but I do take the point you are

Q. I think there are also proposals in the Crime and
 Policing Bill that would enable content takedown for
 material that contravenes UK law on the marketing of
 knives?

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- Q. I want to deal with one further aspect of the Crime and
   Policing Bill now. There's an element of it that
   I understand is known as Ronan's Law, which is named
   after Ronan Kanda, a victim of a knife murder in 2022,
   killed by two individuals, one of whom had stockpiled
   a small arsenal of edged weapons, including machetes?
- 7 **A.** Yes.

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saying.

- 8 **Q**. There is intended to be a new reporting requirement 9 where somebody buys weapons in bulk and, again, 10 summarising and omitting some exceptions, such as blocks 11 of kitchen knives, a retailer would have to report any 12 purchase of more than six knives, not only in a single 13 transaction but also to the same person or to the same 14 address, within a relatively short period of time, 15 30 days?
- 16 A. That is correct, yes.
- 17 Q. It is not a prohibition on selling weapons in bulk, it's
  18 a requirement to report when you have sold weapons in
  19 bulk?
- 20 **A.** It is a requirement to report that to the new police
  21 team we are setting up, so they can then use that
  22 information, compare it to intelligence we've got
  23 elsewhere, to understand why that purchase might be
  24 going ahead

25 **Q.** Can you help with why it is an after purchase reporting 151

- A. They would do and it is designed to pick up either
   unlawful marketing of weapons, contrary to the Knives
   Act 1997, or indeed somebody shown in possession of
   an offensive weapon.
- Q. I think that that also comes with potentially
   significant financial penalties for both -- well, for
   the technology platforms that host such content but also
   senior officer liability in some circumstances?
- 9 A. That's correct. There will be a civil penalty notice
   10 for both the platform and a designated director as well.
- 11 **Q.** That would apply, as I understand it, to social media 12 sites, as well as to traditional websites and the more 13 obvious platforms for sale, such as Amazon?
- A. It would apply to search engines like Google, apply to
   social media platforms, it would apply to online
   marketplaces.
- 17 **Q.** In terms of enforcement of that, you have told us about the police team that is being set up and funded: would that largely be for them to develop how that is to be enforced?
- A. It would be. We have developed a process of content
   removal notices, which that unit would be able to use
   against particular platforms of concern to get the
   material that the accounts close down within 48 hours or
   so of that notice being issued.

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- requirement that is intended to be brought in, rather than just prohibit selling six knives at a time to
- 3 somebody?
- 4 Well, there may well be legitimate reasons why that 5 person wants more than six knives at a time but, if the 6 police have been sent a report by the retailer that that 7 purchase has gone through, it may be, as I say, it 8 reveals other criminality going on, whether they are 9 involved in the grey market as a seller or, as has been 10 the case in the recent past, going to county lines gangs to equip the people in that particular gang. So there 11 will often be other sides of criminality linked to that
- will often be other sides of criminality linked to that
   sale as well, but not all the time.
   Q. Is there a risk that it's a relatively straightforward
- requirement to circumvent. If one wants to accumulate
  a stockpile of knives, even in quite a short space of
  time, one can simply purchase from different sellers, or
- perhaps make purchases from the same seller just over 30
- 19 days apart?
- A. That, of course, is possible. But there is that check
  in the system that there is a duty to report that to the
- police, that that purchase is going ahead. We are
- 23 trying to build, again, on the recommendations in
- 24 Commander Clayman's report around suspicious
- 25 transactions involving knives. We're focusing on online

1 sales of knives, and we think that building on the 2 evidence that Commander Clayman acquired as part of his 3 review, that it goes some way to combating somebody 4 looking to buy knives in that way, whether as a grey 5 market seller to sell them on or otherwise would be the 6 case.

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Q. You mention Commander Clayman's review. I think Commander Clayman recommended not only reporting requirements for bulk purchase of knives but also, as you alluded to, suspicious purchase of knives. I think that was in the announcement we looked at briefly a few moments ago, HOM000125, where it was said that that would form part of Ronan's law.

Am I right that the requirement to report suspicious transactions separately from bulk transactions isn't in the bill?

- 17 A. I think we were to consider the bulk purchase being 18 a suspicious purchase buying that number of knives, 19 either in 30 days or in one go. In terms of actually 20 just having an individual suspicious threshold, I think 21 it would be very hard to define in a way that would make 22 meaningful sense to a retailer. So we are focusing at 23 the moment on the bulk purchases.
- 24 Q. We have heard in this case that AR made a number of 25 enquiries to weapon sellers to see what their age 153

- 1 verification requirements, or indeed how they would 2 deliver the weapons, would it be in an obvious package 3 or not, and that some sellers do already make a practice 4 of reporting suspicious attempts to buy particularly 5 age-verified weapons to the police?
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 Q. Would it not be sound policy to have a reporting 8 requirement for that on sellers?
- 9 A. Again, it's an interesting suggestion. We looked at 10 that as part of the work preparing for the Crime and 11 Policing Bill, based on the recommendation made by 12 Commander Clayman. I think, as you said before, 13 individual retailers, if they considered somebody to be 14 suspicious, would already go to the police about this, 15 whereas if you are trying to define that in a bill, we 16 thought we'd prefer, at the moment, to leave it at 17 a bulk purchase.
- 18 Q. Are these sorts of reporting requirements, either the 19 bulk purchase ones that are being introduced or possibly 20 ones about suspicion, are they the sort of thing that 21 might be assisted by a licensing or a registration 22 scheme because, if sellers have to be licensed or 23 registered then they know failure to comply with the 24 requirements of that is potentially going to risk losing 25 them their ability to operate?

