

Thursday, 19 March 2026

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(1.44 pm)

THE CHAIR: Ms Kaur.

MS KAUR: Thank you.

EMILY ALICE DOHERTY (sworn)

Questioned by MS KAUR

MS KAUR: Could you give your full name, please?

A. Yes, my full name is Emily Alice Doherty.

Q. Ms Doherty, we have a witness statement from you dated 4 February 2026. Can you confirm that you read your statement today and that it's true to the best of your recollection?

A. I can confirm that, yes.

Q. Ms Doherty, what we know is that you were appointed in your capacity as a senior social worker, then based at Rampton, to be part of a multidisciplinary assessment of VC; is that correct?

A. By "multidisciplinary", if you mean myself and a medical professional, like a consultant psychiatrist, then yes, that's correct.

Q. If I can take you to your report. The report is WITN0391002. The report is dated 22 August 2023. Ms Doherty, we know from that report that you met VC in custody on 16 August; is that correct?

A. That's correct, yes.

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a social work perspective, when we would assess somebody, I mean I don't work for Rampton anymore, but when I would assess somebody in that role, education wasn't necessarily a priority factor in referral assessments. It was more so trying to get the underpinning information around the risk, views of family, views of the individual, and whether it was most appropriate. But education would be something that we would consider later on in a social history assessment report.

Q. If education records, for example, were available at the stage that you were conducting the type of assessment you were asked to do in respect to VC, would educational records be helpful to you?

A. I always find any additional information about an individual helpful, so yes.

Q. I'm going to take you, then, to page 3 of your report. We can see paragraph 4, your summary and conclusions, and indeed you did recommend that -- well, that in terms of the risk criteria, you assessed VC "as presenting a grave and immediate risk of harm to others".

In terms of your meeting with VC, can you set out in your own words for the Inquiry how you found that meeting with VC on 16 August?

A. So when I visited him, he was taken to an interview

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Q. If we go to page 2 of that report, paragraph 2.4, you have helpfully set out there the information which you used as part of your assessment.

Now, just pausing there, you, in fact, did have access to VC's RIO case notes, didn't you?

A. Yes.

Q. Just to be clear, the access that you had had the records from 2020 through to 2023?

A. Yes.

Q. You didn't, however, have access to VC's GP records, for example?

A. No, I did not.

Q. Again, am I right in saying you didn't have access to VC's PNC record?

A. I didn't, no.

Q. Or indeed any papers from the criminal proceedings that were then pending?

A. No.

Q. Just pausing there, in terms of information that you, as a senior social worker, would have when undertaking these types of assessments, would it be usual, for example, for you to be provided with education records of the individual that you are going to assess?

A. It's dependent on the individual and their history, I suppose, and the relevance of that. I suppose, from

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room, an isolation room. There was a see-through screen, so he was sat opposite me, but there was a hole where we could communicate through.

He engaged fairly well, I would say. He was quite polite in his mannerisms, some of his responses I felt did suggest some form of thought disorder or mental illness, but I'm not a medical professional so my role is not to diagnose.

We'd spoken about why he was in prison. He said that he was there for murder. I note in my report that I felt he did not understand nor accept the severity of what "murder" meant, and in my view, the way he answered that question he was just quite passive about it. He didn't present as somebody who was wholly aware of what implications a murder charge could have. He didn't remember my colleague, Dr Milton, visiting.

There was nothing overly untoward about my interview with VC, aside from towards the end. So I probed him a little bit about some of the letters that had been found in his cell and, I've noted it in my witness statement as well, that his demeanour shifted rapidly.

So he went from coming across as open, both verbally and non-verbally, to having a bit more of a fixed stare, his facial expression changed, he became very defensive and paranoid about having -- me having read those

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1 letters and who could possibly have had access to them.
 2 **Q.** Up until that point, how would you describe, for
 3 example, VC's eye contact?
 4 **A.** It was three years ago, but on recollection I think his
 5 eye contact, I would say, was fleeting. So at some
 6 points he would make eye contact, but at other times he
 7 might have turned slightly the other way.
 8 **Q.** When you say the other way, was he looking beyond you,
 9 was he looking ...?
 10 **A.** He was looking to the side.
 11 **Q.** You say in your report that he was, for example,
 12 compliant with prison officers and you describe how he
 13 was compliant when he was patted down.
 14 **A.** *(Witness nodded).*
 15 **Q.** Did VC's behaviour, both towards prison guards and to
 16 you, take you by surprise --
 17 **A.** *(Witness shook head).*
 18 **Q.** -- given what you were aware of from the records?
 19 **A.** Not particularly. I don't -- you know, whenever
 20 an assessment is approached, we don't sort of go in with
 21 an assumption of how someone may behave on that specific
 22 day.
 23 **Q.** When you say he "did not appear to understand nor accept
 24 the severity" of why he was in prison, did he go into
 25 any of the details about the offences for which he was

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1 **Q.** So, in your report, when you say, "I had the impression
 2 he had no awareness of the seriousness of his
 3 offence[s]", and that's at page 4, paragraph 5.8, one
 4 interpretation, one impression that could be formed from
 5 what he was telling you and what he was presenting was
 6 he didn't care, he didn't have any concern in respect of
 7 what he had done. What's your thoughts on that?
 8 **A.** I guess that's acknowledged when it's noted that he did
 9 display little to no remorse.
 10 **Q.** And he -- your conversation lasted for about 20 to
 11 25 minutes.
 12 **A.** Yes.
 13 **Q.** In terms of length of conversation when you're
 14 undertaking these types of assessments, was that
 15 a fairly long conversation to have?
 16 **A.** It's difficult to say, because for some assessments you
 17 could have individuals that would not engage for longer
 18 than a minute with you. They would just outright
 19 refuse. Some are more open, and, you know, willing to
 20 have those conversations. I would say a 20 to
 21 30-minute conversation was my experience the average
 22 length of time those interviews would be when I did
 23 assessments.
 24 **Q.** On the face of it, you will have read in, for example,
 25 the medical records, that at times during conversations

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1 in prison for?
 2 **A.** I recall asking him about that, I think it's further
 3 down in my report, and he -- the reason why I said it
 4 was quite thought disordered is that he said something
 5 along the lines of "There is no explanation". I can't
 6 recall it exactly at this moment, but it is in the
 7 report.
 8 **Q.** Did he express any empathy in respect of his victims to
 9 you during your interview?
 10 **A.** No.
 11 **Q.** When you described VC as being passive when speaking
 12 about his offences, what is it that you meant by that?
 13 **A.** He just seemed to disregard it. He didn't sort of
 14 acknowledge it as being something that was quite
 15 a serious charge against him that could have subsequent
 16 consequences for the rest of his life.
 17 **Q.** So when you say "disregard" that, one interpretation
 18 would be a lack of empathy --
 19 **A.** *(Witness nodded).*
 20 **Q.** -- in respect of what he had done; would you agree with
 21 that?
 22 **A.** You could interpret it as a lack of empathy or a lack of
 23 remorse, or a lack of understanding.
 24 **Q.** Yes, and a lack of concern?
 25 **A.** Yes.

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1 with various individuals in the prison system, VC would
 2 go "No comment", would simply not respond. So his
 3 engagement with you, in comparison to his engagement
 4 with others, was fairly good.
 5 **A.** Yeah.
 6 **Q.** Would you agree with that?
 7 **A.** Yeah, I felt that he engaged really well.
 8 **Q.** So on the face of it, it seems that VC made the choice
 9 to engage with the assessment that you were undertaking.
 10 **A.** It would appear so, yes.
 11 **Q.** You discussed with VC, for example, take you to
 12 paragraph 5.6 of your report, this is page 4, where you
 13 discussed with him:
 14 "We spoke about his life prior to coming into
 15 custody. [He] ... reported that he had a few friends
 16 ..."
 17 Just pausing there, did he give you any names of
 18 these friends, for example?
 19 **A.** No, and that wouldn't be something I would ask at
 20 a referral assessment stage.
 21 **Q.** He -- does it come as a surprise to you, Ms Doherty,
 22 that the Inquiry has heard evidence, for example, from
 23 previous flatmates to the effect that he really didn't
 24 seem to have any friends?
 25 **A.** No, and that is noted later on in my report where I go

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1 into detail about the risk of social isolation.

2 **Q.** For example, in your report, still at paragraph 5.6, he
3 informed you that he lived in a house. Again, can you
4 recall any further details that VC gave to you about his
5 living circumstances prior to coming into prison?

6 **A.** I can't, unfortunately, no.

7 **Q.** What do you -- did he, for example, tell you that in
8 fact he had been evicted from his property just prior to
9 the offences he committed?

10 **A.** No. He didn't tell me that, and if he had of, I would
11 have mentioned that within the accommodation issues.

12 **Q.** He described to you studying at the University, and that
13 he enjoyed his time at the University, and graduated.
14 Just breaking that down, the image one gets is VC
15 describing quite a happy time at Nottingham University
16 to you.

17 **A.** He --

18 **Q.** The --

19 **A.** -- he didn't speak about it negatively.

20 **Q.** Did he, for example, discuss with you that in fact in
21 2020 he had voluntarily interrupted his studies because
22 of difficulties he had engaging with his studies?

23 **A.** No.

24 **Q.** Did he, for example --

25 **THE CHAIR:** Sorry, did you answer that question or not?

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1 his childhood was. He just said it was normal, and he
2 said that he attended school. I didn't perhaps, in
3 retrospect, I maybe could have asked what he meant by
4 "normal", but at that point I didn't feel it was
5 a priority in the assessment.

6 **Q.** So he didn't disclose to you information that you later
7 learnt that he had been bullied at school?

8 **A.** He didn't disclose that information, no.

9 **Q.** That initially, on moving to this country, he had
10 difficulties assimilating into the schooling system in
11 this country?

12 **A.** No, he didn't disclose anything like that to me.

13 **Q.** I just briefly want to deal with -- sorry, just before
14 I move on to the meeting that you had with -- rather,
15 telephone discussion you had with VC's mother, he'd
16 discussed with you concerns that he was being monitored.
17 How did that conversation come up?

18 **A.** I know that custody staff had explained to me that he'd
19 presented as quite paranoid, and that something or
20 someone had been involved in programming him. It might
21 be that it came up when I asked him about the letter,
22 but I can't recall -- (*overspeaking*) --

23 **Q.** Do you think that brought that subject up, or was
24 that --

25 **A.** I'll have brought it up with him, yeah.

11

1 **A.** Sorry, I said "no".

2 **THE CHAIR:** Sorry. I didn't hear that. Thank you.

3 **MS KAUR:** Did he, at any time during his assessment with
4 you, discuss that in fact in January 2022, his marks
5 were such that he was given a number of options by the
6 University which included him moving from a master's
7 degree to a bachelor in engineering?

8 **A.** He didn't, no.

9 **Q.** In terms of his life prior to the offences, did he, for
10 example, discuss with you difficulties that he had had
11 with previous flatmates?

12 **A.** No, he hadn't.

13 **Q.** Specifically I talk about violence and intimidation
14 which he had meted out to previous flatmates, including
15 an individual called Chris and Sebastian; was that
16 discussed with you by him?

17 **A.** No, no, he didn't share any of that detail with me.

18 **Q.** He discussed with you that he'd worked in warehousing
19 jobs, and again, was there any discussion from his part
20 about violence that he had meted out to fellow employees
21 whilst employed in various warehouses?

22 **A.** No.

23 **Q.** In terms of his schooling, can you recall the
24 information he gave to you about schools?

25 **A.** No, he just said that his childhood was -- I asked how

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1 **Q.** When you say in your report he was "unhappy", how did he
2 express his unhappiness to you?

3 **A.** His facial expression changed. He didn't really have
4 much of a facial expression anyway. He wasn't overly
5 emotive when I was speaking with him, but he just
6 appeared a lot more guarded, quite defensive. His eye
7 contact was immediately quite -- well, it was fixed on
8 me. It just appeared that he wasn't happy about
9 something that I had said at that moment.

10 **Q.** You touched upon his eye contact was fixed on you?

11 **A.** Mm-hm.

12 **Q.** Can you just elaborate on that?

13 **A.** He would just -- by "fixed", I mean, so when we
14 discussed his eye contact just a moment ago, so it
15 was -- I wouldn't call it fixed eye contact because
16 I wouldn't say that he was looking at me fixatingly and
17 he was sort of passively looking to the side of me.
18 Whereas when I brought up about the letters and the
19 content of them and tried to probe and question him
20 around these, his eye contact was just constantly on me
21 with little blinking and there were no other change sort
22 of in facial expression, it was very much just directed
23 at myself.

24 **Q.** Staring at you?

25 **A.** Yes.

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1 Q. How did you find that?
 2 A. I think it's always a difficult situation to be in, and
 3 it can make people feel intimidated. It can make people
 4 not want to probe further. I still did ask him a little
 5 bit more, but it was something that I was quite used to
 6 in my practice, as well, working in a high-secure unit.
 7 So it wasn't something that was, you know, sort of a new
 8 thing that I'd experienced or come across in my work
 9 with individuals.
 10 Q. We know that you spoke to Celeste Calocane on 22 August,
 11 and in an email -- and I'm not going to take you to
 12 it -- you comment to Dr Milton that you'd spoken to VC's
 13 mother "and it was quite a sad phone call, really, but
 14 Mum was keen to be involved". Can you just expand on
 15 that?
 16 A. Which part do you want me to expand on?
 17 Q. That it was quite a sad phone call.
 18 A. So I guess in the role, particularly as a social worker
 19 at Rampton Hospital of a high-secure unit, we work with
 20 patients and also their families and, you know, there's
 21 kind of this idea that this might not come -- I don't
 22 want to say it in a way that's going to offend anybody
 23 in the room, but there is something that we would
 24 consider, you know, family members of perpetrators of
 25 violence of crimes, in some respects they are secondary

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1 gain further higher education [college]."
 2 So just to be clear, what did you mean by that?
 3 A. So I think I noted it at the starting paragraph of my
 4 conversation with Celeste Calocane, that the
 5 information -- some of the information that was provided
 6 during that conversation contradicted with what was on
 7 file.
 8 So the information that was provided to me during
 9 that call with Celeste, I detailed in that section, and
 10 any other information that I gathered when reviewing
 11 records and other reports would be put in the other
 12 appropriate sections.
 13 I do recall there being mixed reporting of VC's
 14 educational history in the records I had sight of.
 15 Q. In part, am I right in saying that that mixed reporting
 16 was because VC, at various stages, had said different
 17 things about his educational achievement to different
 18 professionals?
 19 A. It could be. It's difficult to say. There's also, as I
 20 understand it in hospitals, not every single
 21 conversation with a patient is always recorded in full
 22 detail. So there's a possibility that that was the case
 23 as well. I couldn't say for certain which one it was.
 24 Q. At paragraph 10.1, for example, you record there:
 25 "... little information regarding VC's finances."

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1 victims. So, you know, the impact that an offence will
 2 have on them. So there was that. That was taken into
 3 account.

4 I think hearing Mum's narrative about what happened,
 5 the follow-up, and how she'd gone from being involved to
 6 suddenly no longer involved. Mum expressed quite a lot
 7 of disappointment. It was a sad conversation. It was
 8 a sad conversation and a difficult conversation to have.

9 Yeah, I don't --

10 Q. How long was that conversation?

11 A. I'd say between 30 and 35 minutes.

12 Q. Was there -- you say, for example, at paragraph 6.5
 13 there was a -- Ms Calocane went into VC's performance at
 14 school, that he'd done well in his exams, that he felt
 15 behind when the family moved to Wales. He had completed
 16 his GCSEs, and his A levels. Are you sure that she said
 17 he'd completed his A levels?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Because, in fact, you touch upon this later in your
 20 report, if I take you to page 7 of your report,
 21 paragraph 8.1, you note there that:

22 "There are mixed reports of Mr Calocane's
 23 educational history, with some notes stating that he
 24 completed his A-level qualifications after his GCSEs in
 25 Wales before moving to Birmingham to attend college to

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1 Your understanding was he'd been in paid employment
 2 for several years. There was no mention by him to you
 3 of debts that he had incurred and financial difficulties
 4 that he was in; am I right?

5 A. Yeah, there was no mention of that.

6 Q. For example, if we go a bit further, this is page 10,
 7 paragraph 13 onwards, the forensic history; where were
 8 you getting the forensic history from?

9 A. So this would have come from mostly the RiO records.

10 Q. So you were doing your best to try and cobble together
 11 the forensic history from the medical records?

12 A. Yeah, basically all the information that I had, I did
 13 what I could to build a chronology. But I am mindful
 14 that it is limited given that I didn't have access to
 15 all documentation.

16 Q. For example, the 3 September incident at paragraph 13.4,
 17 in fact, you, it appears, were not aware that on 3
 18 September 2021, there was an incident involving the
 19 execution of a mental health warrant, that that's what
 20 instigated the incident on 3 September as opposed to VC
 21 had gone to a neighbour's flat?

