

The Nottingham Inquiry

First Witness Statement of Ms Elaine Newton

I, Elaine Newton, will say as follows: -

Introduction

1. I am the widow of Mr Ian Coates who was killed on the 13th June 2023. The offences committed by the perpetrator that day have had an everlasting impact on me.
2. This witness statement is made to assist the Nottingham Inquiry (the **Inquiry**) with the matters set out in the Rule 9 Request dated 30th July 2025 (the **Request**). I hope this statement assists the Inquiry.

Impact of the Events

3. I have been asked to set out the impact of the horrendous events of 13th June 2023.
4. Before that day I had a really happy life. Ian and I had first met at a school we both worked at, we got on immediately. After starting our relationship, we went on to buy a home together and moved in with four of our children, 2 each from previous relationships. We lived in our first home for over 15 years and then decided to buy my mum's house and moved there. I continue to live here and have been here for over 7 years.

5. After moving in we gutted the house and renovated it ourselves, with Ian doing a significant amount of work and putting in an incredible amount of effort to get it how we wanted it to be. We didn't have much spare time as we both worked so it took us many years to complete the house and the garden but the hard work was worth it. We loved our home, and both took great pride in what we had achieved there.
6. Ian was always busy, whether he was at work, doing work to the house or our garden, or out fishing. We were really close and enjoyed spending a lot of time together. We would go on day trips whenever we got chance and he was a big support to me when I was caring for my mum.
7. We hadn't been on holiday abroad for the previous 5 years due to me caring for my mum who sadly passed away the year before Ian. We did however manage to go for weekends away so that we had some time together away from everyday life.
8. We went to Liverpool twice a year which was our favourite place to visit. We went to the museums as Ian loved the history. We enjoyed walking around the Albert Dock and sightseeing. Following Ian's death, I placed a padlock on the chains around the Albert Dock as a memorial with Ian's name and date of birth on there as it was such a special place to us.
9. Ian's main passion was his fishing, he absolutely loved it. He had been going on fishing trips to Ireland twice a year for the last 19 years where he met up with friends and entered competitions. He also went fishing regularly here and would enter competitions.
10. Ian spent a lot of his working life helping young people and giving children who were less privileged a chance to develop new skills. He provided a community that supported them through his love of fishing. Ian didn't grow up with many privileges at all so he always liked to help children who were in a similar position to give them a helping hand where he could.

11. When he was working at schools, he would teach children who were interested how to fish. He ran a fishing club and managed to put 10 children through a fishing qualification and as a result Ian went to the Houses of Parliament as it was the first of its kind ever set up. This was something that he was incredibly proud of.
12. He also ran charity events and fundraisers which aimed to support children in accessing equipment for fishing. With the funds Ian would purchase the necessary equipment for them, and he approached other angling clubs for donations of their unused equipment.
13. One of the children he helped in the past went on to run a fishing tackle shop. Ian used to visit the fishing shop and spoke with this particular student regularly, to the extent that this student attended Ian's funeral which goes to show the significant and lasting impression that Ian made on the lives of so many people.
14. It meant a lot to Ian to be able to help some of the disadvantaged kids who attended the school we worked at through fishing. He had such a special way of being able to communicate with them and he always knew how to get the best from them. He was very passionate about helping others. He hated to see people go without the basic necessities and would do things such as sourcing winter coats for children who didn't have them.
15. He played an active role in helping the school to decorate every Christmas, it was always at the forefront of his mind that there were children who didn't get much at home so he wanted to do anything he could to make it special for them. He would start working on the Christmas decorations in June every year and would spend hours both at home and at school making a Christmas Wonderland for them. He previously worked as a painter and decorator and was wonderfully skilled and creative. The school where Ian worked rang me last Christmas and said how much they missed him as he did so much for them and the children who attended.