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- 1 A. Subject to the consultation and legislation in due 2 course, licensing regime will make that much easier 3 because there will be requirements placed on the 4 licenced seller. So, for example, as well as things 5 like bulk purchases set out in the bill, it may well be 6 we include something around reporting suspicious 7 transactions to the police or trading standards 8 authority, together with other requirements as well, which you wouldn't need to get to the criminal standard
- 9 10 to be applied. 11 Q. Can I just make clear that, though I'm going to move on 12 from legislative change around this, subject to coming 13 back to the point about the new offence, I'm not 14 ignoring the difficult issue of cross-border 15 importation. What you say in the witness statement is 16 that that is -- the recommendations from the Clayman 17 review about that are under active consideration and 18 work is continuing in the Home Office to assess or implement these recommendations?
- 19 20 A. It is. 21 Q. Again, I'm not asking you to commit to a position now 22 but would you be able to keep us updated, perhaps by the 23 end of November, as will Ms Ellsmore, on the course of
- that work? 25 Yes, we can. Yes. A.

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- Q. Who is responsible for investigating and prosecuting 2 breaches of the existing legislation?
- 3 A. Into the sales of knives?
- 4 Q. Yes.
- 5 A. The police and local trading standards authorities.
- Q. I think trading standards departments face quite 6 7 substantial challenges, both in terms of their own 8 resourcing but also in dealing with online sales, which 9 may not be clearly aligned to a particular local 10 authority area?
- 11 A. That's correct.
- 12 Q. Again, taking the example of the machete found in AR's 13 bedroom, sold by Hunting and Knives, a UK company with 14 an address, I think, in Wales, key company officers 15 based in Spain, the delivery arranged by SJ Henderson 16 from Northern Ireland, and have they then made use of 17 two national companies, Whistl and Evri for transit and 18 final mile delivery. It's quite difficult to see which 19 local authority might deal with that chain of events? 20 A. It would be unclear. There will be a number of possible
- 21 trading standards who could have an interest in it. It 22 very much depends on the complaints they might receive. 23 It depends on the intelligence which the police might 24 get or the trading standards might get about delivering

25 and who is inclined to act upon it. There is a national 156

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- trading standards which acts a coordinating authority if

  it cuts across more than one particular trading

  standards body. But going back to the review online,

  sales of knives, it is particularly difficult, I think,

  for trading standards to enforce online sales of knives,
- which is why we are going back to the key role this new police team will play in this area.
  Q. Again, just picking a slightly different example, the 2,500 other bladed items that appear to have been
- delivered into the UK by Hunting and Knives: no one
   local authority is going to have an interest in all of
   them, quite clearly, and perhaps not each one single
- police force. Who do you think the correct law enforcement body to investigate that would be?
- A. Again, it's very hard to say, depending on the circumstances of the case, where the complaint was made, where the major part of the incident was considered to have taken place, talks between the respective law enforcement bodies about who would take the lead in that particular case.
- Q. If we can bring up the claim and review now, HOM000160,
   if we could go to page 14, please. If we could have the
   paragraph "Legislation and sentencing" enlarged.
   What Commander Clayman identified was the sales an

What Commander Clayman identified was the sales and marketing offences that can be used are not commonly

identified in policing. It's an area where officers maynot come across it in their day-to-day business:

"As such, the legislation is rarely used and attempts to use it can encounter barriers at the prosecution stage with those CPS prosecutors contacted never having dealt with a relevant offence."

He then gives a specific example of the difficulties obtaining warrants in some circumstances. It's fair to say that these are not offences that are frequently prosecuted?

- 11 A. No, that's correct.
- 12 Q. You've told us about Commander Clayman recommended13 a national coordination function to help overcome that?
- 14 A. Yes.
- 15 Q. Is that that police unit you've told us about?
- 16 A. It is, yes.
- Q. Can I come then to the new offence in the Crime and
   Policing Bill, as I promised I would. This introduces
   an amendment to the Criminal Justice Act 1988. It
   inserts a new offence: the possession of an offensive
- 21 weapon with intent to commit unlawful violence?
- 22 A. Yes
- Q. It also creates a power for the police to seize a weapon
   that they reasonably suspect of being intended for use
   in unlawful violence?

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1 A. It does, yes.

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- Q. Both of those would have application both in public butalso in private places.
- 4 A. In private, yes.
- Q. On the assumption that Parliament does adopt this in
   something like its current form, would the intention be
   for there to be guidance issued by the Home Office in
   respect of this offence, as there is in respect of other
   offences under the 1988 Act?
- A. There would be guidance, whether by the Home Office or
   jointly with the police and CPS and other bodies; there
   would be guidance.
- Q. Can you help us with what sort of things that might cover? For example would simple possession by a teenager of a machete within a home address be regarded as sufficient for there to be a reasonable
- 17 suspicion as to its intended use?
- 18 A. I think we worked through a number of different
   scenarios to give advice to police and prosecutors about
   the kind of situations which might be considered
   relevant factors, when looking at whether an offence has
   been engaged or not.
- Q. There's all sorts of things that might be capable of
   being taken into account. It might have the
- 25 characteristics of the weapon or the forensic history of 159

- 1 the individual in possession of it?
- A. There'll be a number of different factors that would
   be -- that's why it's important that we clarify it in
   quidance, I think.
- Q. I've spent some time dealing with the legislative
   framework and current potential reforms to it. Can
   I come to some enforcement of the criminal law and
   criminal offences in this area. In terms of police
- powers around weapons, stop and search is a highly
   significant one, various different statutory powers for
- 11 it but under that broad umbrella?
- 12 A. It will be seen as so, yes.
- Q. I think in the statement, page 70 at paragraph 244, it's described as a key tactic for police to take dangerous weapons off the streets and protect communities from violence and other crime?
- 17 **A**. Yes
- 18 Q. The statement goes on to make clear, it's also a power
   19 that has to be exercised with a degree of caution and
   20 care, given the potential repercussions to the model of
   21 policing by consent?
- 22 A. Yes.
- Q. In effect, it's a power that can either be abused or beperceived to be abused?
- 25 A. Possibly so, yes.

