

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Wendy BELLARS

1. My name is Wendy Ann Bellars. My maiden name was Wendy Ann McLean. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1960. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Overview of education and career

Education and qualifications

2. I attended Hillhead High School, Glasgow and graduated with six Highers at Grade A in 1978. Subsequent to that I undertook a Master of Arts (Honours) in English Literature and Scottish Literature at the University of Glasgow. I graduated with a MA Honours (First Class) in 1982. From 1982 to 1983 I went on to undertake a PGCE at Jordanhill Teacher Training College and graduated with a distinction in 1983. In the same year I returned to the University of Glasgow to study in “twilight time” for a Diploma in Education which I achieved with Merit in 1983.
3. I continued with my education during my teaching career. In 2004 I graduated at De Montfort University and achieved a Master of Arts in Education Management; this had been studied through distance learning over several years. In 2006 I undertook a course with The Open University and achieved a Professional Certificate in Business Management.

Employment

4. My first teaching role was with Renfrew High School. I was a teacher there between 1983 and 1985. I then went on to be a teacher and Assistant Housemistress at Gordonstoun School. I worked there between 1985 and 1988. Subsequent to that I

moved to The King's School, Chester where I took on a role as an Assistant Teacher in 1988. I subsequently went on to be Head of Department and Head of Year. I was appointed Deputy Head of Bishop's Stortford College in 1995. I held that role until December 2000. In January 2001 I was appointed Principal of St Leonard's School and Sixth Form College. I held that role until 2003. I then went on to be a Housemistress at Cheltenham Ladies' College before leaving there in December 2004. In January 2005 I became a Staff Tutor in Education with The Open University in Scotland. I held that role until December 2006. Finally, I was appointed the Head of Queen Victoria School, Dunblane (QVS) in January 2007; I took early retirement in 2016.

Other (non-paid) work

5. I was a Board Member and Member of the Management Committee of the Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS). I became a member of the Board in 2008. To be a member of the board you had to be a head teacher or Bursar of an independent school in Scotland. After fulfilling two 3-year terms on the board I stood down because that was mandatory. That would have been in about 2014.
6. I was a board member of the Admiralty Interview Board. I undertook that role annually from 1998 until 2002. I held a commission in the RAF Volunteer Reserve (Training) Branch between 1987 and 1997.

Gordonstoun School, Elgin, Moray

Roles and responsibilities at the school

7. I was an English teacher at Gordonstoun. At that time Gordonstoun was a fully boarding school apart from some children who were the sons and daughters of staff members. When I was there all staff members were required to take on a pastoral role within the school. Because of that I was also a non-residential Assistant Housemistress attached to one of the girls' boarding houses. My line manager on the pastoral side of things was a Housemistress by the name of **BRN**

8. I didn't have any role or involvement with Aberlour House. Aberlour was part of the same organisation but it was located on a separate campus quite a few miles away. I'm aware that Aberlour has now moved onto the same site since the time I was at Gordonstoun.
9. During my time at Gordonstoun there were three boarding houses for the girls. I would guess that there was anything between thirty-five and fifty girls in those houses at any one time. I was initially attached to Gordonstoun House. That was located on the top floor of the main building. That house was later moved to Plewlands House after that was built. I continued in my role as Assistant Housemistress in that house after the move. The roles I held didn't entail living within the boarding houses I was attached to. However, like many other staff members I lived in a house on campus that was provided by the school.

Pastoral care and child protection

10. Pastoral care and child protection policy in boarding schools in the eighties was very different to what it later became. I think that everything across all schools has become much more formalised and regulated. At a national level we have had much more involvement since then from the Scottish Government. There has for example been the introduction of things like GIRFEC. Looking back at my time at Gordonstoun, pastoral care and child protection approaches were much more informal. There weren't the locks, the key pads and the signing in and out systems that were in place by the time I started my role at QVS and probably many other schools later on. All that said, I would still say that the children at Gordonstoun were very well looked after.
11. In comparison to QVS, Gordonstoun had a much lower adult to child ratio in the boarding houses after lessons. It was quite normal, for example, for me to do my one duty night during the week on my own. I would be the only adult in the house between approximately 5pm and 11pm. That was probably the sort of ratio that was in place in many boarding schools back then. If I compare that to my time at QVS there would probably be at least two or three adults in each house at such times.

12. I think that things were slightly different back then in terms of activities and things to organise in the evenings for the boarders. By the time I was at QVS there very much was a pressure to organise things. Back in the late eighties the pupils seemed to be much more self-sufficient. They would read, do prep or watch television in the evenings. In the summer they would go out and play tennis, for example. That was really it. There wasn't the same pressure as I experienced later on at QVS from students and parents to organise trips, put on activities and do things with the boarders.

Concerns about Gordonstoun

13. I don't remember having any concerns about any fellow staff members or adults associated with the school during my time there.

Convicted abusers

Andrew Keir

14. Andrew Keir and I have remained friends since the time I left Gordonstoun and have remained in contact. He was at Gordonstoun before I arrived and stayed on after I left. I think he is about ten years older than I am so he would have been in his mid to late thirties when I was there. He was an excellent Physics teacher. He went above and beyond what might be expected of a teacher, to write notes and booklets etc for the children that he taught. I would describe Andrew as being a bit "Tiggerish" around the children back then. He was full of enthusiasm and would joke with the children.
15. Staff, including myself, were fond of Andrew. We all recognised that there was a childlike quality about him. In those days there wasn't the same kind of focus on conditions like Aspergers or autism. I do know that he, much later on in life, was

diagnosed as having Aspergers. That diagnosis makes sense reflecting on his naivety back then. I think it explains his childlike enthusiasm for things.

16. I never saw Andrew disciplining children in any way because we did not share classrooms or run activities together. I never saw Andrew abusing any children. I didn't hear of any allegations surrounding abuse and Andrew during my time at the school. The first time I heard about the allegations was when it was reported in The Sunday Times much later on. I acted as a character witness for Andrew during his trial in either 2017 or 2018 at Elgin Sheriff Court.
17. When Andrew was due to face his charges in court I was in contact with a couple of people who had been pupils during Andrew Keir's time working at Gordonstoun. I had kept in touch with them over the years after they left the school and they had become friends. One (male) said to me that it was possible that Andrew Keir mucked around with the boys in the swimming pool. However, he said that if Andrew did do that then he did not believe that there could have been any sexual intent present. He said that to him, reflecting on his time at the school, Andrew Keir treated life as if it was a "Boy's Own comic." Everything seemed to the pupil to have been just clean fun. This was a boy who, although not in the boarding house to which Andrew was attached, was helped particularly by Andrew and shared his interest in Physics. His comments very much chimed with the childlike qualities that the staff could all see in Andrew during my time at Gordonstoun.

Queen Victoria School, Dunblane, Stirling

18. The children at QVS tend to come from families who are not used to boarding. It was initially an institution that was set up for the sons of Scottish soldiers and sailors. (I believe that at one point orphans made up about 51% or 52% of the student population.) I think because of the non-fee-paying nature of the school there was a sense – even when I arrived at the school in 2007 - that it was not a place where officers' children would be sent. In other words, if you could afford to send your children to a full fee-paying school then you probably wouldn't choose QVS. However, lots of parents did choose the school because it not only gave their

children the opportunity to board but also it gave their children stability rather than being moved around the country or the world. To put that into perspective, I recall one particular pupil who came to the school during the time I was there who had been to fifteen different schools.

19. Parents don't pay fees at QVS. They pay what is called a "parental contribution." That was something like £1,400 year by the time I left. That is a lot of money but it doesn't go any way towards the cost of bed, board, uniforms, textbooks, IT and all the rest of it. In that way it is a tremendous bargain.

Employment with Queen Victoria School

20. I was appointed Head of Establishment in December 2006 and started in January 2007. I held that role until May 2016. Head of Establishment is a Ministry of Defence (MoD) position which encompasses two sets of duties. The first is that of a boarding school head teacher which involves the care and responsibility for the welfare and development of circa 270 boarding pupils and their staff. The second set of duties encompasses the role of the head of a MoD unit. This role involved wider responsibilities regarding the estate, liaison with MoD departments and support and promotion of the values of the Armed Forces.
21. The MoD has its own recruitment and appointment procedures and would be willing, I expect, to explain those to the Inquiry. As well as the usual references being required, security clearance was also mandatory. At the time I was appointed at the school General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS) registration was not mandatory for teachers in independent schools. However, I had previously joined the register in 1983 as a probationer before ultimately becoming registered. My registration expired a few years after my retirement in 2016.

Expectations prior, during and after appointment process

22. I wouldn't say that before I started at the school the MoD gave any particular thought to how they hoped I would change QVS. I recall being given a fairly MoD type job

description about what I would do. I suspect that was what was given to all their head teachers.

23. It wasn't a scenario whereby I was informed of ongoing issues that the MoD hoped for me to resolve. Nor was it a scenario where the MoD asked me to put in place certain systems and structures. There was nothing like that in the lead up to me starting at QVS. The MoD would have, for example, been aware around about the time I was interviewed of the investigations into YXL and the other individual whose name I don't recall. I wasn't made aware of those circumstances until after I was appointed. That would have been just before I went onto the payroll at QVS in December 2006. My impression was that the MoD just wanted a steady hand on the tiller rather than for any specific issue to be resolved.
24. From my experience of working for the MoD during my time at QVS they did not understand Scottish schools. QVS was its only Scottish school and now is its only school in the UK. That may explain why there was no detailed push on the MoD's part to do certain things with the school around the time I was appointed.
25. I remember that the Director of Education [DETS(A) – Director of Education and Training Services (Army)], if that is the correct title, was on the MoD panel that interviewed me alongside head teachers from other schools who weren't connected to the MoD, the civilian Chairman of the board of commissioners at QVS and various other commissioners as well. During the interview there were questions about what my vision for QVS was. There were questions from the panel as to how I saw the school evolving for the better. I remember preparing for that and passing round notes on that during my interview. I recall that I had all sorts of aspects - involving pastoral, academic, spiritual development and things that I wanted to see at the school - set out on that note. I essentially wanted the school to be a school of choice. My vision was to make the school a place that parents would want to send their children to because they chose to, rather than its being a place where parents just needed to send to their children, in order to avoid them being moved around the country or the world.