22 A. No, I weren't aware of that, no.

23 MS KAUR: Thank you. I don't have any further questions,
 24 but if you could remain there.

25 THE CHAIR: Yes, Mr Moloney. Thank you.

16

1 **Questioned by MR MOLONEY**
 2 **MR MOLONEY:** Only a very few, Ms Doherty, and it's just to
 3 do with your report and just to clarify that at
 4 paragraph 8.1, page 7 of your report to start with.
 5 There it is.
 6 One version that you were getting was that he'd
 7 completed his A-level qualifications after his GCSEs in
 8 Wales. The other side of it was that he'd gone straight
 9 to work after his GCSEs.
 10 **A.** Yes.
 11 **Q.** Now, you've been asked, as well, about the conversation
 12 that you had with VC's mother, and can I just ask you
 13 about bullying of VC, and take you to paragraph 6.4 of
 14 your report at page 5. Thank you very much. This is
 15 from the conversation you had with VC's mother:
 16 "The family moved from Africa when [VC] was
 17 three-and-a-half-years old. This differs to the
 18 information on file, which says the family moved when
 19 [VC] was aged seven. [His mother] reported that her son
 20 was bullied in school in both Portugal and the United
 21 Kingdom, and that this was due to the schools and areas
 22 they resided having a predominantly white community.
 23 [And] the bullying carried on for a few years whilst
 24 [VC] was at school".
 25 Then 16.2 of the report, please, which I believe may

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1 technology was developed to cause him harm by producing
 2 the voices.
 3 **A.** I believe there was notes of that description in there.
 4 **Q.** You've then -- moving on then to the time when he's in
 5 prison in 2023, you've mentioned the letters or notes
 6 that he wrote during that period. Could we have up on
 7 screen, please, NGPF0003167, and page 173 of that,
 8 please. Can you see that?
 9 **A.** I can, yes.
 10 **Q.** Is this one of the notes that you're referring to?
 11 **A.** Yes, it's one of them, yes.
 12 **Q.** Okay. Some of it was read out in court earlier. I'd
 13 just like to go to one page, please. Can you go forward
 14 to 177, please. About halfway down the page there's
 15 a line saying, "When I arrived at my apartment". Can
 16 you see that?
 17 **A.** Okay, yeah, yeah.
 18 **Q.** You say:
 19 "When I arrived at my apartment I was already
 20 hearing people desperately screaming for help. This
 21 time I tried to ponder for a second that it might not be
 22 happening but it became even more vivid and I went out
 23 looking for them. I went to the next block of flats
 24 where the screams were coming from. I found the
 25 apartment, knocked down the door, and searched for

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1 be at page 11, further on, please, sorry. You return to
 2 the same subject at 16.2. There it is. And this is
 3 part of your conclusions section, that:
 4 "[VC's] ... mother has reported that throughout his
 5 childhood and school years, he was the victim of
 6 bullying from others. [And she] ... fed back that the
 7 family had resided in a predominantly white area and as
 8 such it was possible that [VC] ... experienced racial
 9 abuse."
 10 That's all I'd like to clarify with you.
 11 **A.** Yes.
 12 **MR MOLONEY:** Thank you, Ms Doherty.
 13 **THE CHAIR:** Yes. Any further questions? Mr Straw?
 14 **Questioned by MR STRAW**
 15 **MR STRAW:** Thank you, Chair. Ms Doherty, I represent
 16 Celeste and Elias Calocane.
 17 You have explained that you saw a number of medical
 18 notes from, I think, 2020 until the index offences; is
 19 that right?
 20 **A.** It is, yes.
 21 **Q.** Did those notes include descriptions going back to 2020
 22 of the delusions and hallucinations that VC reported to
 23 have suffered?
 24 **A.** They featured within the notes. Yes.
 25 **Q.** For example, him saying he was hearing voices and that

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1 someone."
 2 He goes on:
 3 "It turned out that the woman got scared, jumped out
 4 of the window and hurt her spine."
 5 Then at the bottom of the page:
 6 "... I was admitted/[or]put into a psychiatric
 7 hospital for the first time. This was my introduction
 8 to the technology some call Neural Remote monitoring
 9 ..." et cetera.
 10 Were these notes broadly consistent with the
 11 pre-offence medical notes that you'd seen? So in
 12 particular the reports of hallucinations that had been
 13 set out in those 2020-2021 medical notes. Were those
 14 broadly consistent with these notes VC had made in
 15 custody?
 16 **A.** My view is that I don't think VC was as open with
 17 practitioners, and so as much detail would not have been
 18 noted down.
 19 **Q.** When you say not as open with the practitioners, which
 20 practitioners is that?
 21 **A.** Any that interacted with him.
 22 **Q.** Okay, so he's putting more detail here than he gave to
 23 the practitioners.
 24 **A.** I would say so, yeah.
 25 **Q.** Did you understand why he seemed concerned when he found

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1 out that you had seen these notes, and he was concerned
2 about them being seen by other professionals. Did you
3 know why that would happen?

4 **A.** He just -- he didn't sort of give a reason, he just said
5 he wasn't happy that I'd had access to them, and he
6 asked that if anybody else wanted access to them, to ask
7 him beforehand.

8 **Q.** Okay. Moving on to the telephone call you had with
9 Celeste Calocane on 22 August 2023, you record in your
10 report that Celeste hadn't seen VC face to face while
11 he'd been -- since he'd been arrested for the offence;
12 is that right?

13 **A.** To my knowledge when I visited, there'd been no reports
14 of family visiting him in custody.

15 **Q.** So did it appear that what she was telling you came
16 mainly from what she knew from before the offences, if
17 you see what I mean?

18 **A.** Yes, yes, I would say so.

19 **Q.** Could you have a look, please, at that in your report.
20 It is WITN-- if this could be brought up on screen
21 please -- WITN0391002, and page 5 within that, please.
22 Paragraph 6.6 there, towards the bottom you explain
23 that:

24 "Mrs Calocane felt that her son was capable of
25 disguising his symptoms, such as hearing voices, from

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1 **A.** I would say so, yes, and I think there would probably be
2 an increased risk of that, given many staff within the
3 Prison Service, particularly the officers, may not have
4 as much knowledge and understanding around certain
5 mental illnesses as training practitioners.

6 **Q.** I see. So because they don't have knowledge and
7 understanding of mental illness, they may be less able
8 to spot signs of mental illness than --

9 **A.** Well, I think they would be less able to spot signs of,
10 say, disguised compliance.

11 **Q.** Of what, sorry?

12 **A.** Of disguised compliance.

13 **Q.** Disguised compliance?

14 **A.** Yeah.

15 **Q.** Thank you. Could you go on, in your report -- on screen
16 could we go back to page 4, please, of the same
17 document. At 5.5 there is on screen, you say this:

18 "[VC] described holding some paranoia towards staff
19 within the prison, though he feels this is warranted as
20 what he is 'paranoid about is real'. [VC] would not
21 describe this further. I was later informed by custody
22 staff that [VC] has been paranoid that staff have been
23 involved in programming him ..."

24 Do you see that?

25 **A.** Mm-hm, yes.

23

1 professionals working with him."

2 Is that consistent with what you'd heard from him in
3 custody.

4 **A.** Yes, so I would say that was consistent with my
5 conversation with him during that interview and also the
6 notes.

7 **Q.** Then down at paragraph 6.9, please, at the bottom,
8 I read this out earlier but I want to ask you about it,
9 three lines down:

10 "I asked if she [Celeste] was aware of what the
11 voices said to [VC] ... Mrs Calocane reported that they
12 said different things, they would laugh at him, and tell
13 him that members of the family were in danger.
14 Mrs Calocane informed me that her son was adamant that
15 the government has put the voices in his head as part of
16 some form of technology."

17 Again, is what she was telling you there, is that
18 consistent with what you had read in the medical notes?

19 **A.** It is, yes.

20 **Q.** You note in your report that VC was guarded in custody,
21 that he was capable of masking his symptoms well. Do
22 you recall that?

23 **A.** Yes.

24 **Q.** And does that include being capable of masking his
25 symptoms to prison staff?

22

1 **Q.** Did that appear to you to be a reason why he was masking
2 his symptoms from staff?

3 **A.** It could have been a reason. I can't say for definite.

4 **Q.** Okay. Then final question, please. Could you go
5 forward on screen to page 19 of that report, 20.2 here:

6 "[VC] is currently unmedicated and is receiving no
7 form of meaningful treatment. At this stage I do not
8 think interventions within the prison service would be
9 beneficial to [VC]. I am of the view that admission to
10 a mental health hospital would be the route for [VC] to
11 support him with his mental health needs, support with
12 the provision of medication, and possibly stabilise his
13 current mental state."

14 Why, why did you come to that conclusion?

15 **A.** So in my experience when visiting the prison services,
16 the mental health interventions and support is limited
17 for those in custody. And I think more so in VC's case,
18 one of the key risk factors was around him not being
19 compliant with medication, around disguised compliance,
20 and he could be treated under the Mental Health Act if
21 he was admitted to a hospital. So that was the main
22 reason why I suggested admission to a mental health
23 hospital for assessment and treatment as opposed to
24 remaining in custody at that time.

25 **MR STRAW:** Okay. Thank you very much.

24

1 Thank you, Chair.
 2 **THE CHAIR:** Yes.
 3 Mr Beer?
 4 **MR BEER:** Still no questions. Thank you.
 5 **THE CHAIR:** All right. Thank you. All right, well we'll
 6 take a short break there, just a ten-minute break.
 7 Thank you very much.
 8 Feel free to go.
 9 **(2.26 pm)**
 10 **(A short break)**
 11 **(2.36 pm)**
 12 **MR BLAKE:** Thank you, Chair. Can I please call PS Ashleigh
 13 Small.
 14 **PS ASHLEIGH SMALL (affirmed)**
 15 **THE CHAIR:** Yes.
 16 **Questioned by MR BLAKE**
 17 **MR BLAKE:** Thank you, PS Small. You should have in front of
 18 you a witness statement dated 8 November 2025; is that
 19 right?
 20 **A.** Correct.
 21 **Q.** That has a URN of WITN0028001. Can you confirm that
 22 that statement is true to the best of your knowledge and
 23 belief?
 24 **A.** I can with two small points, which would be paragraph 7,
 25 first line. It states "In May 2022". That should read
 25

1 residents.
 2 **A.** *(Witness nodded).*
 3 **Q.** The same day he returned and he caused a female victim
 4 to jump out of a window, sustaining significant
 5 injuries.
 6 **A.** *(Witness nodded).*
 7 **Q.** July 2020, he broke into another flat, he had to be
 8 restrained by three residents.
 9 **A.** *(Witness nodded).*
 10 **Q.** In May 2021, he had turned up at M15 asking to be
 11 arrested. He was then referred to something called the
 12 Fixated Threat Assessment Centre.
 13 July 2021, he forced Sebastian against a wall. Also
 14 in July 2021, he tried to get into Sebastian's room.
 15 September 2021, VC had assaulted a very -- seriously
 16 assaulted a fellow officer of yours, PC Pritchard.
 17 **A.** *(Witness nodded).*
 18 **Q.** A warning marker was placed on his PNC for extreme
 19 violence.
 20 **A.** *(Witness nodded).*
 21 **Q.** January 2022, he had assaulted another flatmate, placed
 22 him in a headlock, and refused to let him leave.
 23 April 2022, VC followed Sebastian home. Then we're
 24 now in July 2022, and there's a further report from
 25 Sebastian. Almost all of those incidents were not known
 27

1 March 2022. And then also in paragraph 10, line three,
 2 into four, where it states "PS Barnes came under my
 3 supervision"; she wasn't under my supervision, but the
 4 investigation itself was under my supervision.
 5 **Q.** Thank you. And apart from those two small changes, are
 6 you content with your witness statement as filed?
 7 **A.** I am, yes.
 8 **Q.** You're here today to address an incident involving
 9 somebody that we know as Sebastian on the 28 July 2022.
 10 **A.** Yeah.
 11 **Q.** Due to various timetabling issues you're only just being
 12 heard, but this is evidence we've already heard about
 13 couple a weeks ago now.
 14 Your background is set out in your witness
 15 statement. Have you been listening to some of the
 16 evidence of the Inquiry?
 17 **A.** I've listened to some of it previously, yeah.
 18 **Q.** Does that include the evidence of PC Barnes?
 19 **A.** It does, yes.
 20 **Q.** It was PC Barnes who you were supervising in respect of
 21 this incident or, as you've just said, perhaps
 22 supervising the case rather than the person?
 23 **A.** Yeah, that's correct.
 24 **Q.** We know that in May 2020, police were called to Brook
 25 Court and VC smashed a door and was restrained by
 26

1 to PC Barnes.
 2 **A.** *(Witness nodded).*
 3 **Q.** In light of that, do you agree that there was a failure
 4 to properly investigate this matter?
 5 **A.** This matter specifically, no. What would have been
 6 helpful was to look at things holistically.
 7 **Q.** But when you are investigating a single offence,
 8 an offence that's been reported by somebody and they're
 9 saying they're being stalked by somebody, is it not
 10 a very simple task just to look at the PNC, just to find
 11 out the part of that investigation to establish what
 12 other offences they've either committed or been accused
 13 of?
 14 **A.** It is, based on the information that was provided at the
 15 time with the occurrence that I've based my
 16 decision-making on.
 17 **Q.** So even in light of everything I've just told you,
 18 reflecting on that, the simple check of a PNC would not
 19 carry out if it occurred today?
 20 **A.** Sorry, can you repeat the question?
 21 **Q.** Reflecting on everything I have just told you, all those
 22 other seriously violent incidents we've just heard
 23 about, if you were in the same position today and
 24 Sebastian came and reported the incident, you don't
 25 think that a PNC check should be carried out?
 28

1 A. It should -- it should be carried out.
 2 Q. In light of that failure to check the PNC, do you think
 3 that there was a failure to properly investigate this
 4 matter?
 5 A. I don't think there was a failure to properly
 6 investigate, but that was purely based on the
 7 information that we'd had around the information from
 8 the incident log and the occurrence that the incident
 9 log is pulled through from.
 10 Q. But why doesn't a PNC check form part of the
 11 investigation? Surely it's fundamental to the
 12 investigation? Who is this person that's being
 13 complained about?
 14 A. Yeah, yeah, it should.
 15 Q. So in light of that, do you think that there was
 16 a failure to properly investigate because there was
 17 a failure to even check the basic PNC details?
 18 A. The PNC check should have been completed.
 19 Q. In light of that failure to check the PNC, was there
 20 a failure to properly investigate?
 21 A. *(Pause)* No, again, it's based on the information that
 22 we were working with at that time. My --
 23 Q. It's not based on the investigation you were with at
 24 that particular time; it's based on all the other things
 25 you should have known about, isn't it? That's an
 29

1 opinion, this incident would suggest this is
 2 coincidental. And the offender and the IP used the same
 3 gym and walk home the same way.
 4 "I've spoken to Sebastian and he is happy for police
 5 to speak to the offender and about the complaint,
 6 Sebastian states he is happy with this course of action
 7 at this time."
 8 Were you the supervisor that PC Barnes spoke to at
 9 that point in time?
 10 A. I was, yes.
 11 Q. Was it your suggestion that the matter could be
 12 coincidental?
 13 A. No, I can't remember, and I can't recall the exact
 14 semantics of the conversation that we had, but that
 15 would have come about in terms of speaking around what
 16 had happened in terms of being at the same gym and
 17 walking home the same way. So it would have formed part
 18 and parcel of that --
 19 Q. I think PC Barnes's evidence was that, having spoken to
 20 you, she left with the impression essentially that it
 21 was coincidental?
 22 A. That would have been a conversation that we'd have had
 23 together.
 24 Q. What research did you do in respect of providing advice
 25 on that occasion?

31

1 investigation. You look into what previous matters
 2 somebody has been involved in --
 3 A. Yeah.
 4 Q. -- to establish whether they're a threat to this
 5 particular person; isn't that investigating?
 6 A. Yeah, it is, yeah.
 7 Q. So in light of that, was there a failure to properly
 8 investigate this matter?
 9 A. It could have been investigated a lot better, and there
 10 could have been a lot more supervisory review of that
 11 investigation.
 12 Q. You say that it could have; do you think it should have,
 13 in light of all we know now?
 14 A. Yeah, it should have.
 15 Q. Were you aware that PC Barnes's password had ran out in
 16 respect of the PNC system?
 17 A. I wasn't aware of that, no.
 18 Q. Can we please go to NGPF0000003, please, and this the
 19 occurrence log. Is this the only document you looked at
 20 as part of your supervision?
 21 A. It is, yeah.
 22 Q. Can we please start on page 7. It's the bottom of
 23 page 6 into page 7. There's an entry there from
 24 PC Barnes and she says as follows:
 25 "After speaking to a supervisor and getting a second
 30

1 A. I hadn't -- I purely based my decision making off of
 2 this occurrence log.
 3 Q. So at that point in time you had looked at the
 4 occurrence log?
 5 A. I'd looked at the occurrence log at this point, to my
 6 recollection.
 7 Q. One thing you hadn't looked at was the incident log; is
 8 that right?
 9 A. Yeah, that's correct.
 10 Q. If we look at the incident log it's NGPF0000005. If we
 11 turn to page 2, please. I'm going to read to you the
 12 two entries at the bottom of this page. The entry says:
 13 "The male's home is closer to the gym than caller.
 14 He would have to go out of his way to be near caller's
 15 flat."
 16 That is suggestive, is it not, of something not
 17 being a coincidence?
 18 A. It is.
 19 Q. Then the entry below:
 20 "Is the victim very frightened?"
 21 Now, we can't see it on this entry, but we've seen
 22 the original, and that is ticked "Yes", he is
 23 frightened.
 24 "Has the suspect engaged in harassment or stalking
 25 on previous occasion(s)?"
 32

32

1 Again the answer is "Yes".
 2 The entry there is:
 3 "Caller believes he has been followed previously, as
 4 well."
 5 If we go over the page, please, we see about halfway
 6 down:
 7 "Is the suspect known to be abusing drugs and/or
 8 alcohol?"
 9 Then there's another question: "If yes, give details
 10 below."
 11 It says, "Unsure but don't believe so."
 12 Then it's the entry below that, please. If we could
 13 scroll up slightly.
 14 "Is the suspect known to have been violent in the
 15 past?"
 16 The answer is: "He pushed caller up against the wall
 17 in the past."
 18 If you had properly scrutinised that log, do you
 19 think you would have brushed it off quickly as
 20 a coincidence, or would you have suggested further
 21 examination?
 22 **A.** I don't feel I've brushed it off, but having had --
 23 I reviewed that incident, I quite possibly would have
 24 come to a different conclusion.
 25 **Q.** Because the reference to, for example, going out of his

