Witness Name: Andrew Baisley

Exhibits: AB/01 – AB/27

Dated: 27 August 2026

THE SOUTHPORT INQUIRY

FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF ANDREW BAISLEY

I, ANDREW BAISLEY, will say as follows: -

INTRODUCTION

1. I am Andrew Baisley. I am Head of Education, Economics and Social Justice at the National Education Union (NEU), working within the Policy, Research and Equality directorate. I have held that post since 10 October 2025. Before that I held the very similar post of Head of Education, Equalities and Social Justice since 1 April 2024, my new job title was the result of a restructure. Prior to that I led the NEU Research Team and have worked for the NEU and its predecessor the National Union of Teachers (NUT) since 1 September 2017. Prior to that I worked as a mathematics teacher in state secondary schools in Haringey, Hackney and Camden, and also held a variety of lay positions within the NUT. I started work as a teacher in September 1994. My work covers education policy analysis and research, including the union's annual State of Education survey, school funding, the education workforce, and provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. I make this statement on behalf of the National Education Union and I have the authority of the union to do so.

2. This witness statement is made to assist the Southport Inquiry (the "Inquiry") with the matters set out in the Rule 9 Request dated 25 June 2026.

3. The National Education Union is the largest education union in the United Kingdom. It represents 491,789 members: teachers, lecturers, support staff and leaders working in state and independent schools, sixth form colleges and early years settings in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Channel Islands. This statement covers England and Wales, in line with the Inquiry's Phase 2 terms of reference. Education is devolved, so I identify which nation each piece of evidence or guidance concerns. Most of the union's survey evidence comes from members working in English state schools; the union's Welsh evidence is set out at paragraphs 10, 28, 29 and 31.

4. The evidence in this statement comes from seven sources. The first is the State of Education survey, an annual survey of the union's members. The second is the union's casework: the advice we give members and the cases we take up with employers. The third is the union's policy and guidance material. The fourth is a survey of NEU members who hold the role of designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and the fifth a survey of a panel of NEU teacher members working in English state schools. The sixth is a set of case studies prepared from the union's casework and legal work, and the seventh a record of an interview with the head of digital strategy at an English independent school.

5. The State of Education survey for 2026 was in the field between 5 and 16 February 2026. Responses were received from teachers, support staff and other members in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The figures I give are for the 12,333 respondents teaching in English state schools, reweighted by personal and professional characteristics to the most recent School Workforce Census. I exhibit the survey methodology note as AB/01 **NEU000002**

THE ROLE OF THE UNION

6. I do not believe that the term Violence Fixated Individual (VFI) is widely employed or understood in education settings. It is not a term that is used by the Department for Education and this terminology does not appear in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 (DfE, 2026a) or in the Prevent duty guidance for education settings (DfE, 2023), and it does not appear in the Welsh Government's safeguarding guidance for education settings, Keeping Learners Safe (Welsh Government, 2022).

7. Although the term VFI is not widely used in education, teachers and educators will be familiar with the concept of an individual who exhibits violent behaviour or ideation, but who does not appear to be driven by a particular ideology.

8. The National Education Union regularly engages with the Department for Education and with Ofsted through stakeholder meetings and responses to consultations. These meetings are now organised through the Improving Education Together framework. At the meetings relevant to this Inquiry, the union is represented at them by Daniel Kebede, General Secretary; David Wilson, Deputy General Secretary; Ros McNeil, Assistant General Secretary; Scarlet Harris, Head of Workforce and Equalities; Sarah Lyons, Senior Policy Manager, Health, Safety and Environment; Sally Thomas, Senior Policy Manager, School Systems and Inspection; Judy Ellerby, Senior Policy Manager, SEND and Child Poverty; and by me. The union's regional

and local offices maintain contact with local authorities, and local secretaries regularly meet their counterparts in local authorities. At a local level, NEU secretaries and representatives work closely with schools and multi-academy trusts (MATs) on a range of issues, including behaviour, safeguarding, and violent incidents.

9. For this statement the union gathered evidence on the matters the Inquiry raises. In August 2026 it surveyed a sample of members who hold the designated safeguarding lead role and a panel of 1,370 teacher members working in English state schools, weighted to the profile of the teacher workforce. It analysed its casework records from January 2021 to July 2026. It drew together anonymised case studies from its casework and legal work, and a record of an interview with the head of digital strategy at an English independent school.

10. In Wales, the union has been closely involved in the Welsh Government's response to violence in schools. Following the attack at Ysgol Dyffryn Aman, Carmarthenshire, in April 2024, and a meeting between the Cabinet Secretary for Education and the education workforce unions in November 2024, the Welsh Government convened a National Behaviour Summit. A roundtable on violence and safety in schools was held on 8 May 2025 and the summit followed on 22 May 2025.

11. The union also works with the Welsh Government, local authorities in both nations, and other unions through the TUC and joint safety work.

TOPIC ONE – IDENTIFYING AND MANAGING RISK

Identification of VFIs

12. In August 2026 the union conducted two surveys to ascertain members' views on pupils who may pose a risk of serious violence to others. The first was the DSL survey, a survey of members who hold the designated safeguarding lead role in English state schools, conducted on 25 and 26 August 2026 and answered by 319 members. The sample is small and so percentages carry a margin of error of around five to six points, wider for subgroups. The key findings are in document AB/02 – **NEU000003** The second was the panel survey of 1,370 teacher members in English state schools, weighted to the profile of the teacher workforce. The key findings as AB/03 – **NEU000004** Both surveys avoided the term VFI, which members would not recognise, and asked instead about pupils who may pose a risk of serious harm to others. Where I describe a difference between groups as meaningful or significant, the confidence intervals for the two groups do not overlap; where they do overlap I describe the finding as indicative only.

