

## **Southport Inquiry**

### **MANAGEMENT STATEMENT**

**JULY 2025**

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. This Management Statement has been drawn up by the Home Office in consultation with the Southport Inquiry (“the Inquiry”). The purpose of the document is to set out clear roles and responsibilities which preserve the independence of the Inquiry while ensuring the smooth running of the Inquiry’s administration. It does not seek to detail how the operational activity of the Inquiry will be conducted.
2. This document relates specifically to sponsorship of the Inquiry by the Home Office.
3. It is in the public interest for the Inquiry’s work to be conducted at all times in a way that ensures:
  - a. the independence of the Chair in determining how to undertake the Inquiry in order to meet the Terms of Reference;
  - b. the thorough examination and consideration of all the evidence and issues that the Inquiry determines to be pertinent to its Terms of Reference in order to ensure that its reports are complete and robust;
  - c. the fair and equitable treatment of witnesses and all other parties whose interests are affected by the work of the Inquiry; and
  - d. that the Inquiry’s work is conducted in line with section 17(3) of the Inquiries Act 2005, to have regard to the need to act with fairness and with regard also to the need to avoid unnecessary cost.
4. None of the provisions in this document shall be read or applied in such a way as to derogate from or compromise these principles.
5. In addition, the Home Office will take all reasonable steps to provide the Inquiry with an appropriate budget in line with section 39 of the Inquiries Act, having due regard to securing value for public money, enabling the Inquiry to fulfil its Terms of Reference in an efficient and expeditious manner.
6. This document has been agreed between the Home Office Sponsorship Unit and the Southport Inquiry. Amendments may be agreed between the Home Office and the Inquiry at any time. The Management Statement conveys no legal powers or responsibilities.
7. The Home Office is committed to protecting the independence of the Inquiry. Further details of the arrangements which will be put in place with the aim of protecting the Inquiry’s independence are set out below.

## **STATUTORY BASIS AND INDEPENDENCE**

8. The Inquiry was set up under section 1 of the Inquiries Act 2005 by the Home Secretary on 07 April 2025 to discharge the Terms of Reference set out in Annex A. On this date the Home Secretary informed Parliament through a Written Ministerial Statement. A copy of the Terms of Reference was placed in the libraries of both houses
9. The Inquiry is independent of Government, and the independence of its investigations is crucial to its effectiveness.
10. The Home Office shall not have access to any of the Inquiry's evidence, findings or reports before publication unless permitted by the Chair or required under the Inquiry Rules 2006.
11. The Home Office Sponsor will not provide information to the Inquiry in respect of Home Office policy development (other than that which is already in the public domain) or share any information learned about the Inquiry's work or findings with wider Home Office policy teams.
12. The Home Office Sponsorship Unit (HOSU) will keep sponsorship of the Inquiry separate from wider Home Office policy functions. If circumstances arise in which consultation is required about the Inquiry (for example in determining how and by whom an issue is most appropriately handled) this will be done on a formal basis with records taken of actions and decisions.  
  
The Home Office will facilitate and/or provide appropriate corporate support and security advice to the Inquiry to ensure it has the physical and information security and resources it needs for its effective administration in delivering its Terms of Reference.
13. The Inquiry and the Home Office will have routine engagement on matters concerning the Inquiry's progress in fulfilling the Terms of Reference, funding, the management of public resources, management of risk and other administration issues.
14. The Sponsor will not engage with the Inquiry on any matters relating to the Home Office role as a core participant.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

