

**Southport Inquiry**

**Witness Name: STEPHANIE HEATON**

**Exhibits:**

**Dated: 15 October 2025**

**THE SOUTHPORT INQUIRY**

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**WITNESS STATEMENT OF STEPHANIE HEATON**

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**I, STEPHANIE HEATON will say as follows: -**

**Part 1: Details from lesson**

1. I was teaching an ICT lesson in the upstairs ICT room, as my usual classroom was occupied. During the lesson, I noticed AR searching on what looked like a news-type website describing a school massacre with images. I immediately told AR he had to come off this website as it was inappropriate and nothing to do with the lesson several times.
2. When I asked AR to come off this website a final time, he stood up, shouting in close proximity to my face asserting that it was against his human rights to search whatever he wanted. I explained that it was his human right to an education, and that he needs to get back onto his work. AR continued to antagonise me, prompting another student in the class, HD, to stand up from his seat and approach me and AR. He told AR to leave me alone and do as I had instructed him. AR continued to refuse so I then pulled the plug out of the computer, as he would not close the web page.
3. The teaching assistant in the room was Sharon Murphy, she did not get involved.
4. Following the lesson, I reported the incident on the safeguarding portal, CPOMS. I also asked the technician, Phil Hornby, to see whether we could retrieve the search history from the internet provider BTLS.

5. Phil later brought me printed sheets of ARs search history from that day, which was approximately 30 pages long. We spent several hours going through the contents together. The search history was very detailed and even included details of advertisements shown on the visited webpages. Despite the detail, there was nothing on the search history that corroborated with the webpage I'd seen AR visiting.
6. Shortly after the incident, I found out that it was being referred to Prevent. I was subsequently informed that the referral made did not meet Prevent threshold and was not being taken any further.
7. Until 2024, I was not personally contacted by Merseyside Police with a request for a witness statement or otherwise. I have no knowledge of what, if any, discussions took place with the police around the time of the Prevent referral, or the contents of the referral itself.

## **Part 2: November 2024**

### **8. 19th November 2024:**

- 10:09 – Missed call from withheld number. Voicemail left asking me to return the call.
- 11:31 – I made an outgoing call to [DPA].
- 13:27 – I made another outgoing call to [DPA]. These phone calls were to and from Merseyside Police.

### **9. 24th November 2024:**

- 16:42 – Incoming call from [DPA]. The apple suggestion for this number is 'Maybe: Louise Wright'
- 16:48 – I return this call, 2 minutes long. 26th November 2024:
- 09:43 – Incoming call from [DPA] 35 seconds long
- 11:08 – Incoming call from withheld number, 5 minutes long
- 12:18 – Incoming call from withheld number, 7 minutes long

### **10. 27th November 2024:**

- 11:42 – Missed call from withheld number
- 11:43 – Text message: "Hi Stephanie, it's Julie from Merseyside Police. I was wondering when best to call you today?"
- 13:06 – Missed call from withheld number

11. 28th November 2024:

- 09:11 - Incoming call from [redacted] DPA [redacted] 4 minutes long. The apple suggestion for this call is 'Maybe: Julie'

12. During these phone calls, the police told me that they'd like me to give a statement regarding three reports I'd made on our safeguarding portal, CPOMS. One of these reports was the ICT lesson described above. Julie was requesting a statement detailing what had happened.

13. I advised Julie that I was happy to provide a statement on the condition she could guarantee it could not be used to form part of ARs defence. I was told that they were unable to guarantee this and I therefore declined to give the statement, as the police were unable to provide any confirmation that I would not be inadvertently aiding AR. She accepted this, and informed me that the CPOMS entry I had made could be used as hearsay.

14. The various and repeated communications from the police came out of the blue. I was given no warning, and no notification of where they had got my personal contact details from. The police also used various phone numbers to contact me including withheld ones. I became extremely worried about who was in possession of my personal contact details, and concerned given the high-profile nature of the incident that associates of AR, AR's defence team, or the press may also be in possession of them. I still do not know whether this is the case.

### **Part 3: July 2025**

15. On 21st July 2025, Joanne Hodson, the Head Teacher of Acorns School sent me a text message at 09:40 reading: "Hi Steph, can you please give me a quick call about AR? Thanks, Jo". I returned her call at 09:49 lasting 2 minutes. This text message was out of the blue and unexpected.

16. When I called Joanne as requested, she asked me what I'd said to the police about AR. Assuming she was referring to the original incident during the ICT lesson in 2019, I advised Joanne that I had not spoken to the police directly at the time as I believed my CPOMS entry would have been used as part of the Prevent referral.

### **Statement of Truth**

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed:

**Signature**

Dated: 15 October 2025