Line management and appraisal

26. During my time as Head of Establishment I was initially line managed by the Chairman of Commissioners of Queen Victoria School. Her Majesty's Commissioners (HMC) are in many ways like a board of governors of an independent school. I worked with three holders of the position of Chairman of HMC during my time at QVS. The first one was David MacLehose. I think he was either an architect or a builder. He was on the panel of interviewers who interviewed me for my role. He held that role until the summer of 2008. Professor Bart McGettrick took over from him. He had formerly been a chairman of SCIS. Finally, Alan Plumtree took over the role. He was a local accountant. I believe he is still with QVS. All three of those persons were my line managers up until about 2014. I had regular meetings with David MacLehose, Bert McGettrick and Alan Plumtree. Those meetings were either monthly or weekly depending on their availability.
27. Without my knowledge, or my having been consulted, it was decided to change my line manager to a member of the MoD's Directorate for Children and Young People (DCYP). I think that was some time in 2014. I cannot be sure of exactly when that happened because I only found out about the change when reading a document on a different subject some time after the change had been made. I think the person who took over was called Kathryn Forsyth. I believe that she has since remarried so may be now known by a different surname (Ritchie). The change in line manager came out of the blue to me. I wasn't pleased that the change had been made nor with the manner in which it had happened. I remember Alan Plumtree was rather embarrassed when he found out that I hadn't been told of the change, never mind consulted on it.
28. The change in frequency of meetings with my line manager changed when Kathryn Forsyth took over. Kathryn Forsyth would come up for the termly commissioners' meetings. Occasionally she came to the school in between meetings if she needed to do so for some other matter. However, that wasn't a regular occurrence. The change in frequency of meetings was mainly because of geographical reasons. She was based in Upavon near Salisbury Plain in England whereas my previous line managers had been relatively local.

29. In some ways I was relieved about having fewer meetings with my line manager. I felt that whenever we met she didn't understand the situation in Scotland and that took time. That said, it is always more useful for a head teacher to have more regular meetings with their line manager.
30. During my appraisals with my line managers I was initially set Key Targets by the MoD. As time went on the "appraisal" system for teachers at Queen Victoria School moved towards the Professional Update scheme of the GTCS.

Policy

31. I did have involvement in and responsibility for policy in relation to the care, including residential care, of children. Child protection and safeguarding policies, as they are now called, were always under review. We, like any boarding school, took care to keep up with external developments.
32. There were probably three main prompts to major updates in our policies. The first was the legislative requirement that all staff involved in the care of boarders be qualified to at least SVQ Level 3. Some of our "tutors" were non-academic staff who were excellent in the role but not used to formal assessment; they were helped to obtain the necessary qualification in due course. The second prompt was the Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) system with its requirements for pupil chronologies and so on. The third was the GTCS requirement for renewing teacher registration every five years through a programme of Professional Update. The Professional Update involved CPD logs, review and reflection.

The welfare of children with parents on deployment

33. I would say one of the prime responsibilities for the school was the welfare and development of children whose families could be moved about the world several times during their time at the school including deployment to war zones. That was at

the heart of what QVS did and still does. It is that which prompts parents who are not from boarding backgrounds to send their children there.

34. I had the advantage of two very experienced and excellent SNR [REDACTED] who had been in their posts for a long time before I was appointed. QYL [REDACTED] had been at the school practically his entire career. CKC [REDACTED] was a former marine. I have no doubt that they looked after the children – especially those who had parents deployed in action - very, very well prior to me starting at the school. I do not think that the support provided was in any way superficial before I arrived.
35. I think that after I was appointed we made sure that the prime responsibility became more upfront and obvious. I think that is partly because we did a lot of work with The Royal Caledonian Educational Trust which is a charity which particularly looks after the children of Scottish servicemen and servicewomen. That was one way in which the profile was raised. Another way its profile was raised was through making connections with other schools who had large populations of children from service backgrounds. We also formed a Parents on Deployment Group (PoD Group), which provided further support. I think that through all these things the profile of the support we could offer was raised and brought more onto the surface.

Strategic planning

Key Targets and Strategic Development Plan (SDP)

36. Initially, there had been a MoD system of Key Targets in place. The Key Targets were set and reviewed annually. Those targets had to be met by the head teacher and the school. Looking back, the Key Targets were more involved with administrative matters, financial matters and public exam results. Abuse was not specifically mentioned in the Key Targets.
37. Later on the school was required to produce a Strategic Development Plan, later called the School Improvement Plan. I think that was from around 2011. The SDP was based on the fourth edition of "How Good Is Our School?" (HGIOS 4). That was

the Inspectorate's manual. HGIOS 4 is a very comprehensive manual which is divided up very specifically into different areas with subdivisions within those areas. I think there were nine different areas when I last saw it. It contained statements which schools were expected to align themselves with and could use on things like attainment, pastoral care, staff development and so on. Those statements were incorporated into the SDP. Abuse was not specifically discussed in the SDP. However, its prevention is an essential part of promoting the SHANARRI (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included) values of GIRFEC.

Groups and committees who provided oversight in the school

38. Shortly before I arrived at the school the commissioners had set up a sub-committee which evolved into the Education and Welfare Committee (EWC). A new Commissioner called Bart McGettrick took over as its Chair. He later on became the Chairman of HMC. The EWC ensured that there was a thorough programme of reviewing both academic and pastoral issues. There were both commissioners and members of staff on the Committee. Other members of staff would be invited to present to it at its termly or half-termly meetings. Whether the meetings were termly or half-termly was dependent on the length of the term. I have provided the Inquiry with a document entitled "QVS SMT recommendations for the future of the Education and Welfare Committee" dated January 2011 which provides further outline of the EWC's form and remit.
39. There was a Parents' Liaison Group which met four or five times a year for discussion of matters which could be raised by any of the three groups represented on it. The three groups consisted of parents, staff and commissioners. Much liaison was also done with pupils so that their views and concerns could be fed back to these, and other, groups within the school. There were regular Commissioners' Visits to the school, prefects' meetings with members of the senior management team and a food committee (very important in a fully boarding school). I have provided the Inquiry with a document entitled "Schedule of Meetings" dated March 2012. The Schedule of Meetings provides a list of the groups and committees that were in place in the school at the time of one inspection; on rereading it, however, I

was amused to see that I had missed out the EWC – one of the most important of our groups.

Commissioner visits

40. We usually had a visit from a commissioner at least once a term. Depending on what commitments the commissioners had, that sometimes slipped. Sometimes, when they visited, two would come at once. Each of the commissioners who were visiting the school would discuss what aspect of the school they wished to focus on at the commissioners' meeting prior to the visit taking place. There were occasions where the commissioners would say "we haven't looked at 'x' for a while so will you go and look into that?" That could be pastoral care, transition between the years, extra-curricular activities or whatever else.
41. I alongside the other members of the senior management team would develop a programme covering the different aspects of whatever they wanted to look at for the morning of the commissioner's visit. If they were looking into pastoral care then it made sense to make arrangements for the commissioner to be present at mealtimes, in the boarding houses at evening times to observe what was happening or sitting in on some Personal Health and Social Education (PSHE) classes. They might further speak to the Deputy Head (Pupil Support) and the Deputy Head (Pastoral), speak with pupils and so on. After the visit the commissioner would draft a brief report and submit that to the board of commissioners.

Talk to someone

42. Although it probably is more operational than strategic, I would say that our approach of "Talk to someone" was key to our communications with pupils. Pupils, because of their situation, were away from home often for weeks or months at a time. Sometimes they were away from home whilst their parents were in life-threatening operations. Pupils were constantly encouraged not to keep worries or concerns to themselves. Older pupils were always told that they now had a responsibility to those younger than themselves in the same way that they could always go to someone older for help. In practice this seemed to work very well. The pupils were

wisely supportive of one another and would alert staff if they were concerned. The pupils also talked to a wide range of staff, including front-desk security guards and the catering personnel. All staff were briefed to pass on concerns if pupils were in need of help.

43. Looking back “Talk to someone” was more of a cultural change rather than a specific programme or policy. It manifested itself in a number of ways. There were posters placed throughout the school showing all the different sorts of people that a pupil could talk to. The message was repeated umpteen times over the years when I spoke directly to the pupils. It was repeated at staff meetings by both myself and the Deputy Head (Pupil Support) and when we spoke to other individuals, including parents, individually. It was something that became threaded through everything that we did.
44. The culture of “Talk to someone” was probably already present at QVS before I arrived. I don’t think that what we did after I arrived was groundbreakingly original. It had always been something that I felt strongly about since becoming involved with boarding schools. I seem to recall first high-lighting it around the time of the BT campaign “It’s Good to Talk”; that was when I was Principal at St Leonards School in St Andrews. I think that it did help at QVS too, insomuch as we could leap on the back of that and it was easier for the pupils to understand what we were talking about. I suppose, on reflection, I ramped all of that up at QVS. I really banged the drum on making sure the cultural shift occurred and people took the opportunity up. I did notice that pupils appeared feel increasingly comfortable speaking directly to me as time went on.

Other staff

45. I had direct responsibility for three Deputy Heads and was First Reporting Officer for the School Business Manager and the Head’s PA. In MoD terms that meant that I was also Second Reporting Officer for those who were line managed by any of the first four. Especially, but not exclusively, through the School Business Manager, this meant signing off on annual reviews for a number of non-academic staff.