16. Ian was a wonderfully caring man and he would always go out of his way to help people who needed him. He wanted to make a difference for others, and I know that through his hard work and determination he did this for so many people. He is missed by so many people.
17. Ian was due to retire in October 2023 after a lifetime of hard work and dedication. I couldn't wait for Ian to retire so that he could just do what he wanted, when he wanted, as he had always worked so hard and regularly put others needs first. He would frequently work at weekends, often helping friends and neighbours with odd jobs in his spare time, he put his all into his work. We were both looking forward to spending more time together and I couldn't wait for him to be able to thoroughly enjoy his retirement and spend his later years finishing which is what he'd always planned.
18. The horrendous events of 13th June 2023 will forever have a lasting effect on me.
19. The cruel and brutal way in which Ian was taken from me has left me utterly broken. My life is now in ruins.
20. I mourn the love that was lost, and our futures that will never be.
21. The public nature of Ian's death and the public interest in that day has been an additional hardship for me to deal with.
22. I knew that I was going to lose my mum the year before her passing so I was able to spend more time with her, and I was able to prepare, but it was different with Ian. We woke up that morning as normal, said "see you tonight, love you" and then he was gone. I can't get any time back with him. I wish I had spent more time with him the night before and got up with him early that morning. Knowing the horrific circumstances and the details around his death, I have dreamt that I went in the van with him that day and told him to go a different way to work so he got there safe. It is a cruel dream.

23. We wanted to do so much together but the opportunity to do so has been cruelly taken away. I find it particularly hard to deal with the fact that Ian had initially wanted to retire the January before the attack, but the school couldn't find a replacement, so he agreed to work until the October to give them more time to source someone to take over. It makes me angry to think that if he had retired in the January he wouldn't have been there on that day and would still be here with me now and able to enjoy his well earned retirement.
24. Unfortunately, since losing Ian the house doesn't mean anything to me anymore. We had planned to remain living there during our retirement, but it no longer feels like the home I once loved and that we worked so hard to create. The house meant so much to us before. I was born and grew up there. When my mum wanted to sell it, we decided to buy it and renovate the property together, to make it ours. We loved the house, but it doesn't mean anything to me now. It feels like an empty shell despite all the hard work we put into it. It doesn't feel beautiful anymore. I hate it. A support worker suggested that I should sell it, but I don't want to as my memories are all here. My whole life has been around this house. I feel like I cannot leave but I hate being here. I'm stuck.
25. I go into the garden to keep on top of it as Ian spent so much time looking after the garden, so I don't want to let it ruin. I used to love gardening but I now do it because of need, it is not the same as it was before.
26. Everything in the home reminds me of Ian, the life we had together which we both loved, and everything I have lost.
27. I no longer want to do anything at all. I go to work because I have to, then I come home. The grief is consuming, even now.
28. I feel guilty that I am still here and Ian is not. I feel as though nothing really matters any more, I'm not bothered about anything. If it wasn't for my young grandson, I don't think I would be here now.

29. My family try to help as best they can, but I simply don't enjoy life anymore. Without Ian I have no life.
30. My relationships have been impacted with family and friends because I simply don't want to socialise anymore. I just don't see the point with Ian no longer by my side.
31. I feel frightened in public places. Everywhere feels unsafe. I don't know how I could ever feel safe again after what has happened.
32. I have previously had two lots of counselling, but I haven't seen any benefit to this. Talking about everything makes me feel even worse. I try to block the whole thing out of my mind so that I am able to function and get through the day but talking about it during counselling just brought it all back and left me feeling like I was back to square one. The counsellors explained how it works but I just couldn't keep going over it. It felt too soon. The sessions were around the time of the criminal trial so it just felt too much, I was really struggling. I now do my best to push it all to the back of my mind and block it out.
33. I am still not sleeping well. I try to wait to go to bed until I am really tired, I then manage generally to sleep for an hour before I wake up. I wake frequently with anxiety and bad dreams, all of which has negatively impacted my health and my ability to function properly day to day. I feel constantly tired. I lay awake at night thinking about Ian and everything that has happened. The home we once shared together no longer feels like home, it feels empty and alien.
34. I go through the motions every day but feel empty. I still have Ian's jacket on the back of the chair in the kitchen from the night before it happened. He used to walk past the coat hook every day and put his jacket on the chair which we laughed about as he always said that he put his coat on in the kitchen so that's where it made sense to leave it. I can't move his jacket as I feel like if I do move it, I would be moving him which I don't want to do, but I also hate seeing it there. Having it there makes me feel like he's still here but it's also a

reminder that he isn't. Seeing all of Ian's belongings around the house is incredibly difficult and painful, but I cannot bring myself to remove them.