13. The DSL survey (AB/02 – **NEU000003**) shows that safeguarding leads carry a routine caseload of pupils who may pose a risk of serious harm to others. More than one in three (37 per cent) had dealt with six or more such cases in the last three years, including more than one in five (22 per cent) who had dealt with more than ten.

14. The safeguarding leads' central complaint was the response they receive from external agencies when they raise safeguarding concerns. Seven in ten (70 per cent) said external agencies take account of concerns raised by school staff not very well or not at all well; only 2.5 per cent said very well. Among leads who had actually taken a concern to an external agency, the negative share rises to 78 per cent. Only one in four (26 per cent) said they are always or usually told the outcome when they refer a concern that a pupil may pose a risk of harm to others, including referrals to Prevent, and just 4 per cent are always told.

15. The written comments in the DSL survey (AB/02 – **NEU000003**) describe external agencies dismissing or downgrading concerns raised by schools, particularly where the pupil has special educational needs or disabilities (SEND); social care thresholds set so high that referrals come back with no further action; schools expected to supply detail but rarely told what followed; safeguarding records arriving late or not at all when a pupil transfers in; and staff being injured or threatened while pupils wait for specialist placements and mental health provision that does not arrive. One lead wrote: “External services, especially children's social care and mental health services actively dismiss concerns raised by schools, particularly if the child discloses concerning information to school staff but does not repeat it to them directly.”

16. The panel survey (AB/03 – **NEU000004**) asked teachers whether, in the last 12 months, they had been worried about a pupil because of an apparent interest in or preoccupation with violence, weapons or attacks. Just over a third (35 per cent) said yes: 18 per cent about one pupil and 16 per cent about more than one. Teachers in the most deprived fifth of schools were more likely to have been worried (43 per cent) than teachers in the least deprived fifth (26 per cent), a meaningful difference. Secondary teachers were more likely to have been worried (41 per cent) than primary teachers (30 per cent), also a meaningful difference, and teachers in special schools and pupil referral units reported the highest exposure of any group.

17. The union also analysed its casework records. I exhibit the analysis as AB/04 – **NEU000005**. The analysis covered 36,485 cases opened between 1 January 2021 and 31 July 2026 under tags covering assault, behaviour, safeguarding,

personal injury and health and safety. Because the records are free text, cases were identified by keyword matching and a sample of 100 highly relevant cases was reviewed manually. The findings are approximate, and casework is by nature a record of things going wrong. With those caveats, three findings stand out.

18. First, the term violence fixated individual does not appear in any of the 36,485 case records. The term is not used by members or union staff. Second, casework about pupil violence is rising much faster than union casework generally. Across all categories, union casework rose by around 24 per cent between 2021 and 2025. Cases tagged 'assault at work' rose by 173 per cent over the same period, from 180 to 492 cases a year, and cases tagged 'behaviour management' rose by 96 per cent, from 506 to 994. Schools were closed to most pupils from January to March 2021, so the 2021 baseline is depressed and these growth rates will overstate the underlying trend; but the direction of change is consistent with the Department for Education's evidence below, which avoids the pandemic-affected years. Third, keyword analysis identified 5,828 potentially relevant cases, of which 334 matched high-relevance terms such as knife, weapon or stabbing.

19. Incidents involving weapons or threats to kill remain a small minority of casework, in the low hundreds over five and a half years. Casework about pupil violence and behaviour more broadly is routine and growing, and the surveys show that concern about pupils preoccupied with violence is a normal experience for teachers.

The wider behaviour context

20. The identification of VFIs sits within a wider deterioration in pupil behaviour since the pandemic, and the same staff, systems and referral routes manage both. The union's State of Education survey for 2026 found that two thirds (66 per cent) of teachers in English state schools said pupil behaviour had a negative impact on their lessons at least regularly. The proportion was 70 per cent in primary schools, 60 per cent in secondary schools and 69 per cent in special schools and pupil referral units. The 2026 results were similar to 2024, which in turn showed a significant increase on 2022. I exhibit the State of Education 2026 briefing note on behaviour as AB/05 – **NEU000006**

21. The same survey found that almost a third (30 per cent) of teachers in English state schools had been physically assaulted by a pupil in the previous year. The figure was 68 per cent in special schools and pupil referral units, 44 per cent in primary schools and around one in ten in secondary schools. Among support staff, almost half (46 per

cent) had been physically assaulted, rising to 73 per cent in special schools and pupil referral units. Most of the physical assaults reported did not involve a weapon or result in serious injury. The most common were thrown objects, kicking, punching, headbutting, pushing, spitting, biting and pinching. The most serious forms of assault were rare: use of a weapon was reported by 0.5 per cent of primary teachers, 0.08 per cent of secondary teachers and 2 per cent of special school teachers. I exhibit the State of Education 2026 briefing notes on assaults on teachers and on support staff as AB/06 – **NEU000007** and AB/07 – **NEU000008**.

