

Witness Name: Leanne Lucas

Dated: 15 December 2025

THE SOUTHPORT INQUIRY

SECOND WITNESS STATEMENT OF LEANNE LUCAS

I, Leanne Lucas, will say as follows: -

INTRODUCTION

1. This witness statement is made to assist the Southport Inquiry (the “**Inquiry**”) with the matters set out in the Rule 9 Request dated 21st November 2025.

TRAINING

2. In May 2023 I completed a course in advanced safeguarding, child protection and prevent with the Connex Education Academy. To the best of my recollection the course did not address the issue of an intruder. The course mainly dealt with recognising abuse and what to do; how to speak to the child, who you pass those concerns on to, material of that nature. There were no case studies addressing an attack by an intruder or how I should respond to one. No one has ever given me cause to think this might happen or that it was a risk I needed to guard against.
3. I have not been able to provide the Inquiry with a copy of my First Aid Certificate that was in place at the time of the attack. The certificate was sent to me at a school email address. Since leaving that school I do not have access to that email account to be able to access the certificate.

RISK ASSESSMENTS

4. As set out in my first witness statement, I have provided the Inquiry a copy of my risk assessment for workshops at the Hart Space. I had not foreseen an attack occurring, let alone an attack aimed at children by an assailant armed with a knife at that venue or any other venue where I held classes. That is why the risk assessment does not include an attack of that nature.
5. I did not consider the general risk of an intruder who might look to do harm. The venue was not on a main street where the general public would be walking past. People would only attend at the venue if they had a specific purpose to be there. I have never had anyone I did not know enter a class before. I had never previously seen a stranger in the corridor or waiting outside the door. No one had ever mentioned to me anything of this nature for me to have to guard against.
6. It never occurred to me that someone would target my class with the intention of doing harm to children. There was nothing to indicate that such a danger was present in our community. I have never seen anyone in Southport carrying a knife or had any concerns about knife crime in this area. It simply wasn't an issue that I was concerned about for this or any of my classes at any of the venues I used.
7. My risk assessment included all the risks that I perceived were a possibility. The planning for this workshop was extensive. My risk assessment included all the risks that I perceived were reasonably foreseeable at that time. The risk assessment did not include risks that I thought were completely unthinkable such as this attack or an intruder who might look to do harm. I just did not foresee such risks and do not think it would be reasonable to expect me to anticipate risks that were not foreseeable or highly unlikely to happen.

SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING OF THE WORKSHOP

8. I had held classes and workshops at various venues so people who had attended my previous events would need to know where this specific event was being held. From my

experience, it would not be practical to provide the details of the venue privately after booking because parents would not book a class without knowing the venue in advance.

9. Specifying the venue in the advert was providing the parents with the information they needed to make a choice about whether this venue and class was suitable for them and their child. The specific address of the venue is on the advert because from my previous experience, parents had struggled to find the venue because it is not easy to locate if you don't know it's there. Furthermore, it is common practice for most clubs to share the location for the event in their adverts. As the attack was not foreseeable there was no reason not to share the venue.

CONCERNS

10. I am aware that there was a WhatsApp conversation which started with a facilitator of a class about a man who was emailing baby groups across the UK asking to have his nappy changed.
11. I saw the conversation happen in a WhatsApp group for class facilitators. There was no follow up email sent to the group members sharing a formal warning or providing any guidance or advice to take any actions in response. The conversation was very low level and wasn't talked about in a serious manner that this was a threat that needed to be guarded against. It wasn't clear whether this was a prank and there was no evidence the man had ever followed through and attended at any classes. There was nothing to indicate this was a real person making any kind of threat. There was no threat of any violence against anyone.
12. Jenie had discussed self-defence classes at Hart Space around this time but that was also because there was a self-defence class facilitator who was struggling to fill his classes and Jenie wanted to assist. It wasn't that she thought we were at risk from this person as far as I understood. My recollection is that it was too difficult to get a date that suited everyone, so it did not go ahead.
13. This exchange did not cause me to reflect on the security arrangements at the venue because the emails from the man about changing his nappy were not linked to a venue where I held classes. The man had contacted facilitators who used multiple venues in

different locations including outside of Southport, there was nothing to suggest he was targeting the Hart Space. Furthermore, as I wasn't holding baby classes, I did not consider his emails were linked to any classes I held. I did not receive any emails from him or anyone else trying to book onto my class inappropriately. My online booking system was monitored effectively, and I would usually have interactions with the person making the booking in advance of the class as part of my safeguarding.

14. The messages made it clear that the man hadn't actually attended at anyone's classes or any venue, he hadn't booked on to any class, he did not have the Hart Space as a venue in mind, and he wasn't making threats.
15. My security arrangements for this workshop were that I knew exactly who was booked on to attend. I did not make contact with parents who were already known to me from previous classes. Where a parent or child was new to me or I needed more information, I made contact in advance of the class for example one parent booked for three children and I wanted to know who each child belonged to and make sure I had telephone contact details in case of an emergency.
16. I did not see a correlation between a man sending emails asking for his nappy to be changed to baby groups at a venue where I was not holding classes to needing greater security at the Hart Space. Jenie Scholes was on the group chat and was very professional. If she had perceived this to be a risk, I have no doubt she would have raised her concerns with the landlord and discussed how any concerns could be addressed.
17. I did not have any knowledge of people other than Hart Space users seeking to use the Hart Space lavatories. The locks on the lavatories were in place when I started to use the Hart Space, so I had no awareness of any conversation before then. I presumed that was just how it was set up.
18. Locking the doors to the Hart Space would have breached the fire regulations. I could not have just made the decision to lock the doors. Had I made a request to the landlord to lock the doors, and the landlord had agreed, I consider that would still have been in breach of the fire regulations.