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- Its effectiveness is likely to depend on how well that 1 Q.
- 2 balance is struck, to some degree?
- 3 A. That's right.
- 4 Q. There is a relatively recent power introduced, the
- 5 Serious Violence Reduction Order: can you help us with
- 6 how that works in the context of stop and search?
- 7 A. Yes. Serious Violence Reduction Orders were introduced
- 8 under the Police, Courts and Sentencing Act 2022. It
- 9 provides that the police can, on conviction of somebody
- 10 for a knife offence, an over-18 for a knife offence.
- a Serious Violence Reduction Order is also placed on 11
- 12 that person as well. This, in effect, means that that
- 13 person can be stopped and searched at any time without
- 14 the police having to have reasonable grounds to suspect.
- 15 So it's different to a stop and search under the normal
- 16 PACE rules.
- 17 Q. They're effectively walking around in their own little
- Section 60 suspicionless bubble? 18
- 19 A. In effect, yes.
- 20 Q. When somebody is found with a weapon, the decision on
- 21 whether or not they should be charged is one for the
- 22 police, or probably more likely, because they are either
- 23 way offences, for the CPS?
- 24 A. That's correct, yes.
- 25 Q. Can we have HOM000176, please -- not a Home Office

CPS and National Police Chiefs' Council guidelines on

document, although the Home Office have produced it --

- 2
- 3 the cautioning and charging of knife offences -- knife
  - crime offences. It's dated 2022. Do you know whether
- 5 this is a significant change from any earlier guidance
- 6 or is this continuity?
- 7 It replaces the 2015 ACPO guidance. The 2015 ACPO
- 8 guidance was quite a significant step at the time, in
- 9 terms of charging of 16 and 17-year olds, rather than
- 10 leaving it to out-of-court disposals. The 2022
- 11 guidelines you see here evolved after consultation with
- 12 police forces, which was delayed by the pandemic, which
- 13 is why it didn't come out in 2022, but it made it
- 14 clearer how to treat 16 and 17-year olds but also those
- 15 under 16, as well.
- 16 Q. Can we look to page 3. This page deals with adults and
- 17 also with 16 and 17-year olds, as you say?
- 18 A.
- 19 Expectation is that those aged 18 and over will be
- 20 charged for all knife-related offences?
- 21 A. Yes.
- 22 Q. For 16 and 17-year olds, the starting point for children
- 23 and young people aged 16 and 17 for simple possession
- 24 should be to charge --
- 25 A. Yes.

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- 1 -- unless there are exceptional circumstances, in which 2 case potentially a youth conditional caution?
- 3 Α. Yes.
- 4 Q. Where there's any history of offences of violence,
- 5 previous offending, knife or weapon offence, or it's
- 6 an offence more serious than simple possession, they
- 7 should be charged?
- 8 A. Yes.

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- 9 **Q.** Then the next page, please. This deals with children 10 and young persons under 16, page 4:
  - "The starting point for a child aged under 16 for simple possession, who has not previously been involved
- 13 in any violent offending or offences including knives or
- 14 weapons should be a [youth conditional caution]."
- A. That's correct, yes. 15
- 16 **Q.** Then bottom paragraph:
- 17 "Where the suspect has any history of offences of
- 18 violence, has been previously dealt with for
- 19 a knife/weapon offence or the offence under
- 20 investigation is an offence other than simple
- 21 possession, then they should be charged."
- 22 A. Yes.
- 23 Q. I think there is also work underway, in conjunction with
- 24 this charging guidance, to ensure that whenever somebody
- 25 under 18 is found in possession of a knife, whether they 163

- 1 are charged or not, there should be a referral to
- 2 a Youth Offending Team?
- 3 A. That's correct, yes.
- 4 Could we have YJB000112 up, please. This is material
- 5 from the Youth Justice Board from August this year. Can
- 6 we have page 15 up, please. Is the aim of those
- 7 mandatory referrals to the Youth Offending Team,
- 8 wherever anyone is found in possession of a knife, is
- 9 that an example of the sort of individualised decisions
- 10 on outcomes that the YJB supports here?
- 11 A. It is. It's ensuring that the individual young offender
- 12 gets an offender plan that deals with their particular
- 13 reason for their offending.
- Q. You describe them as a young offender but, in fact, it 14
- 15 would cover even if they weren't charged or --
- A. Yes, for their re-admission. 16
- 17 Q. Thank you. Could I ask about knife crime prevention
- 18 orders. These were introduced by Part 2 of the
- 19 Offensive Weapons Act 2019?
- 20 A. They were, yes.
- 21 Q. They were a form of civil order, so they could be
- 22 imposed either on conviction or on a freestanding
- 23 application by the police?
- 24 A. They could be, yes.
- 25 Q. They could impose both positive requirements and

- 1 negative prohibitions --
- 2 A. Yes.
- 3 Q. -- and breach, I think, was a criminal offence?
- 4 A. It was, yes.
- 5 Q. The Act required that, before the relevant provisions
- 6 were commenced nationwide, they had to be piloted?
- 7 A. Yes.
- 8 Q. A report on the pilot lay before Parliament and that
- 9 pilot duly took place in the Metropolitan Police area
- 10 between July 2021 and March 2023?
- A. That's correct, yes. 11
- 12 There hasn't been a report laid before Parliament. Can Q.
- 13 you help us with why not?
- A. There wasn't a report laid before Parliament on the 14
- 15 basis that the pilot wasn't going to be rolled out
- 16 nationally. The view was taken that, if the pilot
- 17 wasn't going to be rolled out nationally, a report to
- 18 Parliament wasn't necessary because that's the way the
- 19 provision was read. As part of the provisions put into
- 20 the Offensive Weapons Bill at the time, as the measures
- 21 were going through Parliament.
- 22 Q. If we could have HOM000085 up, please. This is part of
- 23 the evaluation of this pilot. If we could have page 3
- 24 up, please. Summarising it as best I can, despite some
- 25 difficulties with the data and the ability to analyse