33

1 "Has an evidential prosecution been considered?
 2 Please provide a -- [I think that should be
 3 a 'rationale'] ... as to why we are not doing so."
 4 And it says:
 5 "No this is not in the public's interest, the IP is
 6 not vulnerable whilst not supporting prosecution."
 7 And then:
 8 "Rationale for closing the occurrence".
 9 "Not in the public's interest when the IP is not
 10 supporting prosecution."
 11 That isn't accurate, is it?
 12 **A.** I've based it -- as I've previously said, I've based it
 13 off the information that's within this occurrence that's
 14 come from PC Barnes herself. Now I don't wish to make
 15 excuses, I don't wish to labour the point but just to
 16 provide a slight bit of a context. I was a brand new
 17 sergeant at this point with three months in, overseeing
 18 a brand new team with no handover. And again, you've
 19 heard prior to me today around the pressures of demand,
 20 in terms of dealing with the neighbourhood policing
 21 demand alongside the MIT demand as well.
 22 In terms of that rationale, I should have provided
 23 more to show clear workings of why I've closed this
 24 down.
 25 **Q.** It's not actually accurate, though, the reference to

35

1 way is very suggestive that it's not in fact
 2 a coincidence?
 3 **A.** Sorry, repeat the --
 4 **Q.** It states clearly on the previous page that "the male's
 5 home is closer to the gym", ie VC lives nearer to the
 6 gym so he would have had to have gone out of his way.
 7 **A.** Yeah.
 8 **Q.** If we go back, then, to the occurrence log and that's
 9 NGPF0000003. We're just going to scroll down, and we
 10 can have a look at the entries from PC Barnes, starting
 11 at page 6. If you could tell me, as we're scrolling
 12 down from page 6 onwards, where we first see your name.
 13 If we go over the page to 7 there are more entries from
 14 PC Barnes. Page 8, more from PC Barnes. Still
 15 PC Barnes.
 16 If we go over to the bottom of page 9, is that the
 17 first entry from yourself at the bottom of page 9? We
 18 see "Ash Small" at the bottom there?
 19 **A.** That's correct, yeah.
 20 **Q.** If we scroll over the page, please, your first entry, at
 21 least on the log, is where the matter has been closed
 22 down, "Outcome 16 - Victim Declines/Withdraws Support."
 23 **A.** That's correct.
 24 **Q.** If we look at on the right-hand side, halfway down the
 25 page, there's the question:

34

1 "not supporting [a] prosecution". If we could turn to
 2 page 7, and the words that have been entered by
 3 PC Barnes. She says:
 4 "I have spoken to Sebastian and he is happy for
 5 police to speak to the offender and about the complaint,
 6 Sebastian states he is happy with this course of action
 7 at this time."
 8 Did you speak to the offender, VC?
 9 **A.** I did not, no.
 10 **Q.** Did PC Barnes speak to the offender?
 11 **A.** She did not, no.
 12 **Q.** So in fact, the one request that Sebastian did make in
 13 fact didn't occur.
 14 **A.** That's correct.
 15 **Q.** Did anybody tell Sebastian that VC hadn't been
 16 contacted?
 17 **A.** I now know, as part of the Inquiry, that that hadn't
 18 been conducted by PC Barnes. However, at the time, with
 19 the occurrence in terms of speaking to the victim,
 20 Sebastian, at that time, had been documented. Again,
 21 that's the information that I've worked on with that.
 22 **Q.** Yes. We've all seen the guidance for a supervisor, the
 23 need for one-to-ones.
 24 **A.** (Witness nodded).
 25 **Q.** The need to monitor and view the investigation plan.

36

1 A. *(Witness nodded)*.

2 Q. Looking at this now, do you think that there was
3 a failure to properly supervise PC Barnes?

4 A. I feel -- and again, sort of off the back of the
5 Inquiry, and understanding PC Barnes's circumstances as
6 to why she was on that MIT team and with the lack of
7 supervision or long-term supervision at that point,
8 I should have provided more supervision in terms of this
9 specific investigation. Yeah.

10 Q. There was also another issue, wasn't there. You
11 actually put PC Barnes at risk, didn't you?

12 A. How?

13 Q. She was pregnant, and you allowed her to go to VC's flat
14 to warn him about his behaviour.

15 A. So at that point, I wasn't aware that PC Barnes was
16 pregnant. I also wasn't aware that she was restricted.
17 That's not something or information that was passed to
18 me by anybody else. Again, like I say at the start,
19 because I wasn't her supervisor, I wasn't privy to that
20 information. That information wasn't passed to me. If
21 I had have known that, then that risk assessment would
22 have been completely different and I would never, never
23 have asked her to go to speak to VC.

24 Q. Even if she hadn't been pregnant, we've seen what
25 happened to PC Pritchard, we've seen what happened to

37

1 time. Again, I don't wish to make excuses, and it's
2 around prioritisation, it's the pressures that come with
3 certainly being a first line supervisor. Again, at that
4 point I'd had no training, I was three months into that
5 role, now overseeing somewhere roughly around eight
6 individuals that I'd not had the ability to do that, or
7 the training, like I say, to have that, and the handover
8 on top of it, so trying to navigate.

9 Q. How is it in those circumstances that you come to write
10 a witness statement verified by a statement of truth
11 that says that you don't have concerns, when it seems as
12 though you actually had concerns even at the time about
13 your workload, about your ability to supervise?

14 A. In terms of me not documenting that within this
15 statement itself, the concerns around the workloads,
16 et cetera?

17 Q. Yes.

18 A. I've just -- I haven't written it in to this statement.

19 Q. Is that a force-wide issue, do you think?

20 A. -- (overspeaking) --

21 Q. A lack of reflection, a lack of ability -- a candour,
22 when it comes to accepting that you were too busy, had
23 too much work on, weren't able to properly supervise a
24 fellow officer?

25 A. I think organisation, is a wider issue. PCs, first line

39

1 the flatmate, Christopher, who was put in the headlock.
2 How could you have let any female officer, frankly, go
3 to that address alone?

4 A. I wouldn't, especially not alone. Male or female.
5 I wouldn't have let them go alone.

6 Q. So very finally, if we could go back to your witness
7 statement, please, and we bring on to screen, please,
8 page 7, paragraph 25. You said at paragraph 25:
9 "I have been asked to set out any concerns that
10 I have in respect of the police's actions in relation to
11 this matter. My response is that, while I believe the
12 matter was dealt with correctly, I should have
13 documented the decision-making more frequently,
14 concisely and with clarity."

15 The problem isn't a lack of documenting, is it? The
16 problem is more fundamental than that.

17 A. In terms of?

18 Q. The failure of the investigation, the failure of the
19 supervision. Why is it that it has taken a public
20 inquiry and also hearings within that public inquiry for
21 you to now reflect and to give the evidence that you've
22 given today that is it was a poor investigation and poor
23 supervision?

24 A. Because I was working -- I've solely worked on the
25 information that's within that occurrence log at the

38

1 managers, second line managers, are under immense
2 pressure to finalise -- not finalise investigations but
3 to conduct investigations expeditiously, alongside the
4 daily demand that's coming in, whether that be around
5 grade 1s, grade 2s, grade 3s, et cetera. That pressure
6 is there to reduce that demand down alongside trying to
7 work with your investigations at the same time.

8 Q. How about a lack of candour in accepting that within
9 a witness statement verified by a statement of truth?

10 A. It's -- it's something that I haven't put into my
11 statement.

12 Q. Do you regret that now?

13 A. Upon reflection, I wish I had outlined. It was around
14 sort of the -- the pressures, sorry, of demands and
15 everything else that came along with that, it would have
16 served a purpose by putting that into that statement.

17 Q. It also would have assisted to have accepted that the
18 investigation was subpar and so was the supervision?

19 A. Correct.

20 MR BLAKE: Thank you. I don't have any further questions.
21 I don't think there are any questions from -- ah,
22 Mr Beggs does have some questions.

23 THE CHAIR: All right. Thank you.

24 **Questioned by MR BEGGS**

25 Q. Could we have up, please, NGPF0000003, then page 7,

40

1 please.

2 Officer, can you see the top entry that Mr Blake

3 took you to not too long ago: "I have spoken to

4 Sebastian".

5 So that's Sarah Barnes.

6 "He is happy for the police to speak to the offender

7 ... about the complaint ... happy with this course of

8 action ..."

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Then if you'd drop down to OEL numbers 9 and 10, do we

11 see there that Sarah Barnes did indeed, despite being

12 pregnant, attempt to contact VC?

13 A. She has done, yes.

14 Q. On two occasions?

15 A. Yeah, on two occasions.

16 Q. 4 August and 11 August, and she's tried to see whether

17 he's still there. Can you see that from reading her

18 entries?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. "No reply to knocking", also "no post in the letterbox

21 addressed to the offender"?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. So on the face of it she has tried to execute the plan

24 that she's put in the general update?

25 A. She has done, yeah.

41

1 out through my own continuing professional development

2 is something that I now do, that is --

3 Q. And in light of the helpful summary Mr Blake gave you of

4 all of the previous incidents, yes --

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. -- do you now think that VC could have been dealt with

7 by way of a Public Protection Notice at this juncture?

8 A. Had a Public Protection Notice --

9 Q. No, pause. The question is, in the light of what you

10 now know about the history and your further development,

11 putting your mind back to when you authorised closure,

12 could you instead have issued a Public Protection

13 Notice? Just yes or no.

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Should you have issued a public protection?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And then, for clarity, to whom does the Public

18 Protection Notice get sent?

19 A. That goes to our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, so our

20 MASH team, who are then reviewing that.

21 Q. Yes. So in the PPN, would you include at least

22 a summary of the prior history?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Would it then be the task of MASH, the Multi-Agency

25 Safeguarding Agency Hub, to determine whether to share

43

1 Q. But in the event, didn't, as Mr Blake said, do the very

2 thing that Sebastian requested?

3 A. That's correct.

4 Q. You, I don't think, picked that up when you authorised

5 closure?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Can you tell the Chair what a Public Protection Notice

8 is?

9 A. So a Public Protection Notice is something around a more

10 holistic picture around somebody's antecedents along

11 with any concerns or safeguarding concerns we've got

12 around that person, whether it be the victim or the

13 suspect, it's not either or, and that gets sent on to

14 a --

15 Q. Can I pause you?

16 A. Sorry.

17 Q. If you just pull your chair in a little bit so people

18 can hear better?

19 Do you now accept that before authorising closure,

20 whatever the strength or weakness of the potential case,

21 it would have been good to look at, as Mr Blake said,

22 the PNC?

23 A. Yes, definitely.

24 Q. Maybe to look at the NICHE history?

25 A. Yeah, the prior incidents, which and I'd like to point

42

1 that with other services?

2 A. Yes, that would be for them to review and decide whether

3 they were going to share it on.

4 Q. And they could share internally with Nottinghamshire

5 Police?

6 A. Yes, with other departments.

7 Q. With other departments. Or they could share with, for

8 example, the local NHS Trust?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. And do you accept that's what you ought to have done,

11 ideally?

12 A. I do, yes.

13 Q. Just to then put some context around that, how long had

14 you been a sergeant by August 2022?

15 A. August 2022 -- March, April, May, June, July -- it would

16 have been five months at that point.

17 Q. Did you have any specific training as to the supervision

18 of these type of incidents?

19 A. No, the training that I'd have undertaken specifically

20 around stalking -- sorry, was that the question?

21 Q. Well, just generally about closing a --

22 A. Supervisory. No, I'd had no training at that point.

23 Q. And we know that PC Sarah Barnes wasn't long out of

24 probation?

25 A. Yes.

44

- 1 Q. And can you tell us -- can you remember what her
2 workload was, in respect of occurrences on her --
3 A. I think she'd stated it was round 20 to 30.
4 Q. And what was your estimation of an appropriate workload
5 for a relatively inexperienced constable?
6 A. For me personally, and my expectations around workload
7 of officers, it sits around 10 to 12, which, for it to
8 between 20 to 30, would be two-and-a-half times higher.
9 Q. And for reasons of candour, why did she have such an
10 excessive workload, on your estimation?
11 A. As part of the Inquiry, and answers that have been given
12 by PC Barnes, would be around picking up somebody else's
13 workload.
14 Q. So there's no mystery, because she was picking up
15 PC Beardsmore's?
16 A. That's correct.
17 Q. And that wasn't terribly fair on her, anyway?
18 A. No.
19 Q. Looking to the current position, is there now a better
20 operation in place in Nottingham Police for dealing with
21 this kind of supervisory obligation?
22 A. There is, and I alluded sort of my own CPD as well, off
23 the back of that, and off of the HMIC reports.
24 Q. What's the name of that operation?
25 A. It's Operation Catalyst.

45

- 1 intelligence checks, which are built into NICHE.
2 Q. What, if anything, does it add to the supervisory aspect
3 of this kind of investigation?
4 A. In terms of -- and I'll go off on a slight tangent, just
5 to give a bit of context around it -- we use a system,
6 Power BI, which is our data metrics, essentially. So
7 where we carry supervisors, especially personally, 75,
8 80, 50 -- whatever it might be -- investigations, in
9 order to prioritise and understand providing reviews for
10 those, it will alert us within a 28-day period. So as
11 a supervisor, my expectation from the organisation is
12 that I review everybody's investigations every 28 days.
13 That's part and parcel of what's coming from Operation
14 Catalyst.
15 Q. Does it auto alert you?
16 A. We have to go into Power BI and have a look at it, but
17 yes, it does. It flags up the ones that are about to
18 come to 28 days with a RAG system, essentially.
19 Q. And finally this: is it your estimation that Operation
20 Catalyst has made a difference to your job in
21 supervising such cases?
22 A. It has. It's made it -- "easy" is probably the wrong
23 word, but it's made it better, as a supervisor, to
24 understand where I need to focus my efforts. And it's
25 made it easier for the officers to understand when their

47

- 1 Q. When did it come into force, approximately?
2 A. That was after HMIC had been in in the February, and
3 I believe it was the March of 2024 when that came in.
4 Q. So about two years ago?
5 A. About two years ago.
6 Q. Can you tell the Chair first -- and you've almost
7 alluded to it -- why was Operation Catalyst implemented?
8 A. That was off the back of HMIC coming in and picking up
9 certain areas of business that required development.
10 Q. Is that a euphemism for suboptimal investigations?
11 A. It is, yes.
12 Q. Yes. And what does Operation Catalyst bring to the
13 table to this situation?
14 A. It focuses on victim engagement, so we're looking at
15 victim needs assessments and updating victims within
16 a 28-day period. Around suspect management, as well, to
17 ensure that prior checks are done.
18 Q. Pause there. When you say "prior checks", do you mean
19 the sort of check that Mr Blake invited you to say ought
20 to have been?
21 A. Yes.
22 Q. On PNC?
23 A. PNC checks.
24 Q. What about NICHE?
25 A. NICHE checks as well, which would also incorporate

46

- 1 victim updates are due, along with the supervisor ones
2 I've mentioned.
3 Q. But perhaps most saliently, in respect of the questions
4 from Mr Blake, it reminds people to look at PNC and
5 NICHE?
6 A. Yes, as a more holistic picture.
7 MR BEGGS: Yes. Thank you very much.
8 **Questions by THE CHAIR**
9 THE CHAIR: Just dealing with that, looking at the PNC and
10 NICHE, that really doesn't take very long, does it?
11 A. No, it doesn't.
12 THE CHAIR: It doesn't. And just in terms of your training
13 before this incident and before you were dealing with
14 this supervision, what was your training about, looking
15 at NICHE and the PNC?
16 A. If I remember correctly, it was around training school.
17 So -- in fact it was after. After I joined in 2014,
18 2015. So I think we'd had -- I want to say four days, I
19 can't be certain, but three to four days, where we would
20 go through the system. There would be somebody showing
21 us as an expert in using NICHE.
22 THE CHAIR: But in terms of the importance of it, you know,
23 some people might say it should be the first thing you
24 should do, when you're looking at something like this,
25 to look at the PNC and NICHE. Would you agree with

48

1 that?
2 **A.** I do.
3 **THE CHAIR:** And that's because you have to, for example, for
4 stalking, have a course of conduct, don't you?
5 **A.** Yeah.
6 **THE CHAIR:** So you'd need to go what had gone before. And
7 the flags that up are on the NICHE in the PNC are to
8 protect officers as well as indicate what the history
9 is, aren't they?
10 **A.** They are, they are.
11 **THE CHAIR:** And that's now something you do?
12 **A.** As part of my own continuing professional development,
13 my CPD, along with Operation Catalyst.
14 **THE CHAIR:** And have you found that it assisted your ability
15 to investigate matters?
16 **A.** Immensely.
17 **THE CHAIR:** Immensely. Thank you.
18 Right. Well, we'll finish there, I think, for
19 today.
20 **MR BLAKE:** Yes.
21 **THE CHAIR:** And we'll start again at tomorrow morning at
22 10.00. Thank you.
23 **(3.09 pm)**
24 **(The hearing adjourned until 10.00 am the following day)**
25

INDEX		Page
1		
2		
3	EMILY ALICE DOHERTY (sworn)	1
4	Questioned by MS KAUR	1
5	Questioned by MR MOLONEY	17
6	Questioned by MR STRAW	18
7		
8	PS ASHLEIGH SMALL (affirmed)	25
9	Questioned by MR BLAKE	25
10	Questioned by MR BEGGS	40
11	Questions by THE CHAIR	48
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

