
**CLOSING STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF
THE CHIEF CONSTABLE OF LANCASHIRE CONSTABULARY**

Introduction

1. This Closing Statement is made on behalf of the Chief Constable of Lancashire Constabulary (“LC”), in accordance with the Inquiry Team’s letter dated 9 October 2025.
2. LC starts by recording its profound condolences for the horrific murders of Alice da Silva Aguiar, Bebe King and Elsie Dot Stancombe and the terrible injuries to the other survivors.
3. LC’s objective throughout has been to provide maximum assistance to the Inquiry, with candour, reflection and a genuine desire to learn and improve. In this regard, LC has tried assiduously to adhere to the principles in the Charter for families bereaved through public tragedy, which the NPCC signed up to in September 2021, in particular the following paragraphs:
 - a. Paragraph 2: “Place the public interest above our own reputations”
 - b. Paragraph 3: “Approach forms of public scrutiny – including public inquiries and inquests – with candour, in an open, honest and transparent way, making full disclosure of relevant documents, material and facts. Our objective is to assist the search for the truth. We accept that we should learn from the findings of external scrutiny and from past mistakes”. It is hoped that the Inquiry will record that LC made full (and swift) disclosure and has approached the production of Rule 9 statements and provision of oral evidence with utmost candour.
 - c. Paragraph 4: “Avoid seeking to defend the indefensible or to dismiss or disparage those who may have suffered where we have fallen short”. It is fervently hoped that LC has not sought to defend the indefensible.
 - d. Paragraph 6: “Recognise that we are accountable and open to challenge. We will ensure that processes are in place to allow the public to hold us to account for the work we do and for the way in which we do it. We do not knowingly mislead the

public or the media". LC has endeavoured to be as accountable as possible during this Inquiry and has striven not to mislead anyone, at any time.

4. LC does not seek credit for complying with the NPCC Charter (which, after all, reflects appropriate behaviours by any public agency following such a tragedy) but hopes that nothing will be suggested to the contrary since the chief officer team at LC has endeavoured to discharge its duties under the Charter and thereby to the Inquiry with the utmost cooperation, candour and reflection.
5. LC accepts that 17 March 2022 presented an opportunity to arrest AR. Whether arrest might have led to his charge and prosecution is more difficult to say.
6. LC – and the wider police service – must reflect on the extent to which the pendulum in policing may have swung too far in the direction of viewing children as victims in need of protection, including from the potential harms of detention, rather than protecting others from the risk of harm posed by some children who need a criminal justice outcome. Given the pernicious effect of the internet and the manifest insufficiency of mental health services, this risk seems certain only to intensify unless government effects meaningful changes in legislation and funding of relevant services.
7. Notwithstanding LC's failures on 17 March 2022 (contextually, by two young well-intentioned probationers who did not shirk their responsibilities and did their best in the circumstances as they understood them to be), there is no proximity between that date and the attack on 29 July 2024, some 28 months later.
8. LC note the evidence of Katherine Ashworth, Head of CFW for LCC who asserted: "I'd like it to be remembered that CFW isn't the only -- the only agency operating in and around the family that has got the opportunity to escalate something" [Tr 3 Nov P80 L1-L5].
9. The role for agencies like the police in a case such as AR's must be understood in its proper context. In that intervening 28 months, Alder Hey (FCAMHS and CAMHS) and LCC had numerous opportunities to effect meaningful interventions to support and / or control AR, but those opportunities seem to have been missed.
10. It seems obvious to LC that MASH needs revamping such that a lead agency takes a grip on fulminating problems. AR plainly was a fulminating problem from late 2019 as the materials generated by so many state agencies demonstrate. See paragraphs 7 to 11 of ACC Winstanley's second statement dated 11 November 2025. One key advantage of MASH should be the accurate and efficient sharing of information between agencies. But

if key information emerges after referral to MASH, agencies must ensure this is brought to the attention of the relevant agencies. Furthermore, policing should be informed where policing services are required, such as in child protection. The system plainly requires improvement.

11. The Inquiry must have been struck by the ease with which AR was able to acquire deadly weapons, whether machetes or knives, with a knife from Amazon being used in the attacks. And it seems self-evident that AR's obsession with, and easy access to, disturbing material on the internet can only have fed his apparent appetite for extreme violence.
12. The police can do little in respect of the availability of weapons online or the content of the internet, both of which dangers require muscular governmental action. A good start might be the immediate licensing or even banning of cross-bows, which, though AR never in fact acquired one, seem to have little to no acceptable uses in modern Britain. Likewise, tighter restrictions might be placed on lethal bows and arrows. Whether the Online Safety Act 2023 controls or limits the ability of children like AR to view dangerous material remains to be seen. LC would support tighter controls and limits on access to, and distance selling of, age-restricted material.
13. The evidence concerning the availability of disturbing and toxic material on mainstream websites underscores legitimate concerns about material to which children now have easy access. Free speech may not be sufficient reason for a child to have easy access to, for example, footage of an horrific terrorist attack on a Bishop. There is a real danger that the already stretched and under-resourced public services will have to allocate increasing resource to cope with the impact of such online content, whilst private companies profit from enabling or facilitating access to the same content.
14. A lesson for policing – beyond the confines of LC – is the dual need for all officers, of any rank, to appreciate the importance of:
 - a. accurate and nuanced contemporaneous records;
 - b. risk assessment, in this case not just on a case-by-case basis, but by standing back and examining the totality of the presenting picture over time.
15. But such nuanced risk assessments are only possible if police officers' training embeds a culture of active and curious risk assessment to protect life, and if technology enables officers rapidly and easily to research police and partner databases.

LC's involvement with the perpetrator AR

16. There were 7 incidents spanning October 2019 to March 2023 in which LC officers or staff were involved with AR. LC respectfully suggests that save for 17 March 2022, the performance of its officers when interacting with or about AR was satisfactory and sometimes impressive. In all interactions, LC's officers were motivated by a genuine desire to help AR and his family.
17. That that mind-set might have elevated AR's welfare above that of wider society has been acknowledged in the introduction, above, but since the police are sometimes criticised for being insensitive, it is worth noting that this cannot be said about LC in this tragic case.
18. Indeed, a criticism that can fairly be levelled at LC is that – in common with other services – it did not recognise the totality of the escalating risk. In part, this might have been a product of the multi-agency approach failing to grip such problems. LC's single agency information was not enough to recognise escalation, particularly where, as here, contact between AR and LC was infrequent.
19. LC will now make some brief observations on each of the 7 incidents in which it was involved.

LC Incident One: 7 October 2019

20. LC's response to this self-reporting by AR to Childline was largely effective and efficient:
 - a. PCs McNamee and Wood attended AR's home and spoke with him;
 - b. The officers submitted a high risk vulnerable child investigation to the Police MASH which referred the matter to Children's Social Care ("CSC"), Health and Education;
 - c. An Operation Encompass referral was also sent to LCC;
 - d. PC McNamee also alerted the Range School with a direct and appropriate electronic communication.
21. Furthermore, given the age of AR at this time (13), the fact that he had not been found in possession of the knife, the suggestion that AR may have had autism, and the safeguarding steps taken by LC and the school, the decision to submit a vulnerable child investigation to refer to other agencies was reasonable to enable more appropriate agencies to receive the information and offer appropriate support and intervention to AR.
22. Unsurprisingly, the Range High School rapidly permanently excluded AR. LC were not contacted about prior incidents that might also have been relevant to risk, such as June 2019 when AR made comments about Jihad and referred to the Manchester Arena

bombing as a “good battle” [Tr 22 Oct P176 L18-23]. That information was not recorded by the Range High School [Tr 22 Oct P180 L15] and the latter was not brought to Mr Cregeen’s attention prior to AR’s exclusion [Tr 23 Oct P11 L18-L25] notwithstanding that it was plainly a concerning comment [Tr 23 Oct P26 L4].