  - implementation. You had the Youth Offending Service over principled objections. Talk us through the
- 2
- 3 decision to say, "No, post-pilot, we are not going to
- 4 roll these out nationally"?
- 5 A. I think, looking at the two evaluation reports, one of
- 6 which, as you said, highlights that they seemed to have
- 7 no impact on re-offending between the two different
- 8 groups in the randomised control trial. Also, when
- 9 talking to the various agencies involved in the KCPOs,
- 10 there were concerns, particularly about policing, about
- 11 resourcing, and whether they're the right people to
- 12 actually identify the right conditions to be placed in
- 13 a KCPO.

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- But there were more fundamental concerns by the Youth Offending Team, by Youth Justice Services, in terms of, actually, are we duplicating what's already possible under a youth referral order or a youth offending plan from the Youth Offending Team, or is there also what they described as a moral dilemma in the report, where they spoke about whether they will be criminalising particularly the young person who may be subject to a KCPO because of a non-compliance with the order will be regarded as a potential criminal offence. which will mean they will go back into the court and be
- prosecuted for not complying with the KCPO. I think
  - 167

- 1 that fully, the conclusion was, and we see this in the
- 2 second paragraph, no significant differences across
- 3 treatment and control groups -- treatment groups are
- 4 those that received KCPOs -- in terms of probabilities
- 5 of re-offending, probabilities of being charged with an 6 offence and the number of offences committed:
  - "People in the treatment group and control group also appear to re-offend with similar delays."
- 9 A.

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- 10 Q. In other words, they didn't work?
- 11 A. Exactly.
- 12 There was a study, I think, by University College London Q.
- 13 which was a more sort of qualitative debriefing study of
- 14 those involved?
- 15 A. It was.
- 16 Q. Sir, it's at HOM000087.
- 17 Again, is it a fair summary to say that police and
- 18 CPS respondents had concerns that were more focused on
- 19 resourcing and issues over implementation?
- 20 **A**.

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- 21 **Q.** Youth offending staff had more principled objections?
- 22 A. They had more fundamental concerns, yes.
- 23 Q. What were the reasons then for not rolling this out? We
- 24 have seen some of the qualitative stuff summarised
- 25 there. You also had concerns over resourcing and

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- 1 that was particularly a stumbling block for buy-in from
- 2 Youth Justice Services.
- 3 Q. I have been asked to explore whether a lack of
- 4 resourcing to make these work properly was behind the
- 5 reason, either that they weren't rolled out or that they
- 6 didn't work? Would that be a fair comment to make or is 7
  - that rather too simplistic?
- 8 A. I don't know. I think it's a bit more complex than
- 9 that. I think you've to know some of the context about
  - the introduction of the KCPOs and the Offensive Weapons
- 11 Bill. The KCPOs were an idea developed by the
- 12 Metropolitan Police, at a time when we saw a significant
- 13 increase in knife crime. It had doubled within three or
- 14 four years. In 2018, during the passage of the
- 15 Offensive Weapons Bill, Metropolitan Police submitted to
- 16 ministers a proposal for KCPOs supported by the National
- 17 Police Chiefs' Council. On the basis of that, ministers
- 18 agreed to put the proposal for KCPOs into the bill,
- unusually without consultation, which is an unusual step 19
- 20 to take, which is a complex measure.
- 21 In retrospect, it would have benefited from 22 a consultation, so that the kind of issues which were 23 then exposed by the pilot would have been anticipated in 24 the design of the legislation going into the Offensive
  - Weapons Bill and therefore could have been piloted so

- forth. I think, as the bill was going through, the 1 2 addition of offences in connection to the non-compliance 3 particularly made it problematic for the Youth Justice 4 Services. So I think it was as much that, than any lack 5 of resources was the issue here.
- 6 Q. Can we think how this might have been applied in AR's 7 case. He was convicted of a knife offence of possession 8 in February 2020, that I think was prior even to the 9 pilot starting, by over a year. So he couldn't have 10 received one on conviction?
- 11 A. No.
- 12 Q. Then when he was found with a knife in March 2022, even 13 if the provisions had been in force nationally, I think 14 he wouldn't have been eligible for a KCPO on application 15 by the police because the trigger for that was there had 16 to be two instances of possession within two years and 17 so he would have fallen just outside that?
- 18 A. Possibly but he would have been able to be subject to 19 a conditional caution, subject to the police taking that 20
- 21 Q. So you would look to something like a youth conditional 22 caution, or indeed other tools you have mentioned, youth 23 rehabilitation order, to try to impose positive or 24 negative conditions on somebody with a persistent 25 challenge of possessing knives, rather than focusing on
- 1 2 as the largest single category within knife crime is 3 where a knife has been used to enable a robbery to take 4 place. I think it's about 43 per cent of all knife 5 crime is connected to robbery in some way.

rapidly in the year to June 2024. I think it had gone up by 11 per cent in one year and is driving overall increase in knife crime. So, as a result of that, we put together a task force of those seven areas in the country -- seven police force areas in the country, with the highest level of robbery-related knife crime, and it was the idea that they would work together to collectively drive down and tackle robbery more effectively, particularly knife-enabled robbery, more effectively over that 12-month period of time.

- 17 Q. I think the conclusion appears to be that that was 18 a successful initiative?
- 19 A. So far, yes.