35. In addition to the heartbreak of losing my beloved Ian, I feel totally betrayed and let down by the various bodies involved in VCs treatment. I am left feeling as though there is a total disregard for public safety which ultimately led to the deaths of 3 innocent people. I have lost all confidence in the services ability to keep the public safe.

36. I feel as though I have been betrayed by services that are meant to make us feel safe and cared for. I have been left feeling overlooked and abandoned, as though Ian is just another statistic.

POST INCIDENT

37. I will move on to focus on the input and communication that I had with various services following the attack.

POLICE CONTACT

38. On the morning of Ian's death, I went to work as normal. He had left earlier as he always did. I walked up my road from our home and I heard a siren as I was at the bus stop. As I was waiting for the bus, I was aware of a police van with two young officers in it on the phone. I wondered what was going on but paid no more attention.

39. When I got to work, I walked up the corridor and the two officers that I had seen in the police van were there and my son was with them.

40. Prior to seeing me at work, they had told my son that Ian had died in a road traffic collision. I was told that I needed to go with them. I remember in that moment that I thought something must have happened to my other son as he travels a lot with work, so I was worrying about him until I was told that they were here because of Ian.

41. They repeated to me that Ian had died as a result of a road traffic collision.

42. I remember being confused and telling them that they must have been wrong as Ian would have been at work by that time. The two officers took me and my son home in the police van and came into the house with us.
43. I was asking a lot of questions to try and find out more information, but they just kept telling me that they didn't know any more details. I wanted to go to the scene to see Ian, but they wouldn't let me. I was in complete shock. I had been told the most devastating news and yet they couldn't actually answer any of my questions.
44. I recall that after a while a sergeant arrived and took the officers outside, one of the younger officers then returned and said they would let me know more when they had further information. I recall that they were due to have finished work hours before they left at around 11:30am as they were finishing a night shift, but they had stayed with me. I appreciate that someone was with me, but I needed answers.
45. Two police liaison officers arrived who asked me if I knew what had happened to which I replied that he had died as a result of a road traffic collision. Following this, they told me they didn't understand what I was saying, they clearly didn't know that I had been misinformed. I was then correctly informed that Ian had been killed.
46. I was grossly misinformed. It took 4 agonising hours before I was finally told the truth about the circumstances of Ian's death. As a result of this it felt as though I had lost him twice. This was devastating and will never leave me.
47. Being misinformed in relation to the circumstances of Ian's death was truly traumatic. The police handling of the matter felt wholly inept. I would expect better from the police, particularly in such emotional and upsetting circumstances. With hindsight, I am shocked that I knew there was a sergeant outside my home who had more information about Ian's death but at no time did he bother to come in and speak to me.

48. Following that awful day, I felt very supported by my police Family Liaison Officer, Mark Kimberly. I feel as though he went above and beyond in his duty to provide care and support to me and my family during the most horrendous time. There were occasions where Mark would visit me multiple times a day. In between these visits he kept me updated and I felt that he was always there to listen and answer my questions. He acted at all times as a true professional and was incredibly courteous. I do not feel that I would have managed to get through what happened but for his unwavering support.
49. I remember one night the Senior Investigating Officer (SIO), Leigh Sanders, came to my house at around 8pm (I think with Mark Kimberly) to give me some new information. On a few prior occasions Mark had asked if I had wanted to meet the SIO but I said that as long as Mark was able to tell me everything I didn't need to meet the SIO. However, he turned up that night anyway and I recall that he was telling me about the CCTV footage they had and that they were able to trace VCs movements. I was given a lot of information about him but all I could think was why was he given so much freedom when the police knew what he was capable of? Why was a dangerous man discharged?
50. I don't feel like the information I was provided with that night was necessary. I was happy with how things were going with Mark and the way this visit was managed just caused more frustration and upset. I don't feel as though what I wanted to know was taken in to account.
51. Mark had done so much for me, and I felt comfortable with him so having someone arrive that I didn't know and tell me something that I wasn't expecting to hear, felt like a bit of an intrusion. I would have been happy to know more but I would have liked to have understood what the purpose of the visit was going to be ahead of time so that I could have discussed this with Mark.