22. The Department for Education's evidence points the same way. In the Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders survey, the proportion of teachers rating behaviour in their school as good or very good fell from 58 per cent in 2022 to 46 per cent in 2025, with most of the fall occurring by 2024. The proportion rating behaviour poor or very poor rose from 18 per cent in 2022 to 25 per cent in 2025, having peaked at 27 per cent in 2024 (DfE, 2025b). In the same survey, 59 per cent of teachers and middle leaders said they spend too much time following up behaviour incidents, up from 50 per cent in 2022, and 47 per cent of those who left English state school teaching between 2024 and 2025 cited pupil behaviour as a factor, against 32 per cent of the cohort who left between 2022 and 2023. The Department's National Behaviour Survey for 2024/25 reported that in May 2025, 68 per cent of teachers said between one and ten minutes of teaching time were lost to misbehaviour in every 30 minutes, and 9 per cent said more than ten minutes were lost (DfE, 2025a).

23. The population of pupils presenting violent behaviour, within which the far smaller group at risk of extreme violence must be identified, has grown; and the pastoral and safeguarding capacity required to identify these pupils is more stretched than it was.

RESOURCES, PROVISION AND ACCESS TO SUPPORT

24. School spending per pupil in England fell by 9 per cent in real terms between 2009–10 and 2019–20, the largest cut in more than 40 years, and the most deprived secondary schools saw larger cuts than the least deprived (Sibieta, 2020). Across all stages, education spending fell by 15 per cent in real terms between 2010–11 and 2019–20 and remained 12 per cent below its 2010–11 level in 2023–24 (IFS, 2025). The teacher workforce has not kept pace with pupil numbers. In secondary schools the pupil to teacher ratio rose from 14.8 in 2010/11 to 16.7 in 2024/25, and in special schools and pupil referral units from 5.8 to 6.5 (DfE, 2026d). The average secondary class, was 20.5 pupils in 2010 and 20.4 in 2015/16, but 22.4 by 2023/24 (DfE, 2010; DfE, 2024). The services around schools contracted more sharply: by 2018–19 local

authority spending on Sure Start had fallen by 62 per cent in real terms and spending on services for young people by 65 per cent, and children's services spending became increasingly concentrated on statutory duties and crisis response rather than prevention (IFS, 2019). When these services are cut, the burden falls on schools.

25. The special educational needs system illustrates the strain. Demand has risen steeply: requests for an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) needs assessment more than doubled between 2020 and 2025, reaching 162,700, and there were 718,800 EHCPs in place in January 2026 (DfE, 2026e). In 2017, 64.9 per cent of new plans were issued within the statutory 20 weeks (DfE, 2018); in 2025 the figure was 46.1 per cent, the mean time to issue a plan was 24 weeks against the statutory 20, and one plan in ten took more than a year, up from around one in twenty in 2023 (DfE, 2026e).

26. Members see the consequences in their classrooms. In the State of Education survey for 2026, 83 per cent of teachers said an insufficient number of staff to support learning was a significant barrier to making their setting inclusive. Three quarters of primary teachers said lack of access to external support services was a significant barrier, as did around two thirds of secondary teachers and 60 per cent of special school and PRU teachers. Class sizes were a significant barrier for 62 per cent of teachers, up from 51 per cent a year earlier. I exhibit the briefing note as AB/27 – **NEU000028**

27. The clearest single pressure is children's mental health provision. In 2024-25, for the first time, more than one million children had an active referral to children and young people's mental health services in England, almost double the number in 2018–19. At the end of March 2025, 35 per cent of children referred were still waiting for treatment to begin, and more than 60,000 had been waiting for over two years (Children's Commissioner, 2026).

Case studies

28. I exhibit as AB/08 – **NEU000009** a note of two case studies drawn from the union's casework and legal work, prepared by a solicitor in the union's legal department. The first concerns the attack at Ysgol Dyffryn Aman, Carmarthenshire, on 24 April 2024, in which an NEU member, the school's additional learning needs co-ordinator, sustained multiple stab wounds while attempting to protect a colleague; two teachers and a pupil were stabbed. The pupil was convicted of three counts of attempted murder in February 2025. Carmarthenshire County Council commissioned

an independent Multi Agency Professional Forum review of the case, authored by Gladys Rhodes White OBE and ratified on 19 August 2025, which I exhibit as AB/09 – **NEU000010**

29. The learning in the Multi Agency Professional Forum review mirrors the findings of the Inquiry's Phase 1 report: relevant history did not follow the pupil through school transitions, including a mid-year move between secondary schools; professionals, and the pupil's father, each held information which, shared effectively and in time, would have given a fuller picture; the pupil had twice previously taken weapons into school; multi-agency discussions took place but agreed actions were not consistently followed up, shared or reviewed; and agencies relied on the family to follow up appointments when the family was disengaging.

30. The second case study concerns a Year 5 teacher employed by a multi-academy trust who was seriously assaulted by a pupil in April 2023. The pupil had an EHCP and a documented history of violence and of fixating on individuals. In the months before the assault the pupil targeted the member: seeking her out, threatening to kill her with a knife, asking other staff to help him kill her, and hitting and punching her. The employer did not respond effectively to this escalating and fixated pattern. The pupil was excluded on some occasions but returned with no further measures in place, and the behaviour continued until the serious assault. The Inquiry's Phase 1 report found that agencies repeatedly explained away AR's violence by reference to his diagnosis; in the union's experience the same pattern, in which SEND is treated as an explanation that closes down intervention, appears in this case and in the wider casework I describe at paragraph 48 below.