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- 20 What's in the statement is that it involved:
  - "... enhanced enforcement, intelligence-led interventions, and coordinated support ..."
- 23 Could you expand on that a little, as to what 24
- 25 Α. I'll try explain it the best I can. It's looking at the

the KCPO as a particular tool to achieve that. 1

2 A. I think so because, if the person charged goes to court 3 and is convicted, then there's a youth referral order or 4 a youth rehabilitation order, or whatever, or detention 5 order, and if they are not subject to youth conditional 6 cautions, again, similarly in an offending plan, you 7 would have a set of punitive or more punitive as well as 8 positive measures as part of the offending plan they are 9 subject to.

- 10 Q. In effect, even though somebody isn't taken all the way 11 through the criminal justice system with a charge and 12 a conviction, there are still measures available to the 13 police, things like youth conditional cautions, to try 14 and address the underlying behaviour?
- 15 A. There is and there's going to be -- based on making 16 referrals mandatory to Youth Offending Team, if a child 17 is caught in possession of a knife, there will be 18 Government guidance coming out shortly about this as 19 well, to reaffirm that this is the approach to take.
- 20 Q. Thank you. There is a very small number of further 21 topics I just want to canvass with you, Mr Hunt. The 22 first is: could you tell us about the Knife-Enabled 23 Robbery Taskforce, which I think the Home Office has 24 supported for a number of police forces, page 72 25 paragraph 253 of the witness statement? 170
- A. Yes. The Knife-Enabled Robbery Taskforce was created,

So that would be also increasing particularly

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data they have about where these robberies are taking place, the times they are taking place any other characteristics around these particular robberies. So, for example, smart phones are clearly a big item which is stolen. An example would be, for example, focusing on after school time, is children leaving school, after -- in the evenings, late afternoons, the routes they go home, the bus routes they have taken and whether or not you can focus on those routes by having more visible police presence, police in uniform, and so forth, as a deterrent to those children being -becoming victims of knife-enabled robbery.

Q. Thank you. At paragraphs 252 to 256, we talk about 13 14 a number of non-statutory programmes and projects to 15 help address the risk of knife crime, things like 16 violence reduction units, knife crime coalition and the 17 young futures programme.

Are those the sorts of initiatives that typically at local level sit within the serious violence duty?

A. The serious violence duty will support them. The violence reduction units pre-dated the serious violence duty and they have been in place since 2019, again in 20 police force areas around the country, including Lancashire and Merseyside, with the highest levels of knife crime compared to other areas of the country.

- We have heard about the Lancashire's Violence Reduction 1
- 2 Network, is that an example of one of those?
- 3 A. It's an example of a Violence Reduction Unit. It very
- 4 much evolved and adapted to reflect the local geography
- 5 and local facts in play but that is a violence reduction
- 6 unit.
- Q. There was also, I think, a knife surrender scheme in the 7
- 8 summer of 2025?
- 9 A. Yes.
- 10 Q. Is that regarded as having been a success?
- A. There was an extended surrender scheme, as you say, in 11
- 12 summer 2025, involves the location of new surrender
- 13 bins, a van adapted to be able to take knives and swords
- 14 safely and deliver them to local police stations being
- 15 surrendered in. The results have yet to be published to
- 16 Parliament but the feedback we've had is that it was
- 17 received very successfully by the communities in which
- 18 it was based.
- 19 Q. Without wanting to pour cold water on that perception,
- 20 I think the Youth Justice Board in the analysis that we
- 21 looked at earlier, YJB000112 suggest that knife
- 22 surrender schemes have a very low impact on reducing
- 23 knife crime. Are you familiar with those --
- 24 A. I'm familiar with those words from the Youth Justice
- 25 Board. I think it's arguable. I think you've also to
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- 1 think about community confidence as well and the
- 2 feedback we got, not simply ourselves at the Home
- 3 Office, but the police and others involved in the scheme
- 4 were very positive in terms of the impacts that it was
- 5 having locally as well, being seen to visually take
- 6 knives off the street.
- 7 Q. So community confidence is something that needs to be
- 8 borne in mind. Is it also fair to say that this is
- 9 a field where there can sometimes be an awful lot of
- 10 ideas but it is not always clear which ones, in fact,
- 11 work?
- A. I think knife crime is a very complex issue which takes 12
- 13 more than one solution to be able to respond to it.
- 14 Q. What does the Home Office do in terms of measuring
- 15 impact and ensuring that the project it picks and
- 16 supports and invests time and money in are those that
- 17 are going to have the greatest impact on crime numbers?
- 18 We've put a lot of effort into that, particularly from
- 19 the serious violence strategy in 2018 onwards, we've
- 20 been as full as we can setting out the evidence base
- 21 supporting the programmes that we're putting both
- 22 placement, one is from the Youth Endowment Fund in 2019,
- 23 and one of the biggest reasons for having that Youth
- 24 Endowment Fund is you can test and evaluate different
- 25 approaches towards stopping the causes of knife crime,
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- 1 whether it be stop and search, whether it be particular
- 2 schemes, targeted intervention, what's the most
- 3 effective way of dealing with offending behaviour.
- 4 Q. Does the Home Office then coordinate to ensure that
- 5 where there are lessons identified, effective 6 interventions identified, that different police forces,
- 7 different local authorities, different regions know what
- 8 others have done that works?
- 9 A. We do. I mean, the Home Office regularly convenes
- meetings, putting together all the different violence 10
- 11 reduction units, police forces, to share findings, the
- 12 best evidence in this area to try and make sure that
- 13 there is great awareness about what works and what
- 14 doesn't
- Q. I think the overall aim is a 50 per cent reduction in 15
- 16 knife crime, am I right, by 2029?
- 17 A. No, by 2034, within ten years of the last election.
- 18 Q. How confident are you that that is a target that can and 19 will be met?
- 20 A. It's a very tough target to meet. We are monitoring it
- 21 extremely closely, as you can imagine, and we are
- 22 looking to put forward a number of different
- 23 interventions, whether it's the Knife-Enabled Robbery
- 24 Taskforce, to drive down -- the biggest area of knife
- 25 crime is robbery, to try and reduce the figures; whether