19. I could have held my workshop elsewhere but had no reason to. The Hart Space was well used by dozens of different groups and none of them had any concerns about the security arrangements as far as I was aware, so there was nothing to deter me from using it as venue. Furthermore, none of the other venues that I used such as church halls had magnetic doors. Magnetic doors were not common practice and were certainly not a feature that I have seen at club venues.
20. Until this attack, not a single user of the venue had raised any concerns about the security arrangements as far as I am aware. I had used the venue for approximately 9 months however it had been used for classes for a few years before that. In that time, no class facilitator or person attending classes at that venue had suggested any changes needed to be made as far as I am aware. Certainly no one has said anything to me. Had any concern been raised I would have discussed it with Jenie who in turn, I am sure would have raised it with the landlord and options would then be explored. I am not aware of any parents deciding not to send their children to classes at the venue because they considered the security arrangements to be insufficient.

EMERGENCY PLANS AND PROCEDURES

21. At the time of the attack and indeed prior to this Inquiry, I was not aware of the emergency escape route through the Calculus Office.
22. I am now aware of this route however I am also now aware that the door to the Calculus office would only open if the fire alarm was activated or a fire detected. That being the case, the door would not have opened on 29th July so that route would not have been option for the children. Furthermore, the exit via the stairs was nearer than crossing over to Calculus and going through its office to the far side of the building.
23. Prior to the attack I was aware of the DfE non statutory guidance at DFE000254 but only because of my role as a teacher. It is not easily available for people who run clubs, people would have to go looking for it themselves. If I had not been a teacher I would not have been aware of it. I would like to make it clear that there is no process through which you register that you are running a club, and someone sends you a pack of guidance you should take into consideration. So, whilst I was aware of the guidance, most other people who run

clubs may not be. If there is to be a recommendation that people who run clubs should be aware of such guidance there needs to be a mechanism to ensure they are made aware of it and some degree of oversight.

24. My understanding of the guidance was that as someone with no employees, the recommendation for a written emergency plan did not apply to me. Whilst there was no written plan, I had considered what to do in the event of an emergency as evidenced by the printed register, the fact I had parents contact details and the fact that my risk assessment specifies that I would call 999 if there was an accident. Furthermore, my consideration of an emergency plan was evidenced by the actions I took in response to the attack namely getting as many children out as possible and calling 999 immediately.
25. I followed the fire safety and evacuation plan prepared by Jenie Scholes. My teacher training was that we follow the fire safety and evacuation plan of the venue, and we conduct our own risk assessment which is specific to the activity that is being carried out. My risk assessment was specific to the activity I had planned and specific to the needs of the children attending if necessary. This is what I was taught to do in my teacher role.
26. Without using hindsight, If I had prepared a written emergency plan, it would have reflected what I had already considered and had in place and the conversations I had with Heidi Liddle. It would have reflected the evacuation route that we took, it would have reflected the fact that I had a mobile phone on me as there is no phone at the venue, it would have reflected the need for a register of attendees which I had, It would have reflected the need for the contact details for the parents which I had. It would have reflected the need for a first aid kit which I had. It would have reflected the plan was to call 999 and provide them with the address of the venue and the details of the incident and the emergency resources that were required which is what I did.

ADULT / CHILD RATIOS

27. There is no binding guidance on adult to child ratios for out of school settings. The ratio I used was 1:15 however I made the decision to cap the class at 26 so in practice it was 1:13. The 1:15 ratio came from my teacher training and judgment given my experience and bearing in mind the ages of the children attending the workshop which was primary (ages 5 to 11).

28. I was not aware of the non-binding NSPCC guidance. There was no information from anyone to make me aware of this guidance. I would only have been aware of it if someone raised it with me or if I happened to come across it.
29. My observation of the guidance is that it makes sense to have 2 adults present which I did. It also makes sense that the younger the children, the more supervision is required as the needs of the children are greater.
30. In my view, the skills and expertise of class instructors/ organisers must be taken into account when considering any recommendations for how clubs are run in the future.
31. I am aware of guidance from the National Education Union website (<https://neu.org.uk/advice/classroom/class-sizes>) which provides guidance on classroom sizes rather than out of school settings. The ratios advised here are much higher and states that the ratio should be determined by the activity that is being carried out and that is the approach I followed.

PARENTAL SUPERVISION

32. I did not proactively inform parents they had the option of staying and no parents asked me if they could. These conversations would be prompted by the parent knowing the needs of their own child. There were chairs in the upstairs space outside the studio that parents could have used if they wished to stay for any reason.

IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH

33. Comments made by me in the immediate aftermath was a natural reaction to the traumatic attack that had just happened. It was my response to the trauma I had just witnessed and been personally subjected to. I was one of the adults, and I was one of the people the children would have looked to for help. It was an event that I had co-organised, and the children would not have been there if we hadn't arranged it, so I felt responsible.

34. The comment about the locked door was in the context of if I had known he was coming and was coming to attack us, I would have done anything to barricade that door in the hope it would have helped us. However, in the absence of that knowledge, I would not have locked the doors as it would have breached the fire regulations.

DIFFERING PERCEPTIONS

35. I have never advanced a position that my account was the definitive version of events. I did my best, in traumatic circumstances, to provide as much detail as possible as to what happened. Given the violent and deeply distressing nature of what happened, the speed in which it happened and the confusion I would anticipate that witnesses will have slightly different recollections about the finer details or the order in which some things happened.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth.

Signed: _L. Lucas

Dated: _15.12.25