

Witness Name: Helen Coombes

Exhibits: 2

Dated: 11.02.26

THE SOUTHPORT INQUIRY

SECOND WITNESS STATEMENT OF HELEN RUTH COOMBES

I, Helen Coombes, will say as follows:

1. I make this second statement to clarify a misunderstanding that has arisen with regards to the information that the Transition Team had access to on Lancashire County Council's ("LCC") system at the time of its involvement with AR.

Evidence given regarding access to information

2. At paragraph 36 of my witness statement dated 12 September 2025 (**exhibit HRC23 – LCC001856**) I stated:

"My understanding is that the Transition Team did not have access to the Early Help Module ("EHM") or LCS within liquid logic." [emphasis added]

Reference to "LCS" means Lancashire Children's Services ("CSC") records.

3. I gave oral evidence to the Inquiry on 3 November 2025 and was asked about the Transition Team's access to information. The following extract is taken from p173 lines 17 -25 and p174 lines 1 - 3:

Q ...the Transition Team didn't have access to the children's element of the Liquidlogic record system; is that right?

A That's correct

Q That was a significant and obvious shortcoming, is that fair?

A It was

Q I think that is now one that has been rectified so that they do have the ability to read the notes on both Children's Social Care and Early Help module?

A That's correct and also to be able to link the family....

Reason for clarification

4. [I&S] LCC's solicitors, Weightmans, met with Emma Clough, Suzanne Walmsley's supervisor, [I&S]
[I&S]
5. During the discussion Ms Clough advised that the Transition Team did have access to LCS records with Liquid Logic. What they did not have access to were Early Help records through the Early Help Module ("EHM").
6. Following the discussion Weightmans asked if I can check the position and having done so I can confirm that Ms Clough is correct.
7. This is also confirmed in the statement of Suzanne Walmsley (**exhibit HCR24 - LCC001805**) which states the following:
 - Paragraph 32 – Ms Walmsley would start a transition by checking the records on LCS
 - Paragraph 54 – in this instance Ms Walmsley did not look at LCS.
 - Paragraph 114 – Ms Walmsley cannot say what was on LCS as she did not access it.
 - Paragraph 130 – after the event and as a result of discussions with Emma Clough Ms Walmsley was made aware that most of the AR records were held on the EHM module which they did not have access to.
8. As stated in Paragraph 1 of my first same statement, I commenced my employment with LCC in December 2024 and so was not in post at the time the Transition Team

was involved with AR, and I joined at a time when changes had already been implemented to address deficiencies in the Transition Team access to records.

9. The evidence given, both in my witness statement and to the Inquiry, was given to the best of my knowledge and belief as to the position at that time. I am sorry I was incorrect in my understanding and for any confusion caused.

Confirmation of the Transition Team's access to records during its involvement with AR

10. Following the above I can confirm that at the time the Transition Team was involved with AR the position was as follows:

- a. The Transition Team had access to LCS.
- b. The Transition Team did not have access to EHM which included CFW records (which we now know would have been where the majority of the records relating to AR would have been kept).
- c. Whilst the Transition Team would have been able to view AR's records on LCS, it would not have identified or provided access to any other associated family records.

11. My view remains that this was an unsatisfactory situation which has since been resolved.

Improvements made

12. For the avoidance of doubt, I can confirm that changes made to the system mean that the Transition team can now see the LCS, EHM, and any associated family records within Liquid Logic.

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:

SIGNATURE

Dated: 13 February 2026

Index to the Witness Statement of Helen Ruth Coombes

Exhibit No.	Inquiry reference no.	Document Description
HRC23	LCC001856	First witness statement of Helen Ruth Coombes dated 12.09.25
HCR24	LCC001805	Statement of Suzanne Walmsley dated 12.09.25