31. The Welsh Government's response to the Ysgol Dyffryn Aman attack is also relevant to the Inquiry. I exhibit the Welsh Government's survey of education providers and support staff for the National Behaviour Summit as AB/10 – **NEU000011** and the interim report of the roundtable on violence and safety in schools as AB/11 – **NEU000012**. The roundtable report records a rise in reports of poor behaviour since the pandemic, ranging from low-level disruption to threats of violence and, in some cases, the carrying and use of weapons.

Policy, guidance and training

32. The union's policy and guidance bears on the identification, assessment and management of pupils who may pose a risk of serious violence, though none uses the term VFI. I exhibit the principal documents. Reviewing your behaviour policy

(AB/12 – NEU000013) and the union's model policy on workplace violence and assaults (AB/13 – NEU000014) set out how schools should prevent, record and respond to violent incidents. The union's model pupil behaviour risk assessment pro forma (AB/14 – NEU000015) is the tool members are advised to request where the behaviour of a particular pupil creates a demonstrable risk; the sections on identifying hazards, recording prior incidents and review are the most relevant to the Inquiry. The union's model for whole school development of a trauma-informed approach (AB/15 – NEU000016) addresses prevention and de-escalation. Tackling abuse and assault in the workplace, in versions for members (AB/16 – NEU000017) and for support staff (AB/17 – NEU000018), sets out the actions members should take after an incident, including reporting and requesting an individual pupil risk assessment.

33. On harmful online content, the union publishes advice on the Prevent duty; I exhibit the version current at July 2024 as AB/18 – NEU000019 and the version as updated in August 2026 as AB/19 – NEU000020, and in February 2026 it published Three Minutes to Harm, a report on the harmful content served to children by social media platforms, which I address under Topic Two below. On knives and bladed articles, the union's guidance for new teachers, Education, the Law and You (AB/20 – NEU000021, covers the legal framework, including the power to search pupils and the use of reasonable force; the sections on searching and on health and safety are the most relevant.

34. From the union's perspective there are gaps in the national strategy and guidance. First, there is no settled home for the pupil who presents a risk of serious violence without an ideological driver. I recognise that this position has moved since the Southport attack. The Home Office clarified Prevent referral thresholds in guidance to practitioners in September 2025, and the Key Principles of Prevent state that a clear identifiable ideology is not mandatory to make or adopt a referral (Home Office, 2026a). But Prevent remains a programme to stop people becoming terrorists: assessment and support turn on susceptibility to radicalisation, and cases without a terrorism connection exit the system. The government's response to Lord Anderson's Lessons for Prevent report recognises this, establishing a taskforce on non-ideological extreme violence and piloting arrangements in nine local authorities to connect cases leaving Prevent to other services (Home Office, 2026b). KCSIE addresses harm to the child and abuse between children; health and safety law addresses risks to staff. Each of these frameworks is relevant to the pupil this Inquiry is concerned with, but there is no single, overarching framework or entity to ensure

the pupil does not fall between gaps. Second, as I set out under information sharing below, the transfer of safeguarding information between schools rests on guidance rather than duty, and managed moves have no statutory framework. Third, there is no reliable feedback loop: schools that refer concerns are frequently not told the outcome. Fourth, accountability between agencies is fragmented, a concern the union first raised in its response to the Home Office consultation on a new legal duty to support a multi-agency approach to preventing and tackling serious violence in 2019. I exhibit that response as AB/26 – **NEU000027**

35. On training, all staff receive safeguarding training in line with KCSIE, and designated safeguarding leads receive additional training. There is no training that members are required to receive on violence fixation or on the escalation from concerning behaviour to attack planning. The panel survey (AB/03 – **NEU000004** asked teachers whether their training had prepared them to recognise a pupil who may pose a risk of serious harm to others and to know how to respond. Six in ten (60 per cent) agreed, but nearly one in five (19 per cent) disagreed. Teachers in the North East were markedly more likely to disagree (32 per cent), a significant difference from the national figure. In the union's assessment, generic safeguarding training gives staff confidence in the reporting route but does not reliably equip them to recognise fixation and pre-attack behaviour, and its effect is uneven.

Assessment and management of risk

36. There is no national tool for assessing the risk a pupil poses to others. Members use individual pupil behaviour risk assessments, of which the union's pro forma (AB/14) is **NEU000015** one model, alongside whatever recording systems their school uses. These tools were designed for behaviour management and staff safety, not to capture escalation towards extreme violence; they share no common language with the police, health or children's social care, and their quality depends on the school.

NEU000005

37. The casework analysis (AB/04) suggests the tools are inconsistently used. Of the 5,828 potentially relevant cases, 19 per cent contained language indicating procedural barriers, such as no clear procedure, unclear guidance or a failure to follow safeguarding protocol. In the manual review of 100 highly relevant cases, recurring themes were the absence of a risk assessment, uncertainty over whether one had been carried out, inadequate risk assessments, and risk assessments not being followed where they existed. In some cases members had violent pupils moved into their classrooms without being told of the risk, or were not told that a pupil had made death threats against them.

38. The union does not consider these tools adequate, on their own, to assess the risk posed by VFIs. Practice varies between teachers, roles and schools, and the union is not aware of national steps to secure consistency. On compatibility with other agencies' approaches the union holds no systematic evidence, beyond noting that school risk assessments and agency threat assessments use different frameworks and vocabularies.