<p>MR BEER: [1] 25/4 MR BEGGs: [1] 48/7 MR BLAKE: [4] 25/12 25/17 40/20 49/20 MR MOLONEY: [2] 17/2 18/12 MR STRAW: [2] 18/15 24/25 MS KAUR: [4] 1/4 1/7 10/3 16/23 THE CHAIR: [18] 1/3 9/25 10/2 16/25 18/13 25/2 25/5 25/15 40/23 48/9 48/12 48/22 49/3 49/6 49/11 49/14 49/17 49/21</p> <hr/> <p>'paranoid' [1] 23/20 'rationale' [1] 35/3</p> <hr/> <p>1</p> <p>1.44 pm [1] 1/2 10 [4] 16/6 26/1 41/10 45/7 10.00 [2] 49/22 49/24 10.1 [1] 15/24 11 [2] 18/1 41/16 12 [1] 45/7 13 [1] 16/7 13.4 [1] 16/16 16 [1] 34/22 16 August [2] 1/24 3/24 16.2 [2] 17/25 18/2 173 [1] 19/7 177 [1] 19/14 19 [1] 24/5 19 March 2026 [1] 1/1 1s [1] 40/5</p> <hr/> <p>2</p> <p>2.26 [1] 25/9 2.36 pm [1] 25/11 2.4 [1] 2/1 20 [4] 7/10 7/20 45/3 45/8 20.2 [1] 24/5 2014 [1] 48/17 2015 [1] 48/18 2020 [6] 2/8 9/21 18/18 18/21 26/24 27/7 2020-2021 [1] 20/13 2021 [6] 16/18 20/13 27/10 27/13 27/14 27/15 2022 [9] 10/4 25/25 26/1 26/9 27/21 27/23 27/24 44/14 44/15 2023 [4] 1/22 2/8 19/5 21/9 2024 [1] 46/3</p>	<p>2025 [1] 25/18 2026 [2] 1/1 1/10 22 August [1] 13/10 22 August 2023 [2] 1/22 21/9 25 [2] 38/8 38/8 25 minutes [1] 7/11 28 [2] 47/12 47/18 28 July 2022 [1] 26/9 2s [1] 40/5</p> <hr/> <p>3</p> <p>3.09 [1] 49/23 30 [3] 14/11 45/3 45/8 30-minute [1] 7/21 35 [1] 14/11 3s [1] 40/5</p> <hr/> <p>5</p> <p>5.5 [1] 23/17 5.6 [2] 8/12 9/2 5.8 [1] 7/3 50 [1] 47/8</p> <hr/> <p>6</p> <p>6.4 [1] 17/13 6.5 [1] 14/12 6.6 [1] 21/22 6.9 [1] 22/7</p> <hr/> <p>7</p> <p>75 [1] 47/7</p> <hr/> <p>8</p> <p>8.1 [2] 14/21 17/4 80 [1] 47/8</p> <hr/> <p>A</p> <p>ability [4] 39/6 39/13 39/21 49/14 able [3] 23/7 23/9 39/23 about [48] 3/15 4/9 4/14 4/17 4/19 4/25 5/25 6/2 6/12 7/10 8/14 9/1 9/4 9/19 10/13 10/20 10/24 11/21 12/8 12/18 14/4 15/17 17/11 17/13 19/14 21/2 22/8 23/20 26/12 28/23 29/13 29/25 31/5 31/15 33/5 36/5 37/14 39/12 39/13 40/8 41/7 43/10 44/21 46/4 46/5 46/24 47/17 48/14 abuse [1] 18/9 abusing [1] 33/7 accept [4] 4/11 5/23 42/19 44/10 accepted [1] 40/17 accepting [2] 39/22 40/8 access [8] 2/5 2/7 2/10 2/13 5/1 16/14</p>	<p>21/5 21/6 accommodation [1] 9/11 account [1] 14/3 accurate [2] 35/11 35/25 accused [1] 28/12 achievement [1] 15/17 acknowledge [1] 6/14 acknowledged [1] 7/8 across [2] 4/22 13/8 Act [1] 24/20 action [3] 31/6 36/6 41/8 actions [1] 38/10 actually [3] 35/25 37/11 39/12 adamant [1] 22/14 add [1] 47/2 additional [1] 3/15 address [2] 26/8 38/3 addressed [1] 41/21 adjourned [1] 49/24 admission [2] 24/9 24/22 admitted [2] 20/6 24/21 advice [1] 31/24 affirmed [2] 25/14 50/8 Africa [1] 17/16 after [7] 14/24 17/7 17/9 30/25 46/2 48/17 48/17 again [13] 2/13 9/3 10/19 22/17 29/21 33/1 35/18 36/20 37/4 37/18 39/1 39/3 49/21 against [3] 6/15 27/13 33/16 aged [1] 17/19 Agency [3] 43/19 43/24 43/25 ago [6] 5/4 12/14 26/13 41/3 46/4 46/5 agree [4] 6/20 8/6 28/3 48/25 ah [1] 40/21 alcohol [1] 33/8 alert [2] 47/10 47/15 ALICE [3] 1/5 1/8 50/3 all [12] 16/12 16/15 18/10 25/5 25/5 27/25 28/21 29/24 30/13 36/22 40/23 43/4 allowed [1] 37/13 alluded [2] 45/22 46/7 almost [2] 27/25 46/6 alone [3] 38/3 38/4 38/5 along [5] 6/5 40/15</p>	<p>42/10 48/1 49/13 alongside [3] 35/21 40/3 40/6 already [2] 19/19 26/12 also [11] 13/20 15/19 22/5 26/1 27/13 37/10 37/16 38/20 40/17 41/20 46/25 always [3] 3/15 13/2 15/21 am [7] 2/13 15/15 16/4 16/13 24/9 26/7 49/24 another [4] 27/7 27/21 33/9 37/10 answer [3] 9/25 33/1 33/16 answered [1] 4/13 answers [1] 45/11 antecedents [1] 42/10 any [21] 2/16 3/15 5/25 6/8 7/6 8/17 8/24 9/4 10/3 10/17 10/19 15/10 16/23 18/13 20/21 38/2 38/9 40/20 40/21 42/11 44/17 anybody [4] 13/22 21/6 36/15 37/18 anymore [1] 3/2 anything [2] 11/12 47/2 anyway [2] 12/4 45/17 apart [1] 26/5 apartment [3] 19/15 19/19 19/25 appear [4] 5/23 8/10 21/15 24/1 appeared [2] 12/6 12/8 appears [1] 16/17 appointed [1] 1/14 approached [1] 5/20 appropriate [3] 3/8 15/12 45/4 approximately [1] 46/1 April [2] 27/23 44/15 April 2022 [1] 27/23 are [20] 2/23 7/19 13/25 14/16 14/22 26/5 28/7 34/13 35/3 40/1 40/21 43/20 46/17 47/1 47/17 48/1 49/7 49/7 49/10 49/10 area [1] 18/7 areas [2] 17/21 46/9 aren't [1] 49/9 around [24] 3/6 12/20 23/4 24/18 24/19 29/7 31/15 35/19 39/2 39/5 39/15 40/4 40/13 42/9 42/10 42/12 44/13 44/20</p>	<p>45/6 45/7 45/12 46/16 47/5 48/16 arrested [2] 21/11 27/11 arrived [2] 19/15 19/19 as [56] Ash [1] 34/18 Ashleigh [3] 25/12 25/14 50/8 aside [1] 4/18 ask [5] 8/19 13/4 17/12 21/6 22/8 asked [9] 3/13 10/25 11/3 11/21 17/11 21/6 22/10 37/23 38/9 asking [2] 6/2 27/10 aspect [1] 47/2 assaulted [3] 27/15 27/16 27/21 assess [3] 2/23 3/1 3/3 assessed [1] 3/20 assessment [12] 1/16 2/3 3/9 3/12 5/20 8/9 8/20 10/3 11/5 24/23 27/12 37/21 assessments [6] 2/21 3/5 7/14 7/16 7/23 46/15 assimilating [1] 11/10 assisted [2] 40/17 49/14 assumption [1] 5/21 at [93] at page 11 [1] 18/1 attempt [1] 41/12 attend [1] 14/25 attended [1] 11/2 August [9] 1/22 1/24 3/24 13/10 21/9 41/16 41/16 44/14 44/15 August 2022 [2] 44/14 44/15 authorised [2] 42/4 43/11 authorising [1] 42/19 auto [1] 47/15 available [1] 3/11 average [1] 7/21 aware [9] 4/15 5/18 16/17 16/22 22/10 30/15 30/17 37/15 37/16</p> <hr/> <p>B</p> <p>bachelor [1] 10/7 back [9] 18/6 18/21 23/16 34/8 37/4 38/6 43/11 45/23 46/8 background [1] 26/14 Barnes [21] 26/2 26/18 26/20 28/1</p>
---	--	---	--	--

<p>B</p> <p>Barnes... [17] 30/24 31/8 34/10 34/14 34/14 34/15 35/14 36/3 36/10 36/18 37/3 37/11 37/15 41/5 41/11 44/23 45/12</p> <p>Barnes's [3] 30/15 31/19 37/5</p> <p>based [10] 1/15 28/14 28/15 29/6 29/21 29/23 29/24 32/1 35/12 35/12</p> <p>basic [1] 29/17</p> <p>basically [1] 16/12</p> <p>be [45] 1/16 2/7 2/21 2/22 3/8 3/14 6/18 7/4 7/22 8/19 11/21 13/2 13/14 15/2 15/11 15/19 18/1 19/21 21/20 23/1 23/7 23/9 24/1 24/8 24/10 24/20 25/24 27/7 27/10 28/25 29/1 31/11 32/14 33/7 35/2 40/4 42/12 43/24 44/2 45/8 45/12 47/8 48/19 48/20 48/23</p> <p>Beardsmore's [1] 45/15</p> <p>became [2] 4/24 19/22</p> <p>because [12] 7/16 9/21 12/15 14/19 15/16 23/6 29/16 33/25 37/19 38/24 45/14 49/3</p> <p>been [41] 4/19 9/8 11/7 11/20 16/1 17/11 20/12 20/17 21/11 21/11 21/13 23/22 23/22 24/3 26/15 28/5 28/8 28/12 29/18 30/2 30/9 30/10 31/22 33/3 33/14 34/21 35/1 36/2 36/15 36/18 36/20 37/22 37/24 38/9 42/21 43/6 44/14 44/16 45/11 46/2 46/20</p> <p>Beer [1] 25/3</p> <p>before [7] 11/13 14/25 21/16 42/19 48/13 48/13 49/6</p> <p>beforehand [1] 21/7</p> <p>Beggs [3] 40/22 40/24 50/10</p> <p>behave [1] 5/21</p> <p>behaviour [2] 5/15 37/14</p> <p>behind [1] 14/15</p> <p>being [15] 6/11 6/14 11/16 14/5 15/13 21/2 22/24 24/18 26/11 28/9 29/12 31/16</p>	<p>32/17 39/3 41/11</p> <p>belief [1] 25/23</p> <p>believe [5] 17/25 19/3 33/11 38/11 46/3</p> <p>believes [1] 33/3</p> <p>below [3] 32/19 33/10 33/12</p> <p>beneficial [1] 24/9</p> <p>best [3] 1/11 16/10 25/22</p> <p>better [4] 30/9 42/18 45/19 47/23</p> <p>between [2] 14/11 45/8</p> <p>beyond [1] 5/8</p> <p>BI [2] 47/6 47/16</p> <p>Birmingham [1] 14/25</p> <p>bit [7] 4/19 4/23 13/5 16/6 35/16 42/17 47/5</p> <p>BLAKE [8] 25/16 41/2 42/1 42/21 43/3 46/19 48/4 50/9</p> <p>blinking [1] 12/21</p> <p>block [1] 19/23</p> <p>both [3] 4/22 5/15 17/20</p> <p>bottom [8] 20/5 21/22 22/7 30/22 32/12 34/16 34/17 34/18</p> <p>brand [2] 35/16 35/18</p> <p>break [3] 25/6 25/6 25/10</p> <p>breaking [1] 9/14</p> <p>briefly [1] 11/13</p> <p>bring [2] 38/7 46/12</p> <p>broadly [2] 20/10 20/14</p> <p>broke [1] 27/7</p> <p>Brook [1] 26/24</p> <p>brought [4] 11/23 11/25 12/18 21/20</p> <p>brushed [2] 33/19 33/22</p> <p>build [1] 16/13</p> <p>built [1] 47/1</p> <p>bullied [2] 11/7 17/20</p> <p>bullying [3] 17/13 17/23 18/6</p> <p>business [1] 46/9</p> <p>busy [1] 39/22</p> <p>but [34] 3/2 3/8 4/2 4/7 5/4 5/6 6/6 11/4 11/22 12/5 13/5 13/13 13/23 16/13 16/24 19/22 22/8 26/3 26/12 28/7 29/6 29/10 31/14 32/21 33/11 33/22 35/15 40/2 42/1 47/16 47/23 48/3 48/19 48/22</p> <p>C</p> <p>call [7] 12/15 13/13</p>	<p>13/17 15/9 20/8 21/8 25/12</p> <p>called [3] 10/15 26/24 27/11</p> <p>caller [3] 32/13 33/3 33/16</p> <p>caller's [1] 32/14</p> <p>Calocane [8] 13/10 14/13 15/4 18/16 21/9 21/24 22/11 22/14</p> <p>Calocane's [1] 14/22</p> <p>came [6] 11/21 21/15 26/2 28/24 40/15 46/3</p> <p>can [31] 1/10 1/13 1/21 3/18 3/22 9/3 10/23 12/12 13/3 13/3 13/14 17/12 19/8 19/9 19/13 19/15 25/12 25/21 25/24 28/20 30/18 30/22 34/10 41/2 41/17 42/7 42/15 42/18 45/1 45/1 46/6</p> <p>can't [8] 6/5 9/6 11/22 24/3 31/13 31/13 32/21 48/19</p> <p>candour [3] 39/21 40/8 45/9</p> <p>capable [3] 21/24 22/21 22/24</p> <p>capacity [1] 1/15</p> <p>care [1] 7/6</p> <p>carried [3] 17/23 28/25 29/1</p> <p>carry [2] 28/19 47/7</p> <p>case [5] 2/5 15/22 24/17 26/22 42/20</p> <p>cases [1] 47/21</p> <p>Catalyst [6] 45/25 46/7 46/12 47/14 47/20 49/13</p> <p>cause [1] 19/1</p> <p>caused [1] 27/3</p> <p>Celeste [7] 13/10 15/4 15/9 18/16 21/9 21/10 22/10</p> <p>cell [1] 4/20</p> <p>Centre [1] 27/12</p> <p>certain [4] 15/23 23/4 46/9 48/19</p> <p>certainly [1] 39/3</p> <p>cetera [3] 20/9 39/16 40/5</p> <p>chair [8] 18/15 25/1 25/12 42/7 42/17 46/6 48/8 50/11</p> <p>change [1] 12/21</p> <p>changed [2] 4/24 12/3</p> <p>changes [1] 26/5</p> <p>charge [2] 4/15 6/15</p> <p>check [8] 28/18 28/25 29/2 29/10 29/17 29/18 29/19 46/19</p> <p>checks [5] 46/17 46/18 46/23 46/25</p>	<p>47/1</p> <p>childhood [3] 10/25 11/1 18/5</p> <p>choice [1] 8/8</p> <p>Chris [1] 10/15</p> <p>Christopher [1] 38/1</p> <p>chronology [1] 16/13</p> <p>circumstances [3] 9/5 37/5 39/9</p> <p>clarify [2] 17/3 18/10</p> <p>clarity [2] 38/14 43/17</p> <p>clear [3] 2/7 15/2 35/23</p> <p>clearly [1] 34/4</p> <p>closed [2] 34/21 35/23</p> <p>closer [2] 32/13 34/5</p> <p>closing [2] 35/8 44/21</p> <p>closure [3] 42/5 42/19 43/11</p> <p>cobble [1] 16/10</p> <p>coincidence [3] 32/17 33/20 34/2</p> <p>coincidental [3] 31/2 31/12 31/21</p> <p>colleague [1] 4/16</p> <p>college [2] 14/25 15/1</p> <p>come [13] 8/21 11/17 13/8 13/21 16/9 24/14 31/15 33/24 35/14 39/2 39/9 46/1 47/18</p> <p>comes [1] 39/22</p> <p>coming [7] 4/22 8/14 9/5 19/24 40/4 46/8 47/13</p> <p>comment [2] 8/2 13/12</p> <p>committed [2] 9/9 28/12</p> <p>communicate [1] 4/3</p> <p>community [1] 17/22</p> <p>comparison [1] 8/3</p> <p>complained [1] 29/13</p> <p>complaint [3] 31/5 36/5 41/7</p> <p>completed [5] 14/15 14/17 14/24 17/7 29/18</p> <p>completely [1] 37/22</p> <p>compliance [4] 23/10 23/12 23/13 24/19</p> <p>compliant [3] 5/12 5/13 24/19</p> <p>concern [2] 6/24 7/6</p> <p>concerned [2] 20/25 21/1</p> <p>concerns [7] 11/16 38/9 39/11 39/12 39/15 42/11 42/11</p> <p>concisely [1] 38/14</p> <p>conclusion [2] 24/14 33/24</p> <p>conclusions [2] 3/18</p>	<p>18/3</p> <p>conduct [2] 40/3 49/4</p> <p>conducted [1] 36/18</p> <p>conducting [1] 3/12</p> <p>confirm [3] 1/10 1/13 25/21</p> <p>consequences [1] 6/16</p> <p>consider [2] 3/9 13/24</p> <p>considered [1] 35/1</p> <p>consistent [5] 20/10 20/14 22/2 22/4 22/18</p> <p>constable [1] 45/5</p> <p>constantly [1] 12/20</p> <p>consultant [1] 1/19</p> <p>contact [9] 5/3 5/5 5/6 12/7 12/10 12/14 12/15 12/20 41/12</p> <p>contacted [1] 36/16</p> <p>content [2] 12/19 26/6</p> <p>context [3] 35/16 44/13 47/5</p> <p>continuing [2] 43/1 49/12</p> <p>contradicted [1] 15/6</p> <p>conversation [17] 7/10 7/13 7/15 7/21 11/17 14/7 14/8 14/8 14/10 15/4 15/6 15/21 17/11 17/15 22/5 31/14 31/22</p> <p>conversations [2] 7/20 7/25</p> <p>correct [13] 1/17 1/20 1/24 1/25 25/20 26/23 32/9 34/19 34/23 36/14 40/19 42/3 45/16</p> <p>correctly [2] 38/12 48/16</p> <p>could [34] 1/7 4/3 4/15 5/1 6/15 6/22 7/4 7/17 11/3 15/19 16/13 16/24 19/6 21/19 21/20 23/15 23/16 24/3 24/4 24/20 30/9 30/10 30/12 31/11 33/12 34/11 36/1 38/2 38/6 40/25 43/6 43/12 44/4 44/7</p> <p>couldn't [1] 15/23</p> <p>country [2] 11/9 11/11</p> <p>couple [1] 26/13</p> <p>course [4] 31/6 36/6 41/7 49/4</p> <p>court [2] 19/12 26/25</p> <p>CPD [2] 45/22 49/13</p> <p>crimes [1] 13/25</p> <p>criminal [1] 2/16</p> <p>criteria [1] 3/20</p> <p>current [2] 24/13 45/19</p> <p>currently [1] 24/6</p>
---	---	--	---	---