46. When the GTCS Professional Update scheme kicked in, there were specific responsibilities in that respect too. There was a mandatory 35 hours' worth of CPD for all teachers. You had to keep an online journal and show that you had undertaken appropriate learning, training, reading and reflection. From a line manager's perspective, rather than the individual's, there was a duty to make sure the teachers you managed kept up to date with their CPD and journals. You might also become involved with making suggestions as to how a particular person could look to develop, if that was appropriate.
47. Every full-time teacher had to be a tutor attached to a boarding house. This was more a pastoral than an academic role and included duty time in the House one evening a week and on occasional weekends as part of a rota. The staff we appointed in that time were inducted into the importance of being vigilant, particularly in the pastoral role. They were aware that these pupils were not going home at the end of each day to a household where, for example, they might routinely be seen partially dressed by a parent and any sudden weight-loss, bruising or cuts noticed.

Recruitment of staff

Composition and processes of the HR team

48. This is an area in which the Inquiry might have to ask the MoD as it had its own HR practices. The MoD has its own very specific procedures and requirements. These changed from time to time. The HR department for the school was part of the MoD but was located within QVS. HR staff members were MoD employees. I could speak to them at any time if I had any concerns. They were very approachable.
49. I do know that the HR policies in the school were commended by various inspection teams who visited during my time there. An example of this was the Investors in People Programme. The school was for some years part of that programme until the MoD decided that it would no longer use this for its establishments.

Involvement with the recruitment of staff

50. I did have an input in the process of selecting the preferred candidate for roles at the school. I was directly involved in appointing teaching staff and other key individuals such as the School Sergeant Major, Drumming Instructor, Estates Manager and so on. If the consensus on a preferred candidate did not come round to my way of thinking I would speak out and highlight particular considerations that needed to be taken into account. I would never have allowed an appointment to have gone ahead if I had not agreed with the person being appointed. I would say that I never really disagreed with any of the appointments that were made. I can only really think of two mistakes in terms of individuals we appointed. Both of those were situations where I went with the majority opinion of the rest of the appointees on the board. The mistakes weren't ones that were anything major.
51. All references were taken up by the MoD HR staff. I was not allowed to see them. I gather they were only taken up after a proposed appointment (the "preferred candidate") had been decided upon. I cannot say whether referees were ever spoken to. When compared to the other irritations that were present when managing a school for the MoD, not getting to see references for preferred candidates was a relatively minor one.

Requirement for GTCS registration

52. It became a requirement for teachers at QVS to become registered with the GTCS when it became clear that that was something that would become mandatory for all teachers in Scotland. I can't remember when it became mandatory but I do recall that we got about two years' warning that it would be happening. Whenever that was, we made it clear to staff at that point that they would need to obtain registration if they hadn't had that in place already.
53. We also made changes at that time in the way that we advertised for teaching staff. I remember that we had always advertised that it would be preferable that applicants were either registered with or eligible for registration with the GTCS. That became a

mandatory condition when we were informed in advance that it would ultimately be a mandatory requirement for teachers in Scotland.

Updates from GTSC / PVG disclosure process

54. We were regularly updated by the GTCS with the list of those who had been declared unfit to teach in Scotland. I recall that an email would be sent approximately every couple of months to QVS's HR manager and she would in turn pass that on to me. I don't know whether there was an equivalent update sent from other regulatory bodies for non-teaching staff.
55. I do know that sometimes employers would be notified of things through the PVG disclosure process prior to appointing people. That would allow us to form a further view on whether a particular candidate would be suitable for appointment. I am only aware of this because of what happened when I was at St Leonards, where those disclosures were sent to the bursar. I am not sure to whom in the HR department they would have been sent during my time at QVS, if indeed any such notifications occurred during that period.

Training of staff

56. The MoD has its own induction routine. It is designed more for its other establishments than for schools. That said, the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) budget was very generous at Queen Victoria School. Staff including myself were able to attend various off-site courses.
57. We had two or three In-Service Training Days (INSET) for all staff at the beginning of each term. I took part in delivering the termly INSET, as well as being a participant myself. INSET consisted of two lots of two days and one lot of three days per year. The programme for INSET was always packed and covered both in-house and invited speakers or trainers. A variety of topics were covered. They were usually school orientated. Occasionally there were mandatory MoD ones such as Fire Safety.

58. Child Protection was a major topic at INSET. We received valuable input from a range of specialists as well as in-house development work led by our own staff. I recall speakers including John Carnochan of the Violence Reduction Unit coming in. I can't recall any other specific names and individuals who came in but I do recall there was a female police officer who was particularly concerned with Child Exploitation and Online Pornography (CEOPs) and another from a bereavement charity. All those names, individuals and events were recorded on file at QVS.
59. Materials and courses on various subjects were provided by both SCIS and the GTCS as well as by the DCYP, Police Scotland and Education Scotland. Furthermore, there was a reminder to all staff at INSET, at least annually, of the Child Protection arrangements in the school. I have provided the Inquiry with a document entitled "Child Protection Queen Victoria School" dated April 2015 which provided useful contact details which staff may have wished to use when encountering issues surrounding Child Protection.
60. On the academic side, I visited lessons frequently as part of the senior management team's programme of "drop in" visits. This was something which had been requested by the teachers themselves. We always gave brief written feedback on these visits.
61. I was always keen to promote the development of staff under my mentorship. An example of this was overseeing the work of a Principal Teacher who became a Chartered Teacher (in the days of that programme). I coached the three Deputy Heads through the National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership. This was an English scheme suggested by the MoD. Under the GTCS Professional Update scheme I fulfilled the requirements of being the line manager to the three Deputy Heads.

One-to-ones and child protection issues

62. I met with every member of staff individually after my arrival. I took care to emphasise in one-to-one meetings with newly appointed staff and thereafter that my

door was always open either literally, or metaphorically through my PA. Part of the one-to-one meetings was always set aside to point out to new staff that the children at QVS didn't have parents to keep an eye on them daily. This point was particularly made with regards to every full-time member of the teaching staff and some non-teaching staff who were "tutors" as they had roles in the boarding houses.

63. I would point out to new staff that they might see things that a parent would normally pick up such as sudden or severe weight loss or bruising and scars. I would make it clear that it was important to pass these things on. I also thought it was important to mention that I would much rather know about something that someone thought wasn't right so that we could do something about it rather than being allowed to carry on in "blissful ignorance".
64. I think that approach was something that just occurred to me as I spent an increasing amount of time working in boarding schools. It wasn't something that I incorporated into my practice following a particular incident. I've always been interested in the differing experiences between day and boarding pupils and indeed their parents. I appreciated that children came to QVS when they were possibly as young as ten years old and from families who weren't necessarily used to boarding.
65. Children who aren't boarders would normally go home at night and parents when putting their child to bed or whenever would pick up on marks or bruises. None of that would necessarily happen in a boarding school setting. There would be a real horror now were a teacher to see a child partially or wholly undressed. When I reflect on my time Gordonstoun the changing nature of this aspect especially comes to mind. At Gordonstoun we all had to do various afternoon type activities. On Monday afternoons I didn't have anything particular to do so I was assigned to assist with multi gym. I remember that to get there I had to walk through the boys' changing room before and afterwards whilst boys were getting changed. I would keep my head down and not respond to any comments from the boys. Nobody thought it was unusual that a female member of staff would be walking through a boys' changing room back then. Now things are very different. There wouldn't be that assumption that, as a staff member, you would behave properly and manage these situations.

66. Nowadays there is an emphasis on things like knocking before entering a child's room and so on, and rightly so. However, that also leads to staff in boarding schools no longer having the opportunity to pick up on things like marks and bruises, other than perhaps in the swimming pool, whereas they may have done so in the past. That in itself creates an additional barrier. Therefore, it is really important if you are working in a boarding school, and you are saying goodnight, for example, if you see anything in terms of marks or bruises then you must ask how the child came by them.

Supervision / staff appraisal / staff evaluation

67. With regards to oversight during the school day members of the senior management team paid frequent unannounced visits to class lessons. This was a policy agreed with teaching staff. Brief written feedback was provided subsequent to their visits. The duty member of the senior management team would also visit boarding houses on his or her duty nights. Duty nights consisted of one regular night per week and weekends on a rota basis.
68. I “appraised” all those for whom I had line manager or First Reporting Officer responsibilities. The MoD system of Performance Appraisal and Development Review (PADR) was mandatory for all non-teaching staff. PADR was impractical for teaching staff. It caused difficulties because some teachers at QVS, and across Scotland, resent the suggestion that the Scottish education system is in any way like the English system, and only the English system used the term “appraisal”. There was quite a bit of resistance when teachers were expected to undertake schemes that had really only been designed for the English education system. That was both from the perspective of how they undertook appraisal but also because it was based on the national curriculum of England, SATs, etc which didn’t bear any relevance to what was going on in Scotland. A lot of the benchmarks that teachers were being asked to work and refer to through the MoD’s appraisal scheme just weren’t relevant.

69. The GTCS's Professional Update scheme came in some years after the mandatory requirement for teachers to be registered with the GTCS. I think it came in in about 2015. I know that SCIS worked on its evolution for years prior to its introduction. Before the introduction of that scheme a teacher would remain registered basically up until they retired as long as they didn't do anything wrong. The Professional Update scheme changed that. Its introduction meant teachers essentially had to be re-registered every five years. In order for that to happen a teacher has over the course of the five years to complete an online record of CPD, undertake professional development activities, show reflection and reading, and so on. All of that is overseen by the teacher's line manager who has to sign off on all of that at the end.
70. When I retired it was still undecided whether the MoD would accept the GTCS Professional Update scheme as sufficient for its oversight of teachers at QVS. The GTCS scheme had had an immense amount of work placed into it with the involvement of both ourselves and many other schools. I appreciate that no system is perfect but the GTCS one was a pretty exhaustive scheme. For me, if the teachers were meeting their requirements under the GTCS scheme then that really should have been sufficient for the MoD in terms of appraisal.