39. Members are generally confident about how to raise a concern but much less confident about what happens next. In the panel survey (AB/03 – **NEU000004**, 95 per cent of teachers were very or fairly confident that they know how to raise a concern about a pupil who may pose a risk of serious harm to others. But 42 per cent said they are rarely or never told what action was taken after raising a safeguarding concern, and only 31 per cent are usually or always told. Three quarters (75 per cent) agreed that when they raise safeguarding concerns appropriate action will be taken, but confidence is uneven: teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds were meaningfully less likely to be told what action was taken (23 per cent never told, against 12 per cent of other teachers) and meaningfully less likely to strongly agree that appropriate action will be taken (22 per cent against 33 per cent). Teachers in the North East were meaningfully more likely to disagree that appropriate action will be taken.

40. On the effectiveness of multi-agency systems, the union's clearest evidence is at paragraph 14: seven in ten safeguarding leads say external agencies take account of school concerns not very well or not at all well. Members are confident in the internal process and lose confidence at the point the referral leaves the school.

Parental engagement and consent

41. The union holds limited evidence on the effect of parental consent being withheld, withdrawn or manipulated, and no evidence on how frequently this occurs. Two sources are relevant. The Multi Agency Professional Forum review of the Ysgol Dyffryn Aman case (AB/09) found that reliance on the pupil and her father to follow **NEU000010** up appointments and contribute to assessments prevented agencies from gathering the information they needed, and it recommends that where families are non-compliant or use avoidance strategies this should itself be reviewed so the child can still be monitored and helped. In the DSL survey (AB/02 – **NEU000003**), safeguarding leads reported concerns being dismissed where a child disclosed to school staff but would not repeat the disclosure to the agency directly. A system that

treats the school's account as evidence in its own right, rather than requiring the child or family to repeat it, would reduce dependence on parental co-operation.

Multi-agency structures and ownership of risk

42. The union supports effective multi-agency arrangements to identify, assess and manage VFIs. However, its experience of earlier government proposals on serious violence is that creating additional duties, partnerships or governance structures does not, of itself, produce effective collaboration. In its 2019 response to that consultation (AB/26 – **NEU000027**, the union highlighted longstanding weaknesses in multi-agency working: inconsistent information sharing, a lack of clear and transparent protocols, inadequate involvement of educational institutions in local safeguarding and prevention strategies, fragmented accountability, and insufficient resources for early intervention.

43. The union does not have a view on the most appropriate multi-agency structure. We do believe that within the existing safeguarding partnership structures, schools should be given full partner status, there must be clear case ownership and enforceable information duties.

44. On building a culture in which agencies and settings own risk rather than referring it onwards, the union makes one observation. Schools already own the risk in the most concrete sense: the pupil is in the classroom every day, whatever the outcome of a referral. The onward-referral culture is largely a feature of the agencies around the school, and the union's evidence points to this being driven by thresholds and capacity rather than attitude. We believe the following changes are necessary: schools' concerns being treated as professional evidence rather than opinion; every referral receiving a substantive response and the referrer being told the outcome; and services having the capacity to accept the cases that meet their own criteria. The DSL survey (AB/02 – **NEU000003** suggests all three are currently missing.

A named duty holder within education settings

45. The Inquiry asks whether members would have the experience, skills and time to act as the named lead for the multi-agency case management of a VFI, if such a duty holder were required in every case. They would not, and this function should not sit with school staff.

46. Teachers in English state schools reported average working weeks of 46.9 hours in 2025, and 51.4 hours for full-time primary teachers, in the Department's own survey

(DfE, 2025b). Designated safeguarding leads already absorb substantial casework, as the DSL survey (AB/02 – NEU000003 shows, and in many primary schools the role is held alongside a full teaching load or the SENCo role. Teachers are trained to identify and refer, not to coordinate multi-agency risk management across police, health and social care. Co-ordination of this kind is better placed as a function of the local authority or of the local safeguarding partnership, with a named, trained, resourced case owner. There must be a named duty holder to stop cases getting lost, as the Ysgol Dyffryn Aman review shows. The disadvantage of placing it in schools is that it would transfer statutory risk to individuals without the powers, information or time to discharge it. It would also deter people from taking on safeguarding roles.

A shared multi-agency risk assessment tool

47. The union supports, in principle, a clear and accessible central multi-agency risk assessment tool, provided its limits are understood. The advantages would be a common language and common thresholds across education, police, health and social care; a single record that can travel with the child; and less dependence on the quality of individual school documents. There are risks though: a tool can become a tick-box exercise; a completed assessment can create false assurance if no agency is required to act on it; it would create additional workload unless it replaces existing paperwork; and it would require training across hundreds of thousands of staff. A shared tool without a duty on receiving agencies to respond to what it records would change little. The union would want to be consulted on design, workload and training.

Autism, neurodevelopmental conditions and risk assessment

48. The Inquiry's Phase 1 report found that AR's diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder was not properly recognised as a factor which, in his individual case, increased the risk he posed to others. The union's evidence shows a related pattern operating in schools: SEND being used by employers and agencies as a reason for limited intervention. In the manual review of casework, SEND was a factor in multiple cases and was often cited by the school or academy trust as a reason for weak or absent intervention in cases of pupil violence. A safeguarding lead wrote in the DSL survey(AB/02 – NEU000003): "Significant risk behaviour towards others, eg peers or adults, is often dismissed as an unmet SEND need by outside agencies." The second case study at AB/08 shows the same pattern preceding a serious assault.