15. **The Home Secretary** is accountable to Parliament for the funding and overall support given to the Inquiry and may designate another Minister to assist them in the discharge of their duties. The Home Secretary's responsibilities include:
- a. appointing the Inquiry Chair;
  - b. appointing any Inquiry Panel Members in consultation with the Inquiry Chair;
  - c. setting the Terms of Reference in consultation with the Inquiry Chair;
  - d. providing appropriate financial and other resources to the Inquiry;
  - e. reporting to Parliament on Home Office sponsorship responsibilities in relation to the Inquiry;
  - f. receiving the Inquiry's Report before it is published and laying it before Parliament in accordance with legal duties; and
  - g. responding to the Inquiry's findings relevant to the Department.
16. **The Inquiry Chair** is responsible to the Home Secretary for leading the Inquiry in fulfilling its Terms of Reference and reporting the Inquiry's findings, subject to the principles set out at paragraph 1.3. The Chair, in line with section 17(3) of the Inquiries Act 2005, must act with fairness when making any decision as to the procedure or conduct of an inquiry and with regard also to the need to avoid any unnecessary cost (whether to public funds or to witnesses or to others). The Chair's duties include:
- a. conducting the work necessary to discharge the Inquiry's Terms of Reference;
  - b. providing leadership to the Inquiry;
  - c. ensuring high standards of probity and impartiality;
  - d. collating and assessing evidence relevant and necessary to the Terms of Reference;
  - e. providing the Inquiry report to the Home Secretary (see 4 below).
17. **The Permanent Secretary of the Home Office**, as the Department's Principal Accounting Officer, is responsible for the standard of financial management in the Department as a whole. In this context, the Principal Accounting Officer is accountable to Parliament for spending by the Inquiry. The Principal Accounting Officer of the Home Office expects to be assured, by the Sponsor and the Secretary to the Inquiry that:

- a. the financial and other management controls applied by the Home Office to the Inquiry are appropriate and sufficient to safeguard public funds and that the Inquiry's compliance with those controls is effectively monitored;
- b. the internal controls applied by the Inquiry conform to the requirements of regularity, propriety, value for money and good financial management;
- c. the Inquiry has detailed project planning and is making sufficient progress to fulfil its Terms of Reference; and
- d. the Inquiry has in place appropriate governance structures and processes to manage and mitigate risks to the Inquiry and Department.

18. **The Sponsor of the Inquiry** is a Director in the Home Office. The Sponsor, in consultation with others as necessary, is the primary source of advice to the Home Secretary on the discharge of their sponsorship responsibilities in respect of the Inquiry; for example, their responsibilities to keep Parliament informed. The Sponsor is the primary point of contact for the Inquiry in dealing with the Home Office on matters concerning funding, the Inquiry's progress in fulfilling the Terms of Reference, the management of public resources, management of risk and other administration issues. The Sponsor shall advise the Home Secretary of:

- a. the agreed budget/forecast for the Inquiry and any material changes;
- b. progress being made by the Inquiry; and
- c. issues impacting the delivery of the Inquiry that the Inquiry would wish brought to the attention of the Home Secretary.

19. In support of the Principal Accounting Officer the Sponsor will:

- a. manage the delegation of budget to the Inquiry in accordance with the conditions of delegation;
- b. monitor the Inquiry's expenditure on a monthly basis and progress in fulfilling the Terms of Reference on a continuing basis through regular meetings with the Inquiry Secretary;
- c. address in a timely manner any significant problems raised by the Inquiry concerning its finances or other resources;
- d. inform the Inquiry of relevant Government policy and procedures including relating to financial management in a timely manner, advise as appropriate on the interpretation of that policy and issue specific guidance to the Inquiry as necessary.

20. **The Inquiry Secretary** is the Senior Accountable Officer for the Inquiry and shall ensure that the Inquiry's affairs are conducted with due probity in line

with the requirements of Managing Public Money<sup>1</sup> and any subsidiary rules and/or regulations governing expenditure within HM Government. The Secretary acts as the main source of internal support and advice to the Chair, and a source of internal challenge, as appropriate. The Inquiry Secretary reports to the Inquiry Chair, and has a particular leadership responsibility for:

- a. advising the Inquiry on the efficient and effective use of staff and other resources and ensuring the Inquiry has the necessary infrastructure in place;
- b. advising the Chair about his duty under section 17(3) of the Inquiries Act 2005;
- c. managing the Inquiry budget in accordance with the letter of budget delegation from the Sponsor;
- d. ensuring that all public funds made available to the Inquiry are used for the purpose intended by Parliament, and that such monies, together with the Inquiry's assets, equipment and staff, are used economically, efficiently and effectively and with due regard to value for money principles;
- e. ensuring that adequate internal management and financial controls are in place, including reasonable measures against fraud and theft, and ensuring that any statutory or administrative requirements for the use of public funds are complied with;
- f. ensuring that the Inquiry operates within the limits of its remit and any delegated authority agreed with the Sponsor, and in accordance with any other conditions relating to the use of public funds, including Managing Public Money and Her Majesty's Treasury approval via the Sponsor for novel and contentious spend, and taking corrective or appropriate action as necessary in response to likely overspends or other adverse financial risks;
- g. preparing the Inquiry's programme plan to support the regular liaison between the Inquiry and Sponsor about the expenditure of the allocated budget and progress against the timescales within which the Inquiry expects to fulfil its Terms of Reference;
- h. liaising as appropriate with the Sponsor including providing appropriate information to the Sponsor to support the establishment and management of cross-government cost-sharing arrangements;
- i. providing the Sponsor with accurate monthly forecasts and monitoring information on finance (with follow-up meetings if required), and notifying

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<sup>1</sup>[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/212123/Managing\\_Public\\_Money\\_AA\\_v2\\_-\\_chapters\\_annex\\_web.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/212123/Managing_Public_Money_AA_v2_-_chapters_annex_web.pdf)

- the Sponsor promptly if overspends or underspends are likely or if there are any other significant management or financial or resource problems;
- j. providing the Sponsor with a quarterly update (at a meeting convened by the Sponsor or by any other means agreed) on sponsorship matters as set out in 2.7; and other relevant information, or, if necessary, as and when the matters emerge;
  - k. implementing risk management and other relevant financial or management guidance promulgated by HM Treasury and/or the Cabinet Office;
  - l. ensuring that if the Inquiry has notice of possible legal action, informing the Home Office of it;
  - m. ensuring effective personnel management policies covering fair treatment on the basis of merit, performance management and appraisals, continuous professional development, and grievance and disciplinary procedures are in place and maintained. In doing so, the Inquiry must ensure that its policies are in line with the standard guidance appropriate to the Civil Service. As regards to those staff on loan from the HO, if the Inquiry wishes to deviate from the agreed Home Office policy, the Inquiry must secure the agreement of the Sponsor. The Inquiry Secretary will also work closely with the Home Office Human Resources team on any personnel matters affecting civil servants or staff employed by, or on loan to, the Inquiry;
  - n. regularly reviewing workforce planning to ensure the resources are most efficiently deployed to meet the needs of the Inquiry and focused on delivering the Terms of Reference. Where resourcing creates additional liabilities for the Home Office, the Inquiry should consult the Home Office Senior Sponsor in advance of any decisions;
  - o. ensuring that suitable whistle-blowing policies and procedures are in place, recognising the Inquiry's independence from the Home Office;
  - p. ensuring that personnel and physical security processes are in place, and those who work there are aware of their responsibilities;
  - q. providing public facing communications and responding to media enquiries as the Inquiry deems appropriate in matters which relate to the day to day running of the Inquiry; and
  - r. ensuring that the Inquiry has arrangements in place in accordance with the Public Records Act 1958 and the Inquiry Rules 2006 for the preservation of Inquiry records;