<p>C</p> <p>custody [10] 1/24 8/15 11/18 20/15 21/14 22/3 22/20 23/21 24/17 24/24</p>	<p>9/7 9/20 9/24 9/25 10/3 10/9 11/17 12/1 13/1 13/4 15/2 16/12 18/21 20/25 21/2 21/15 24/1 24/14 31/24 36/8 36/9 36/10 36/11 36/12 36/15 41/11 44/17 45/9 46/1</p>	<p>48/10 doesn't [4] 29/10 48/10 48/11 48/12 DOHERTY [10] 1/5 1/8 1/9 1/14 1/23 8/21 17/2 18/12 18/15 50/3</p>	<p>engagement [3] 8/3 8/3 46/14 engaging [1] 9/22 engineering [1] 10/7 enjoyed [1] 9/13 ensure [1] 46/17 entered [1] 36/2 entries [4] 32/12 34/10 34/13 41/18</p>	<p>experienced [2] 13/8 18/8 expert [1] 48/21 explain [1] 21/22 explained [2] 11/18 18/17 explanation [1] 6/5 express [2] 6/8 12/2 expressed [1] 14/6 expression [4] 4/24 12/3 12/4 12/22 extreme [1] 27/18 eye [8] 5/3 5/5 5/6 12/6 12/10 12/14 12/15 12/20</p>
<p>D</p> <p>daily [1] 40/4 danger [1] 22/13 data [1] 47/6 dated [3] 1/9 1/22 25/18 day [5] 5/22 27/3 46/16 47/10 49/24 days [4] 47/12 47/18 48/18 48/19</p>	<p>didn't [26] 2/5 2/10 2/13 2/15 4/14 4/16 6/13 7/6 7/6 8/23 9/10 9/19 10/2 10/8 10/17 11/2 11/4 11/6 11/8 11/12 12/3 16/14 21/4 36/13 37/11 42/1 difference [1] 47/20 different [5] 15/16 15/17 22/12 33/24 37/22 differs [1] 17/17 difficult [4] 7/16 13/2 14/8 15/19 difficulties [4] 9/22 10/10 11/10 16/3 directed [1] 12/22 disappointment [1] 14/7 disclose [3] 11/6 11/8 11/12 discuss [3] 9/20 10/4 10/10 discussed [6] 8/11 8/13 10/16 10/18 11/16 12/14 discussion [2] 10/19 11/15 disguised [4] 23/10 23/12 23/13 24/19 disguising [1] 21/25 disorder [1] 4/6 disordered [1] 6/4 display [1] 7/9 disregard [2] 6/13 6/17 do [30] 3/13 9/7 11/23 13/16 15/13 17/3 22/21 23/24 24/7 28/3 29/2 29/15 30/12 31/24 33/18 37/2 39/6 39/19 40/12 41/10 42/1 42/19 43/2 43/6 44/10 44/12 46/18 48/24 49/2 49/11 document [2] 23/17 30/19 documentation [1] 16/15 documented [2] 36/20 38/13 documenting [2] 38/15 39/14 does [11] 8/21 22/24 26/18 26/19 40/22 43/17 46/12 47/2 47/15 47/17 48/10 does it [3] 8/21 47/2</p>	<p>doing [2] 16/10 35/3 don't [20] 3/2 5/19 5/20 13/21 14/9 16/23 20/16 23/6 28/24 29/5 33/11 33/22 35/14 35/15 39/1 39/11 40/20 40/21 42/4 49/4 done [7] 6/20 7/7 14/14 41/13 41/25 44/10 46/17 door [2] 19/25 26/25 down [16] 5/13 6/3 9/14 19/14 19/25 20/18 22/7 22/9 33/6 34/9 34/12 34/22 34/24 35/24 40/6 41/10 Dr [2] 4/16 13/12 Dr Milton [2] 4/16 13/12 drop [1] 41/10 drugs [1] 33/7 due [3] 17/21 26/11 48/1 during [7] 6/9 7/25 10/3 15/6 15/8 19/6 22/5</p>	<p>especially [2] 38/4 47/7 essentially [3] 31/20 47/6 47/18 establish [2] 28/11 30/4 estimation [3] 45/4 45/10 47/19 et [3] 20/9 39/16 40/5 et cetera [3] 20/9 39/16 40/5 euphemism [1] 46/10 even [5] 19/22 28/17 29/17 37/24 39/12 event [1] 42/1 every [2] 15/20 47/12 everybody's [1] 47/12 everything [3] 28/17 28/21 40/15 evicted [1] 9/8 evidence [6] 8/22 26/12 26/16 26/18 31/19 38/21 evidential [1] 35/1 exact [1] 31/13 exactly [1] 6/6 examination [1] 33/21 example [22] 2/11 2/22 3/11 5/3 5/11 7/24 8/11 8/18 8/22 9/2 9/7 9/20 9/24 10/10 14/12 15/24 16/6 16/16 18/25 33/25 44/8 49/3 exams [1] 14/14 excessive [1] 45/10 excuses [2] 35/15 39/1 execute [1] 41/23 execution [1] 16/19 expand [2] 13/14 13/16 expectation [1] 47/11 expectations [1] 45/6 expeditiously [1] 40/3 experience [2] 7/21 24/15</p>	<p>F</p> <p>face [5] 7/24 8/8 21/10 21/10 41/23 facial [4] 4/24 12/3 12/4 12/22 fact [10] 2/4 9/8 9/20 10/4 14/19 16/17 34/1 36/12 36/13 48/17 factor [1] 3/4 factors [1] 24/18 failure [12] 28/3 29/2 29/3 29/5 29/16 29/17 29/19 29/20 30/7 37/3 38/18 38/18 fair [1] 45/17 fairly [3] 4/4 7/15 8/4 families [1] 13/20 family [8] 3/7 13/24 14/15 17/16 17/18 18/7 21/14 22/13 featured [1] 18/24 February [2] 1/10 46/2 February 2026 [1] 1/10 fed [1] 18/6 feel [5] 11/4 13/3 25/8 33/22 37/4 feels [1] 23/19 fellow [3] 10/20 27/16 39/24 felt [5] 4/5 4/11 8/7 14/14 21/24 female [3] 27/3 38/2 38/4 few [3] 8/15 17/2 17/23 file [2] 15/7 17/18 filed [1] 26/6 final [1] 24/4 finalise [2] 40/2 40/2 finally [2] 38/6 47/19 finances [1] 15/25 financial [1] 16/3 find [3] 3/15 13/1 28/10 finish [1] 49/18 first [9] 20/7 25/25 34/12 34/17 34/20 39/3 39/25 46/6 48/23</p>
<p>delusions [1] 18/22 demand [5] 35/19 35/21 35/21 40/4 40/6 demands [1] 40/14 demeanour [1] 4/21 departments [2] 44/6 44/7 dependent [1] 2/24 describe [3] 5/2 5/12 23/21 described [3] 6/11 9/12 23/18 describing [1] 9/15 description [1] 19/3 descriptions [1] 18/21 desperately [1] 19/20 despite [1] 41/11 detail [5] 9/1 10/17 15/22 20/17 20/22 detailed [1] 15/9 details [4] 5/25 9/4 29/17 33/9 determine [1] 43/25 developed [1] 19/1 development [4] 43/1 43/10 46/9 49/12 diagnose [1] 4/8 did [41] 2/4 2/12 3/19 4/6 4/11 5/15 5/23 5/24 6/8 7/8 7/22 8/17</p>	<p>discussed [6] 8/11 8/13 10/16 10/18 11/16 12/14 discussion [2] 10/19 11/15 disguised [4] 23/10 23/12 23/13 24/19 disguising [1] 21/25 disorder [1] 4/6 disordered [1] 6/4 display [1] 7/9 disregard [2] 6/13 6/17 do [30] 3/13 9/7 11/23 13/16 15/13 17/3 22/21 23/24 24/7 28/3 29/2 29/15 30/12 31/24 33/18 37/2 39/6 39/19 40/12 41/10 42/1 42/19 43/2 43/6 44/10 44/12 46/18 48/24 49/2 49/11 document [2] 23/17 30/19 documentation [1] 16/15 documented [2] 36/20 38/13 documenting [2] 38/15 39/14 does [11] 8/21 22/24 26/18 26/19 40/22 43/17 46/12 47/2 47/15 47/17 48/10 does it [3] 8/21 47/2</p>	<p>E</p> <p>earlier [2] 19/12 22/8 easier [1] 47/25 easy [1] 47/22 education [5] 2/22 3/3 3/8 3/11 15/1 educational [4] 3/13 14/23 15/14 15/17 effect [1] 8/23 efforts [1] 47/24 eight [1] 39/5 either [2] 28/12 42/13 elaborate [1] 12/12 Elias [1] 18/16 else [3] 21/6 37/18 40/15 else's [1] 45/12 email [1] 13/11 EMILY [3] 1/5 1/8 50/3 EMILY ALICE [2] 1/5 50/3 emotive [1] 12/5 empathy [3] 6/8 6/18 6/22 employed [1] 10/21 employees [1] 10/20 employment [1] 16/1 end [1] 4/18 engage [2] 7/17 8/9 engaged [3] 4/4 8/7 32/24</p>	<p>earlier [2] 19/12 22/8 easier [1] 47/25 easy [1] 47/22 education [5] 2/22 3/3 3/8 3/11 15/1 educational [4] 3/13 14/23 15/14 15/17 effect [1] 8/23 efforts [1] 47/24 eight [1] 39/5 either [2] 28/12 42/13 elaborate [1] 12/12 Elias [1] 18/16 else [3] 21/6 37/18 40/15 else's [1] 45/12 email [1] 13/11 EMILY [3] 1/5 1/8 50/3 EMILY ALICE [2] 1/5 50/3 emotive [1] 12/5 empathy [3] 6/8 6/18 6/22 employed [1] 10/21 employees [1] 10/20 employment [1] 16/1 end [1] 4/18 engage [2] 7/17 8/9 engaged [3] 4/4 8/7 32/24</p>	<p>evicted [1] 9/8 evidence [6] 8/22 26/12 26/16 26/18 31/19 38/21 evidential [1] 35/1 exact [1] 31/13 exactly [1] 6/6 examination [1] 33/21 example [22] 2/11 2/22 3/11 5/3 5/11 7/24 8/11 8/18 8/22 9/2 9/7 9/20 9/24 10/10 14/12 15/24 16/6 16/16 18/25 33/25 44/8 49/3 exams [1] 14/14 excessive [1] 45/10 excuses [2] 35/15 39/1 execute [1] 41/23 execution [1] 16/19 expand [2] 13/14 13/16 expectation [1] 47/11 expectations [1] 45/6 expeditiously [1] 40/3 experience [2] 7/21 24/15</p>

<p>F</p> <p>five [1] 44/16</p> <p>Fixated [1] 27/12</p> <p>fixatingly [1] 12/16</p> <p>fixed [5] 4/23 12/7 12/10 12/13 12/15</p> <p>flags [2] 47/17 49/7</p> <p>flat [4] 16/21 27/7 32/15 37/13</p> <p>flatmate [2] 27/21 38/1</p> <p>flatmates [3] 8/23 10/11 10/14</p> <p>flats [1] 19/23</p> <p>fleeting [1] 5/5</p> <p>focus [1] 47/24</p> <p>focuses [1] 46/14</p> <p>follow [1] 14/5</p> <p>follow-up [1] 14/5</p> <p>followed [2] 27/23 33/3</p> <p>following [1] 49/24</p> <p>follows [1] 30/24</p> <p>force [2] 39/19 46/1</p> <p>forced [1] 27/13</p> <p>forensic [3] 16/7 16/8 16/11</p> <p>form [4] 4/6 22/16 24/7 29/10</p> <p>formed [2] 7/4 31/17</p> <p>forward [2] 19/13 24/5</p> <p>found [5] 3/23 4/20 19/24 20/25 49/14</p> <p>four [3] 26/2 48/18 48/19</p> <p>frankly [1] 38/2</p> <p>free [1] 25/8</p> <p>frequently [1] 38/13</p> <p>friends [3] 8/15 8/18 8/24</p> <p>frightened [2] 32/20 32/23</p> <p>front [1] 25/17</p> <p>full [3] 1/7 1/8 15/21</p> <p>fundamental [2] 29/11 38/16</p> <p>further [13] 6/2 9/4 13/4 15/1 16/6 16/23 18/1 18/13 23/21 27/24 33/20 40/20 43/10</p>	<p>getting [3] 16/8 17/6 30/25</p> <p>give [6] 1/7 8/17 21/4 33/9 38/21 47/5</p> <p>given [6] 5/18 10/5 16/14 23/2 38/22 45/11</p> <p>go [27] 2/1 5/20 5/24 8/2 8/25 16/6 19/13 19/13 23/15 23/16 24/4 25/8 30/18 32/14 33/5 34/8 34/13 34/16 37/13 37/23 38/2 38/5 38/6 47/4 47/16 48/20 49/6</p> <p>goes [2] 20/2 43/19</p> <p>going [9] 2/23 3/17 13/11 13/22 18/21 32/11 33/25 34/9 44/3</p> <p>gone [5] 14/5 16/21 17/8 34/6 49/6</p> <p>good [2] 8/4 42/21</p> <p>got [2] 20/3 42/11</p> <p>government [1] 22/15</p> <p>GP [1] 2/10</p> <p>grade [3] 40/5 40/5 40/5</p> <p>grade 1s [1] 40/5</p> <p>graduated [1] 9/13</p> <p>grave [1] 3/21</p> <p>guarded [2] 12/6 22/20</p> <p>guards [1] 5/15</p> <p>guess [2] 7/8 13/18</p> <p>guidance [1] 36/22</p> <p>gym [5] 31/3 31/16 32/13 34/5 34/6</p>	<p>41/23 41/25 47/20 47/22</p> <p>have [94]</p> <p>haven't [2] 39/18 40/10</p> <p>having [6] 4/23 4/25 4/25 17/22 31/19 33/22</p> <p>he [135]</p> <p>he'd [10] 10/18 11/15 11/18 14/14 14/17 16/1 17/6 17/8 21/11 21/11</p> <p>he's [3] 19/4 20/22 41/17</p> <p>head [2] 5/17 22/15</p> <p>headlock [2] 27/22 38/1</p> <p>health [6] 16/19 24/10 24/11 24/16 24/20 24/22</p> <p>hear [2] 10/2 42/18</p> <p>heard [6] 8/22 22/2 26/12 26/12 28/22 35/19</p> <p>hearing [5] 14/4 18/25 19/20 21/25 49/24</p> <p>hearings [1] 38/20</p> <p>help [1] 19/20</p> <p>helpful [4] 3/14 3/16 28/6 43/3</p> <p>helpfully [1] 2/2</p> <p>her [11] 17/19 20/4 21/24 22/14 37/13 37/19 37/23 41/17 45/1 45/2 45/17</p> <p>here [3] 20/22 24/5 26/8</p> <p>herself [1] 35/14</p> <p>high [2] 13/6 13/19</p> <p>high-secure [1] 13/19</p> <p>higher [2] 15/1 45/8</p> <p>him [30] 3/25 4/18 6/2 6/15 8/13 10/6 10/16 11/20 11/21 11/25 12/5 12/19 13/4 16/2 18/25 19/1 20/21 21/7 21/14 22/1 22/2 22/5 22/12 22/13 23/23 24/11 24/18 27/22 27/22 37/14</p> <p>his [55]</p> <p>history [11] 2/24 3/9 14/23 15/14 16/7 16/8 16/11 42/24 43/10 43/22 49/8</p> <p>hm [2] 12/11 23/25</p> <p>HMIC [3] 45/23 46/2 46/8</p> <p>holding [1] 23/18</p> <p>hole [1] 4/2</p> <p>holistic [2] 42/10 48/6</p> <p>holistically [1] 28/6</p>	<p>home [5] 27/23 31/3 31/17 32/13 34/5</p> <p>hospital [5] 13/19 20/7 24/10 24/21 24/23</p> <p>hospitals [1] 15/20</p> <p>house [1] 9/3</p> <p>how [15] 3/23 5/2 5/12 5/21 10/25 11/17 12/1 13/1 14/5 14/10 37/12 38/2 39/9 40/8 44/13</p> <p>however [2] 2/10 36/18</p> <p>Hub [2] 43/19 43/25</p> <p>hurt [1] 20/4</p> <hr/> <p>I alluded [1] 45/22</p> <p>I always [1] 3/15</p> <p>I am [3] 16/13 24/9 26/7</p> <p>I arrived [2] 19/15 19/19</p> <p>I asked [3] 10/25 11/21 22/10</p> <p>I believe [2] 38/11 46/3</p> <p>I brought [1] 12/18</p> <p>I can [4] 1/13 1/21 19/9 25/24</p> <p>I can't [6] 6/5 9/6 11/22 24/3 31/13 31/13</p> <p>I could [1] 16/13</p> <p>I couldn't [1] 15/23</p> <p>I detailed [1] 15/9</p> <p>I did [4] 2/12 7/22 16/12 36/9</p> <p>I didn't [4] 2/15 10/2 11/2 11/4</p> <p>I do [4] 15/13 24/7 44/12 49/2</p> <p>I don't [14] 3/2 5/19 13/21 14/9 16/23 20/16 29/5 33/22 35/14 35/15 39/1 40/20 40/21 42/4</p> <p>I feel [1] 37/4</p> <p>I felt [2] 4/5 8/7</p> <p>I found [1] 19/24</p> <p>I go [1] 8/25</p> <p>I guess [2] 7/8 13/18</p> <p>I had [4] 7/1 15/14 37/21 40/13</p> <p>I hadn't -- I [1] 32/1</p> <p>I have [2] 38/9 38/10</p> <p>I haven't [1] 39/18</p> <p>I joined [1] 48/17</p> <p>I just [1] 11/13</p> <p>I know [1] 11/18</p> <p>I maybe [1] 11/3</p> <p>I mean [3] 3/2 12/13 21/17</p> <p>I move [1] 11/14</p> <p>I need [1] 47/24</p>	<p>I note [1] 4/10</p> <p>I noted [1] 15/3</p> <p>I now [1] 36/17</p> <p>I pause [1] 42/15</p> <p>I please [1] 25/12</p> <p>I probed [1] 4/18</p> <p>I quite [1] 33/23</p> <p>I read [1] 22/8</p> <p>I recall [1] 6/2</p> <p>I remember [1] 48/16</p> <p>I represent [1] 18/15</p> <p>I reviewed [1] 33/23</p> <p>I right [3] 2/13 15/15 16/4</p> <p>I said [2] 6/3 10/1</p> <p>I say [2] 37/18 39/7</p> <p>I see [1] 23/6</p> <p>I should [3] 35/22 37/8 38/12</p> <p>I still [1] 13/4</p> <p>I suggested [1] 24/22</p> <p>I suppose [1] 2/25</p> <p>I take [1] 14/20</p> <p>I talk [1] 10/13</p> <p>I think [14] 5/4 6/2 13/2 14/4 15/3 23/1 23/9 24/17 31/19 35/2 39/25 45/3 48/18 49/18</p> <p>I tried [1] 19/21</p> <p>I visited [2] 3/25 21/13</p> <p>I want [2] 22/8 48/18</p> <p>I was [8] 12/5 13/5 19/19 20/6 23/21 31/10 35/16 38/24</p> <p>I wasn't [3] 30/17 37/19 37/19</p> <p>I went [1] 19/22</p> <p>I weren't [1] 16/22</p> <p>I would [10] 3/3 4/4 5/5 7/20 8/19 9/10 20/24 21/18 23/1 37/22</p> <p>I wouldn't [4] 12/15 12/16 38/4 38/5</p> <p>I'd [11] 13/8 14/11 18/10 19/12 21/5 32/5 39/4 39/6 42/25 44/19 44/22</p> <p>I'll [2] 11/25 47/4</p> <p>I'm [4] 3/17 4/7 13/11 32/11</p> <p>I've [14] 4/20 26/17 28/15 28/17 31/4 33/22 35/12 35/12 35/12 35/23 36/21 38/24 39/18 48/2</p> <p>idea [1] 13/21</p> <p>ideally [1] 44/11</p> <p>ie [1] 34/5</p> <p>if [35] 1/18 1/21 2/1 3/11 9/10 14/20 16/6 16/24 21/6 21/16 21/20 22/10 24/20 28/19 28/23 32/10</p>
--	--	---	--	---