52. Although Mark was amazing, I do feel that the police generally could have told me more and kept me more informed. Aside from Mark, and that one unwelcome visit from the SIO, I had very little contact with anyone else from the police that I recall. I would have preferred the SIO to have contacted me directly rather than through Mark as it would have felt more personal. As Ian's partner, and given what had happened, this would have been the least I would have expected.

53. I didn't feel as though I was ever anyone's priority, or even a consideration of theirs at times. I am aware that I was grieving and perhaps not as on things as I would have otherwise been, but I remember thinking at the time that I wasn't sure how much I should or could be told. I now realise that I should have been told much more.

54. I was more recently invited to the police headquarters to discuss matters with Chief Constable Kate Meynell, but that was only as a result of the issues with the 8 police officers that were being investigated due to their conduct. Mark told me about these issues because he said it might be on the news. I was never formally informed or provided with much detail about it. When I met with Kate Meynell in February 2024, she told me that it had happened in the January but they didn't want to put any further burden on the families involved in the proceedings so only told us at a later stage. I continue to receive monthly emails with updates on what is going on, but I still feel very much in the dark and feel that I do not have the full story.

55. I was provided with a victim support worker following the attack although our relationship was not a good one. I understand that she passed information to Ian's sons that I didn't want her to and she also gave me false information by making a promise that was not kept so as a result I stopped her coming. I rang her boss to explain what had happened, although I did not make a formal complaint. I felt as though she had used me to get information out of me.

56. Given the nature of the relationship I have with Ian's sons, it felt like there was a conflict of interest with us having the same victim support worker. I believe

this was a massive oversight by the police and it appeared to me as though there was no thought or consideration given to my position. This would have been easily apparent to them if they had taken the time to discuss matters directly with me.

57. I think family liaison officers must be mindful that generally, the people they are dealing with will not be used to the legal process that follows after an attack like this and therefore they should be given more information about the whole process and given more time to deal with everything. Those in situations that require their input have been through the worst possible situations. People need time, care and consideration to their individual personal circumstances. The procedure needs to be explained clearly at every step for people. It felt at times as though I had been abandoned and was left to fend for myself. While Mark was great, I do think I would have benefited from further support.

58. If I didn't have the support of Mark, I would have been totally out of the loop. I don't think I would have got through the aftermath of the attack without Mark, which goes to show just how important his job is, but I believe more help and information should be provided to people in my position.

CROWN PROSECUTION SERVICE CONTACT

59. At each court hearing I attended I met with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and they discussed the court proceedings with me. During these meetings I found the language, or legal jargon they used very hard to digest. These meetings typically took place just before or after the hearings and often felt very rushed and like it was an inconvenience to them.

60. I recall on one occasion I was faced with 8 people. I was told who they were and what they did but I couldn't take it all in. I was also asked if I had any questions, but I simply didn't know what to ask because I had never been in that position or had anything to do with the Courts before, so it all felt overwhelming and alien to me.