- s. adhering to the relevant provisions of the data protection legislation as defined in section 3(9) of the Data Protection Act 2018 and ensuring that appropriate data protection and data security policies are in place throughout the lifecycle of the Inquiry.
21. The Chair, and all those engaged in supporting the Inquiry, shall act in accordance with their wider responsibility to:
- a. comply at all times with the Inquiry Rules and other rules relating to the use of public funds and to conflicts of interest;
  - b. act with impartiality and confidentiality, ensuring conflicts of interests are avoided;
  - c. ensure that information gained in the course of their public service on the Inquiry is not disclosed or misused for personal gain or for political profit, nor seek to use the opportunity of public service to promote their private interests or those of connected persons or organisations;
  - d. comply with Government guidance on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality, and of business appointments;
  - e. ensure that Government information given to the Inquiry is handled in accordance with Government security regulations; and
  - f. act in good faith and in the best interests of the Inquiry.
22. The Home Office is responsible for replying to Parliamentary Questions about the Inquiry and to any Freedom of Information Act 2000 requests it receives in relation to information which it holds on the Inquiry. The Inquiry itself is not a public authority for the purposes of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 but, in the spirit of openness and transparency, will publish such information in relation to its work as is possible. In particular, the Inquiry will routinely publish expenditure information.

### **SUBMISSION AND PUBLICATION OF INQUIRY REPORTS**

23. The Chair must deliver an Inquiry report to the Minister setting out the facts and the recommendations as set out in the Inquiries Act 2005. The report must be provided to the Minister before it is provided to core participants and before it is published as set out in the Inquiry Rules 2006.
24. It is the responsibility of the Minister to publish the Inquiry report, unless the Minister notifies the Chair before the setting up of the Inquiry that responsibility for publication has been delegated to the Chair, or at any time after the setting up of the Inquiry the Minister invites the Chair to take responsibility for publication and the Chair accepts.

### **GOVERNANCE AND ASSURANCE**

25. The Inquiry Secretary shall ensure that:

- a. Management structures are in place to discuss project plans, finance, risk, workforce planning and performance.
- b. Effective processes are in place to escalate issues and opportunities to the correct level for consideration.
- c. Decisions made are in line with the Inquiry's Terms of Reference, and relevant policies and legislation.
- d. Controls and processes for making decisions are in place, understood, documented, reviewed regularly and tested.

### **Register of Interests**

26. The Inquiry shall maintain a written register of interests of the Chair and provide a copy of that document, and any changes to it, to the Sponsor.

27. All those working on the Inquiry and others engaged on the Inquiry's business (including contractors or consultants) should declare any interests they have in respect of the nature of the Inquiry's work. Similarly, records should be kept of any financial interest by Inquiry members or staff in any company/consultant engaged in the Inquiry's work. A record should also be kept if any Inquiry member or member of staff knows any of the information providers, interested parties, core participants or their representatives in a personal capacity.

### **PLANNING, FINANCIAL MATTERS AND AUDIT**

#### **Planning**

28. The Inquiry shall produce a project plan and indicative budget, . The project plan shall include key targets and milestones for the establishment and running of the Inquiry's work and shall be linked to budgeting information so that resources are allocated effectively.

#### **Financial Matters**

29. The Inquiry shall operate management information and accounting systems, which enable it to review in a timely and effective manner its performance against the budgets and targets set out in its plan and identify the need for corrective or appropriate action as necessary in response to likely underspends, overspends or other adverse financial risks.

30. The Inquiry shall present its budget to the Home Office as part of its annual business planning round, ordinarily in December. This will include a detailed assessment of the budget required to allow the Inquiry to deliver its remit

successfully for the following year. Following approval of the budget, the Inquiry will be issued with the following documents:

- a. a sub-delegation letter; and
- b. a statement of any planned change in policies affecting the Inquiry, for example any changes to central cost controls from HM Treasury or the Cabinet Office.

31. As noted above, the Inquiry Secretary is responsible for notifying the Sponsor if there are any external conditions that could affect the smooth running of the Inquiry's work - particularly if this could result in a need to re-examine the budget allocated to the Inquiry.

### **Procurement**

32. Procurement exercises will be undertaken by the Home Office on behalf of the Inquiry. Any exercises will be conducted in accordance with the applicable regulations and Home Office procurement policies.