23. LC acknowledges (and did so during the Inquiry) the following deficiencies in its 7 October 2019 response in that its officers should have:

- a. acted with greater urgency in asking Merseyside Police to record a crime of possession of a knife on school premises¹;
- b. ensured that the child AR alleged was bullying him (and his parents) knew of the risk²;
- c. when further information was provided by AR’s school to LC which was placed onto the vulnerable child investigation³, re-shared that information with the MASH for further assessment and so that the further information could have been shared with other agencies.

24. In terms of record keeping issues:

- a. The recording of AR’s statements regarding the intent to use a knife was not as exact or detailed as that which he told officers and such information should have been properly recorded and shared on referrals [Tr 8 Oct P38 L7];
- b. No update was entered on the log when AR’s father contacted PC McNamee to request advocacy at a school meeting and failure to record this assessment deprived future officers of useful information for risk assessment [Tr 8 Oct P38 L12];
- c. There was no recording on police systems of the result of referrals to other agencies, notwithstanding a need for police systems to contain such information for future reference [Tr 8 Oct P40 L7].
- d. Issues or limitations of the CONNECT system at the time hindered accessibility and speed of response [Tr 8 Oct P41 L2];

¹ PC McNamee [Tr 2 Oct 2025 P149 L21-L24; P167 L9-L23; P169 L7-L9] and ACC Winstanley [Tr 8 Oct P34 L12-L17; P35 L1-L13].

² McNamee [Tr 2 Oct P150 L21-L25]; Winstanley [Tr 8 Oct P36 L14-L22].

³ McNamee [Tr 2 Oct P157 L23-P158 L4; P159 L8-L16; P175 L6-L25 & P177 L2]; Winstanley [Tr 8 Oct P33 L22-P34 L11]. ACC Winstanley accepted also that information was not recorded on the vulnerable child log or LC systems [Tr 8 Oct P47 L1-L10].

- e. Referral to the Community Safety Team (“CST”) was not considered but this would have been appropriate [Tr 8 Oct P41 L8].

25. Information was not shared with LC as matters developed:

- a. On 8 October 2019, the LC high risk referral into the MASH was stepped down to level 2;
- b. It was not until 29 October 2019 that the caseworker attempted to get into contact with AR’s family [Tr 3 Nov P11-L24];
- c. Mr Cregeen, as safeguarding lead at the Range school, contacted the MASH to express concern about AR being stepped down to as low as level 2⁴;
- d. Mr Cregeen’s CAMHS referral on 10 October 2019 [Tr 23 Oct P1 L14] and his surprise and disappointment at the matter being closed so quickly given concerns about AR’s mental state [Tr 23 Oct P3 L16-P4 L17];
- e. The Range School’s concerns expressed to Early Help on 5 December 2019 about maintaining AR as a high-risk case⁵;
- f. Communications sent from Acorns to Prevent on 5 December 2019 [Tr 8 Oct P136 L6-L11], the phone call between Prevent and Janet Lewis on 6 December 2019 [Tr 8 Oct P140 L2-L16] and further communications about AR’s school computer search history on 10 December 2019 [Tr 8 Oct P144 L2-L17].

LC Incident Two: 11 December 2019

26. LC’s response to the 11 December 2019 incident was appropriate given that:

- a. The incident was within the Merseyside Police area;
- b. LC liaised with the school, Merseyside Police, CTPNW and CSC in sharing information and ensuring relevant agencies were put in touch with one another;
- c. LC was appropriately represented at the 17 December 2019 Strategy Meeting;
- d. It was deemed by the lead agencies that it was not necessary for LC to attend the follow up meeting, given Merseyside Police’s primacy for the criminal investigation;

⁴ Katherine Ashworth accepted: “There might have been a case for pushing back” and that LCC’s early help “didn’t appear to do that at the time” [Tr 3 Nov P6 L10-P8 L6]

⁵ Early help would have ‘deferred’ more to risk of harm to AR rather than risks posed to others [Tr 3 Nov P9 L8-P10 L24]

- e. CTPNW had confirmed Prevent's involvement and during the Strategy Meeting CTPNW confirmed that they would be completing an assessment for AR with a view to considering whether to refer him to the Channel programme.
27. LC acknowledges that officers involved in this matter received information in relation to AR and the actions taken by other agencies which should have been, but was not, recorded on the Connect system.
28. While steps taken, including by PCs McNamee and Harrison, were appropriate, there should have been the creation of a report on LC systems, both about the information received and the fact of the Prevent referral. PC Harrison had knowledge that was not recorded on the systems and which would not have been readily available to later response officers [Tr 8 Oct P46 L3 - P47 L24]. The lack of effective recording meant that the fact of a Prevent referral which was known to LC officers at the time became lost to officers dealing with AR later [Tr 8 Oct P54 L6-L10]. This would have allowed officers who subsequently dealt with AR to be better informed based on LC IT systems.
29. A request for LC to remain involved in AR's case was not made and subsequent developments were not communicated to LC, specifically:
- a. Within the Mersey Care Criminal Justice Mental Health Liaison & Diversion Custody Suite Contact Form document [MERP002881_0005] the Criminal Justice Liaison Mental Health Practitioner Stephanie Hallaron "expresses very serious concern about the risk that AR poses to others" [Tr 28 Oct P58 L18-L21]. Neither the "immediate risk management plan" or "[F]urther risk management plan" documented any role for LC;
 - b. An email to LC's PC Paul Harrison on the morning of the 17 December 2019 strategy meeting indicated that AR "will be coming to Prevent" [Tr 6 Oct P39 L21-P40 L6];
 - c. Carmen Thompson's evidence was that at the meeting on 17 December 2019 she "was advised by Merseyside Police that they had seized devices and sent those off to be examined and that the school had been asked to provide any information on the searches" [Tr 9 Oct P76 L14-L24];
 - d. According to the meeting minutes from 17 December 2019, "Carmen Thompson from Prevent identified that she will be completing an assessment regarding [AR] and considering if a referral to channel programme would be appropriate for him" [LANC000004_0006];