<p>I</p> <p>if... [19] 32/10 33/5 33/9 33/12 33/18 34/8 34/11 34/13 34/16 34/20 34/24 36/1 37/20 37/24 38/6 41/10 42/17 47/2 48/16</p> <p>illness [3] 4/7 23/7 23/8</p> <p>illnesses [1] 23/5</p> <p>image [1] 9/14</p> <p>immediate [1] 3/21</p> <p>immediately [1] 12/7</p> <p>immense [1] 40/1</p> <p>Immensely [2] 49/16 49/17</p> <p>impact [1] 14/1</p> <p>implemented [1] 46/7</p> <p>implications [1] 4/15</p> <p>importance [1] 48/22</p> <p>impression [3] 7/1 7/4 31/20</p> <p>incident [13] 16/16 16/18 16/20 26/8 26/21 28/24 29/8 29/8 31/1 32/7 32/10 33/23 48/13</p> <p>incidents [5] 27/25 28/22 42/25 43/4 44/18</p> <p>include [4] 18/21 22/24 26/18 43/21</p> <p>included [1] 10/6</p> <p>including [1] 10/14</p> <p>incorporate [1] 46/25</p> <p>increased [1] 23/2</p> <p>incurred [1] 16/3</p> <p>indeed [3] 2/16 3/19 41/11</p> <p>index [1] 18/18</p> <p>indicate [1] 49/8</p> <p>individual [5] 2/23 2/24 3/7 3/16 10/15</p> <p>individuals [4] 7/17 8/1 13/9 39/6</p> <p>inexperienced [1] 45/5</p> <p>information [24] 2/2 2/19 3/6 3/15 10/24 11/6 11/8 15/5 15/5 15/8 15/10 15/25 16/12 17/18 28/14 29/7 29/7 29/21 35/13 36/21 37/17 37/20 37/20 38/25</p> <p>informed [3] 9/3 22/14 23/21</p> <p>initially [1] 11/9</p> <p>injuries [1] 27/5</p> <p>inquiry [8] 3/23 8/22 26/16 36/17 37/5 38/20 38/20 45/11</p> <p>instead [1] 43/12</p>	<p>instigated [1] 16/20</p> <p>intelligence [1] 47/1</p> <p>interacted [1] 20/21</p> <p>interest [2] 35/5 35/9</p> <p>internally [1] 44/4</p> <p>interpret [1] 6/22</p> <p>interpretation [2] 6/17 7/4</p> <p>interrupted [1] 9/21</p> <p>interventions [2] 24/8 24/16</p> <p>interview [4] 3/25 4/17 6/9 22/5</p> <p>interviews [1] 7/22</p> <p>intimidated [1] 13/3</p> <p>intimidation [1] 10/13</p> <p>into [19] 5/24 8/14 9/1 9/5 11/10 14/2 14/13 20/6 26/2 27/7 27/14 30/1 30/23 39/4 40/10 40/16 46/1 47/1 47/16</p> <p>introduction [1] 20/7</p> <p>investigate [7] 28/4 29/3 29/6 29/16 29/20 30/8 49/15</p> <p>investigated [1] 30/9</p> <p>investigating [2] 28/7 30/5</p> <p>investigation [13] 26/4 28/11 29/11 29/12 29/23 30/1 30/11 36/25 37/9 38/18 38/22 40/18 47/3</p> <p>investigations [6] 40/2 40/3 40/7 46/10 47/8 47/12</p> <p>invited [1] 46/19</p> <p>involved [6] 11/20 13/14 14/5 14/6 23/23 30/2</p> <p>involving [2] 16/18 26/8</p> <p>IP [2] 31/2 35/5</p> <p>is [102]</p> <p>isn't [4] 29/25 30/5 35/11 38/15</p> <p>isolation [2] 4/1 9/1</p> <p>issue [3] 37/10 39/19 39/25</p> <p>issued [2] 43/12 43/15</p> <p>issues [2] 9/11 26/11</p> <p>it [139]</p> <p>it's [27] 1/11 2/24 6/2 7/8 7/16 13/2 15/19 17/2 19/11 29/11 29/21 29/23 29/24 30/22 32/10 33/12 34/1 35/25 39/1 39/2 40/10 40/10 42/13 45/25 47/22 47/23 47/24</p> <p>itself [2] 26/4 39/15</p>	<p>J</p> <p>January [2] 10/4 27/21</p> <p>January 2022 [2] 10/4 27/21</p> <p>job [1] 47/20</p> <p>jobs [1] 10/19</p> <p>joined [1] 48/17</p> <p>July [6] 26/9 27/7 27/13 27/14 27/24 44/15</p> <p>July 2020 [1] 27/7</p> <p>July 2021 [2] 27/13 27/14</p> <p>July 2022 [1] 27/24</p> <p>jump [1] 27/4</p> <p>jumped [1] 20/3</p> <p>juncture [1] 43/7</p> <p>June [1] 44/15</p> <p>just [46] 2/4 2/7 2/19 4/13 6/13 7/18 8/17 9/8 9/14 10/25 11/1 11/13 11/13 12/5 12/8 12/12 12/13 12/14 12/20 12/22 13/14 15/2 17/2 17/3 17/12 19/13 21/4 21/4 25/6 26/11 26/21 28/10 28/10 28/17 28/21 28/22 34/9 35/15 39/18 42/17 43/13 44/13 44/21 47/4 48/9 48/12</p> <p>K</p> <p>Kaur [3] 1/3 1/6 50/4</p> <p>keen [1] 13/14</p> <p>key [1] 24/18</p> <p>kind [3] 13/21 45/21 47/3</p> <p>Kingdom [1] 17/21</p> <p>knew [1] 21/16</p> <p>knocked [1] 19/25</p> <p>knocking [1] 41/20</p> <p>know [18] 1/14 1/23 5/19 7/19 11/18 13/7 13/10 13/20 13/24 14/1 21/3 26/9 26/24 30/13 36/17 43/10 44/23 48/22</p> <p>knowledge [4] 21/13 23/4 23/6 25/22</p> <p>known [5] 27/25 29/25 33/7 33/14 37/21</p> <p>L</p> <p>labour [1] 35/15</p> <p>lack [10] 6/18 6/22 6/22 6/23 6/24 37/6 38/15 39/21 39/21 40/8</p> <p>lasted [1] 7/10</p> <p>later [5] 3/9 8/25 11/6 14/19 23/21</p>	<p>laugh [1] 22/12</p> <p>learnt [1] 11/7</p> <p>least [2] 34/21 43/21</p> <p>leave [1] 27/22</p> <p>left [1] 31/20</p> <p>length [2] 7/13 7/22</p> <p>less [2] 23/7 23/9</p> <p>let [3] 27/22 38/2 38/5</p> <p>letter [1] 11/21</p> <p>letterbox [1] 41/20</p> <p>letters [4] 4/19 5/1 12/18 19/5</p> <p>level [2] 14/24 17/7</p> <p>levels [2] 14/16 14/17</p> <p>life [3] 6/16 8/14 10/9</p> <p>light [9] 28/3 28/17 29/2 29/15 29/19 30/7 30/13 43/3 43/9</p> <p>like [8] 1/19 11/12 18/10 19/13 37/18 39/7 42/25 48/24</p> <p>limited [2] 16/14 24/16</p> <p>line [6] 19/15 25/25 26/1 39/3 39/25 40/1</p> <p>lines [2] 6/5 22/9</p> <p>listened [1] 26/17</p> <p>listening [1] 26/15</p> <p>little [6] 4/19 7/9 12/21 13/4 15/25 42/17</p> <p>lived [1] 9/3</p> <p>lives [1] 34/5</p> <p>living [1] 9/5</p> <p>local [1] 44/8</p> <p>log [12] 29/8 29/9 30/19 32/2 32/4 32/5 32/7 32/10 33/18 34/8 34/21 38/25</p> <p>long [7] 7/15 14/10 37/7 41/3 44/13 44/23 48/10</p> <p>long-term [1] 37/7</p> <p>longer [2] 7/17 14/6</p> <p>look [12] 21/19 28/6 28/10 30/1 32/10 34/10 34/24 42/21 42/24 47/16 48/4 48/25</p> <p>looked [4] 30/19 32/3 32/5 32/7</p> <p>looking [12] 5/8 5/9 5/10 12/16 12/17 19/23 37/2 45/19 46/14 48/9 48/14 48/24</p> <p>lot [4] 12/6 14/6 30/9 30/10</p> <p>M</p> <p>made [6] 8/8 20/14 47/20 47/22 47/23 47/25</p> <p>main [1] 24/21</p>	<p>mainly [1] 21/16</p> <p>make [6] 5/6 13/3 13/3 35/14 36/12 39/1</p> <p>making [3] 28/16 32/1 38/13</p> <p>Male [1] 38/4</p> <p>male's [2] 32/13 34/4</p> <p>management [1] 46/16</p> <p>managers [2] 40/1 40/1</p> <p>mannerisms [1] 4/5</p> <p>many [1] 23/2</p> <p>March [4] 1/1 26/1 44/15 46/3</p> <p>March 2022 [1] 26/1</p> <p>marker [1] 27/18</p> <p>marks [1] 10/4</p> <p>MASH [2] 43/20 43/24</p> <p>masking [3] 22/21 22/24 24/1</p> <p>master's [1] 10/6</p> <p>matter [8] 28/4 28/5 29/4 30/8 31/11 34/21 38/11 38/12</p> <p>matters [2] 30/1 49/15</p> <p>may [8] 5/21 17/25 23/3 23/7 25/25 26/24 27/10 44/15</p> <p>May 2020 [1] 26/24</p> <p>May 2021 [1] 27/10</p> <p>May 2022 [1] 25/25</p> <p>maybe [2] 11/3 42/24</p> <p>me [19] 4/2 4/25 9/10 10/17 11/12 11/18 12/8 12/16 12/17 12/20 13/16 15/8 22/14 34/11 35/19 37/18 37/20 39/14 45/6</p> <p>mean [6] 1/18 3/2 12/13 15/2 21/17 46/18</p> <p>meaningful [1] 24/7</p> <p>meant [3] 4/12 6/12 11/3</p> <p>medical [8] 1/18 4/7 7/25 16/11 18/17 20/11 20/13 22/18</p> <p>medication [2] 24/12 24/19</p> <p>meeting [3] 3/22 3/24 11/14</p> <p>members [2] 13/24 22/13</p> <p>mental [11] 4/6 16/19 23/5 23/7 23/8 24/10 24/11 24/13 24/16 24/20 24/22</p> <p>mention [2] 16/2 16/5</p> <p>mentioned [3] 9/11 19/5 48/2</p> <p>met [1] 1/23</p> <p>meted [2] 10/14</p>
---	--	---	---	---