Living arrangements

71. All children were accommodated in the four boarding houses located within the campus. The only exception to this would be if a child was spending a night in the Medical Centre. The two houses for senior boys are within the original main school building. The junior, or Primary 7, co-ed house and the senior girls' house are separate buildings. Each house has a resident Housemaster or Housemistress, a resident Deputy and a resident Matron.
72. I occupied the Head's House which was a detached house within the school campus. Two deputy heads had similar arrangements. There was another detached house belonging to the school but across a public road from the walled school campus, where a third Deputy Head lived. There was staff housing in a relatively distant part of the campus known as Victoria Green. That became less

occupied as plans to build new pupil accommodation on the site were developed. I gather those plans are currently on hold and that some of the staff accommodation is still occupied.

73. The Duty Nurse had overnight accommodation in the Medical Centre which was a detached building. The Sister in charge had permanent accommodation in a section of that building. In the girls' house there was a "spare" flat which at one point was used by a GAP student. GAP students were school or university leavers from Australia, New Zealand or South Africa. They usually came to spend a year as assistants to the Houses. The use of the spare flat was discontinued when it was decided to accommodate all GAP students in Victoria Green.
74. In terms of access, each member of the House's Tutor Team could come and go from the buildings by knowing the access code for the locks. There was no such restraint in the Senior Boys' Houses because of the integral nature of them within the main building. CCTV cameras were installed in the stairways giving access to the Senior Boys' Houses and monitored by the 24/7 security presence at the front desk. External door alarms were fitted to the Senior Boys' Houses (and those of the other two Houses) so that anyone trying to leave the buildings after they had been settled for the night would set off an alarm.

Culture within Queen Victoria School

75. The ethos of Queen Victoria School is one of community. Not only are all the pupils boarders but they all have at least one parent who is, or has been, in the UK Armed Forces. It is Scotland's only mainstream fully boarding school. Having worked in several schools now I very much appreciate the mutual understanding between pupils and staff, and the support of one another, which a fully boarding environment encourages. Of further relevance to understanding the unique ethos of the school is the School Vision Statement which was drawn up in consultation with pupils as well as staff and parents. I have provided a copy of a document entitled "Vision Statement" dated April 2009 to the Inquiry for further reference on this aspect.

76. The pupils are one another's best support mechanism because they all know what it is like to have a serving parent. This is particularly apparent when parents are deployed to conflict zones. Those pupils who have experienced that before are able to support those currently going through it. We further had a PoD group which was entirely voluntary. That group helped to bring focus to what is a generally understanding and supportive environment for those whose parents were risking their lives in another country.

Culture amongst older boys

77. Pupils were encouraged to respect and to help one another rather than impose themselves on one another. This was something that I was keen to ensure happened as when I arrived there were times when it wasn't the case. There was a sense that the boys in the school very much dominated when I arrived. It was apparent that particularly the older boys were held in reverence and perhaps slightly feared by the younger boys. There was a culture amongst some S6 boys of thinking that, because they were in S6, they could do what they wanted. That was partly why I wanted to instil the sense that S6 was a privilege and make sure that pupils who attended S6 realised that they needed to use their time there well.
78. When I was speaking to former pupils at the school, they probably did exaggerate their experiences from when they were at school. I did hear things from them of incidents like being hung out of windows by their ankles by older boys. Whether those sort of things happened, and that sort of culture was there, I don't know. Certainly from speaking to staff who had been with the school for some time, they weren't aware of things like that happening. However, there was certainly something of a macho culture amongst the pupils when I arrived.
79. I do believe though that with the help of my excellent Deputies we managed to make QVS a much more civilised place. By the end of my time at the school the atmosphere had changed markedly for the better and the senior pupils were a valuable asset to the school. It was also noticeable that senior boys, as well as senior girls, were prepared to come to talk to a member of the senior management team if they had concerns about one another.

The changing culture in S6

80. I was concerned about the use of S6 boys' time when I arrived at the school. In my early days at the school it was just assumed by pupils that they would go on for another year in S6. It was as if the pupils did not think about it and just assumed that they would be spending another year at the school. They almost sleepwalked into spending more time at the school without really thinking about what was going to happen after that. I think that that assumption and thought pattern caused more harm than benefit to the pupils.
81. Over my time there we changed the culture and use of S6 considerably so that returning for the year was seen as a privilege and something that had to be planned for and well used. In the early days a pupil might not be offered an S6 place because there was not a viable academic course available for them. The school might have felt that there was not enough present in it academically for the pupil to study reasonably for whatever they wanted to do. A pupil's record would be reviewed when deciding whether to offer an S6 place. If it was a pupil who had been suspended multiple times, a state of affairs that seemed to occur more at QVS than any other school I experienced, then that would come up in discussion whether to offer a place. Clearly, if that pupil behaved in a certain way previously then there were no guarantees that that pupil would not continue to get into even more trouble when they had a relatively larger amount of free time in S6. All this followed extensive input from teachers and house staff and an interview for each S5 pupil with the Head. All pupils could be accompanied by their tutors if they wished.
82. Ultimately, pupils who stayed on for S6 had been made to think about why they might want to return to the school for that year. I felt that the pupils knew why they were coming back and what was expected of them. Through the time I was at QVS the pupils did become more thoughtful, helpful and motivated themselves to want to be part of S6. I'm pleased that, by the time of my last few years in post, it was unusual for a pupil not to be offered a place in S6. Of course, S6 wasn't right for certain pupils because of their own personal reasons too. That was equally great because they pursued opportunities such as college or apprenticeships because that was what they wanted to do.

Professional relationships between staff at the school

83. Honestly but sadly, I should say that there was a readiness on the part of some members of staff to complain about others whenever possible. This meant concerns were more likely to be raised without substance than to be kept under wraps. There seemed to be a huge sense of complacency and bitterness amongst a hard core section of the staff. I experienced this throughout my time as Head at QVS.
84. If I could explain why there was a culture of staff complaining about others whenever possible, then I think my time at QVS would have been totally different. There was a readiness between those staff members to create and spread gossip. The sort of level of gossip I'm talking about is not about children, or the way staff interacted with children, but more about their professional capabilities as teachers. Looking back, I don't think that the readiness of certain staff members to complain about other staff members had an effect of the way the children were cared for in the school.
85. I never really got to the bottom of why that culture was present in the school. One theory I have is the background of the staff who came to the school. I don't want to exaggerate but QVS is a unique place. It is an independent school in the sense that it is not part of the Scottish state system and is boarding (and levies a financial parental contribution) but it also has traits of a state school because it is run by an exterior organisation, the MoD. I would say that there is a perception amongst the independent school sector in Scotland that QVS isn't quite one of them. I think that affected the types of staff who tended to apply for roles at the school. They tended to be state school staff who were looking for a change. When staff arrive they are very well remunerated when compared to employees in the state sector. This is because all the staff have to do boarding school duties over and above their teaching duties. I don't know whether those things run together resulted in staff feeling either too comfortable or uncomfortable because it was not the environment they had come from.
86. It was a difficult culture to root out. There were some really quite difficult staff members who would rejoice in making life difficult for other members of staff. One

way I tried to respond to it was to highlight the culture itself and speak about “the QVS rumour mill.” I would question whatever it was I was hearing and ask whether staff members really believed what they were saying was true.

Discipline and punishment

87. There was the usual scope for individual teachers to exercise discipline in effective ways which meant that they seldom had to resort to the guidelines. These included timely warnings, encouragement, observations, the raised eyebrow and so on. Where more formal punishments were needed they were allocated according to the Behaviour Management Guidelines.
88. Wherever possible we would involve parents, in discipline matters which were outside the usual order of misbehaviour by young people. That would be done either by phone or by email. We would encourage the child him/herself to inform his or her parents. In more serious cases, or where it was not possible for the child to contact a parent themselves, a member of the senior management team or the Housemaster or Housemistress would contact the parents. There were some matters of concern which required pupil confidentiality and that would be observed. The onsite medical centre staff were very helpful in this regard.

The Behaviour Management Guidelines

89. Carole Phipps, Deputy Head (Pupil Support), undertook some excellent work around the time I first joined the school. She had been appointed two terms before I was. She produced a booklet entitled “Behaviour Management Guidelines.” The Behaviour Management Guidelines were produced following consultation with pupils, staff, parents and consultation with the Behaviour Management Group. The Behaviour Management Group was chaired by the Deputy Head (Pupil Support).
90. The guidelines came into effect around 2013. They were generally a formalisation of what had been carried out previously. I have provided the Inquiry with a sample copy of the Behaviour Management Guidelines dated January 2013. The booklet

was produced after widespread consultation of staff, parents and pupils and by the Behaviour Management Group. Looking back, the consultation process allowed for a general “buy in” for the Guidelines. The Behaviour Management Group continued to meet regularly after the publication of the Guidelines, to monitor progress.

91. Sometimes I could have “seen the Behaviour Management Guidelines far enough” - by which I mean that people’s recourse to them could be deeply irritating, when each child’s case is different - but, in the round, they really were excellent. They allowed us to say, “This is the misdemeanour, this is the mandated range of punishments and this is why the pupil in question has been given a particular punishment.” All of the groups who would use or be involved in using the guidelines were consulted with by Carole Phipps and her Group before the guidelines were finalised, so no one could really disagree when a sanction was issued.