- e. On 19 December 2019 Anna Jameson sent an email to LC's PS Bramhall in terms: "Thanks to you and Paul coming on Monday. I've not sent you or Paul and (sic) invite to the next one given there's no further role for your agency. I just wanted to say thanks for coming" [LANC000135_0001];
 - f. Anna Jameson's assessment was: "given the nature of the offence that he was arrested for ... the likelihood is that it would have been YOT and Youth Justice who would have then got on board to complete that specialist work with him. Obviously, if it was felt that – if the outcome wasn't that he was referred to YOT, we would have got back in touch with Andy Bramhall" [Tr 28 Oct P82 L24-P83 L20].
30. Therefore, despite a potential role for the CST [Tr 6 Oct P49 L15-L22] LC were not contacted again about AR and were not asked to become involved, whether following any assessment by Prevent or otherwise. The approach agreed by all agencies present at the strategy meeting was carried through into the outcomes and was: "further investigation by various agencies, so by CAMHS, by [LCC] by Prevent and of course the criminal investigation by MerPol, and then a follow up strategy meeting" [Tr 28 Oct P79 L22-P80 L8].
31. LC were not asked to become involved in respect of, *inter alia*:
- a. The "wealth of highly concerning information" including AR referring to the Manchester Arena attack as being a "good battle" [Tr 9 Oct P74 L19-L25];
 - b. AR's interest in degloving injuries and other information "that raises the level of concern significantly" and which was "consistent with a fascination with unpleasant injury" and "would have given the lie to AR's account that he wasn't doing anything untoward on school computers" [Tr 9 Oct P77 L7-L23]. The information "would have corroborated what Acorns had said about AR trying to search for information about school shootings" [Tr 8 Oct P147 L17-L25]. Indeed, such information would have resulted in a referral to Channel [Tr 9 Oct P78 L4-6].
32. In terms of the involvement of other agencies, the evidence includes:
- a. When "assessing the risk of violence of young adults, where it may arise from a mental health condition", assessment "needs to be undertaken in partnership with the system, and the system being health, education, social care. Of course, the FCAMHS team have forensic expertise in undertaking specialise assessments that

- could also add to risk profiles” and which is “something over and above what “standard” CAMHS staff would have in assessing risk” [Tr 21 Oct P164 L10-L23];
- b. It “would have been appropriate for FCAMHS to flag to CAMHS in 2020 the desirability of doing a SAVRY” and “[t]here needed to have been an escalation that with CAMHS not coming to the table at the time, that there was a real push to ensure that they absolutely joined and contributed. There may have been vital information that they had during that period that would have been missing from the risk assessment and they could have contributed greatly” [Tr 21 Oct P175 L10-P176 L3];
 - c. Before AR was discharged from FCAMHS “a professionals meeting should have been called to ensure that that was a safe discharge. There were key players who were missing from the meeting, including CAMHS, and it wasn’t very clear who was going to take on the roles and responsibilities outlined within the recommendations” [Tr 21 Oct P184 L18-L23];
 - d. Two letters sent by FCAMHS’ John Hicklin, Clinical Nurse Specialist, to Stephanie Hallaron, Mental Health Practitioner on 11 February 2020 [AHCH0000231_0002] and 9 March 2020 [AHCH000231_0004-5] were not scanned onto the CAMHS system and as a result subsequent professionals were not aware of the content;
 - e. January and February 2021 would “have been an appropriate time to re-refer AR to FCAMHS” [Tr 21 Oct P186 L13-L19].
33. On “4 May 2020, Hayley Dawson ... gave [Cheryl Smith] a paper copy of a risk assessment from Acorns School which [she] uploaded to CPOMS” [Tr 23 Oct P232 L9-L13] and “looking at that history, as a Designated Safeguarding Lead” she was “absolutely” concerned [Tr 23 Oct P235 L6-L8].
34. On 1 February 2021 Jan Lewis raised concerns with Prevent about AR accessing content relating to Colonel Gadaffi and “which might raise some potential radicalisation concerns” [Tr 23 Oct P69 L7-P70 L23].
35. On 22 April 2021 Jan Lewis sent a third Prevent referral [LCCO01399_0001] based on AR’s comments about London Bridge, Israel and Palestine and the IRA [Tr 23 Oct P74 L10-L23].

LC Officers subsequently coming to deal with AR were not aware of this or related information⁶.

LC Incident Three: 5 November 2021

36. LC dealt with this call for help from AR's parents appropriately in that PC Williams:
- a. dealt appropriately with the call for help by telephone and did not attend in person since there was no reported crime or risk to anyone;
 - b. completed a medium risk vulnerable child investigation and submitted it to the Police MASH which shared the referral with the CFWS, Education and Health, the more appropriate lead agencies;
 - c. made an Op Encompass referral to LCC (albeit that PC Williams selected "Out of Force" as an option when the Acorns School was within the LC area such that he could and should have specifically selected the Acorns School).

LC Incident Four: 30 November 2021

37. LC was contacted by Merseyside Police, who reported a call from AR's father stating that AR had become angry, thrown a plate of food at, and jumped on, a rental car.
38. LC's response to this incident was appropriate:
- a. LC telephoned AR's father who stated that AR was no longer causing any issues but that they were having ongoing behavioural problems with AR and that AR had kicked his father that evening;
 - b. Around 3 hours after the follow-up call to AR's parents, PCs Ward and Hall attended AR's home, spoke to AR's father and created a crime report;
 - c. The officers submitted a standard risk vulnerable child referral to the Police MASH which upgraded the risk assessment to medium and shared the referral with CFWS;
 - d. The officers also submitted an Op Encompass referral to Acorns and LCC.
39. The option of arresting AR and / or pursuing a criminal justice outcome for common assault and criminal damage, whilst theoretically possible, was not realistic given the wishes of the notional victim, AR's father. It is unlikely that the investigation would have met the evidential or public interest test of the CPS's Full Code Test.
40. LC identified 2 points of learning from this incident:

⁶ PS Ward [LANC000294_0007 para 29]; PC Fairclough [LANC000273_0016 para 69]; PC Rhodes [LANC000293_0010 para 44]; PS Clarke [LANC000271_0007 para 35]; and PC Andrews [LANC000272_0007 para 31].

- a. First, during a call with the LC Force Control Room (“FCR”) [LANC000078], a lot of information shared by AR’s father relating to the family’s struggles with AR’s behaviour was not fully typed onto the incident log such that the officers attending the incident were not aware of that information. The reality of police logs is that what is reported and recorded at the start of an incident is often different from what the response officer finds or is told. The key for the FCR is to capture the essence of the information so as to correctly grade the initial response. In AR’s case, that information might be relevant to the exercise of discretion in dealing with later episodes. No-one in LC recognised that this was the second callout in the same month with someone with AR’s conviction and history [Tr 8 Oct P61 L19 – P63 L5].
- b. Second, a meaningful supervisor’s review of the investigation was not documented. There was instead a copy and paste from a different case with no resemblance to the investigation. As a result there was no further specific action and the police were not aware of the full picture that may have assisted decision-making. Without feedback, there was not proper multi-agency working [Tr 8 Oct P63 L14 – P65 L20].

41. In terms of relevant context, LC note that Ms Barrett accepted that in the period prior to LC’s next involvement with AR on 17 March 2022, “there’s a very clear problem with risk information being diluted” by LCC’s Family Support Workers [Tr 29 Oct P55 L18-L21].