<p>M</p> <p>meted... [1] 10/20 metrics [1] 47/6 MI5 [1] 27/10 might [6] 5/7 11/20 13/21 19/21 47/8 48/23 Milton [2] 4/16 13/12 mind [1] 43/11 mindful [1] 16/13 minute [3] 7/18 7/21 25/6 minutes [2] 7/11 14/11 MIT [2] 35/21 37/6 mixed [3] 14/22 15/13 15/15 Mm [2] 12/11 23/25 Mm-hm [2] 12/11 23/25 Moloney [3] 16/25 17/1 50/5 moment [3] 6/6 12/9 12/14 monitor [1] 36/25 monitored [1] 11/16 monitoring [1] 20/8 months [3] 35/17 39/4 44/16 more [17] 3/5 4/23 7/19 12/6 13/5 19/22 20/22 24/17 30/10 34/13 34/14 35/23 37/8 38/13 38/16 42/9 48/6 morning [1] 49/21 most [2] 3/7 48/3 mostly [1] 16/9 mother [6] 11/15 13/13 17/12 17/15 17/19 18/4 move [1] 11/14 moved [3] 14/15 17/16 17/18 moving [5] 10/6 11/9 14/25 19/4 21/8 Mr [19] 14/22 16/25 17/1 18/13 18/14 25/3 25/16 40/22 40/24 41/2 42/1 42/21 43/3 46/19 48/4 50/5 50/6 50/9 50/10 Mr Beer [1] 25/3 Mr Beggs [3] 40/22 40/24 50/10 MR BLAKE [8] 25/16 41/2 42/1 42/21 43/3 46/19 48/4 50/9 Mr Calocane's [1] 14/22 Mr Moloney [3] 16/25 17/1 50/5 Mr Straw [3] 18/13 18/14 50/6 Mrs [3] 21/24 22/11</p>	<p>22/14 Mrs Calocane [3] 21/24 22/11 22/14 Ms [11] 1/3 1/6 1/9 1/14 1/23 8/21 14/13 17/2 18/12 18/15 50/4 Ms Calocane [1] 14/13 Ms Doherty [7] 1/9 1/14 1/23 8/21 17/2 18/12 18/15 Ms Kaur [3] 1/3 1/6 50/4 much [9] 12/4 12/22 17/14 20/17 23/4 24/25 25/7 39/23 48/7 Multi [2] 43/19 43/24 Multi-Agency [2] 43/19 43/24 multidisciplinary [2] 1/16 1/18 Mum [2] 13/14 14/6 Mum's [1] 14/4 murder [3] 4/10 4/12 4/15 my [36] 1/8 4/7 4/10 4/12 4/16 4/17 4/20 6/3 7/21 8/25 13/6 13/8 15/3 19/15 19/19 20/7 20/16 21/13 22/4 24/15 26/2 26/3 26/4 28/15 29/22 32/1 32/5 38/11 40/10 43/1 45/6 45/22 47/11 47/24 49/12 49/13 myself [2] 1/18 12/23 mystery [1] 45/14</p> <p>N</p> <p>name [4] 1/7 1/8 34/12 45/24 names [1] 8/17 narrative [1] 14/4 navigate [1] 39/8 near [1] 32/14 nearer [1] 34/5 necessarily [1] 3/4 need [4] 36/23 36/25 47/24 49/6 needs [2] 24/11 46/15 negatively [1] 9/19 neighbour's [1] 16/21 neighbourhood [1] 35/20 Neural [1] 20/8 never [2] 37/22 37/22 new [3] 13/7 35/16 35/18 next [1] 19/23 NGPF0000003 [3] 30/18 34/9 40/25 NGPF0000005 [1] 32/10 NGPF0003167 [1]</p>	<p>19/7 NHS [1] 44/8 NHS Trust [1] 44/8 NICHE [10] 42/24 46/24 46/25 47/1 48/5 48/10 48/15 48/21 48/25 49/7 no [51] nodded [10] 5/14 6/19 27/2 27/6 27/9 27/17 27/20 28/2 36/24 37/1 non [1] 4/23 non-verbally [1] 4/23 nor [2] 4/11 5/23 normal [2] 11/1 11/4 not [45] 2/12 4/7 4/8 4/11 5/19 5/23 7/17 8/2 9/25 13/4 13/11 13/21 15/20 16/17 19/21 20/17 20/19 23/3 23/20 24/7 24/18 27/25 28/9 28/18 29/23 32/16 32/16 34/1 35/3 35/5 35/6 35/6 35/9 35/9 35/25 36/1 36/9 36/11 37/17 38/4 39/6 39/14 40/2 41/3 42/13 note [3] 4/10 14/21 22/20 noted [5] 4/20 7/8 8/25 15/3 20/18 notes [15] 2/5 14/23 18/18 18/21 18/24 19/3 19/5 19/10 20/10 20/11 20/13 20/14 21/1 22/6 22/18 nothing [1] 4/17 Notice [6] 42/7 42/9 43/7 43/8 43/13 43/18 Nottingham [2] 9/15 45/20 Nottinghamshire [1] 44/4 November [1] 25/18 now [18] 2/4 17/11 26/13 27/24 30/13 32/21 35/14 36/17 37/2 38/21 39/5 40/12 42/19 43/2 43/6 43/10 45/19 49/11 number [2] 10/5 18/17 numbers [1] 41/10 numbers 9 [1] 41/10</p> <p>O</p> <p>obligation [1] 45/21 occasion [2] 31/25 32/25 occasions [2] 41/14 41/15 occur [1] 36/13 occurred [1] 28/19 occurrence [11]</p>	<p>28/15 29/8 30/19 32/2 32/4 32/5 34/8 35/8 35/13 36/19 38/25 occurrence log [6] 30/19 32/2 32/4 32/5 34/8 38/25 occurrences [1] 45/2 OEL [1] 41/10 off [9] 32/1 33/19 33/22 35/13 37/4 45/22 45/23 46/8 47/4 offence [6] 7/3 14/1 20/11 21/11 28/7 28/8 offences [7] 5/25 6/12 9/9 10/9 18/18 21/16 28/12 offend [1] 13/22 offender [7] 31/2 31/5 36/5 36/8 36/10 41/6 41/21 officer [4] 27/16 38/2 39/24 41/2 officers [5] 5/12 23/3 45/7 47/25 49/8 Okay [6] 19/12 19/17 20/22 21/8 24/4 24/25 old [1] 17/17 on [71] one [13] 6/17 7/3 7/4 9/14 15/23 17/6 19/10 19/11 19/13 24/18 32/7 36/12 36/23 ones [3] 36/23 47/17 48/1 only [3] 17/2 26/11 30/19 onwards [2] 16/7 34/12 open [4] 4/22 7/19 20/16 20/19 operation [8] 45/20 45/24 45/25 46/7 46/12 47/13 47/19 49/13 opinion [1] 31/1 opposed [2] 16/20 24/23 opposite [1] 4/2 options [1] 10/5 or [25] 2/16 4/6 6/22 6/23 9/25 11/19 11/23 13/8 19/5 20/6 26/21 28/12 32/24 33/7 33/20 37/7 37/17 38/4 39/6 42/11 42/12 42/13 42/20 43/13 44/7 order [1] 47/9 organisation [2] 39/25 47/11 original [1] 32/22 other [15] 5/6 5/7 5/8 12/21 15/10 15/11 15/11 17/8 21/2 28/12 28/22 29/24 44/1 44/6 44/7</p>	<p>others [3] 3/21 8/4 18/6 ought [2] 44/10 46/19 our [3] 43/19 43/19 47/6 out [24] 2/2 3/22 10/14 10/20 19/12 19/22 20/3 20/3 20/13 21/1 22/8 26/14 27/4 28/11 28/19 28/25 29/1 30/15 32/14 33/25 34/6 38/9 43/1 44/23 Outcome [1] 34/22 outlined [1] 40/13 outright [1] 7/18 over [4] 33/5 34/13 34/16 34/20 overly [2] 4/17 12/4 overseeing [2] 35/17 39/5 overspeaking [2] 11/22 39/20 own [4] 3/23 43/1 45/22 49/12</p> <p>P</p> <p>page [35] 2/1 3/17 7/3 8/12 14/20 16/6 17/4 17/14 18/1 19/7 19/13 19/14 20/5 21/21 23/16 24/5 30/22 30/23 30/23 32/11 32/12 33/5 34/4 34/11 34/12 34/13 34/14 34/16 34/17 34/20 34/25 36/2 38/8 40/25 50/2 page 10 [1] 16/6 page 173 [1] 19/7 page 19 [1] 24/5 page 2 [2] 2/1 32/11 page 3 [1] 3/17 page 4 [3] 7/3 8/12 23/16 page 5 [2] 17/14 21/21 page 6 [3] 30/23 34/11 34/12 page 7 [7] 14/20 17/4 30/22 30/23 36/2 38/8 40/25 page 9 [2] 34/16 34/17 paid [1] 16/1 papers [1] 2/16 paragraph [19] 2/1 3/18 7/3 8/12 9/2 14/12 14/21 15/3 15/24 16/7 16/16 17/4 17/13 21/22 22/7 25/24 26/1 38/8 38/8 paragraph 10 [1] 26/1 paragraph 10.1 [1] 15/24</p>
---	---	---	---	---

P	36/18 37/3 37/11 37/15 45/12 PC Barnes's [3] 30/15 31/19 37/5 PC Beardsmore's [1] 45/15 PC Pritchard [2] 27/16 37/25 PC Sarah [1] 44/23 PCs [1] 39/25 pending [1] 2/17 people [6] 13/3 13/3 19/20 42/17 48/4 48/23 performance [1] 14/13 perhaps [3] 11/2 26/21 48/3 period [3] 19/6 46/16 47/10 perpetrators [1] 13/24 person [4] 26/22 29/12 30/5 42/12 personally [2] 45/6 47/7 perspective [1] 3/1 phone [2] 13/13 13/17 picked [1] 42/4 picking [3] 45/12 45/14 46/8 picture [2] 42/10 48/6 place [1] 45/20 placed [2] 27/18 27/21 plan [2] 36/25 41/23 please [26] 1/7 17/25 18/1 19/7 19/8 19/13 19/14 21/19 21/21 21/21 22/7 23/16 24/4 25/12 30/18 30/18 30/22 32/11 33/5 33/12 34/20 35/2 38/7 38/7 40/25 41/1 pm [4] 1/2 25/9 25/11 49/23 PNC [19] 2/14 27/18 28/10 28/18 28/25 29/2 29/10 29/17 29/18 29/19 30/16 42/22 46/22 46/23 48/4 48/9 48/15 48/25 49/7 point [13] 5/2 11/4 31/9 32/3 32/5 35/15 35/17 37/7 37/15 39/4 42/25 44/16 44/22 points [2] 5/6 25/24 police [6] 26/24 31/4 36/5 41/6 44/5 45/20 police's [1] 38/10 policing [1] 35/20 polite [1] 4/5 ponder [1] 19/21	poor [2] 38/22 38/22 Portugal [1] 17/20 position [2] 28/23 45/19 possibility [1] 15/22 possible [1] 18/8 possibly [3] 5/1 24/12 33/23 post [1] 41/20 potential [1] 42/20 Power [2] 47/6 47/16 Power BI [2] 47/6 47/16 PPN [1] 43/21 practice [1] 13/6 practitioners [5] 20/17 20/19 20/20 20/23 23/5 pre [1] 20/11 pre-offence [1] 20/11 predominantly [2] 17/22 18/7 pregnant [4] 37/13 37/16 37/24 41/12 present [1] 4/14 presented [1] 11/19 presenting [2] 3/20 7/5 pressure [2] 40/2 40/5 pressures [3] 35/19 39/2 40/14 previous [7] 8/23 10/11 10/14 30/1 32/25 34/4 43/4 previously [3] 26/17 33/3 35/12 prior [9] 8/14 9/5 9/8 10/9 35/19 42/25 43/22 46/17 46/18 prioritisation [1] 39/2 prioritise [1] 47/9 priority [2] 3/4 11/5 prison [13] 4/9 5/12 5/15 5/24 6/1 8/1 9/5 19/5 22/25 23/3 23/19 24/8 24/15 Pritchard [2] 27/16 37/25 privy [1] 37/19 probably [2] 23/1 47/22 probation [1] 44/24 probe [2] 12/19 13/4 probed [1] 4/18 problem [2] 38/15 38/16 proceedings [1] 2/16 producing [1] 19/1 professional [4] 1/19 4/7 43/1 49/12 professionals [3] 15/18 21/2 22/1 programming [2] 11/20 23/23 properly [9] 28/4	29/3 29/5 29/16 29/20 30/7 33/18 37/3 39/23 property [1] 9/8 prosecution [4] 35/1 35/6 35/10 36/1 protect [1] 49/8 protection [7] 42/7 42/9 43/7 43/8 43/12 43/15 43/18 provide [2] 35/2 35/16 provided [6] 2/22 15/5 15/8 28/14 35/22 37/8 providing [2] 31/24 47/9 provision [1] 24/12 PS [5] 25/12 25/14 25/17 26/2 50/8 PS Ashleigh [3] 25/12 25/14 50/8 PS Barnes [1] 26/2 psychiatric [1] 20/6 psychiatrist [1] 1/19 public [9] 38/19 38/20 42/7 42/9 43/7 43/8 43/12 43/15 43/17 publics [2] 35/5 35/9 pull [1] 42/17 pulled [1] 29/9 purely [2] 29/6 32/1 purpose [1] 40/16 pushed [1] 33/16 put [8] 15/11 20/6 22/15 37/11 38/1 40/10 41/24 44/13 putting [3] 20/22 40/16 43/11	rapidly [1] 4/21 rather [2] 11/14 26/22 rationale [2] 35/8 35/22 read [8] 1/10 4/25 7/24 19/12 22/8 22/18 25/25 32/11 reading [1] 41/17 real' [1] 23/20 really [5] 8/7 8/23 12/3 13/13 48/10 reason [5] 6/3 21/4 24/1 24/3 24/22 reasons [1] 45/9 recall [8] 6/2 6/6 9/4 10/23 11/22 15/13 22/22 31/13 receiving [1] 24/6 recollection [3] 1/12 5/4 32/6 recommend [1] 3/19 record [3] 2/14 15/24 21/9 recorded [1] 15/21 records [11] 2/8 2/10 2/22 3/11 3/14 5/18 7/25 15/11 15/14 16/9 16/11 reduce [1] 40/6 reference [2] 33/25 35/25 referral [2] 3/4 8/20 referred [1] 27/11 referring [1] 19/10 reflect [1] 38/21 reflecting [2] 28/18 28/21 reflection [2] 39/21 40/13 refuse [1] 7/19 refused [1] 27/22 regarding [1] 15/25 regret [1] 40/12 relation [1] 38/10 relatively [1] 45/5 relevance [1] 2/25 remain [1] 16/24 remaining [1] 24/24 remember [4] 4/16 31/13 45/1 48/16 reminds [1] 48/4 remorse [2] 6/23 7/9 Remote [1] 20/8 repeat [2] 28/20 34/3 reply [1] 41/20 report [28] 1/21 1/21 1/22 1/23 2/1 3/10 3/17 4/10 5/11 6/3 6/7 7/1 8/12 8/25 9/2 12/1 14/20 14/20 17/3 17/4 17/14 17/25 21/10 21/19 22/20 23/15 24/5 27/24 reported [7] 8/15 17/19 18/4 18/22
			Q qualifications [2] 14/24 17/7 question [9] 4/13 9/25 12/19 24/4 28/20 33/9 34/25 43/9 44/20 Questioned [10] 1/6 17/1 18/14 25/16 40/24 50/4 50/5 50/6 50/9 50/10 questions [9] 16/23 18/13 25/4 40/20 40/21 40/22 48/3 48/8 50/11 quickly [1] 33/19 quite [13] 4/4 4/13 6/4 6/14 9/15 11/19 12/6 12/7 13/5 13/13 13/17 14/6 33/23	
			R racial [1] 18/8 RAG [1] 47/18 Rampton [3] 1/16 3/2 13/19 ran [1] 30/15	