33. Where Cabinet Office approval is required for specific areas of the Inquiry's spend, as set out in the guidance from the Cabinet Office on Gov.uk<sup>2</sup> the Inquiry will work with the Home Office, as the sponsor department. The Home Office will, in turn, submit any expenditure proposals to the Cabinet Office on the Inquiry's behalf, copying in HM Treasury, for Cabinet Office approval. The Home Office will inform the Inquiry of the outcome of submitted proposals.

34. All assets procured by the Inquiry contractually rest with the Home Office.

35. The Inquiry will be responsible for managing all contracts to ensure performance delivery and compliance with contract terms and conditions, and for ensuring that appropriate exit plans are in place for the Inquiry's contracts to manage the closing down process of the Inquiry effectively.

### **Fraud and Theft**

36. The Inquiry shall adopt and implement policies and practices to safeguard itself against fraud and theft in line with Government guidance.

37. All cases of attempted, suspected or proven fraud shall be reported to the Home Office immediately, irrespective of the amount involved. The Home Office may report such matters onward as required by internal procedures.

### **Internal Audit**

38. All the Inquiry's procedures and processes should comply with Her Majesty's Government audit requirements. Auditors should be given access to the

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cabinet-office-controls>

Inquiry's management records as necessary, but not to records concerning the evidence obtained by the Inquiry, the analysis or interpretation of that evidence, the decisions of the Inquiry, the Inquiry's dealings with witnesses and other parties to the Inquiry's work or any other records where this would conflict with the overriding principles outlined at paragraph 1.3.

### **Additional Department access to the Inquiry**

39. In addition to the right of access referred to in paragraph 6.11, the Home Office shall be given access to all the Inquiry's relevant financial management and HR records only to the extent that this is necessary to support the Inquiry Secretary in providing the appropriate level of financial assurance to the Home Office, and in supporting the duty of care owed to the Inquiry's staff.
40. The Home Office shall not have access to records that relate to the evidence obtained by the Inquiry, the analysis or interpretation of that evidence, the decisions of the Inquiry, or the Inquiry's dealings with witnesses and other parties to the Inquiry's work, or any other records where this would conflict with the principles outlined at paragraph 1.3.

### **INQUIRY TEAM MANAGEMENT**

41. The Inquiry Secretary shall ensure that:
- a. Team members are treated fairly on the basis of merit;
  - b. there is no discrimination or harassment on grounds of sex, gender reassignment, marriage, civil partnership, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, disability, pregnancy, maternity or age.
  - c. Home Office performance management procedures are in place to ensure that the performance of its civil service staff at all levels is satisfactorily appraised in order to deliver the Inquiry's Terms of Reference;
  - d. Its team members are encouraged to acquire the appropriate professional, management and other expertise necessary to achieve the Inquiry's Terms of Reference;
  - e. proper consultation with team members takes place on key issues affecting them;
  - f. Home Office grievance and disciplinary procedures are in place; and
  - g. Team members are aware of whistleblowing procedures.
42. The Inquiry Secretary will also work closely with the Home Office Human Resources team on any personnel matters affecting civil servants employed by, or on loan to, the Inquiry.

43. Workforce planning should be undertaken and reviewed regularly to ensure the resources are most efficiently deployed to meet the needs of the Inquiry and focused on delivering the Terms of Reference. All recruitment decisions and appointments should be authorised by the Strategy Director and/or other nominated Home Office Senior Civil Servant, in line with HO policies and any controls in place at that time.