LC Incident Five: 17 March 2022

42. This incident could have led to AR being arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned for his possession of Ricin and the AQ manual, though the precise sentence that might have been imposed for these offences is uncertain⁷.
43. Whilst better management of this incident might have prevented the horrors of 29 July 2024, that is by no means certain.
44. The two probationers reacted to what was in front of them, namely a timid and compliant boy who handed over the small knife taken from his kitchen without demur. They did so

⁷ See the sentencing remarks of Singh J in *R v Kuntal Patel* dated 7 November 2014 in which a sentence of 3 years was imposed for an adult convicted of acquiring biological toxin Abrin contrary to s.1 of the Biological Weapons Act 1974 and attempting to obtain Abrin on more than one occasion. Further, note a 16 year old sentenced to a 12 month referral order after pleading guilty to attempting to acquire a biological toxin or agent contrary to the Criminal Attempts Act 1981 and s.1 of the Biological Weapons Act 1974. The basis of plea was that he attempted to purchase Abrin with a view to killing himself, the article noting that Abrin is more toxic than Ricin www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/apr/20/teenager-court-after-abrin-toxin-over-internet

against a long-term legislative and policy backdrop deprecating the criminalising of children: **see Appendix A hereto**. Whilst it is not suggested that these two probationers reviewed or knew of the material in Appendix A, that material contributed to the backdrop and their “cultural” attitudes and operating environment.

45. The reason why two probationer constables were faced with such issues in 2022 was explained by ACC Winstanley in his oral evidence [Tr 8 Oct P92 L20 – P94 L19].
46. PC Fairclough’s decision not to arrest AR at the bus was not taken without thought and he cited the following factors: AR was a child; AR had mental health and neurodiverse issues; AR had been cooperative and compliant; AR had not produced the knife in public; AR had not threatened anyone; the effect that a period of detention could have on a vulnerable child; there were other more appropriate agencies to deal with AR; AR had been due to attend Presfield High School and AR’s mother explained that AR did not like change and was due to meet new teachers that day and to start the new school imminently. In other words, there were reasons for AR’s actions.
47. PC Fairclough unfortunately conflated the October and December 2019 assault⁸.
48. PC Rhodes appropriately submitted a high risk vulnerable child investigation report to the Police MASH which (appropriately) forwarded it to CSC, Education and Health.
49. Response officers operate in an environment with increasing demands related to child welfare, missing persons, mental health and societal vulnerabilities. This may have contributed nationally to increased focus on vulnerability (and the voice of the child) and less focus on criminality.
50. Had PC Fairclough arrested AR immediately for possession of the knife, realistically, it is unlikely that there would have been a s.18 PACE search of AR’s house – so the Ricin and/or AQ manual would not have been found.
51. Once AR said during the car journey to his home that he wanted to stab someone and had thought about poisoning people (both for the purposes of getting arrested to have his social media accounts deleted), the probationers should have sought advice from their supervisor, most of all because of the comment about poison.

⁸ In his statement, LANC000273_0025 at para 107 Fairclough acknowledges that he “could have made further enquiries to establish the full circumstance of AR’s conviction in 2020 and any previous contacts he had with Lancashire Constabulary”. He made similar concessions in his oral evidence, [Tr 7 Oct P13 L12 - P14 L19].

52. Depending on the supervisor's reaction to the comments about poison, it is possible that matters would have escalated and led to a search of AR's home and thus the finding of the Ricin. This in turn could have led to a search of AR's computer devices whereupon AR's obsession with violence and the AQ manual would likely have been identified.
53. Had the Ricin accoutrements and AQ manual been identified, it is reasonable to conclude that the criminal justice system would have caused AR to be charged, remanded into custody and prosecuted for what ultimately became counts 15 and 16, respectively. Accordingly, even without the associated multiple counts for murder and attempted murder, AR would likely have been sentenced to a significant period of imprisonment.
54. A concurrent Prevent referral would have become somewhat academic once the Ricin and AQ manual was found. Equally academic would have been a Violence Referral Network ("VRN") referral, though neither probationer knew about the VRN.
55. LC has recently been engaged with a review of the structure and functions of the VRN, and briefings to all staff will be incorporated into the implementation plan: see ACC Winstanley's first statement at paragraph 268.
56. The key learning from 17 March 2022 may be five-fold:
57. First, officers must make better contemporaneous records of events to build the intelligence picture.
58. Second, police forces (with other agencies) must better facilitate access to such information including via information sharing mechanisms. This was the very issue raised by the Chair at the end of ACC Winstanley's evidence [Tr 8 Oct P118 L4-L17] and dealt with in ACC Winstanley's second statement at paragraphs 43 to 52.
59. Third, officers must be encouraged always to exercise professional curiosity. This is easier said than done in the context of excessive demand on, especially, response officers. This was referenced in ACC's Winstanley's first statement at paragraphs 250 to 252.
60. Fourth, officers must endeavour fully to research subjects of interest. In this instance, PC Fairclough was unaware of the October 2019 self-reporting from AR.
61. Finally, where in doubt, officers should consult their supervisors for guidance and those supervisors must themselves exercise professional curiosity.
62. The real world difficulty is that it will not always be anywhere near obvious which cases demand significant police intervention: after all, how frequently will a timid small child on a bus with a small knife be sitting on Ricin and an AQ manual in their home?

63. Police officers are faced with a daily challenge of deciphering and differentiating statements of credible risk and genuine threat from spurious comment and empty threat.
64. Members of the public often make threats to or in the presence of police officers. A comment such as “I’ll burn your house down” would not always result in an arrest for public order or threats to commit arson. Furthermore, without further intelligence or evidence of preparation, the police would not in such situations conduct a s.18 search looking for lighters, petrol or other paraphernalia. Police officers do not (and cannot) respond to everything that is said to them. How to respond requires consideration of means and capability under pressure of time and without the luxury of reflection and hindsight analysis. Unfortunately, if police officers were to arrest every instance of a veiled threat to commit harm, they would quickly run out of resources.
65. As noted by Amanda Chapman of LCC: “What children say to you cannot always be taken at face value” [Tr 28 Oct P238 L19]. Louise Anderson of LCC observed: “Let’s not forget the amount of children that carry knives. We have some children that say they will use a knife and never do and we have many children who would look me in the eye and tell me I will never use a knife, and do use a knife” [Tr 3 Nov P134 L7-L13].
66. AR had already made an irrational comment to PCs Fairclough and Rhodes concerning his motives for arrest: to have social media accounts deleted. Response officers get told many things by many people, but do not and cannot take everything literally. As suggested within the evidence of Sharon Barrett of LCC: “It’s not right that you only go off what you are presented with. You don’t just take the word of the parents and the child. You look at the total position on risk ... Otherwise you’re taking what they say on face value”.
67. Police officers are affected by context. With hindsight, AR was an exceptional case and different from nearly every other child with whom the LC come into contact. The probationers did not recognise that words AR used regarding poison had truth to them.
68. As the probationers explained in their evidence⁹, by the time of their contact with AR on 17 March 2022, considerable time had passed since he had gone missing and he had not carried stabbed anyone. The officers’ awareness of AR being in possession of a knife came

⁹ PC Fairclough [Tr 7 Oct P17 L20-P18 L4; P29 L11-19]. See also PC Rhodes statement [LANC000293_0005 para 24]

from a voluntary disclosure by AR's parents. It is in that context that the probationer officers took steps to divert AR from the criminal justice system.