<p>R</p> <p>reported... [3] 22/11 28/8 28/24</p> <p>reporting [2] 15/13 15/15</p> <p>reports [5] 14/22 15/11 20/12 21/13 45/23</p> <p>represent [1] 18/15</p> <p>request [1] 36/12</p> <p>requested [1] 42/2</p> <p>required [1] 46/9</p> <p>research [1] 31/24</p> <p>resided [2] 17/22 18/7</p> <p>residents [2] 27/1 27/8</p> <p>respect [10] 3/13 6/8 6/20 7/6 26/20 30/16 31/24 38/10 45/2 48/3</p> <p>respects [1] 13/25</p> <p>respond [1] 8/2</p> <p>response [1] 38/11</p> <p>responses [1] 4/5</p> <p>rest [1] 6/16</p> <p>restrained [2] 26/25 27/8</p> <p>restricted [1] 37/16</p> <p>retrospect [1] 11/3</p> <p>return [1] 18/1</p> <p>returned [1] 27/3</p> <p>review [3] 30/10 44/2 47/12</p> <p>reviewed [1] 33/23</p> <p>reviewing [2] 15/10 43/20</p> <p>reviews [1] 47/9</p> <p>right [12] 2/13 15/15 16/4 18/19 21/12 25/5 25/5 25/19 32/8 34/24 40/23 49/18</p> <p>right-hand [1] 34/24</p> <p>RIO [2] 2/5 16/9</p> <p>risk [8] 3/6 3/20 3/21 9/1 23/2 24/18 37/11 37/21</p> <p>role [4] 3/3 4/7 13/18 39/5</p> <p>room [4] 4/1 4/1 13/23 27/14</p> <p>roughly [1] 39/5</p> <p>round [1] 45/3</p> <p>route [1] 24/10</p>	<p>same [9] 18/2 23/16 27/3 28/23 31/2 31/3 31/16 31/17 40/7</p> <p>Sarah [3] 41/5 41/11 44/23</p> <p>sat [1] 4/2</p> <p>saw [1] 18/17</p> <p>say [32] 4/4 5/5 5/8 5/11 5/23 6/17 7/1 7/16 7/20 12/1 12/16 13/22 14/11 14/12 15/19 15/23 19/18 20/19 20/24 21/18 22/4 23/1 23/10 23/17 24/3 30/12 37/18 39/7 46/18 46/19 48/18 48/23</p> <p>saying [5] 2/13 15/15 18/25 19/15 28/9</p> <p>says [7] 17/18 30/24 32/12 33/11 35/4 36/3 39/11</p> <p>scared [1] 20/3</p> <p>school [7] 11/2 11/7 14/14 17/20 17/24 18/5 48/16</p> <p>schooling [2] 10/23 11/10</p> <p>schools [2] 10/24 17/21</p> <p>screaming [1] 19/20</p> <p>screams [1] 19/24</p> <p>screen [7] 4/2 19/7 21/20 23/15 23/17 24/5 38/7</p> <p>scroll [3] 33/13 34/9 34/20</p> <p>scrolling [1] 34/11</p> <p>scrutinised [1] 33/18</p> <p>searched [1] 19/25</p> <p>Sebastian [15] 10/15 26/9 27/13 27/23 27/25 28/24 31/4 31/6 36/4 36/6 36/12 36/15 36/20 41/4 42/2</p> <p>Sebastian's [1] 27/14</p> <p>second [3] 19/21 30/25 40/1</p> <p>secondary [1] 13/25</p> <p>section [2] 15/9 18/3</p> <p>sections [1] 15/12</p> <p>secure [2] 13/6 13/19</p> <p>see [15] 3/18 4/1 19/8 19/16 21/17 23/6 23/24 32/21 33/5 34/12 34/18 41/2 41/11 41/16 41/17</p> <p>seem [1] 8/24</p> <p>seemed [2] 6/13 20/25</p> <p>seems [2] 8/8 39/11</p> <p>seen [8] 20/11 21/1 21/2 21/10 32/21 36/22 37/24 37/25</p> <p>semantics [1] 31/14</p> <p>senior [2] 1/15 2/20</p>	<p>sent [2] 42/13 43/18</p> <p>September [4] 16/16 16/18 16/20 27/15</p> <p>September 2021 [2] 16/18 27/15</p> <p>sergeant [2] 35/17 44/14</p> <p>serious [1] 6/15</p> <p>seriously [2] 27/15 28/22</p> <p>seriousness [1] 7/2</p> <p>served [1] 40/16</p> <p>service [2] 23/3 24/8</p> <p>services [2] 24/15 44/1</p> <p>set [5] 2/2 3/22 20/13 26/14 38/9</p> <p>seven [1] 17/19</p> <p>several [1] 16/2</p> <p>severity [2] 4/12 5/24</p> <p>share [5] 10/17 43/25 44/3 44/4 44/7</p> <p>she [20] 14/16 18/6 21/15 21/16 22/10 22/17 26/3 30/24 31/20 36/3 36/11 37/6 37/13 37/16 37/24 41/13 41/23 41/25 45/9 45/14</p> <p>she'd [2] 14/5 45/3</p> <p>she's [2] 41/16 41/24</p> <p>shifted [1] 4/21</p> <p>shook [1] 5/17</p> <p>short [2] 25/6 25/10</p> <p>short break [1] 25/10</p> <p>should [17] 25/17 25/25 28/25 29/1 29/1 29/14 29/18 29/25 30/12 30/14 35/2 35/22 37/8 38/12 43/15 48/23 48/24</p> <p>show [1] 35/23</p> <p>showing [1] 48/20</p> <p>side [4] 5/10 12/17 17/8 34/24</p> <p>sight [1] 15/14</p> <p>significant [1] 27/4</p> <p>signs [2] 23/8 23/9</p> <p>simple [2] 28/10 28/18</p> <p>simply [1] 8/2</p> <p>since [1] 21/11</p> <p>single [2] 15/20 28/7</p> <p>sits [1] 45/7</p> <p>situation [2] 13/2 46/13</p> <p>slight [2] 35/16 47/4</p> <p>slightly [2] 5/7 33/13</p> <p>small [7] 25/13 25/14 25/17 25/24 26/5 34/18 50/8</p> <p>smashed [1] 26/25</p> <p>so [65]</p> <p>social [6] 1/15 2/20 3/1 3/9 9/1 13/18</p> <p>solely [1] 38/24</p>	<p>some [18] 4/5 4/6 4/19 5/5 7/16 7/19 13/25 14/23 15/5 19/12 20/8 22/16 23/18 26/15 26/17 40/22 44/13 48/23</p> <p>somebody [9] 3/2 3/3 4/14 26/9 28/8 28/9 30/2 45/12 48/20</p> <p>somebody's [1] 42/10</p> <p>someone [3] 5/21 11/20 20/1</p> <p>something [17] 3/8 6/4 6/14 8/19 11/19 12/9 13/5 13/7 13/23 27/11 32/16 37/17 40/10 42/9 43/2 48/24 49/11</p> <p>somewhere [1] 39/5</p> <p>son [3] 17/19 21/24 22/14</p> <p>sorry [11] 9/25 10/1 10/2 11/13 18/1 23/11 28/20 34/3 40/14 42/16 44/20</p> <p>sort [10] 5/20 6/13 12/17 12/21 13/7 21/4 37/4 40/14 45/22 46/19</p> <p>speak [7] 9/19 31/5 36/5 36/8 36/10 37/23 41/6</p> <p>speaking [5] 6/11 12/5 30/25 31/15 36/19</p> <p>specific [3] 5/21 37/9 44/17</p> <p>specifically [3] 10/13 28/5 44/19</p> <p>spine [1] 20/4</p> <p>spoke [3] 8/14 13/10 31/8</p> <p>spoken [6] 4/9 13/12 31/4 31/19 36/4 41/3</p> <p>spoken about [1] 4/9</p> <p>spot [2] 23/8 23/9</p> <p>stabilise [1] 24/12</p> <p>staff [7] 11/18 22/25 23/2 23/18 23/22 23/22 24/2</p> <p>stage [3] 3/12 8/20 24/7</p> <p>stages [1] 15/16</p> <p>stalked [1] 28/9</p> <p>stalking [3] 32/24 44/20 49/4</p> <p>stare [1] 4/23</p> <p>Staring [1] 12/24</p> <p>start [4] 17/4 30/22 37/18 49/21</p> <p>starting [2] 15/3 34/10</p> <p>state [1] 24/13</p> <p>stated [1] 45/3</p> <p>statement [16] 1/9</p>	<p>1/11 4/21 25/18 25/22 26/6 26/15 38/7 39/10 39/10 39/15 39/18 40/9 40/9 40/11 40/16</p> <p>states [5] 25/25 26/2 31/6 34/4 36/6</p> <p>stating [1] 14/23</p> <p>still [5] 9/2 13/4 25/4 34/14 41/17</p> <p>straight [1] 17/8</p> <p>Straw [3] 18/13 18/14 50/6</p> <p>strength [1] 42/20</p> <p>studies [2] 9/21 9/22</p> <p>studying [1] 9/12</p> <p>subject [2] 11/23 18/2</p> <p>suboptimal [1] 46/10</p> <p>subpar [1] 40/18</p> <p>subsequent [1] 6/15</p> <p>such [5] 10/5 18/8 21/25 45/9 47/21</p> <p>suddenly [1] 14/6</p> <p>suffered [1] 18/23</p> <p>suggest [2] 4/6 31/1</p> <p>suggested [2] 24/22 33/20</p> <p>suggestion [1] 31/11</p> <p>suggestive [2] 32/16 34/1</p> <p>summary [3] 3/18 43/3 43/22</p> <p>supervise [3] 37/3 39/13 39/23</p> <p>supervising [3] 26/20 26/22 47/21</p> <p>supervision [12] 26/3 26/3 26/4 30/20 37/7 37/7 37/8 38/19 38/23 40/18 44/17 48/14</p> <p>supervisor [8] 30/25 31/8 36/22 37/19 39/3 47/11 47/23 48/1</p> <p>supervisors [1] 47/7</p> <p>supervisory [4] 30/10 44/22 45/21 47/2</p> <p>support [4] 24/11 24/11 24/16 34/22</p> <p>supporting [3] 35/6 35/10 36/1</p> <p>suppose [2] 2/25 2/25</p> <p>sure [1] 14/16</p> <p>Surely [1] 29/11</p> <p>surprise [2] 5/16 8/21</p> <p>suspect [5] 32/24 33/7 33/14 42/13 46/16</p> <p>sustaining [1] 27/4</p> <p>sworn [2] 1/5 50/3</p> <p>symptoms [4] 21/25 22/21 22/25 24/2</p> <p>system [6] 8/1 11/10</p>
<p>S</p> <p>sad [4] 13/13 13/17 14/7 14/8</p> <p>safeguarding [3] 42/11 43/19 43/25</p> <p>said [18] 4/9 6/3 6/4 10/1 10/25 11/1 11/2 12/9 14/16 15/16 21/4 22/11 22/12 26/21 35/12 38/8 42/1 42/21</p> <p>saliently [1] 48/3</p>				

S	26/1 27/11 27/23 32/19 33/9 33/12 34/8 35/7 37/21 40/25 41/10 43/17 43/20 43/24 44/13	45/8 timetabling [1] 26/11 today [7] 1/11 26/8 28/19 28/23 35/19 38/22 49/19 together [2] 16/10 31/23 told [2] 28/17 28/21 tomorrow [1] 49/21 too [3] 39/22 39/23 41/3 took [1] 41/3 top [2] 39/8 41/2 touch [1] 14/19 touched [1] 12/10 towards [4] 4/18 5/15 21/22 23/18 training [9] 23/5 39/4 39/7 44/17 44/19 44/22 48/12 48/14 48/16 treated [1] 24/20 treatment [2] 24/7 24/23 tried [5] 12/19 19/21 27/14 41/16 41/23 true [2] 1/11 25/22 Trust [1] 44/8 truth [2] 39/10 40/9 try [1] 16/10 trying [3] 3/5 39/8 40/6 turn [2] 32/11 36/1 turned [3] 5/7 20/3 27/10 two [8] 25/24 26/5 32/12 41/14 41/15 45/8 46/4 46/5 two years [2] 46/4 46/5 type [2] 3/12 44/18 types [2] 2/21 7/14	Unsure [1] 33/11 until [3] 5/2 18/18 49/24 untoward [1] 4/17 up [19] 5/2 11/17 11/21 11/23 11/25 12/18 14/5 19/6 21/20 27/10 33/13 33/16 40/25 42/4 45/12 45/14 46/8 47/17 49/7 update [1] 41/24 updates [1] 48/1 updating [1] 46/15 upon [3] 12/10 14/19 40/13 URN [1] 25/21 us [3] 45/1 47/10 48/21 use [1] 47/5 used [3] 2/3 13/5 31/2 using [1] 48/21 usual [1] 2/21	visited [2] 3/25 21/13 visiting [3] 4/16 21/14 24/15 vivid [1] 19/22 voices [5] 18/25 19/2 21/25 22/11 22/15 voluntarily [1] 9/21 vulnerable [1] 35/6
T	there [56] there'd [1] 21/13 there's [9] 13/20 15/19 15/22 19/14 27/24 30/23 33/9 34/25 45/14 these [8] 2/21 7/14 8/18 12/20 20/10 20/14 21/1 44/18 they [15] 7/18 13/25 17/22 18/24 22/11 22/12 23/6 23/7 23/9 44/3 44/4 44/7 49/9 49/10 49/10 they're [3] 28/8 28/9 30/4 they've [1] 28/12 thing [4] 13/8 32/7 42/2 48/23 things [4] 15/17 22/12 28/6 29/24 think [29] 5/4 6/2 11/23 13/2 14/4 15/3 18/18 20/16 23/1 23/9 24/8 24/17 28/25 29/2 29/5 29/15 30/12 31/19 33/19 35/2 37/2 39/19 39/25 40/21 42/4 43/6 45/3 48/18 49/18 this [60] those [12] 4/25 7/20 7/22 18/21 20/13 20/13 24/17 26/5 27/25 28/21 39/9 47/10 though [3] 23/19 35/25 39/12 thought [2] 4/6 6/4 thoughts [1] 7/7 threat [2] 27/12 30/4 three [8] 5/4 17/17 22/9 26/1 27/8 35/17 39/4 48/19 three months [2] 35/17 39/4 three years [1] 5/4 three-and-a-half-year s [1] 17/17 through [6] 2/8 4/1 4/3 29/9 43/1 48/20 throughout [1] 18/4 Thursday [1] 1/1 ticked [1] 32/22 time [20] 7/22 9/13 9/15 10/3 19/4 19/21 20/7 24/24 28/15 29/22 29/24 31/7 31/9 32/3 36/7 36/18 36/20 39/1 39/12 40/7 times [3] 5/6 7/25	U under [5] 24/20 26/2 26/3 26/4 40/1 underpinning [1] 3/6 understand [7] 4/11 5/23 15/20 20/25 47/9 47/24 47/25 understanding [5] 6/23 16/1 23/4 23/7 37/5 undertaken [1] 44/19 undertaking [3] 2/20 7/14 8/9 unfortunately [1] 9/6 unhappiness [1] 12/2 unhappy [1] 12/1 unit [2] 13/6 13/19 United [1] 17/20 University [4] 9/12 9/13 9/15 10/6 unmedicated [1] 24/6	various [4] 8/1 10/21 15/16 26/11 VC [41] 1/17 1/23 3/13 3/20 3/22 3/24 4/18 6/11 8/1 8/8 8/11 9/4 9/14 15/16 16/20 17/13 17/16 17/19 17/24 18/8 18/22 20/14 20/16 21/10 22/11 22/20 23/18 23/20 23/22 24/6 24/9 24/10 26/25 27/15 27/23 34/5 36/8 36/15 37/23 41/12 43/6 VC's [15] 2/5 2/10 2/14 5/3 5/15 11/15 13/12 14/13 15/13 15/25 17/12 17/15 18/4 24/17 37/13 verbally [2] 4/22 4/23 verified [2] 39/10 40/9 version [1] 17/6 very [14] 4/24 12/22 17/2 17/14 24/25 25/7 27/15 28/10 32/20 34/1 38/6 42/1 48/7 48/10 victim [9] 18/5 27/3 32/20 34/22 36/19 42/12 46/14 46/15 48/1 victims [3] 6/8 14/1 46/15 view [4] 4/12 20/16 24/9 36/25 views [2] 3/6 3/7 violence [4] 10/13 10/20 13/25 27/19 violent [2] 28/22 33/14	W Wales [3] 14/15 14/25 17/8 walk [1] 31/3 walking [1] 31/17 wall [2] 27/13 33/16 want [6] 11/13 13/4 13/16 13/22 22/8 48/18 wanted [1] 21/6 warehouses [1] 10/21 warehousing [1] 10/18 warn [1] 37/14 warning [1] 27/18 warrant [1] 16/19 warranted [1] 23/19 was [152] wasn't [15] 3/4 12/4 12/8 13/7 21/5 26/3 30/17 37/10 37/15 37/16 37/19 37/19 37/20 44/23 45/17 way [10] 4/12 5/7 5/8 13/22 31/3 31/17 32/14 34/1 34/6 43/7 we [49] 1/9 1/14 1/23 2/1 3/1 3/8 3/18 4/3 5/20 8/14 12/13 13/10 13/19 13/23 16/6 19/6 23/16 26/9 26/24 29/22 30/13 30/18 30/22 31/14 32/10 32/10 32/21 33/5 33/5 33/12 34/8 34/9 34/12 34/13 34/16 34/17 34/20 34/24 35/3 36/1 38/6 38/7 40/25 41/10 44/23 47/5 47/7 47/16 48/19 we'd [4] 4/9 29/7 31/22 48/18 we'll [3] 25/5 49/18 49/21 we're [4] 27/23 34/9 34/11 46/14 we've [7] 26/12 28/22 32/21 36/22 37/24 37/25 42/11 weakness [1] 42/20 weeks [1] 26/13 well [20] 3/19 4/4 4/21 8/7 12/7 13/6 14/14 15/23 17/11 22/21 23/9 25/5 33/4 35/21 44/21 45/22

<p>W</p> <p>well... [4] 46/16 46/25 49/8 49/18</p> <p>went [4] 4/22 14/13 19/22 19/23</p> <p>were [28] 1/14 2/17 3/11 3/12 3/13 5/18 8/9 10/5 12/21 16/7 16/10 16/17 17/6 19/24 20/10 20/13 22/13 26/20 26/24 27/25 28/23 29/22 29/23 30/15 31/8 39/22 44/3 48/13</p> <p>weren't [2] 16/22 39/23</p> <p>what [43] 1/14 4/12 4/15 5/18 6/12 6/20 7/5 7/5 7/7 9/7 11/3 14/4 15/2 15/6 16/13 16/19 21/15 21/16 21/17 22/2 22/10 22/17 22/18 23/11 23/20 28/5 28/11 30/1 31/15 31/24 37/24 37/25 42/7 43/9 44/10 45/1 45/4 46/12 46/24 47/2 48/14 49/6 49/8</p> <p>what's [3] 7/7 45/24 47/13</p> <p>whatever [2] 42/20 47/8</p> <p>when [41] 2/20 3/1 3/3 3/25 5/8 5/13 5/23 6/11 6/11 6/17 7/1 7/8 7/13 7/22 11/21 12/1 12/5 12/13 12/18 14/15 15/10 17/16 17/18 19/4 19/15 19/19 20/19 20/25 21/13 24/15 28/7 35/9 39/11 39/22 42/4 43/11 46/1 46/3 46/18 47/25 48/24</p> <p>whenever [1] 5/19</p> <p>where [11] 4/3 8/12 8/25 16/7 19/24 26/2 34/12 34/21 47/7 47/24 48/19</p> <p>Whereas [1] 12/18</p> <p>whether [7] 3/7 30/4 40/4 41/16 42/12 43/25 44/2</p> <p>which [15] 2/2 5/25 10/6 10/14 13/16 15/23 17/18 17/25 20/19 25/24 42/25 45/7 46/25 47/1 47/6</p> <p>while [2] 21/10 38/11</p> <p>whilst [3] 10/21 17/23 35/6</p> <p>white [2] 17/22 18/7</p> <p>who [6] 4/14 5/1 26/20 29/12 38/1 43/20</p>	<p>wholly [1] 4/14</p> <p>whom [1] 43/17</p> <p>why [16] 4/9 5/24 6/3 20/25 21/3 24/1 24/14 24/14 24/22 29/10 35/3 35/23 37/6 38/19 45/9 46/7</p> <p>wide [1] 39/19</p> <p>wider [1] 39/25</p> <p>will [3] 7/24 14/1 47/10</p> <p>willing [1] 7/19</p> <p>window [2] 20/4 27/4</p> <p>wish [4] 35/14 35/15 39/1 40/13</p> <p>Withdraws [1] 34/22</p> <p>within [13] 9/11 18/24 21/21 23/2 23/19 24/8 35/13 38/20 38/25 39/14 40/8 46/15 47/10</p> <p>WITN [1] 21/20</p> <p>WITN0028001 [1] 25/21</p> <p>WITN0391002 [2] 1/22 21/21</p> <p>witness [19] 1/9 4/20 5/14 5/17 6/19 25/18 26/6 26/14 27/2 27/6 27/9 27/17 27/20 28/2 36/24 37/1 38/6 39/10 40/9</p> <p>woman [1] 20/3</p> <p>word [1] 47/23</p> <p>words [2] 3/23 36/2</p> <p>work [7] 3/1 3/2 13/8 13/19 17/9 39/23 40/7</p> <p>worked [3] 10/18 36/21 38/24</p> <p>worker [3] 1/15 2/20 13/18</p> <p>working [4] 13/6 22/1 29/22 38/24</p> <p>workings [1] 35/23</p> <p>workload [6] 39/13 45/2 45/4 45/6 45/10 45/13</p> <p>workloads [1] 39/15</p> <p>would [66]</p> <p>wouldn't [5] 8/19 12/15 12/16 38/4 38/5</p> <p>write [1] 39/9</p> <p>written [1] 39/18</p> <p>wrong [1] 47/22</p> <p>wrote [1] 19/6</p> <hr/> <p>Y</p> <p>yeah [31] 8/5 8/7 11/25 14/9 16/5 16/12 19/17 19/17 20/24 23/14 26/10 26/17 26/23 29/14 29/14 30/3 30/6 30/6 30/14 30/21 32/9 34/7 34/19 37/9 41/15 41/19 41/25 42/25 43/5 44/9</p>	<p>49/5</p> <p>years [7] 5/4 16/2 17/17 17/23 18/5 46/4 46/5</p> <p>yes [60]</p> <p>you [242]</p> <p>you'd [5] 13/12 20/11 22/2 41/10 49/6</p> <p>you're [5] 7/13 19/10 26/8 26/11 48/24</p> <p>you've [7] 17/11 19/4 19/5 26/21 35/18 38/21 46/6</p> <p>your [52]</p> <p>yours [1] 27/16</p> <p>yourself [1] 34/17</p>		
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