49. The union holds no survey evidence on members' confidence in factoring autism or other neurodevelopmental conditions into risk assessment, or on training specific to that question, and I therefore cannot answer those parts of the Inquiry's request; I am not aware of any such training being required or generally provided. The union would emphasise, as the Chair did in the Phase 1 report, that it would be wrong to associate autism generally with violence. The failure the evidence shows is not a failure to treat autistic pupils as risky; it is the use of a diagnosis, or an unmet need, as a reason to stop asking whether a specific, escalating pattern of behaviour presents a risk to others.

Information sharing

50. Existing systems do not consistently support schools to share risk information with other schools or agencies. This is the union's central concern in this statement, raised in successive consultation responses: inconsistent information sharing between schools and with safeguarding partners, and the lack of clear protocols for the exchange of information.

51. Only one in three safeguarding leads (32 per cent) always or usually receives relevant safeguarding information before a pupil joins their setting from another school, and just 6 per cent always do. An equal share (32 per cent) rarely or never receives it, so in around a third of settings a pupil can arrive with no prior safeguarding picture at all. Three in four leads (74 per cent) have become aware of significant safeguarding information about a pupil only after that pupil had already started at their setting. Late disclosure is close to a universal experience rather than an occasional failure.

52. The union believes that this is because there is no statutory duty to pass on all safeguarding information. KCSIE states that where children leave a school the designated safeguarding lead should ensure the child protection file is transferred to the new school as soon as possible, within five days for an in-year transfer, and should consider sharing information with the new school in advance of the move (DfE, 2026a). Schools must have regard to KCSIE, but the wording is “should”: there is no legal duty on the school the pupil is leaving to pass safeguarding and risk information to the receiving school, no standard national record, and no mechanism that checks the transfer happened. The position in Wales is instructive. Keeping Learners Safe, the Welsh Government's guidance under the same section 175 of the Education Act 2002, was strengthened in its 2022 edition: paragraph 3.56 says the designated safeguarding person must ensure that any child protection records are

copied to the new setting as soon as possible (Welsh Government, 2022). Wales has moved from 'should' to 'must'; but the Welsh requirement still sits in guidance, and it sets no timescale and requires no confirmation of receipt, where KCSIE sets five days and asks for confirmation. The union welcomes the recent strengthening of this section of KCSIE, including the encouragement of direct discussion between safeguarding leads before a move; in the union's opinion this should be a duty, not an expectation, and it should apply to every change of setting.

53. The gap is at its widest in managed moves. A managed move is a voluntary agreement between two schools, the parents and the pupil for the pupil to transfer, typically as an alternative to exclusion. There is no statutory scheme governing managed moves. The statutory guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion says that a managed move should follow appropriate initial intervention and should be underpinned by comprehensive and timely information sharing, including risk management strategies (DfE, 2026b), but managed moves are not recorded in any national data collection and no body verifies that the information sharing the guidance describes has taken place. In practice they are unregulated. Wales is structurally the same: managed moves rest on non-statutory guidance, Effective managed moves: a fresh start at school for children and young people, and local authority protocols (Welsh Government, 2011). Because a managed move often follows precisely the escalating behaviour with which this Inquiry is concerned, the pupils most likely to be moved are those about whom information most needs to travel.

54. A case study from the union's casework, which I exhibit as AB/21 – **NEU000022** illustrates the problem. An assistant headteacher at a London secondary school was seriously assaulted by a 14-year-old pupil in February 2023, in an attack that staff described as being on the verge of a riot, and after which the pupil returned to look for the member. When the member returned from four weeks of sickness absence he discovered that the pupil had been moved to another school in the same borough. Neither the serious assault on him, nor the pupil's other assaults on staff and pupils, had been declared to the receiving school or to the local authority. When the member raised it, the receiving school returned the pupil. The two schools were in the same local authority, operating a named-contact protocol for managed moves; the information still did not get passed on.

55. The same case study records the experience of the member concerned of the incentives that suppress disclosure. Schools fear that if they are wholly honest about

a pupil's history, the receiving school will not take the pupil; he has also seen social workers and youth justice workers withhold information to protect a placement. In his account, academy chains from outside the borough persuaded pupils to make in-year admissions to schools in his borough, or to be electively home educated, with no information supplied until the pupil was on roll, at which point significant safeguarding and SEND needs emerged; and local authority inclusion teams were not receiving the information either. Within one local authority area, schools under different admission arrangements can be compelled to share to different degrees. The union's casework analysis found the same themes at lower intensity: 26 per cent of potentially relevant cases contained language indicating failures to share, disclose or notify, and 5 per cent contained language indicating fear or reluctance to share risk information.

56. Schools show some reluctance to share risk information, but in the union's assessment it is produced by the structure of the system rather than by indifference. A school that discloses fully risks the move collapsing and the pupil remaining without a fresh start; a school that discloses little exports an unmanaged risk. The present system only works where every school in an area is both completely honest and prepared to take a fair share of pupils who need additional support. The barriers to effective sharing are, in the union's view: the absence of a duty; the absence of a standard record that travels with the pupil; uncertainty about data protection, which persists among staff despite KCSIE's statement that data protection is not a barrier to safeguarding; fragmented admission arrangements between local authority and academy sectors; and moves across local authority boundaries or into elective home education, where oversight is weakest. Pupils residing in one local authority and attending school in another, or moving between authorities, weaken information sharing further because no single inclusion team holds the whole picture.

57. The union's position is that the passing of safeguarding and risk information on any change of school, including a managed move, should be a legal duty on the sending school, discharged through a standard national record within a fixed timescale, with the receiving school required to confirm receipt.