69. Response officers are primarily trained to identify and assess risk, not to monitor or follow up. Due to limited capacity, LC operates a "refer-on" model. Officers are not expected to manage ongoing cases, and the volume of high risk vulnerable children necessitates this approach. LC rely on partner agencies. MASH has the responsibility to assess a response officer's referral. It has access to more information and staff with safeguarding experience. MASH directs referrals to the appropriate agencies. This includes specialist police officers where crime is a significant factor. In other cases, LC relies on more appropriate agencies to lead the response.
70. The multi-agency model is designed to share information and then engage the most appropriate lead service/professional. That lead service/professional holds the concern on behalf on the muti agency model and can engage/re-engage partners as circumstances or needs change and adjust. The function of a response police officer is not designed to hold and monitor a case.
71. In the 28 months that followed 17 March 2022 (during which LC had only two interactions concerning AR) there were numerous missed opportunities on the part of agencies beyond LC, including but not limited to those set out in **Appendix B**.

LC Incident Six: 14 May 2022

72. On 14 May 2022 LC received the transferred incident log from Merseyside police. LC considers that its response to this incident was entirely appropriate:
- a. PCs Andrews and Franzoni deployed to AR's home address and were told that AR (now aged 15) had thrown food and water around the house but was now agreeing to sleep. AR's parents stated that they needed support in managing AR;
 - b. The officers completed a high risk vulnerable child investigation and shared it with the Police MASH which subsequently downgraded the risk assessment to medium and appropriately shared it with the Early Help Hub, Education and Health;
 - c. The officers also made an Op Encompass referral to LCC;
 - d. Following the sharing of information by the Police MASH, no further action was taken by LC in respect of this incident, nor was any further action required of the police since this was manifestly Children's Services or MH services to deal with.

LC Incident Seven: 21 March 2023

73. LC received a call from Cheryl Smith of Presfield High School asking for the police to conduct a welfare check because AR had not been to school since May 2022. Smith reported the following to the LC call handler Robert Correy:
- a. CAMHS had seen AR in January 2023;
 - b. AR's parents had reported that AR could not come to school due to his mental health;
 - c. There was no immediate risk to life or serious harm to an identified person or the public.
74. It follows that no crime was suspected or reported.
75. Properly applying the "Right Care Right Person" ("RCRP") policy, aided by a question set, Correy correctly determined that this was not a matter for police deployment.
76. LC submits that this was the right decision albeit that Correy should have:
- a. obtained more information from the caller (such as AR's name and address);
 - b. conducted basic checks on STORM, including looking at previous calls to AR's address or any warning markers against the property to inform the THRIVE assessment.
77. RCRP is an important and relatively new policy in policing. LC wrote its RCRP policy [LANC000162_0001] in January 2022 and it took effect in May 2022, LC being the second force nationally to implement RCRP (after Humberside), with College of Policing national guidance not launched until July 2023¹⁰.
78. The purpose of the LC RCRP policy was to ensure police responses to concern for welfare calls were appropriate [LANC000292_0016 para 72] and that the appropriate agency with the appropriate expertise and knowledge took responsibility for an incident [Tr 8 Oct P90 L8]. Where there are agencies other than policing better placed to fulfil the role, those agencies should attend, to avoid police resource being diverted from policing functions.
79. LC recognises that with greater resources it could have deployed to an incident such as 21 March 2023. However, irrespective of police resources, it would still be preferable for other agencies to have sufficient resources to meet such needs, allowing policing to focus its scarce resources on responding to police incidents and investigating crime.

¹⁰ <https://www.college.police.uk/article/rcrp-national-guidance-launched>

80. In an ideal world, with greater resources, LC could be more involved with matters such as that on 21 March 2023, though that would take away from core policing responsibilities of responding to serious incidents and investigating crime [Tr 8 Oct P90 L23-P91 L2].
81. LC does not consider that police should have deployed to AR's home address on this occasion. AR was not missing from home and Smith had confirmed that there was no immediate risk. Cheryl Smith's evidence was that she "knew about the risk that AR presented from the risk assessment [she] had read" and thought "Lancashire Council" were "responsible for managing it" [Tr 23 Oct P245 L1-L4].
82. Police are not the appropriate agency to deal with educational issues where there is no identified imminent risk of harm. The evidence of safer schools' officer PC Stephen Baker supports this. PC Baker made 4 separate visits to AR's home between 18 July 2023 and 8 December 2023 following a request by Cheryl Smith and noted: "I do not recall having concerns about how he presented other than the fact that he was absent and out of school which the School was trying to address; in other words, I had no concern that required a police response. There was nothing said that suggested that AR was committing or intended to commit criminal offences". PC Baaker also said: "Escalating concerns to external agencies would have been a matter for the School. I do not recall any request for me (or Merseyside Police) to assist them with escalating safeguarding concerns to external agencies or to do anything other than attend the home visits with them as described above" [MERP008318_0008 paras 41 & 44 respectively].

Cross-bows, machetes, knives

83. CAMHS psychiatry was closing to AR on 16 April 2024 [MERP000904]:
- a. **after** AR had already made inquiries about cross-bows from Tactical Archery (May 2022: TAC000003, TAC000004, TAC000005, TAC000006, TAC000007, TAC000008) ordered three machetes (10 June 2023, 3 October 2023 and 14 October 2023: MERP000161, KAW000009, HKAW000032) and ordered something doubtless inappropriate from Hattila (12 June 2023: MERP000534);
 - b. **before** AR ordered a kitchen knife from Hunting and Knives (21 June 2024: MERP000017) and (from Amazon: MERP000556) the very knife (on 13 July 2024) that he used on 29 July 2024.
84. That neither LCC nor CAMHS nor LC nor Merseyside Police nor Prevent knew what AR had been ordering on-line reflects the limitations on state agencies being able to protect the

public since there is no obligation on the merchants of such weaponry to advise the police (or anyone) of such purchases [Tr 30 Sep P9 L4-L8] & [Tr 2 Oct P43 L7-L14] or attempted purchase by an underage person [Tr 1 Oct P57 L4]. Likewise there is no requirement on retailers to report suspicious transactions in respect of products that do not come within the Poisons Act 1972 [2 Oct P 71 L14-L23].

85. Leaving aside the question of whether cross-bows or lethal bows and arrows should be available at all, there must be a valid question as to whether such purchases from members of the public should be communicated to police who could then interrogate their data bases and / or pass on to MASH for further consideration.

Violence fascinated individuals and the Internet

86. It would be surprising if the Inquiry did not comment upon the impact of the internet on children, especially those who have disordered personalities and / or lack parental control.
87. The internet has developed uncontrolled and LC readily understands its negative impact upon teenagers. Whether the Online Safety Act 2023 will see a major reduction in children being able to access websites with extreme violent content remains to be seen. But society has been warned about the potentially malign influence of the internet, and not just from AR's appalling atrocities.
88. On 13 September 2024, just 6 weeks after 17 year old AR's atrocious attacks, 18 year old Nicholas Prosper¹¹, brutally murdered his mother, sister and brother with a shotgun (and knife). There were strikingly similar features to that atrocity, as the sentencing remarks of Mrs Justice Cheema-Grubb dated 19 March 2025 reveal (with emphasis added):
- a. At paragraph 6, the Judge noted that having been asked to leave school in March 2023, "[F]rom then until September 2024, **you existed in an online world choosing little real-life contact with others** apart from attending a gym and working part-time stacking supermarket shelves for a few months. **Your internet activity has been analysed. You were deeply fascinated by notorious murderers, perpetrators of mass school shootings around the world, and rapists.** You collected images of a six year old girl C (one of the victims of the Sandy Hook school massacre), photographs of two nearby primary schools and over two hundred indecent images and videos

¹¹ Who also "resisted assessment or intervention" and in respect of whom "nothing came" of a CAMHS referral, see paragraph 5 of the sentencing remarks of Mrs Justice Cheema-Grubb

of children. Nineteen of these were of the most serious kind, category A depicting the rape of children. You recorded audio files discussing topics such as necrophilia, the six-year-old victim C and a computer game called The Walking Dead”.