Fagging

92. Fagging did not exist at QVS. In the Behaviour Management Guidelines there is reference to “Days” and an explanation of what a “Day” is. This was the only form of punishment which could be meted out to pupils by other pupils. Those pupils meting out the punishment were always prefects and the system was monitored by the Housemasters or Housemistresses and senior management team members. “Days” were not a first resort.

Prefects

93. I can’t remember what the selection process for prefects was when I arrived. It may have been as informal as asking at a staff meeting whether any staff members had any suggestions for pupils they felt were appropriate, or not as the case may be, followed by a further discussion at a senior management team meeting later on. I think out of that would come a consensus and I would pick out of those pupils who would become head boy and head girl.
94. Over the years I was at QVS we managed to evolve a system that was a bit more democratic, transparent and participatory. We wanted to be a bit more consultative. By the end of my time with the school we had in place a points system. I would

guess that was first introduced in either 2012 or 2013 but it was really part of an evolution within the school. Points would be awarded by house staff, some based on comments made by pupils during house meetings, and so on. The pupils knew there was a points scheme, however they didn't know how those points were translated. The senior management team made clear that the system was only advisory. However, we would have to be in possession of some pretty serious information to overthrow the outcome of the points system.

95. I can't think of any pupils who turned down the opportunity to become a prefect when they were offered that role. Those that weren't selected did approach me over the years to ask me why they weren't selected. When that happened I would discuss with the pupil what they could do over the course of the year to become a prefect. There were still staff who complained about the decisions made surrounding particular pupils being made, or not made, prefects. However, those staff members were usually ones who didn't make any contribution to the numerical points based system.
96. Prefects were given guidance about how to deal with minor problems without resorting to punishments. It was generally first provided at the end of the summer term prior to the pupil entering S6. I think there was ultimately a written guide. Training was provided during that down time that you get at schools after the exams had finished. The pupils would be back in any case because of the big parade that we annually held at the end of the academic year at the school. The Head of Sixth Form would provide some of the training however myself, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and the Deputy Head (Pupil Support) would talk to those pupils too.
97. Amongst the training there was guidance on how pupils as prefects should deal with particular scenarios, an addressing of any worries the pupils might have and so on. When pupils returned after the summer break for S6 and started their roles as prefects staff members and myself would observe the prefects so that we could assist and provide guidance. Occasionally there were situations where prefects would approach myself or other staff members for help and guidance with particular situations. We would discuss these sorts of things at prefects' meetings. I would chair those meetings and in attendance would be the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and

the Head of Sixth Form. We would make suggestions or maybe toss the subject of discussion around. Over and above that I am sure that the Housemasters and Housemistresses would be there behind the scenes providing individual prefects with further guidance because that was the sort of people they were.

Sanctions

98. There was a concern within the school about allegedly inconsistent use of sanctions and punishments. This was something that had been raised before I arrived. Carole Phipps was the main channel through which I came to learn about the issue of inconsistent use of sanctions. She was the person who led on all of this area. I perhaps wouldn't want to over amplify the issue because it was one which was more part of the general "chuntering" of disaffected staff who just wanted something to complain about.
99. There were children who would feel that they had been punished disproportionately as well as parents who felt that too. They would use their perception as a means either to cause trouble, to get reparation or really just to sound off. The Behaviour Management Guidelines were part of the remedy to that.

Days and additional sanctions

100. A list of "Days" had to be copied to the Housemaster or Housemistress and to each member of the senior management team explaining who was in receipt of a "Day", who had imposed it and why. The Housemaster, Housemistress or Deputy on duty on the day that the punishment list was submitted had to review it and sign it off before the punishment was carried out.
101. Latterly, an additional sanction was evolved which required pupils who repeatedly infringed school uniform rules to appear for "Drill for Dress" with the School Sergeant Major. The School Sergeant Major was an adult member of staff. "Drill for Dress" sessions took place in a pupil's free time and involved extra drill practice. QVS is a school for the children of Armed Forces personnel and has a proud ceremonial tradition. There are several formal parades each year in which the entire pupil body

takes part. Every pupil learns how to perform drill manoeuvres and has a ceremonial uniform in addition to the everyday one. Drill is therefore not specifically a punishment activity.

Day to day running of the school

102. QVS is a fully boarding school with no day pupils. Not even the children of staff were allowed to be day pupils. Being Head of such a school meant in practice that when the pupils were there you were never really off duty. There was a duty rota for members of the senior management team that was very helpful. However, as Head you knew that "the buck stops with you." You were also aware that when something major happened, from a bereavement to a power-cut or a flood, you were not going to stay in your (on-site) house and let everyone else deal with it. At those times people are reassured to see the Head around.
103. Generally, I was in school from 8:10am to 6:30pm or later Monday to Friday. I was at rugby and hockey matches on Saturday mornings and at Chapel on Sunday mornings. As a member of the senior management team I had a weekly 24-hour duty period which meant supervising senior pupils (S4 and S5) in prep for 90 minutes in the evening, visiting the boarding houses and being on call during the night. I also had one weekend in four on duty during term times. This meant Friday evenings as above and being on call all weekend. I also visited classes as part of the senior management team scheme. That was a scheme that had been requested by teachers.
104. I spent almost every weekday lunchtime in the communal area outside the dining room so that I could see, and be seen by, the pupils to be monitoring behaviour and so that I was available for conversation. Furthermore, I watched the school come out of Chapel and Assembly six days a week. I did this to spot pupils looking unhappy or unwell and to sense the mood of the school. I spoke to the whole school at Chapel every day from Monday to Friday to relay information such as awards, meetings, visitors and so on. I made a longer address there each Friday morning. I have provided the Inquiry with an example copy of the a Schedule of meetings

entitled "As part of our Quality Assurance procedures we hold a number of scheduled meetings:..." dated March 2012 which sets out, in terms of administration, the long list of meetings that were at the school.

Concerns about the school

Concerns regarding "loutish behaviour" and hierarchy amongst the boys

105. When I arrived at QVS I was concerned about the pupils' attitude to one another at times. Some boys were loutish. There was one example where a boy urinated on his girlfriend in front of other pupils during leisure time. This was extreme, of course, but indicative of a sense that some pupils could dominate others. In a way that I came to see as characteristic of QVS pupils, the girl was supported by her friends to tell the Deputy Head (Pupil Support) of this incident and we involved the police. The boy, who had a record of misdemeanours, was expelled.
106. I think I was mostly occupied with how to make things better at QVS after I arrived rather than reflecting on where the loutish behaviour amongst the boys had come about. I would say a factor that probably influenced it was that the school had previously been an all-boys school; the first intake of girls was in 1996 I believe. I have had experience of working in an all-boys day school and the culture there was different enough. I can imagine that in an all-boys boarding school that culture would be even more intense. There is no doubt about it that that culture brings a competitiveness, a level of arrogance and a sense of hierarchy.
107. The culture of hierarchy may also have come from the background of the boys at the school. All the children were from families who had involvement with the military and the military, by its very nature, is a very hierarchical structure. All the children thought their serving parents were wonderful, and that is exactly as it should be, and mostly it was sons with fathers who were in the forces. If a son is looking up to a father who is in a very hierarchical organisation then, intentionally or not, that sense of hierarchy and respect for authority will be imbibed by the child.

108. I can't comment too much on what historically happened before my time at QVS but I did hear anecdotally from a friend before I was appointed that there was something odd about QVS and it needed a female touch. Being the first female Head may have resulted in me possibly being interested in things that previous Heads were not. An example of this might have been the school's focus on rugby. My predecessor was a great rugby man and that was very much his particular interest. It could be that that, although that wasn't his intention, promoted a certain culture.

Concerns surrounding smart phones

109. We needed to adapt to, and as far as possible pre-empt, the challenges of developments in young people's lives such as smart phones. Mobile phones, whether they were smart or not, are very much a mixed blessing in a boarding school environment. They are wonderful inasmuch as they allow children to contact their families, and other persons who are outside of the school, much more readily. That is hugely important for boarders, especially for children who may not have that opportunity for long stretches if their parent is on active duty. If I reflect back on my time at Gordonstoun by comparison there were maybe only two payphones in a boarding house and children would have to queue to use them in the evenings after prep.

110. A minor disadvantage to the school surrounded the ability of children to get on a phone to their parents immediately if something minor went wrong. An example of this might be a situation where a child falls out with their best friend. The child would immediately be on their phone to their parents in tears saying it was the end of the world, and having unburdened him/herself then hang up. More often than not, after the child had called their parent, they would immediately be fine because they had offloaded their troubles on the parent. The parent, however, would be left climbing the walls and would be straight onto the phone to the Housemistress or Housemaster asking them what they were going to do. It's a really minor point but because of that sort of thing the child in some ways became a little less independent.

111. The big disadvantage in terms of smart phones in boarding schools is the access to what children can see online. That was a difficult one to overcome. When we got

Wi-Fi we were able to put blocks in place far more easily. However, there was always the problem that they could access content through their own connection or bring in material stored on their phones from home.

112. Another problem that access to smart phones brought was the issue of how that resulted in behaviours between the pupils. I remember that when text messaging and Facebook came in the children started leaving messages for each other that they would never have said to one another face to face. The recipient would become terribly upset and we would then have to trawl through yards and yards of online unpleasantness. We would then have to reason with the child who sent the messages and question whether they would have said whatever it was face to face or in a letter.
113. We also had issues when phones included cameras. At one point we tried to ban phones with cameras but that became impossible to do. We had situations where a girl would send very inappropriate pictures of herself to a boy she thought was her boyfriend and he would show it around all of his friends. Over and above that, the school was a closed community and it was inevitable that everybody would know what had happened. That made it quite difficult from the school's perspective to manage a situation such as that. We would have to try and educate the boy and tell him that he was breaking the law through passing on the images.
114. Another disadvantage was the potential for pupils to contact people who may pose a threat to them. Shortly after my arrival the Deputy Head was told by a girl's friends that she was communicating electronically with an older man. Again, this was dealt with with the help of the police. We had a particularly good community liaison officer, Simon Fraser, for several of my years in post and he was on hand to assist.
115. Towards the end of my time at QVS, when online grooming was more prevalent in society at large, some girls reported concern about one of their number who was, they said, planning to meet someone she'd got to know online during her Saturday afternoon free time in Stirling. Again, this was dealt with, I believe supportively and well, by the school. That course of action was characteristic of the pupils' concern for one another and their willingness to trust senior staff to help them.