Interventions

58. On members' experience of psychological, behavioural, therapeutic and social interventions to reduce risk, the casework evidence is that they are rare. In the 100 highly relevant cases reviewed manually, the interventions recorded were overwhelmingly suspensions, exclusions, class moves and managed moves;

interventions aimed at reducing the violent ideation itself were rarely recorded, behaviour units were rarely mentioned, and none of the 100 cases recorded a referral to Prevent. The union cannot assess the effectiveness of interventions its members rarely see. The DSL survey (AB/02 – **NEU000003**) comments describe pupils waiting for specialist placements and mental health provision that does not arrive, with staff being injured in the meantime. In the union's assessment, the barriers are the capacity of child and adolescent mental health services, the shortage of specialist and alternative provision places, and the withdrawal of early help services.

TOPIC TWO – THE ROLE OF THE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

59. The union's research indicates that online platforms can facilitate and aggravate fixation and fantasies of extreme violence. In February 2026 the union published Three Minutes to Harm, which I exhibit as AB/22 – **NEU000023** For that report, researchers created four fictional profiles of British 13-year-olds on TikTok, Snapchat, YouTube and Instagram, each declaring its age accurately, selected typical teenage interests, did not search for harmful material, and scrolled for up to 30 minutes a day for a week. Concerning content appeared within an average of three minutes of logging on; profiles were shown roughly one piece of harmful or inappropriate content for every minute of scrolling; in several sessions harmful material was the first item served; and exposure intensified over the week. The content followed gendered pathways: profiles presented as boys were steered towards misogynistic narratives, weapons imagery and racist or extremist material; profiles presented as girls towards sexualised and body-focused content, including material linked to self-harm.

60. In union survey research, 70 per cent of teachers said they frequently see pupils' behaviour, attitudes or language shaped by extreme or harmful online content, and 89 per cent said social media platforms play a major role in exposing children to such material. Over 90 per cent of members supported raising the minimum age of access to social media from 13 to 16. In the panel survey (AB/03 – **NEU000004**, 12 per cent of teachers had seen a pupil accessing violent or disturbing material on a school device or the school network in the last 12 months, rising to 26 per cent of teachers in special schools and pupil referral units. Our software combines special schools and pupil referral units/alternative provision into one category, and we have not had time to disaggregate them, but it is reasonable to assume that the proportion would be higher still in pupil referral units. I exhibit the State of Education briefing notes on

social media and smartphones for 2025 and 2026 as AB/23 – **NEU000024** and AB/24 – **NEU000025**

61. On whether existing frameworks and software are effective at blocking content that may facilitate fixation or attack planning, the union's direct evidence is limited. In August 2026 the union interviewed the head of digital strategy at an English independent school; I exhibit the record of interview as AB/25 – **NEU000026** His experience is that filtering software varies greatly between providers in how well it identifies and blocks such content; that online behaviours linked to violent fixation can be detected through monitoring systems, but only through careful examination of trends over time by staff who know what they are looking for; that alerts feed a ticketing process which is closed only when actioned by the safeguarding team; and that the barriers are money and people: filtering systems cost thousands of pounds a year, and the language children use changes faster than filtering categories. He had received very little training specific to detecting problematic online behaviour; his capability came from experience. He also observed that in a state school the person responsible for monitoring infrastructure would typically cover many schools and have little contact with the children whose searches they are reading.

62. Two structural limits apply. First, school filtering and monitoring, maintained to the standards in KCSIE, covers school devices and the school network. Most of children's exposure to harmful content takes place on personal devices outside school, where schools have no visibility and no control, yet the consequences arrive in school. Second, monitoring is only effective where someone has the time and skill to analyse and read it; the staffing to do this is uneven, and weakest where budgets are tightest.

63. On measures to report and respond: concerning online behaviour is routed through the safeguarding team like any other concern, and from there to children's social care, the police or Prevent where thresholds are met. There is no reporting route specific to non-ideological violent fixation, and the feedback problems described at paragraphs 14 and 39 apply equally here. Those are also the mechanisms available to members for sharing information about concerning patterns of online behaviour with other agencies; the union is not aware of any dedicated mechanism.

TOPIC FOUR – KNIVES AND BLADED ARTICLES

64. Whether members have sufficient training, policies and guidance to respond to a pupil bringing a crossbow, knife or bladed article to school is difficult to gauge; the

position varies across thousands of schools, employers and roles. The worst case is a weapon being used or threatened, which is rare. More common, particularly in secondary schools, is a pupil bringing a weapon in a bag, or claiming to have a weapon, and other pupils telling staff. Headteachers and authorised staff have statutory powers to search pupils without consent where they have reasonable grounds to suspect a prohibited item, and to seize items found (DfE, 2022). The union advises extreme caution in exercising these powers and advises that the police be called if there is any suggestion the pupil may resist violently. Ofsted's review of knife crime and safeguarding found considerable variation in how schools implement searching and screening in practice (Ofsted, 2019).

65. What the union can evidence is that, whatever policies and training are in place, prevention is not working uniformly. The State of Education assault findings at paragraph 21 above show that while weapon assaults on staff are rare, the wider pattern of assault from which the most serious incidents emerge is common. The union is also concerned about under-recording. Acts of physical violence to employees at work resulting in specified injuries or incapacitation for over seven days are reportable to the Health and Safety Executive under RIDDOR, and employers must keep an accident book, but members repeatedly tell the union they do not report incidents: because they do not want to single out the pupil, because they fear being blamed, because they are discouraged from reporting for reputational reasons, or because they do not know the systems exist.