- 1 by taking knives off the streets; whether by putting 2 money into intervention prevention programmes, it's
- 3 a whole suite of measures that have been put in place,
- 4 already in place, to try and achieve that figure.
- 5 Q. The last thing I want to ask you about, Mr Hunt, is the
- 6 Safer Knife Replacement Scheme, a post-Southport
- 7 initiative, aimed at reducing the number of
- 8 sharp-pointed kitchen knives and replacing them with
- round-tipped knives, particularly for homes where there 9
- 10 is a risk. At paragraph 262, page 75, it's said that
- 11 the Home Office is doing work with retailers and
- 12 manufacturers about how best to take that forward. Can
- 13 you expand on that at all?
- 14 A. Yes. Rounded-tipped kitchen knives is something that
- 15 the previous Home Secretary was supportive of us looking
- 16 at to explore whether there is scope to encourage
- 17 a greater take up by consumers of rounded-tipped kitchen
- 18 knives, as a way to replace sharp-pointed knives,
- 19 particularly in kitchen, in domestic circumstances. We
- 20 know that kitchen knives, in particular, are used in
- 21 domestic homicides, and maybe as a way of reducing that
- 22 or the severity of the injuries caused by those knives,
- 23 we look at the idea of encouraging the greater take-up 24 of rounded-tipped kitchen knives. And we put together
- 25
  - a round table with manufacturers and retailers to

- 1 explore that and we're working with them now to try to
- 2 put together a set of incentives that might be --
- 3 encourage a greater take up.
- 4 Q. We've heard that the police in this case, on a number of
- 5 occasions, advised AR's parents to lock knives away.
- 6 Would this scheme be the sort of thing that could be
- 7 offered to families in that position?
- 8 A. Are you talking about this Kent scheme here or more
- 9 generally?
- 10 Q. I think the idea of offering families where there is
- 11 a risk of kitchen knives being used in violence, round
- 12 tipped knives, would that be the sort of intervention
- 13 that could be offered, rather than offering advice to
- 14 lock knives away, say, actually, here is a constructive
- 15 proposal to reduce the risk?
- 16 A. I understand that's what they are doing in Kent
- 17 actually, is offering to replace sharp-pointed knives in
- 18 the kitchen with rounded-tip knives. Kent are a very
- 19 positive Violence Reduction Unit, they are very position
- about the impact it's having so we're looking at it to
- 21 see what evidence there is and whether it might be put
- 22 onto a bigger scale but we're looking at it very
- 23 closely.
- 24 Q. Is there anything else you want to add, Mr Hunt, to what
- 25 I've asked you about?

- far, of what are said to be justifications for possession of machetes.
- 3 **A.** Yes.
- 4 SIR ADRIAN FULFORD: Of course, one can see that, in some
- 5 particular instances, those are no doubt viable but,
- 6 certainly, at this stage of the Inquiry, based on what
- 7 I have heard, there doesn't seem to be a particularly
- 8 strong evidence base for suggesting that machetes need
- 9 to be widely available with almost no restriction given
- 10 the extent to which they may feature in crime. Is there
- 11 anything you want to say about that?
- 12 A. I don't think I want to add anything more than that.
- 13 I think it's a fair observation.
- 14 SIR ADRIAN FULFORD: There was a 2023 consultation and
- 15 a comprehensive review, I think, 12 months ago. I think
- 16 I have already asked another witness -- I can't remember
- 17 which -- for a copy of what arose out of the
- 18 consultation but can you make sure that I get that,
- 19 please --
- 20 A. Of course, yes.
- 21 SIR ADRIAN FULFORD: -- together with anything that's been
- 22 provided by way of a comprehensive review.
- 23 A. Yes.
- 24 SIR ADRIAN FULFORD: Thank you. Mr Goss took you to the
- 25 split responsibility between the police and local

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- 1 A. No, it's fine, thank you.
- 2 MR GOSS: I don't know if there are any questions to my
- 3 left

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- 4 Sir, I wonder -- a short break for our stenographer 5 and there is a summary of remaining CTP evidence before
- 6 we finish for the day?
- 7 SIR ADRIAN FULFORD: Just before we let Mr Hunt go, a few
- 8 questions from me.
- 9 MR GOSS: I'm sorry, sir.

## Questioned by THE CHAIR

- 11 SIR ADRIAN FULFORD: First of all, you've indicated that the
- 12 Home Office thus far, I don't think, has investigated
- 13 trying to get some data on the lawful purposes for
- 14 possessing machetes. That's surely not an impossible
- 15 task, is it, to find some reliable evidence as to what
- 16 the lawful purposes are?
- 17 A. In terms of simple figures we have been trying to get
  - data from retailers and others about the sale of knives,
- 19 including machetes. I think it's clear from previous
- 20 consultations and responses we got the reason why people
- think they are a legitimate reason to have machetes.
- 22 But in terms of the numbers in circulation, we do not
- 23 have that.
- 24 SIR ADRIAN FULFORD: Yes, we've heard some evidence, as I'm
- sure you are aware, during the course of the hearing so