Specific concerns raised by parents directly to me

116. I recall one occasion where a pupil's parents rightly complained that their son, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had been sworn at by a member of staff called Gerard Buchanan. Gerard Buchanan had kept the boy back in the minibus after a group social outing on which [REDACTED] had been particularly unpleasant. Gerard Buchanan admitted he had been at fault and was given an informal warning which remained on his file for one year. This is a formal stage of the MoD disciplinary process. That struck me as strange as by definition, "informal" means "not formal".

Complaints to the Care Inspectorate

117. I recall complaints being made to the Care Inspectorate on two occasions. If there were more, I genuinely don't remember them. There will of course be records of such complaints with the Care Inspectorate, to which the Inquiry will have access. The Care Inspectorate will no doubt have records of their investigations and their outcomes.

118. The first complaint related to the care of a young diabetic child called [REDACTED] whose parents very much wanted him to be at the school. His parents were Mr and Mrs [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] hated being diabetic and one of his ways of trying to "cope" with it was to lie about whether or not he had taken his medication. In the end we had to ask his parents to take him away as we couldn't look after him unless he was truthful with us about his medication. This was after, in my opinion, his Housemaster, Housematron and the staff of the Medical Centre had gone above and beyond what might reasonably have been expected. All this resulted in a number of complaints by his parents. One of the parents' complaints was found to be grounded, namely that the Medical Centre fridge was not checked often enough to ensure that the temperature was always correct.

119. The second investigation undertaken by the Care Inspectorate was, I think, about a boy called [REDACTED] whose father alleged he had been bullied. I don't recall the boy's father's name. No substance could be found to these allegations. The boy had been involved in incidents such as starting paper fires in the boarding house and had

been punished accordingly. I think there was probably an element of “attack is the best form of defence” on the part of his father.

Complaints to the DCYP

120. I recall that the DCYP received a complaint about how one of our pupils was treated. There was a lot of paperwork sent to them about that. I don't remember the nature of the complaint. However, again, it was one where all sorts of measures had been put in place to help a child in a very difficult situation. For some reason the parent was still unsatisfied.

Concerns after leaving the school

121. I gather some inappropriate sexual behaviour by a member of staff towards some senior girls did occur some years after I had left. I understand that that member of staff is no longer at the school. I have this only on hearsay and believe that the police were involved. This incident is an example showing that it is unlikely that unacceptable behaviour will remain hidden at the school.

Reporting of complaints / concerns

122. I am reasonably confident that if a pupil were in trouble of any sort he or she, close friends or older pupils would have expressed concern to a senior member of staff. Self-harm was harder to pin down. However, even then there was a remarkable degree of openness amongst those closest to the victim, and indeed the self-harmers themselves, which I attribute to the frequent coverage of such topics in PSHE classes and the approachability of key staff.
123. I do believe that the pupils after my first few years, whether they be boys or girls, were careful of one another and responsible in their attitudes. I further believe that the staff were clear that no concern was too small to pass on. This was especially important given that these children were not going home to their parents every night.

Of course, there can be “unknown unknowns” in any establishment. However, we were such a close community that I think abuse would have come to light.

124. There was a complaints policy which was part of the Handbook. The Handbook was issued to all families whose children were joining the school as part of their “joining instructions.” The Handbook or “Guide to Life at QVS” was updated annually. Unfortunately I do not have a copy of it, but I am sure the school would be able to supply the Inquiry with one. It advised that concerns were best raised in the first instance with the appropriate member of staff whether that be teacher, Principal Teacher, Housemaster or Housemistress. There was then an explanation of how complaints could be escalated, alongside the contact details of appropriate personnel including those outside the school such as the Care Inspectorate.
125. Pupils were constantly encouraged and reminded to talk to someone if they had problems or concerns. This could be any member of staff, not only teachers or pastoral staff, an older pupil or a friend. Complaints would come within this. There were also forums such as the Catering Committee (whole-school) and House Councils where complaints could be raised. A note of the complaint and action taken would therefore appear in the minutes of those groups.
126. At a more formal level, Childline numbers were displayed in all Houses, including next to the payphones. Furthermore a complaints log was maintained by the Head's PA and looked at during each inspection during my time at QVS.

Trusted adult / confidante

127. There was no “external listener” attached to QVS as had become the case in many independent schools elsewhere. We did, however, manage eventually to employ a part-time Educational Psychologist who spent a lot of her time working with individual pupils. As this was part of the GIRFEC process concerns raised with her would be discussed by the appropriate parties at child case conferences within the school. Examples of those persons who may be present at a case conference would be

Housemasters or Housemistresses, Year Heads, the Medical Centre Sister and so on.

Abuse

128. I cannot produce a QVS document relating to the school's definition of abuse.

However, again there was material in the "Guide to Life." We based much of what we produced on SCIS guidelines. I have provided the Inquiry with a draft document entitled "Guidance on Wellbeing and Child Protection" dated April 2015. This was the 2015 SCIS draft policy. I have also provided the Inquiry with the version dated October 2011.

129. We carried out frequent Child Protection INSET training. INSET training included small group discussion of scenarios which might arise and what the responses should be on the part of members of staff to whom disclosures were made or who noticed causes for concern. These sessions were sometimes led by the Child Protection lead who was the Pastoral Deputy Head, sometimes by the Deputy Head who was involved with Pupil Support and sometimes by external experts.

Child protection arrangements

130. Child Protection was always foremost in our dealings with the children at QVS. The senior pupils were excellent in passing on concerns to their House staff about younger pupils. Such concerns were then escalated or addressed as necessary.

131. Child Protection was a regular and frequent topic at INSET sessions. Its inclusion ranged from a brief reminder of who the Child Protection Officer at the school was and what sorts of things should be passed on to him to sessions of several hours in length dealing with possible scenarios or new guidance.

132. Various flow-charts were devised and attached to policies and guidance for staff. I knew that these documents would be safely kept by the excellent Deputy Heads with

specific responsibility for these matters so I didn't keep copies myself on memory sticks. Accordingly I am unable to produce them for the Inquiry.

133. I think that as time went on, and GIRFEC became more and more demanding in terms of bureaucracy, there was a greater centralisation of responses to any pupil matters. Because everything had to be recorded in a pupil's chronology in a certain way, and because of the involvement of the Deputy Head (Pupil Support) in every case conference, there was a consistency of approach which mitigated against autonomy on the part of individual staff dealing with concerns. QVS is a very small school - there were only circa 270 pupils, who were all boarders and in only four Houses - so this sort of overview was possible, albeit extremely time-consuming.
134. In terms of arrangements to reduce the likelihood of abuse, the openness of the House layouts, the sharing of rooms by under sixteens and the comparatively generous staffing rotas in the Houses all helped to ensure that secrecy was unlikely. In the school overall the pupil to teaching ratio was something like 1:8 which was very generous. In the boarding houses there were always two to three members of staff in each boarding house when the pupils were mostly all there. The biggest house, which was the girls' house, contained about 84 or 86 children. The smaller houses contained between 57 and 63 children. That house staff to child ratio is far higher than anything I have ever come across in any of the previous boarding schools I have worked in.

External monitoring

135. QVS was inspected by the Care Inspectorate in early 2016 and received the highest possible score for its pupil care regime. The score made the school a sector leader, not least in the troubled matter of the requirement for a "Named Person" for each child (since rescinded by Government). I assume the Inquiry has access to all HMIE and Care Inspectorate reports. Several reports were written during my time at the school. The MoD also sent in its own inspection teams from time to time. If the Inquiry would like more specific dates I can try to piece together a list from what information I have retained.

136. When inspectors came into the school they spoke with the children. There was always a detailed programme with as much opportunity as possible for the inspectors or other visitors to speak with pupils. Often the groups would be put together by year-group. Sometimes there would be a cross-section of pupils from different year-groups. When inspectors spoke with the children staff were only present when introducing the visiting inspector. Tours of the school were always given by pupils, unaccompanied by staff, and when visitors visited Houses (for example, there was a commissioner linked to each of the four Houses) there was ample opportunity for conversations to take place. Subsequent to inspections taking place both oral and written feedback was provided by the inspectors.
137. The aspects that stood out as being found to be positive were generally those aspects in the reports that discussed pastoral care. I remember us getting sixes for our pastoral care during my time at QVS. I was very pleased for the pastoral care leadership team that they should get such a high recommendation because they really did work incredibly hard, particularly so when all of the GIRFEC stuff came in.
138. It was particularly nice to hear that inspectors formed the impression that the children were happy. I appreciate that no child is happy 100% of the time but I found it fantastic that external inspectors would make that conclusion.
139. With regards to aspects which required to be improved, what stands out was that almost always the thing that came out lowest was the estate and the standard of the buildings. I recall us getting our lowest mark (four) for those aspects. I think that was our lowest mark given in the last Care Inspectorate report during my time at QVS. I think all of that went back to the frustrations and tensions surrounding being run by the MoD. I recall that there were plans to build a new teaching block at QVS even before I was appointed. There have been umpteen committees, inquiries and drawings and that teaching block still hasn't happened. Much much more has been spent by the MoD on all of that than what would have been were the building have been built in the first place.