66. The union holds no administrative data on the prevalence of pupils bringing weapons into school, and I am not aware of any national collection. Its survey and casework evidence, exhibited at AB/03 and AB/04, is as follows. In the panel survey (AB/03 – **NEU000004**), 35 per cent of teachers said they had known of an incident of a pupil bringing a weapon into their setting in the last 12 months: 27 per cent of one incident and 8 per cent of more than one. Secondary teachers were far more likely to know of an incident (46 per cent) than primary teachers (22 per cent), a meaningful difference. Teachers in the most deprived fifth of schools were meaningfully more likely to know of repeated incidents (12 per cent) than teachers in less deprived schools (4 per cent in the second least deprived fifth). In the casework records, 164 cases opened between January 2021 and July 2026 mention the word 'knife', with further cases mentioning 'knives', 'weapons', 'blades' or 'stabbing'. These are counts of union casework, not of incidents, and will understate prevalence. The Inquiry may also wish to note that the Department for Education records the use or threat of use of an offensive weapon or prohibited item as a reason category in its suspension and

exclusion statistics, which would allow a national time series to be constructed (DfE, 2026c).

IMPROVEMENTS

67. First, a duty to share. The transfer of safeguarding and risk information on any change of school, including managed moves, moves into and out of alternative provision, and moves into elective home education, should be a legal duty on the sending school rather than guidance. It should be discharged through a standard national record, within the five-day timescale KCSIE already uses for child protection files, with the receiving school required to confirm receipt and the local authority notified.

68. Second, a statutory framework for managed moves: national recording through the school census, minimum information-sharing requirements, and local authority oversight of moves within and across boundaries. A move designed to give a pupil a fresh start should not result in information being lost by the system.

69. Third, a duty to report on action taken. A school or member of staff who refers a concern that a pupil may pose a risk to others, including to Prevent, should be told the outcome and, where appropriate, the reasons. Only 26 per cent of safeguarding leads say this happens now. This would improve the quality of future referrals, and build confidence in the referral system.

70. Fourth, add recognition of violence fixation into the safeguarding training that staff already receive under KCSIE.

71. Fifth, if a shared multi-agency risk assessment tool is developed, it should replace rather than add to existing paperwork.

72. Sixth, capacity. Timely access to child and adolescent mental health services, specialist placements and alternative provision is essential for the therapeutic interventions the Inquiry asks about at Topic 1. There have been substantial cuts to schools and children's services since 2010, these must be reversed to ensure children are kept safe in education.

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: 28 August 2026

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ANNEX 1: INDEX TO THE WITNESS STATEMENT OF ANDREW BAISLEY

Exhibit No.	Inquiry reference No.	Document description
AB/01	NEU000002	NEU State of Education survey 2026: methodology note
AB/02	NEU000003	NEU survey of designated safeguarding leads, August 2026: key findings
AB/03	NEU000004	NEU panel survey of teachers in English state schools, August 2026: key findings
AB/04	NEU000005	Analysis of NEU casework records, January 2021 to July 2026
AB/05	NEU000006	NEU State of Education 2026 briefing note: pupil behaviour (English state teachers)
AB/06	NEU000007	NEU State of Education 2026 briefing note: assaults (English state teachers)
AB/07	NEU000008	NEU State of Education 2026 briefing note: assaults (English state school support staff)
AB/08	NEU000009	NEU legal department note of two case studies: identification and management of pupils presenting a risk of serious violence
AB/09	NEU000010	Carmarthenshire County Council, MAPF Independent Review Report, Ysgol Dyffryn Aman (CYSUR 2 2024), ratified 19 August 2025
AB/10	NEU000011	Welsh Government, Behaviour summit: survey of education providers and support staff (Social Research 42/2025, 21 May 2025)
AB/11	NEU000012	Welsh Government, National Behaviour Summit: interim report of the roundtable on violence and safety in schools
AB/12	NEU000013	NEU, Reviewing your behaviour policy (NEU2988)
AB/13	NEU000014	NEU, Workplace violence and assaults model policy (NEU3186)

Exhibit No.	Inquiry reference No.	Document description
AB/14	NEU000015	NEU, Model pupil behaviour risk assessment pro forma
AB/15	NEU000016	NEU, Model for whole school development of a trauma-informed approach (NEU3551)
AB/16	NEU000017	NEU, Tackling abuse and assault: action for members (NEU4105)
AB/17	NEU000018	NEU, Tackling abuse and assault: support staff (NEU4106)
AB/18	NEU000019	NEU, Prevent: advice to members (as published July 2024)
AB/19	NEU000020	NEU, Prevent: advice to members (as published August 2026)
AB/20	NEU000021	NEU, Education, the law and you: lecture notes (revised July 2025)
AB/21	NEU000022	NEU case study: transfer of a pupil between two schools in the same local authority following a serious assault
AB/22	NEU000023	NEU, Three Minutes to Harm (February 2026)
AB/23	NEU000024	NEU State of Education 2025 briefing note: social media and smartphones (English state teachers)
AB/24	NEU000025	NEU State of Education 2026 briefing note: social media and smartphones (English state teachers)
AB/25	NEU000026	Record of NEU interview with the head of digital strategy at an English independent school, August 2026
AB/26	NEU000027	NEU response to the Home Office consultation on a new legal duty to support a multi-agency approach to preventing and tackling serious violence (2019)
AB/27	NEU000028	NEU State of Education 2026 briefing note: special educational needs and disabilities (English state teachers)