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- 1 trading standards over prosecuting that which is bought
- 2 via the internet and, although I do not think we have
- 3 been provided with figures, certainly the tenor of your
- 4 evidence has been that prosecutions are a rarity.
- 5 A. They are very low. They are not a rarity but very low.
- 6 SIR ADRIAN FULFORD: Given that trading standards, they are
- 7 obviously focused on a particular area and purchases
- 8 over the internet cross all boundaries, has thought been
- given to setting up an equivalent body but one which
- 10 focuses on internet sales, rather than a geographical
- 11 area?
- 12 A. We hope and intend a new police coordinating team will
- 13 cover a lot. They will also include trading standards
- 14 as part of the kind of bespoke model they are developing
- 15 as well. Therefore, we there will be a better kind of
- 16 understanding on the use of intelligence about who would
- 17 be best placed to direct an investigation -- if the team
- themselves don't do the investigation itself.
- 19 SIR ADRIAN FULFORD: I'm going to have to obviously look
- 20 very carefully at what this national coordination
- 21 function is going to amount to but it's not going to be
- 22 a prosecuting authority, is it?
- 23 A. No, it's a police investigating team unit.
- 24 SIR ADRIAN FULFORD: So that's not going to address the
- 25 difficulty over different local trading standards

1		authorities not taking responsibility, for prosecuting,	1	missed it, what you have relied on in relation to youth
2		as it were, the generality of knives that are sold	2	conditional cautions and youth rehabilitation orders and
3		across the internet. Are you confident that a national	3	the place or role or part that they can play in relation
4		coordinating function is going to be able to resolve	4	to this. Can you do a short note?
5		that problem, Mr Hunt?	5	A. Of course.
6	A.	I think there's a lot of goodwill there. I think	6	SIR ADRIAN FULFORD: It doesn't need to be a doctoral thesis
7		there's a strong relationship between that developing	7	but a couple of pages of A4 as to how you see them
8		team and the national trading standards coordinating	8	fitting into this landscape?
9		body and I think that there will be enough they will be	9	A. Yes, of course.
10		able to work through how to improve particularly online	10	SIR ADRIAN FULFORD: Mr Hunt. Thank you very much.
11		prosecutions, who is responsible for doing that.	11	I will sit again at 3.50 pm.
12	SIR	ADRIAN FULFORD: When are they due to produce something,	12	(3.38 pm)
13		in terms of literature that will give a firm idea as to	13	(A short break)
14		actually how much assistance they are going to be able	14	(3.50 pm)
15		to provide in this vexed area.	15	SIR ADRIAN FULFORD: Yes, Mr Boyle.
16	A.	I don't want to speak on that you are behalf but it is	16	Summary of further evidence relating to Counter Terrorism
17		being developed at the moment. But the team is just	17	Policing (read)
18		being set up at the moment so I wouldn't want to commit	18	MR BOYLE: Sir, we have reached the conclusion of the live
19		them to a particular deadline but it's being set up now.	19	evidence from Counter Terrorism Policing and in relation
20	SIR	ADRIAN FULFORD: So, by the sounds of it, unlikely to	20	to AR's contact with Prevent. There are a small number
21		assist me in Phase 1 but there may be something by the	21	of further statements to summarise for the record.
22		time of Phase 2?	22	Many of the matters raised in the evidence of these
23	A.	Certainly, I hope by Phase 2.	23	witnesses have been canvassed with others, particularly
24	SIR	ADRIAN FULFORD: I've done a word search and I can't	24	DCS Kenwright and DAC Evans as corporate witnesses for
25		find in Ms Ellsmore's statement, although I might have 181	25	Counter Terrorism Policing. Of course, the fact that 182
1		these witnesses have not been called to give live	1	sets out the day-to-day running of the office and the
2		evidence is not to be taken as an indication by the	2	extent to which he, as a supervisor, was involved in the
3		Inquiry that their evidence is accepted entirely as	3	CTCO caseload

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Inquiry that their evidence is accepted entirely as written. What to make of all the evidence, including the written evidence, remains a matter for you in due course.

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So the first statement is that of Temporary Chief Inspector James Neale, which is CTPNW000166, dated 13 August this year.

Temporary Chief Inspector Neale, now in local policing in Lancashire Constabulary, was a sergeant in the CTPNW Prevent team in December 2019. He was the supervisor who authorised the closure of AR's first Prevent referral on 31 January 2020.

He sets out his background and experience, including that he joined the Prevent team as a sergeant from February 2017 to July 2020, albeit that this was not continuous: in 2017 to 2018 he spent eight months in another CTP team.

He describes the structure of Prevent and Channel, including Dovetail. He then sets out the team he supervised: eight CTCOs, covering Lancashire and Cumbria, with two supervisors, (himself and PS McIntyre) and an inspector and a chief inspector equivalent above them. His focus was a Cumbria and north Lancashire. He

He details his training and experience, including that he moved from his role, before completing the new National Prevent Foundation Course, as they were prioritising CTCOs to complete it. He says that there was "a lot of CPD/training more generally", and he recalls training throughout the year for Prevent officers and staff, so that people were up to date with current issues relating to Prevent functions.

Turning to the first referral: he was aware of it when it first came in as he was copied in to emails, though it was within the geographical area that PS McIntyre would more usually focus on. He was the supervisor who transferred the case to PC Thompson on 17 December 2019.

He was also the supervisor who authorised the case for closure. He recalls speaking with PC Thompson and PC Lawrence, the CTCOs who had visited AR at his home. He recalls that "both officers held the strong opinion that AR was not suitable for referral to Channel". He sets out his rationale for closing the case, including the assessment of the FIMU of no CT/DE relevance which he describes as a "persuasive factor". His view was

that AR's violence was "criminal violence" rather than terrorist in nature. He did not think that AR was presenting as having an obsession with school massacres.

He then sets out some broader considerations about the interactions between Prevent and the FIMU, about the Vulnerability Support Hub, about the role of the 2019 joint letter and various other factors within his assessment of the case. His overall view was that, having reflected on the case, "I do not think, in the absence of additional or new information, that I would have reached a different conclusion", about continuing AR's first referral within Prevent.