140. Another aspect historically that required improvement was the quality of the food which was always something that the children complained about. Food is always very important in a boarding school. That was something that led to the creation of the catering committee. I think that was created just before I arrived at QVS.
141. Reflecting on all the inspections in which I've been involved, if those being inspected could produce lots of paperwork then that would help their case immensely. I was an inspector for HMC – the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference – for some years, and had been involved in inspections in other schools where I was working, as well as at QVS. Because we were a MoD institution we were geared to producing lots of paperwork and everything had to be recorded anyway and that allowed us to be reviewed favourably in that respect by the Care Inspectorate. A more specific example of this was the paperwork the MoD's HR department were required to produce in and around staff recruitment, inductions and so on. I would suspect that other independent fee paying boarding schools wouldn't necessarily have the manuals and documents we had because their focus would have been on other things.
142. It is difficult to tell how the minds of the inspectors work (and I have been an inspector for the independent sector). For all of the inspectors who came in, whether they were MoD, HMI Inspectorate or the Care Inspectorate, we were very keen to show them what happened and to let them speak to children and staff without observation by others. I really do hope that they all found out about what was there and what they were interested in in the school.
143. In my experience, the Care Inspectorate did respond to what was actually there. I think that for QVS the way in which the Care Inspectorate inspected the school was entirely appropriate because it was a very institutionalised school. I could quite understand that were the Care Inspectorate to turn up at other independent fee paying boarding schools, such as Gordonstoun where I worked, there might be the same sort of frustrations present between the staff who worked there and the Care Inspectorate that we held between ourselves and the educational inspectorate of the MoD.

Record-keeping

144. The MoD is very careful about record-keeping. In addition, as a school we were very aware of the importance of this. Prior to the introduction of the GIRFEC processes, and during the time I was at QVS, each pupil would have a file kept in the Head's office. Over and above that records were held in Houses. The records in the Houses were not necessarily in the same format as the ones kept in the Head's office.
145. I would say that there was only an informal record keeping system in place when I arrived. However, that is not to say that the then incumbents of the SNR posts (there had been only two until two terms before my arrival) were ineffective in that regard. On the contrary, I was very impressed by the level of knowledge and care that they displayed regarding pupils. Both QYL and CKC had been with the school for quite some time, in one case for his entire career. Both SNR knew not only the current pupils but those of their family who had been at, or connected with, the school previously. I am confident that the SNR SNR, who worked closely with the then Care Commission and the police, had extensive records of concerns and actions taken, but this was at a time when there was no centralisation of records of this sort.
146. Record-keeping was formalised with the introduction of the GIRFEC processes. Although very, very time-consuming, the requirements of record-keeping, pupil in-school "case conferences", compiling "chronologies" and so on meant that there were extensive well-kept records on pupils by the time I left. That would have contributed, I'm sure, to the high scores in the 2016 Care Inspectorate Report. The paperwork was produced because we were doing these things; it was not the case that we were just recording things for paperwork purposes.
147. Although as an administrative unit we were keen to regularise the keeping and timely destruction of documents, there was still a legacy of older records at the school. I recall one request from the MoD regarding a pupil from many years previously who was making allegations of ill-treatment elsewhere in his life as a child, and had apparently asked for his school records as part of his case. We did manage to find

some hand-written records in the “archives”, which were not at this point catalogued, and we passed them on. I recall that there was very little there. Should a similar request be made nowadays about pupils who were at the school in my time, there would be a considerable body of information. That would be particularly so from the period following GIRFEC becoming the norm. Even with pupil records from those earlier days, some House records and logs, pupil files and so on would probably be available.

148. I don't know how long records such as pupil records and House records were kept. What I do know is that I didn't manage to get the school archives, rather than the MoD archives, transferred to The Registers of Scotland. Despite pushing and pushing for years there was always a last minute glitch because the MoD wanted to check this, that or the other. In the course of attempting to do that I did see the archives room at the school. The sort of more historical archives that were held there weren't in any sense the sort of archives that the Care Inspectorate or others would be looking at. I remember seeing ledgers dating back to when the school opened in 1908. There were also things like old copies of the school magazine, records of pocket money and what regiment particular children's fathers were attached to.
149. I remember that my assistant, Clare, made fantastic efforts to locate records to complement a former pupil's records concerning a complaint about his life elsewhere. She managed to locate a few handwritten notes from what was probably the Headmaster during his time at the school. I think the notes set out that the former pupil had been with the school for 'x' period and set out what that individual was going on to do.
150. More detailed records were available in the archives, such as pupil files, but they probably only dated back to about ten or twenty years before I arrived at QVS. I think that was primarily due to the ability not to have to rely on ledgers and to have access to things like photocopier machines and their predecessors. I think it was at that stage things became more administratively secure and those sort of records became reproduced more easily.

151. There was at least one Subject Access Request for a pupil's file during my time at the school. The MoD ensured that this was dealt with promptly and properly. Redacting information about other pupils in such a file is a very time-consuming process. Potentially sensitive information would of course be kept securely. It would have probably been held by the Deputy Head (Pupil Support). Medical Centre records were kept entirely separately by the Medical Centre staff.

Investigations into abuse – personal involvement

152. During my time at the school I was involved in responding to the Care Inspectorate when they visited in response to the two complaints. I have set out these incidents above under "Concerns about the school." I was only informed about, not involved in, the two cases where friends had reported concerns about girls who had apparently developed relationships with men they "met" online. Each case concerned a different girl. I was involved along with a Deputy Head in responding to the incident in which a male pupil had urinated on his girlfriend in front of other pupils.

Alleged rape of [REDACTED] by [REDACTED]

153. There was an occasion where a fifteen-year-old boy called [REDACTED] – I am only vaguely aware of his surname now – was seen having sexual intercourse in an empty classroom. The girl's name was [REDACTED] I can't recall when exactly that incident occurred but I think it occurred late spring or early summer term. I can't narrow it down further. The details would be kept in the records at the school. The incident was witnessed by Mike Eastham, who was a Housemaster, and his wife. I believe Mike Eastham has since retired from the school. At that time Mike Eastham and his wife occupied a third-floor flat in another building and were on the same level as the unoccupied classroom. I believe [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had been in a relationship for some time. They were both quite open about that. Apparently they had had sex before. However, when [REDACTED] reported the incident she said that [REDACTED] had forced her. She didn't use the word rape but she did say that she had been forced against her will.

154. The matter was reported to the police. I think [REDACTED] hadn't been a boarder with us particularly long. I think the incident occurred during the second year that she was with the school. By that I mean she had arrived at the school later than was usual, not that she was in S2. [REDACTED] remained at the school after the incident took place and the complaint to the police.
155. I recall speaking with [REDACTED] father, which was particularly difficult. I recall him handling things very well. Carole Phipps, Deputy Head (Pupil Support), was present during that meeting. We discussed together what would be best for [REDACTED]. By the end of our conversation everything had been talked through. The father said that he trusted us and he wanted [REDACTED] to remain at the school.
156. I wouldn't say there was a formal programme of support put in place after that but I am sure that Carole Phipps and [REDACTED] Housemistress would have kept a close eye on her. The Housemistress would have either been Eileen MacDonald or Rebecca Appleyard. I recall that that staff member was very close to [REDACTED]. I do know that [REDACTED] went on to S6, then to university in Aberdeen where she achieved a first.
157. [REDACTED] was allowed to return to the school purely for the purposes of sitting his exams and was required to leave the school premises immediately after each exam. I didn't hear anything more on whether the police investigated things further or what the ultimate outcome was. That makes me think that they decided not to take things any further.
158. I was also aware through QYL [REDACTED] of a historical incident involving two pupils during the school holidays which had similar circumstances. QYL [REDACTED] told me that his experience in that particular situation was that the police told him that if they saw that both individuals involved were under sixteen then it was unlikely that they would take things further. I don't know whether that is still the case but historically seemingly it was.

Reports of abuse and civil claims

159. As mentioned above under “Record-keeping”, there was one occasion on which the MoD requested anything that the school held about a pupil from many years earlier. He was not making a complaint against the school but asking for his records. We were able to pass on some hand-written notes.

Police investigations / criminal proceedings / allegations in the media

160. I have never given evidence at a trial concerning alleged abuse of children cared for at the school. I have never given a statement to the police or the Crown concerning alleged abuse of children cared for at the school.

Gerard Buchanan

161. Gerard Buchanan was a member of staff at Stirling High School who had been an external member of interview panels at QVS. I think he was on a panel he decided to withdraw from because he wanted to apply for the role being filled instead. That was the role he finally worked in during his time at the school. I’m not sure when I appointed him. It could have been around about 2009. I never had any concerns about Gerard Buchanan other than the incident where he swore at the badly behaved pupil, [REDACTED] on the minibus. He was given an informal warning for that.
162. In August 2016 the police came to QVS to see me. They told me that Gerard Buchanan had been arrested and that they wanted to remove any IT equipment that he used. What I told the police at that time was turned into a statement, if I remember rightly. Subsequently I was told (in response to a question that I asked, the following day) that the allegation was not an allegation of abuse of children at the school and that the charge was to do with downloading, storing and passing on child pornography. There are few more serious charges where those who work with young people are concerned. Both Gerard Buchanan and the police assured me, when I asked them, that no connection with QVS was part of the charges. More than

one police officer told me in the days following Gerard Buchanan's arrest what the charges against him were; I would say that the police were very supportive of the school at this time.

163. Gerard Buchanan was suspended from QVS after he was arrested. He was ultimately dismissed. It was about a year after Gerard Buchanan was arrested that he was found guilty. By that time he had been suspended from the school for almost a year. I gather he was given two thousand hours of community service. I have a full folder of hard-copy notes and documents to which I can refer should the Inquiry wish more information. I have provided the Inquiry with the letter statement I wrote to the Registrar for Independent Schools. The document is entitled "Your 10th September letter re: criminal charges made against a teacher" and is dated September 2015. That letter summarises the situation usefully.