- b. At paragraph 26, the Judge noted: “Although you have not undergone a formal diagnosis, **you have traits of autism spectrum disorder (ASD)** ... In your case [ASD] means that you have persistent deficits in social communication and interaction, and restrictive patterns of behaviour, interests and activities. These explain almost all the abnormal aspects of the way you related to people and obsessed about things you were interested in such as school shootings and serial killers. **The internet facilitated this through the free availability of imagery and commentary**”.

89. Mrs Justice Cheema-Grubb explained the grotesque nature of that imagery in paragraphs 6 (“notorious murderers, perpetrators of mass school shootings”) and 10 (“the last images you looked at were of school massacres”). This was strikingly similar to AR’s internet search history, see paragraphs 23-24 of Mr Justice Goose’s sentencing remarks.

90. Also noteworthy is that Prosper was arrested in possession of a kitchen knife, and - like AR - after arrest “displayed no signs of agitation or mental distress” and was “inappropriately cheerful”, paragraph 15 sentencing remarks. Compare with AR’s inappropriate responses post-arrest, see Mr Justice Goose’s sentencing remarks, paragraph 22.

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24 November 2025

APPENDIX A

PUBLIC POLICY CONSIDERATIONS AGAINST ARRESTING CHILDREN

1. Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (“UNCRC”) (entry into force 2 Sept 1990, in accordance with article 49¹²), provides:
 - “1. In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.
 2. States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures.
 3. States Parties shall ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision”.
2. Article 37(b) of the UNCRC, provides that “No child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily. The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be in conformity with the law and shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time”.
3. The UK ratified the convention on 16 December 1991 since when its implementation has been pursued through legislation and policy initiatives¹³, including the Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters (September 2003) and policy for 0-19 year olds set out in the Government’s December 2007 Children's Plan.
4. Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places the police (and others) under a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children:
 - “11 Arrangements to safeguard and promote welfare
 - (1) This section applies to each of the following–
 - ...

¹² <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child-uncrc-how-legislation-underpins-implementation-in-england>

- (h) the local policing body and chief officer of police for a police area in England;
- ...
- (2) Each person and body to whom this section applies must make arrangements for ensuring that–
- (a) their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children ...”
5. Section 6 of the “Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004” applies to the police and the Chair’s attention is invited in particular to sections 6.2 – 6.5.
 6. Case law rapidly reflected the legislation and guidance.
 7. See per Wyn Williams J in *R (Suppiah) v SoS for Home Department* [2011] EWHC 2 (Admin) at [119].
 8. See per Pitchford LJ in *Castle v Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis* [2011] EWHC 2317 (Admin) at [51]¹⁴ concerning section 11 of the 2004 Act.
 9. Section 1(8)(h) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 came into force on 22 November 2012 and specifically requires the Police and Crime Commissioner to hold the chief constable to account for “the exercise of duties in relation to the safeguarding of children and the promotion of child welfare that are imposed on the chief constable by sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004.”
 10. In *R (HC) v SoS for the Home Department* [2013] EWHC 982 (Admin), a case concerning a 17 year old, Moses LJ concluded that “it is inconsistent with the rights ... enshrined in Article 8 ... to treat 17 year-olds as adults when in detention”. And note his comments in particular at [36], [51] and [58].
 11. The College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice (APP)¹⁵ for Detention and custody > detainee care > “Children and young persons” first published 23 October 2013 contains strong advice seeking to limit children going into police custody.
 12. The 7 Minute Briefing APP document for Detention and Custody, section 6 ‘CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN CUSTODY’ provides: “Custody should be a **last resort** for children and

¹⁴ The Court of Appeal expressly agreed with the *Castle* analysis in *Mohamoud v Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea* [2015] EWCA Civ 780, at [10].

¹⁵ To which regard must be had, see s.39A Police Act 1996

young persons and officers should discuss alternative methods with Supervision before transporting them to custody.”

13. The Chair will be familiar with his own comments in *R (BG) v Chief Constable West Midlands Police* [2014] EWHC 4374 (Admin) at [28-30], traversing the statutory guidance on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 and reiterating the obligation under Article 3 of the UNCRC that the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration.
14. In the March 2015 report “The welfare of vulnerable people in police custody”, Sir Tom Windsor, then Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Constabulary, stated at page 14: “In some cases, people may be both offenders and in need of care. Vulnerability can be a trigger for crime or it can make people more likely to be victims of crime. The task that we ask of our police officers in making the distinction between the need for care and the requirements of justice is therefore both highly complex, and crucial if we are to ensure that vulnerable adults and children in our society do not become criminalised for want of a more appropriate response. The bricks and mortar of the custody suite and the police cell do not, and cannot make this distinction. As a result, some of the most vulnerable in our society may be subject to the same physical conditions and treatment as some of the most harmful”.
15. The NPCC’s “National Strategy for the Policing of Children & Young People” dated April 2015 contained numerous similar strong deprecations against criminalising children and young people, see especially pp4-9.
16. On 8 September 2017 the Lammy review final report (by former Foreign Secretary and now Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy) focused on disproportionality of BAME people in the criminal justice system but also included commentary on the youth justice system, including: “Adults are expected to take complete responsibility for their offending but it is understood that young people lack the same maturity and require far greater support structures around them”.
17. The Home Office Concordat on children in custody was first published on 30 October 2017 and included numerous propositions deprecating and warning against detaining children in custody, see pp3-14.
18. In November 2019 LC produced [LANC000281_0001] as part of student officer training. Slide 2 of the PowerPoint presentation makes clear that the National Custody Strategy

issued by the NPCC seeks to “ensure children are only held in custody as a last resort” and encourages “innovative but appropriate alternatives to custody”.

19. In *R (Just for Kids Law) v SoS Home Department* [2019] EWHC 1772 (Admin), Supperstone J considered s. 11 of the Children Act 2004 as it applies to the police (from [30]) and at [58] referenced the key principles in the NPCC document “The National Strategy for the Policing of Children and Young People”.
20. United Nations General comment No. 24 (2019) on children’s rights in the child justice system provides *inter alia* as follows: “The objectives and scope of the present general comment are ... (c) To promote key strategies for reducing the especially harmful effects of contact with the criminal justice system, in line with increased knowledge about children’s development, in particular *inter alia* “Scaling up the diversion of children away from formal justice processes and to effective programmes” and “Expanding the use of non-custodial measures to ensure that detention of children is a measure of last resort”.
21. In May 2020 the Standing Committee for Youth Justice published “Ensuring custody is the last resort for children in England and Wales” and stated, *inter alia*: “There are many ways the number of children in custody could and should be reduced. The flow of children into the formal criminal justice system could be reduced through investment in prevention and early help, children’s and youth services, and by ensuring (in line with the YJB national standards) that point-of-arrest diversion is appropriately used” at p4.
22. See [98] to [104] per Dame Victoria Sharp P, in *Archer v Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis* [2021] EWCA Civ 1662 all under the sub-heading “The protection of children”.
23. Within the LC Intranet article dated 3 February 2022 [LANC000247_0001] there was much emphasis on not arresting or detaining children.
24. In *ST v Chief Constable of Nottinghamshire* [2022] EWHC 1280 (QB) Cotter J cited Article 37(b) and roundly criticised the defendant police force for arresting a 14 year old suspected of robbery early in the morning, see especially [96] to [104] and [98-99] in particular. Such criticism has an impact upon culture within the police service as officers speak with each other and training departments promulgate the outcomes of litigation.