61. No one from the CPS took the time to slow down and explain things to me. I trusted that they knew what they were doing as it was their job, but I didn't really know what was going on.
62. When it came to VC's guilty plea to manslaughter, I didn't feel like it had been explained to me in enough detail. It seemed like they all thought they were doing the right thing, but it was rushed. I just went along with it at the time as I didn't know what else to say or do, but things definitely weren't explained clearly enough to me.
63. Legal professionals often spoke in their language as though I knew what they were talking about, but I had no idea and I couldn't give an opinion on something I knew nothing about.
64. It felt a bit like a tick box exercise when they checked in with me, like they had to check but no one made sure I actually understood. I felt like I wanted to ask something, but I didn't want them to be daft questions, and I never felt comfortable enough to try.
65. I believe the CPS could have been in touch with me more frequently and at more suitable times. After the end of the last day of Court hearings, I didn't know what to do when it was all over, everyone rushed out. I got up to go home. Mark asked whether I wanted to see the CPS but as I didn't know this was an option and as I hadn't expected to see them, I wouldn't have known what to say or ask.
66. I recall I was taken into a room with lots of people, who I believed were all from the CPS. They were all stood up the whole time and it felt very rushed and impersonal. It was hard to take in what had happened after spending hours in the Court room listening to the ruling and sentencing. I went home with a pounding headache and felt unable to take anything in. I tried to process everything, but it was hard. If it wasn't for Mark who did his best to explain everything to me, I would have known even less. I felt like the CPS

don't see you as a lay person. They expect you to know everything, but I certainly didn't.

67. I wish I had been told in advance that I could have had the opportunity to speak to them afterwards as I would have been able to prepare what I might have wanted to say or ask.

68. After the hearings I was also given the opportunity to speak to the press but, as I didn't want to speak to them, Mark took me out of the side exit so that I could go home. It has felt at times that because I am very private and don't want to speak publicly about everything that my thoughts and feelings do not matter.

69. As I hadn't been warned that I was able to speak to the CPS afterwards, it felt like I was just left alone and had to go home to deal with it all and accept what had happened. If I was given the choice again, I definitely would have wanted the opportunity to talk to the CPS. Prior warning would have been necessary, so I was aware of what was going on as it was hard for me to grasp what was happening.

70. I was very emotional during this whole process and even when the CPS attempted to explain things to me in layman's terms, I struggled to understand exactly what I was being told. I did my best to take everything in at the time, but it was a lot to deal with.

71. I do not feel that I can comment on whether the information was sufficient, or whether I should have been told any more. In hindsight now I do feel there could have been a better way of providing me with all of the necessary information. I think that more should have been done to ensure that I understood what I was being told and had time to digest the information in good time ahead of the hearings, or by communicating follow ups in writing so that I had something to refer back to as and when I felt able to process things.

72. I have been told and know very little about whatever is going on in relation to the H M Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate. I received a letter dated 29th August 2025 with very brief details, following which I confirmed that I want to be kept updated and I have since received emails each month with brief updates, but I still don't have any real information.

73. In respect of the Victims and Courts Bill which I understand is being considered, I think that passing this bill could provide an opportunity to make positive changes to the victim's experience within the criminal justice system. I would certainly say it could lead to improved trust in the Crown Prosecution Service, for example giving victims timely and accurate information regarding the processing and sentencing of offenders would improve transparency and support, especially when it comes to knowledge of provision once an offender is coming up to release as this is a concern for any victim of crime. A lack of knowledge would make them feel vulnerable post release of a violent offender.

THE INQUIRY

74. I would like this Inquiry and the Chair to ensure lessons are learnt and similar attacks are prevented in the future.

75. I believe that the police and mental health services should have an improved communication network when dealing with violent offenders suffering with mental health issues. There should be a dedicated and robust procedure to process a mentally ill person who is engaged in any criminal activity to ensure that they do not just slip through the net or be brushed off by police as not as serious a concern because they are mentally ill.

76. In relation to the support provided to families of victims of crimes and their treatment, I would recommend that victims of any crime dependent on circumstances should get appropriate and dedicated support to help them through. This should be in the form of access to victim support, counselling, support from the NHS services and access to clear information from the police so that they are treated as a person and a victim; not just a case number.

They should feel cared for and protected by dedicated victim services and not condescended to by faceless authorities who just want to tick boxes and move on.

77. I hope that this inquiry identifies all those who failed and prevents anyone else experiencing a loss like this in the future. Something like this should never happen again.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed:

GRO-B

Dated: 17/11/2025