### **INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND DATA PROTECTION**

44. The Inquiry must comply with the requirement under the Public Records Act 1958 and the Inquiry Rules 2006 to make arrangements for the preservation of inquiry records. The National Archive guidance on storage and transfer should be adhered to. Where sensitive material cannot be transferred to The National Archives, the Inquiry will make necessary arrangements with the Home Office for the transfer of information in a timely manner.
45. The Inquiry will ensure that its work with data and information is conducted in accordance with all applicable legislation, that appropriate data protection and security policies, documentation and risk assessments are in place throughout the lifecycle of the Inquiry from inception to closure (and where appropriate prior to the commencement of processing personal data), and that Information Systems have been assured by Home Office Cyber Security (HOCS) prior to operational use.
46. The Inquiry will ensure that as it closes down operations, appropriate data and information management measures are put in place, in line with data protection legislation, (supported by the Knowledge Information Management Unit and The National Archive) ensuring information, records, documents and data (including hard copy and online) are securely stored, but retrievable and accessible when information requests are made.
47. The Inquiry must also ensure that the Chair, and all those engaged in their support receive necessary training appropriate to the risks presented by the personal data processing the Inquiry will undertake, and their individual role. The Inquiry will ensure that it adheres to the relevant provisions of the data protection legislation as defined in section 3(9) of the Data Protection Act 2018. Before processing any personal data, it should also ensure that its controller status is confirmed and documented, and consideration has been given to registering with the Information Commissioner.
48. The Inquiry should appoint a Data Protection Officer where required by law. The appointment to this position will be carried out in accordance with the legislative requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018. The Inquiry should ensure a Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO) is appointed.

49. The Inquiry should report data and/or security incidents to the sponsor Department: there is a clear mandate for the Sponsorship Unit and HO Security to maintain oversight of all incidents, given the potential implications for personnel security, including national security vetting, as well as physical security matters.

Strategy Director Melissa Smith	Inquiry Secretary Kate Anderson
Signed on behalf of the Home Office	Signed on behalf of the Southport Inquiry
DATE 5/10/25	DATE 8/10/25

***Annex A: Terms of Reference***

**Southport Inquiry: Terms of Reference**

1. On 29 July 2024, Axel Rudakubana carried out a brutal knife attack at a children's dance club in Southport. He murdered three young girls, Elsie Dot Stancombe, Alice da Silva Aguiar and Bebe King, and injured ten other people.
2. It is of vital importance that there is a clear understanding of how this was able to happen, and the lessons identified, so that we can take appropriate steps to minimise the risk of a future tragedy. This statutory inquiry has been established to achieve this.
3. Phase 1 will examine evidence, including considering the findings of any parallel locally led investigations, to:
  - Establish a definitive account of the events leading up to the Southport attack and the attack itself, including an overall timeline of Axel Rudakubana's history and interactions with various state systems including criminal justice, education, social care and healthcare. The account of the attack will include the facts and circumstances of each individual death to reflect the purposes of section 5(1) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009. The inquiry will consider the accounts of all those directly impacted by the attack.
  - Review the decision-making and information-sharing by local services and agencies which interacted with Axel Rudakubana prior to the attack to examine whether there were opportunities to manage the risk he posed to the public, making any required recommendations for improvements.
4. The findings of Phase 1 will inform the Secretary of State for the Home Department's consideration of the focus of Phase 2 of the inquiry. This is expected to consider the adequacy of multi-agency systems to address the risk posed by young people whose fixation or obsession with, and desire to commit, acts of extreme violence presents a significant risk to public safety.

***Continued./***

5. The Inquiry will examine all evidence as the Chair shall judge appropriate, including, but not limited to, interviews with relevant witnesses and disclosure by the following organisations:

- a. Merseyside Police
- b. Lancashire Constabulary
- c. Counter-Terrorism Policing
- d. Lancashire County Council
- e. Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board
- f. Department of Health and Social Care
- g. Department for Education
- h. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
- i. Home Office

- j. Ministry of Justice
- k. Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
- l. MI5
- m. NHS England
- n. Youth Justice Board

6. The Inquiry will receive such oral and written evidence, as the Inquiry Chair shall judge appropriate and follow such procedures as are appropriate to ensure that the Inquiry is effective.

7. The Inquiry should aim to provide a final report on Phase 1 to the Secretary of State for the Home Department by the end of 2025 or early 2026, subject to reasonable progress on matters outside the Inquiry's control. The Inquiry should make pragmatic choices as to its methods and procedure to deliver within this timeframe. The report may include recommendations for local and national authorities to address any issues arising from this work. In making recommendations, the Inquiry should engage with relevant practitioners to ensure they are practicable.