Reports, guidance post-17 March 2022

25. In the 19 July 2023 HMICFRS Report on an inspection of custody suites in LC, the following was observed:

- a. "There is a strong commitment by the constabulary and partner services to keep children out of custody, and good joint working to achieve this" p2
- b. "Frontline officers have a good understanding of what makes a person vulnerable, and they take account of this when deciding whether to arrest. Information from call handlers to help officers decide what to do is generally good" p2
- c. "Children are taken to custody only as a last resort. Officers use alternatives such as voluntary attendance interviews instead" p2
- d. "Children are detained only when necessary and receive some good care in custody. Custody officers try to keep children's time in custody as short as possible, but we found that some children spent a long time there. The constabulary seeks to move children charged and remanded to other accommodation but the lack of local authority provision means this rarely happens" p2
- e. "Children are taken to custody only as a last resort. Frontline officers said they always considered other options to keep children away from custody. These often include arranging attendance interviews or resolving the incident through a community resolution" p7
- f. "The constabulary also has an early intervention team that supports children with offending behaviour. The team works with children to try and prevent them from entering the criminal justice system" p7

26. Archbold Criminal Pleading Evidence and Practice 2025 Ed. Guideline 10 - Sentencing Children and Young People emphasises the importance of avoiding criminalisation of children at 1.4 to 1.6.

27. So too does the NPCC Child Gravity Matrix 2025 at pp3-5.

28. The September 2024 Lancashire Child and Youth Justice Service Plan 2024–2025 outlines a commitment to a "Child First" approach, emphasizing trauma-informed and restorative practices. It refers to key performance indicator desired outcomes including "Reducing the Use of Custody for children" p15 and "ensure a partnership approach to optimising diversion from the criminal justice system" p44.

APPENDIX B

SIGNIFICANT MISSED OPPORTUNITIES AFTER 17 MARCH 2022

1. On 18 March 2022 there was “a failure within the MASH to consider this case properly” [Tr 3 Nov P152 L14] and “AR's historic involvement with [children's Social Care] and [Early Help] should have been more thoroughly considered. It would also be expected that the MASH would have initiated a conversation with EH and MFH, including consideration of the detail supplied about this incident” [Tr 3 Nov P152 L14-L19].
2. On 21 March 2022 the handover to Presfield documented in CPOMS included information about a knife on a bus and safeguarding information [Tr 23 Oct P81 L11]. Ms Smith and Mrs Allred suggested ‘possibly’ that AR “going on the bus with a knife was partially triggered by the move that was happening around that time” [Tr 23 Oct P84 L8].
3. On 22 March 2022 CPOMS records containing further information were sent to Ms Smith but were not opened until after the July 2024 attack [Tr 23 Oct P222 L23 – P225 L12].
4. On 22 March 2022 AR’s “quite obvious lie” about having a weapon “demanded further exploration” by Ms Chapman [Tr 28 Oct P252 L20]. The “the combination of (1) the lack of professional curiosity ... and (2) the fact that [Ms Chapman was] not given anything like all of the information [she] needed, meant that Lancashire County Council's opportunity to identify any wider or more concerning issues out of this episode of AR going missing was wholly lost” [Tr 28 Oct P259 L8 – L20].
5. Ms Chapman “didn't have enough information about the circumstances of AR going missing and then being found. She didn't challenge AR sufficiently in the interview, including when he obviously lied about not having a weapon, and ... "Exploration of these issues should have led to a safeguarding referral from the [Missing from Home] worker” [Tr 3 Nov P151 L10].
6. The “information on PC Rhodes' high-risk referral, in and of itself, should have been treated more seriously, not just closed at level 2 when there was no response from the parents” [Tr 3 Nov P153 L6].
7. There were “two referrals from the same agency on the same day about the same child and the same incident and they should have been linked and considered together” but there is “no evidence that that was done” [Tr 3 Nov P152 L25].
8. It was accepted that “had any of these failings in either strand not occurred, you would have expected AR's case to have been looked at in more detail, further assessed, both in

terms of risk to himself and risk to others” and “would have expected a strategy discussion” [Tr 3 Nov P153 L12] and “things would have gone differently with what we know now because we would have had a joint Section 47 investigation, I think, which would have involved both the police and social care visiting the child's home” and would “Involve Acorns and Presfield” [Tr 3 Nov P153 L17-L22].

9. Ultimately “[i]t was an opportunity, on the information that LCC had available to it, for that information to be shared with other agencies, the risk identified and steps taken” [Tr 3 Nov P154 L15-L19] and “It was not just a failure, it was an extremely grave failure” [Tr 3 Nov P155 L4].
10. On 23 March 2022 Louise Lewis sent an email to the Early Help Worker saying “I knew this would happen” but was not “asking any questions about what had happened in the incident” and “when the incident was as serious as a knife being carried in public and he'd said he wanted to stab someone, for the team as a whole, Lancashire Council, this response was very poor” [Tr 28 Oct P191 L23- P192 L25].
11. CAMHS considered that responsibility for assessment of risk in AR's case fell to FCAMHS because CAMHS “defer that responsibility to FCAMHS” [Tr 20 Oct P 192 L4].
12. Dr Killen stated she “would consider FCAMHS as providing an assessment of risk and in that regard taking the responsibility for advising around risk” [Tr 20 Oct P193 L12].
13. However, FCAMHS said corporately “it was always CAMHS who maintain the lead in responsibility for doing the risk assessments ... it was never our responsibility to actually do the risk assessment” [Tr 20 Oct P192 L13-L17].
14. Following the bus incident, AR's case “was crying out for a serious re-assessment of the risk to others” [Tr 20 Oct P203 L21-L23].
15. Lynsey Boggan would “have expected CAMHS, who were aware of the [autism] diagnosis, to re-refer to FCAMHS” [Tr 21 Oct P65 L14].
16. By 22 April 2022 Dr Ram was “aware of the fact that AR had gone missing and was in possession of a knife” [Tr 20 Oct P138 L6] but that was the “sum of the information about it on the CAMHS record”. Dr Ram “only had that information, no more than that. So [she] didn't know that [AR] had shared to the police constable that he wanted to hurt someone with a knife” and Dr Ram explained that “a young person carrying a knife, especially who is on the autistic spectrum and who is highly anxious and socially anxious, can sometimes carry weapons for protection” and “if I had been aware of this incident, on reflection I

could have triggered a referral to FCAMHS. So I think based on what we have discussed that was a red flag” [Tr 20 Oct P138 L13-L23].