Sir, the next witness is Officer A, who has provided two statements: CTPNW000179 of 25 August, and CTPNW000417 of 25 September this year.

Officer A is a temporary detective sergeant in the Lancashire FIMU within CTP North West. He was the officer who received the first Prevent referral on 5 December 2019 and asked The Acorns School to fill out the Prevent referral form. He deals with that in his second statement. He also conducted the FIMU assessment of AR's second referral to Prevent, received on 1 February 2021, which he deals with in his first statement.

Also, in his first statement, he sets out his

experience and training, and a summary of the role and capabilities of the FIMU, including his recollection of how it interacted with Prevent.

Turning briefly to his second statement, as that deals with matters coming first in time, he sets out that he had not previously remembered being involved in the first referral on 5 December 2019. He describes his role as a "minor administrative communication" and notes that it took place prior to Officer B's assessment of the first referral. He makes clear that, based on his review of the available documents, he does not believe that the internet search history, LCC0014001, was provided to CTP North West by The Acorns School.

He says that it was not unusual to receive referrals into the "Concern" inbox that did not make clear the basis of the referral. In those cases, where the case did not appear to be urgent, it was routine to ask the referrer to complete the Prevent referral form. This would involve some review of the material but it was not the same as conducting a substantive FIMU assessment of that material.

He sets out the notes he made on the referral, including describing what was sent as a "large dump of data from the school".

When the referral was remade the following day, it 186

was picked up by Officer B. Officer A had no further involvement.

Officer A then sets out his reasons, based on analysis of the documents, why he does not consider that the internet search history was sent to CTP North West. He also sets out the limitations that would have existed in relation to analysing that material within the FIMU: you have heard about those from Officer B.

Returning to Officer A's first statement, after setting out his experience and training, he then describes the receipt of the second referral from Acorns on 1 February 2021, which related, as we've heard, to screenshots from AR's Instagram account concerning Colonel Gaddafi. He describes carrying out the FIMU assessment of the referral and then sharing the outcome with the Lancashire Prevent team. He has no recollection of being contacted by the Prevent team about the case.

He does not recall the steps that he undertook as part of the assessment, though comments that from the papers it's clear that he took account of the first Prevent referral and its outcome, took steps to identify social media accounts for AR (though he didn't locate AR's Instagram account) and checked a number of police databases.

His rationale for determining that the second referral was not CTP relevant was as follows, and I quote:

"As such I do not believe this new intelligence is worthy of a new Prevent referral as I do not assess it would meet the thresholds for adoption at Channel and the content does not suggest he holds any extremist ideology but rather an opposing opinion on Gaddafi's Libyan regime, questioning the US and EU motivation for removing him."

He says that he knew it was not the role of the FIMU officer to make Prevent assessments or to tell Prevent what they should or shouldn't do with a case:

"I don't have a sufficient understanding of the Prevent thresholds and role to make such an assessment".

He accepts that his assessment "could have been worded differently" but says that, "I do not consider that assessors should be restricted in setting out their views". It was not, however, intended as a guide or instruction to the Prevent team.

He concludes his statement with some reflections on changes to practice since 2021 and on potential further improvements.

Sir, next is DC Timothy Aspinall, his statement is CTPNW000173, dated 18 August.

Mr Aspinall was a detective constable in the FIMU between September 2018 and December 2022, when he retired from the police. He sets out the background and role of the FIMU, as well as his training and experience.

Mr Aspinall was the FIMU assessor for the third Prevent referral in respect of AR. He describes receiving the referral from The Acorns School on 22 April 2021, and sets out a summary of its concerns. He describes the searches he undertook as part of the FIMU checks. He had the records of the first and second Prevent referrals available to him. As well as checking police systems -- which revealed AR's conviction and the October 2019 incident on Lancashire systems -- he also carried out open-source checks, which were no trace for AR.

His conclusion was that the third Prevent referral was "not CTP relevant" and he assigned it the corresponding RADO outcome, RADO 6. His rationale was:

"As per the previous PCM (Colonel Gaddafi) I do not feel this new reporting holds any CT/DE vulnerability and only highlights and [sic] interest in world news and current affairs which is a trait of ASD. Subject's educational needs are being met at Acorns and it's clear that the teachers are aware of reporting any future

concerns."

He then passed the case to the Lancashire Prevent team; he does not recall having any discussion with them and the case was not referred back to the FIMU.

In the remainder of his statement he addresses the comment he made about "knee jerk referrals", accepting that his language could have been better chosen but explaining that he meant to "highlight internally that sometimes referrals can be made by a student who continues to be challenging that, whilst in good faith, does not increase the risk in terms of counter terrorism vulnerabilities". He sets out his understanding of autism and the impact that had on his decision-making, as well as the social media and open-source checks he carried out. He makes clear that when considering CT/DE vulnerability, "the idea of unclear, mixed or unstable ideology was not at the forefront of my mind and none of the concerns raised in the third Prevent referral were related to school massacres".

Having been asked to reflect on his involvement and having considered the impact of hindsight, he maintains the view that the assessment he made from a FIMU perspective was the right thing for him to have done based on what was known at the time, on the basis that the concerns reported were already being addressed by 190

a multi-agency response.

Sir, that concludes the CTP evidence. We break now until Monday, due to other engagements at the Town Hall.

On Monday we commence evidence in relation to mental health and hear from practitioners from Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust.

Sir, we are timetabled to sit from 10.30 am, rather than 11.00 on Monday.

**SIR ADRIAN FULFORD:** Thank you very much indeed, Mr Boyle.

Then Monday at 10.30 am.

(The Inquiry adjourned until 10.30 am on Monday, 20 October 2025)

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