164. I recall that when I discussed the circumstances surrounding Gerard Buchanan's suspension with the independent schools' registrar and asked for his advice he told me that he felt that the school's conduct surrounding the matter had been exemplary.

Glenn Harrison's allegations

165. There was a revisiting by one newspaper in I think the summer of 2015 of allegations that had been made by a former Housemaster in the early 1990s. I think the name of the former Housemaster was Glenn Harrison. The Inquiry should know that there are two Mr Harrisons who have worked at the school as Housemasters. Craig Harrison worked as Housemaster in Haig House during the time I was at the school. The first – who was called Glenn Harrison - worked in the school much before I started my role. The MoD would have dealt with and been responsible for the school's response at that time.

166. Even now there is much repetitive coverage of the accusations on the internet. I know only what I read in the press, and later online, and what a member of staff at the school at the time recalled. I heard that Mr Harrison had been a rather strange person who had displayed odd behaviours before making the allegations. The odd behaviours that I heard about were not of child abuse. The person who told me

about Glenn Harrison's strange behaviour is a staff member at the school called Tom Shannon. He is still at the school, I believe.

167. The only thing I remember specifically that Tom Shannon told me was that there was some sort of formal event in the library where commissioners were present. The library has floor to ceiling glass windows on two sides. Apparently, Glenn Harrison decided that during this lunch he'd go around the glass windows on the outside capering and pulling faces. I'm not sure whether he was shouting abuse but I was told that Glenn Harrison was generally being very very odd about the people inside. Needless to say, that wasn't the sort of behaviour you would expect of a Housemaster. I don't know anything further than that but I'm sure Tom Shannon would remember him.

168. When those allegations were reported in the media it was an occasion for me to remind the pupils that they should speak out at any time if someone's behaviour made them uncomfortable and to reassure them that the police response at the time of the Housemaster's allegations was to remove him from the school premises.

169. There have been the same stories repeated in the press regarding speculation surrounding alleged abuse at the school for years. At times it has felt that they have been repeated *ad infinitum*. The situation with the press and Glenn Harrison reminds me of Carl Beech. Obviously, I wasn't there at the time but to my mind all of it seems very like that. When it has suited the press we have been reported as a "top Scottish school", we have Prince Phillip as a patron and historically, and to a certain extent still, certain very senior military figures sit on the Board of Commissioners. I think because of all those factors it is an institution which is a very attractive target for people who want to cause trouble.

CDQ

170. CDQ, the [REDACTED] is referred to in quite a lot of reports discussing QVS. His alleged appearance on QVS's grounds was before 1996 and before the time I had an involvement with the school. I recall that John Silcox, who was the chaplain whilst I was there and has now sadly passed away, had been in

charge of the CCF for a long time at the school. He was an ex-army person himself. I remember that during the time I worked with him he approached me to say that historically CDQ [REDACTED] had approached him for permission to use the school's firing range and that he had denied that to him. He said that that permission had been denied because he didn't think that CDQ [REDACTED] was a sound character. If CDQ [REDACTED] was on site then it was certainly not with the permission of the person who was in charge and had knowledge of the firing range.

Convicted abusers

171. I do not know of any person who worked at the school who was convicted of the abuse of a child or children at the school.

Specific alleged abusers

172. I understand that the Inquiry has received evidence of allegations about staff and others who may have been employed at the school at the same time as me.

YXL [REDACTED]

173. I recall YXL [REDACTED] He was already at the school when I arrived in January 2007 and still there when I left in 2016. I can't be sure how old he was during the time he was at the school at the same time as me. He was the [REDACTED] of Computing and additionally held a non-residential position as an Assistant Housemaster. During my time at QVS I was the Head of Establishment / Head Teacher. I was therefore in effect his "Second Reporting Officer", in MoD terminology.

174. I knew YXL [REDACTED] reasonably well professionally. We were a small school and I had seen every teacher teach at least once even in my first terms there. When I saw him with children in the classroom setting he appeared to be professional and well informed when interacting with the children. I didn't see him discipline children. It

wasn't necessary in the lessons I saw. YXL had a very effective professional manner with his pupils. I never saw him abuse any children.

175. I was told by the MoD what the allegations had been but not in a formal way. I gather a former pupil (female) had accused YXL of having sexual intercourse with her while she was a pupil at the school in a small office off his classroom. When I arrived at the school YXL was on a returning to work programme. He had previously been suspended during investigation by the MoD and subsequently cleared of the allegations made against him. Another teacher who had, I believe, been similarly charged, chose to leave the profession. I do not remember his name and never met him.

176. Although the MoD investigation had cleared YXL, the GTCS subsequently launched their own investigation. Over the course of that investigation I met with their investigator and wrote them a statement. I have provided the Inquiry with a copy of the statement I provided to the GTCS entitled "YXL" and dated April 2008 which provides further detail. In the end the case against YXL was dropped by the GTCS as there was insufficient evidence to proceed.

Helping the Inquiry

SCIS

177. I think the level of importance of SCIS to the boarding school sector over the years has changed. I suspect it's changed even further since I retired. I first became aware of SCIS when I became the principal of St Leonards. At that time SCIS was led by Judith Sischy. She was the person who had founded SCIS and had run it for many years. She was probably more of a confidante to head teachers than her successor was. She proved to be a great independent source of advice as well as a good resource for responding to things like consultations collectively for head teachers in the independent sector. The ability to respond collectively in particular avoided a lot of extra work and hassle for lots of different schools. I remember Judith Sischy would very happily come out and personally provide training sessions for boards of governors alongside bringing all sorts of contacts into schools.

178. I can't recall exactly when John Edward took over from Judith Sischy. I was on the interview panel who ultimately appointed him. John Edward was a different type of person and ran SCIS in a very different way. He was very up to date on government policy, legislation and working with people involved with that. When John Edward took over, SCIS became less personalised. SCIS became less involved day to day with individual schools than it had been in the past. John Edward was more concerned with things like strategy, policy and regulation than maintaining the personal approach that Judith Sischy maintained. He was a very good spokesman for SCIS as a whole in that way.

Budget

179. The Board of Commissioners do not control the budget at QVS. That was an underlying source of many tensions and frustrations at Queen Victoria School. QVS was in a unique position with regards to budget because it was owned by the MoD. The source of the tension was that normally a board of governors would sign off on various projects. That might be the building of a new building, the move to become co-educational, or the opening of a prep school , for example. They'd make the final decision on whatever change was going to be made. None of those decisions at QVS could be made by the board of commissioners because they didn't have any financial clout. All the financial decisions had to be taken by the MoD who had their own copious and sometimes quite strange way of deciding where money could be spent.

180. The way the budget was controlled was an impediment to making the changes I wanted to make but not on any grand scale. By way of example we at one stage wanted to appoint an educational psychologist to the school. Were we to have been an independent school then once we had made that decision that was what would be done. With QVS and the MoD things were different. There had to be business cases, a particular form of interviewing, priority given to people who were already employed by the MoD rather than the best person being chosen from those who applied for the job and so on. That created frustrations.

181. I remember with the appointment of the educational psychologist the Deputy Head (Pupil Support) having to go through all of the toing and froing back and forth with the MoD. It probably took over a year to get someone in place. Were we to have been an independent or state school then that process would have been a lot quicker.

School's relationship with the police

182. The school's relationship with Simon Fraser was mostly informal. He was excellent and everybody in the senior management team felt that we could contact him if we needed advice as well as when we needed to report things to him officially. I'm not sure whether he came into the school to provide training however I do remember him coming to the school and giving talks to the children in the boarding houses independently. I was part of arranging that. I remember the Deputy Head (Pastoral), Steve Adams, was particularly interested in making sure that happened. Simon Fraser would talk to the children about things like staying out of trouble, theft and other relevant important things. We tried to make that an annual thing but because of his commitments that didn't always happen.

183. I would say that my experience at QVS was that it was far more open to the police than any other independent school I have worked for. My experience at other independent schools in the past was that parents would be horrified were the police to be involved with the school in any way. At QVS that was different. That could possibly be as a result of the parents being in the services and there was a culture of "brothers in arms" going on. By way of example, I remember in my very first weekend in post at QVS I was informed that two sets of parents had independently contacted the police because both of their daughters had had a hairbrush fight in the girls' boarding house. Each one wanted the other one charged with assault. Parents at QVS were very ready to go to police and I suppose that made things easier for us to go and consult Simon Fraser for advice.

Final thoughts

184. I was privileged to be Head of a fully boarding school for nine and a half years. It enabled me to see and to influence somewhat a small community of pupils who throughout my time became more and more supportive of one another.
185. I believe that boarding schools can be a valid and valuable alternative to living at home during term-time. However, I appreciate that they can never be its equivalent. The child to adult ratio in the boarding houses is never going to be the same as that in the home, even the home of a large family.
186. Openness, both physically and emotionally, can be planned for and encouraged, although the former is difficult to reconcile with a child's right to privacy. On balance the safety of the individual, and the reputation of any adults in the house, is better protected in an environment where it is at any time not unlikely that someone else is going to see what's happening in your "space".
187. I always felt that the children at QVS were one another's best support. It was that which came through time and time again in the several difficult situations that we encountered during my time there. A school is two things. It is both the institution and the people in it. Sometimes the answer to the key questions, "What is in the best interests of this individual pupil?" and "What is in the best interests of the school?" diverge. That is when a head teacher really could do with the wisdom of Solomon. More often the answer to both questions is the same. I believe that looking after the pupils is also looking after the school. For me looking after the school, so that it inculcates and promotes an atmosphere of openness and care for one another, is looking after the pupils.
188. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

DocuSigned by:

Signed.....

23 December 2020

Dated.....