17. Whilst “[i]t wasn't recorded on the CAMHS record ... when AR was found on the bus, he had made remarks about wanting to stab people and about potentially having made poison” and that was ‘absolutely’ “a matter of grave concern ... that that information did not get to” Dr Ram [Tr 20 Oct P139 L5].
18. Dr Ram explained “now that I have knowledge of all the incidents and multiple agencies' involvement in AR's care, I do think that there was at least one missed opportunity for us to have considered a re-referral to FCAMHS and that could have changed some of the interventions that may have been considered for him.” [TR 20 Oct P151 L23-P152 L4].
19. Dr Ram noted that “during the entire period of [her] involvement with AR, there was no risk assessment conducted by a case manager” [Tr 20 Oct P146 L10-L13].
20. On 4 May 2022, Mr Berry of Presfield made a home visit at which “AR's father was concerned that AR might get angry and attack him. He did not feel threatened in part because of AR's relaxed demeanour whenever he saw him and because it was not uncommon to be attacked by students with complex learning needs” [Tr 29 Oct P249 L16-L20].
21. Following LC's attendance on 14 May 2022 LC made a further safeguarding referral which was passed to the MASH but “assessed by the MASH ... without reference to what had happened two months before” [Tr 3 Nov P156 L19] and “while it was still being dealt with by the MASH, there was further concern expressed by Presfield School about AR's refusal to attend ... and also his behaviour at home ... closed by the MASH on the basis that there wasn't any consent from the parents because they didn't respond to communications. Presfield followed it up ... but it doesn't appear to have been taken forward” [Tr 3 Nov P156 L19-P157 L14].
22. On “26 May 2022, AR's father called CAMHS to request again a new case manager. Shortly thereafter, on 14 June 2022, Dr Ram requested that AR be reallocated to a new psychiatrist as she no longer felt safe to work with AR's father” [Tr 29 Oct P227 L12]. On reflection “the fact that an experienced psychiatrist such as Dr Ram felt intimidated and even threatened to an extent by AR's father and Ms Steed has also reached a stage where effectively the relationship had broken down ... that itself may have been an indication of increased risk at the time” [Tr 20 Oct P190 L1 to L12].

23. Taking over from Dr Ram after 14 June 2022, Dr Molyneux was not made aware of the bus incident despite the fact that “it is crucial that somebody in [his] position ought to know those things at that time” [Tr 20 Oct P15 L10] and it is ‘arguable’ that “any assessment of the risk that AR posed to others while [Dr Molyneux was] the treating psychiatrist, would be deeply flawed without knowledge of those matters” [Tr 20 Oct P15 L23].
24. Dr Molyneux’s “actual understanding of the risk that AR posed to others when [he] took over his psychiatric care” was “minimal” [Tr 20 Oct P27 L1]. However, Dr Molyneux was not aware of relevant incidents, despite them being available to him in the records, including:
- a. AR had admitted taking knives into school on some ten occasions leading up to an incident where Childline were called in October 2019 [Tr 20 Oct P9 L21]
 - b. There were some indications that AR was bringing the knife in with a distinct intention of causing at least very serious harm [Tr 20 Oct P11 L8]
 - c. AR had been engaged in searching for material on a school computer including relating to school shootings in America and graphic images of degloving injuries [Tr 20 Oct P11 L12-L19]
 - d. The hockey stick assault [Tr 20 Oct P16 L3]
 - e. AR had been subject to a ten-month referral order [Tr 20 Oct P16 L12]
 - f. AR had taken a knife into school with the intention of using it [Tr 20 Oct P16 L19]
 - g. AR had been viewing inappropriate content online in relation to terrorism [Tr 20 Oct P18 L12]
 - h. AR had researched the Manchester arena bombing [Tr 20 Oct P18 L18].
25. In an appointment on 1 August 2022 Dr Molyneux could not “say definitively” that he “asked [AR] about thoughts of harm to others” [Tr 20 Oct P36 L25- P37 L1].
26. If Dr Molyneux “had known that as recently as March [AR] had been found with a knife, and it is not something that he said, the police have seen the knife, taken it off him and given it back to parents, and said that he had the knife because he wanted to stab somebody and had made reference to poison”, those are matters that Dr Molyneux “would have been bound to explore with him, however cautiously” [Tr 20 Oct P37 L2-L13]. Thereafter, because he “didn’t know elements of the history”, Dr Molyneux took AR’s “answers at face value” “about risk of harm to others” [Tr 20 Oct P45 L19-L25].

27. On 25 September 2023 Dr Molyneux carried out a home visit [Tr 20 Oct P61 L23] and considered AR's case to be "primarily a social care issue of parents not being able to implement boundaries or willing to implement boundaries" [Tr 20 Oct P63 L18] with AR "indicating by his repeated actions that he does not want to engage with CAMHS" and that he considered "the lead agency at this time ought to be social care" [Tr 20 Oct P68 L8].
28. Therefore "one possibility would have been ... keeping [AR] open to CAMHS for longer, principally because of the risk to others" [Tr 20 Oct P69 L16-L20] and "even if he was going to be discharged from CAMHS, in terms of the risk of harm to others, [Dr Molyneux] would have wanted before his case was closed to CAMHS to make sure that other agencies were aware of that"[Tr 20 Oct P69 L23-P70 L5].
29. The "risk that AR posed to others became almost completely lost in how CAMHS dealt with him" [Tr 20 Oct P90 L5-L8].
30. In Dr Irani's opinion, "given AR's historic risks and his presentation or the lack of physical evidence of his presentation in the early half of 2024 should have prompted a Mental Health Act assessment ... In addition to that, the quite long list of developments during the course of the chronology, so AR's diagnosis of autism in February 2021 but then matters like the second and the third Prevent referrals in the spring of 21; the incidents of violence in the home in November 2021; and then, in particular, the bus incident in March 2022; May 2022, police called again for violence in the home; and then the increasing isolation from September 2023 ... all of that should have given rise to considerations for re-referral to FCAMHS" [Tr 22 Oct P79 L1-L20]
31. According to Louise Anderson "if we think about expertise, in terms of that multi-agency group ... FCAMHS are the agency that have the training to be able to assess whether a child is a risk to another person or not and so they are key in that role ... police have powers, in terms of investigation, to understand if a child is participating in criminal activity or spending time with other people who are participating in criminal activity ... Youth Justice Service, at the time, was just beginning to move into the Prevention and Diversion space ... So there were a number of agencies who would lead on the identification and then the work and the intervention" and "at that time ... the only formal multi-agency forum to bring all of those agencies together would have been the Child Protection process under Working Together to Safeguard Children" and "there would also have been Prevent" and

“scope for a Channel panel bringing together multiple agencies” if “taken on to a Channel panel” [Tr 3 Nov P120 L3-P121 L3].

32. On 23 July 2024, some 16 months since LC were last contacted in relation to AR and around 26 months since LC’s last contact with AR’s family, but ‘soberingly close to the attack’, Ms Morris performed a risk assessment and recorded of AR: “Poses risk to others: none”. That “assessment of risk six days before the attack” falling “very” “far short of acceptable” [Tr 20 Oct P195 L21-P199 L5].