

## **Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

**Marco LONGMORE**

Support person present: none present

Others present: Michael Short (solicitor and observer, Clyde & Co)

1. My name is Marco Gregory Longmore. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1969. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### **Background**

2. I was born and brought up in Scotland and educated at Milburn Academy in Inverness. I attended the University of Edinburgh and studied for an MA in History between 1986 and 1990. Following graduation, I went into teaching. I trained at Moray House College of Education between 1990 and 1991. I graduated as a teacher in History and Modern Studies.
3. My first teaching role was with George Heriot's School in Edinburgh. I was there from August 1991 until August 1998. I was initially solely a teacher in History and Modern Studies, but I was later appointed Assistant Principal Teacher in Guidance for years S1 and S2. That was a pastoral role that I undertook alongside my teaching duties. It was my first promoted role when it came to working pastorally in a school setting. I was then appointed the Head of History and Modern Studies at George Watson's College. I held that role between August 1998 and August 2005. During my time at George Watson's, I obtained a Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Leadership and Management, referred to as the Scottish Qualification for Headship, from the University of Edinburgh.

4. I was the Senior Deputy Head of Alleyn's School in Dulwich, London between September 2005 and August 2008. Alleyn's School is a very successful co-educational independent school in south London. I was not the Child Protection Officer, but I did oversee both the academic and the pastoral care and wellbeing of students within the Senior School. Towards the end of my time at Alleyn's School I was approached, as part of their recruitment process, for the role of Rector at the Edinburgh Academy.
5. I was appointed Rector of the Edinburgh Academy in August 2008, and remained in that role until August 2017. I took over as Rector of Edinburgh Academy at a time when the school was moving towards full co-education. The School had finalised the closure of its boarding houses and these had been sold during the academic year before I joined. There was no residential care provided at the School during my time as Rector.
6. Whilst at the Edinburgh Academy, I was approached to become involved in an overseas venture to set up a start-up school for Brighton College in Dubai. In Dubai, I worked as Head Master from the pre-operational stage through and into the second year of operation, between August 2017 and October 2019. After finishing duties in Dubai, I moved on to work with Fettes College to undertake a similar start-up exercise in mainland China. There, I led the establishment of Fettes College Guangzhou, as Head of College between October 2019 and October 2020. The school was both a day and a boarding school.
7. Due to travel restrictions in place in China resulting from the Covid pandemic, I was unable to see family and loved ones in Hong Kong and in the UK. I opted not to renew my contract within mainland China and instead moved to Hong Kong to be with my life partner. To facilitate this, I set up my own educational consultancy in Hong Kong called Castle Rock Education. That allowed me to gain residency in the city. I did that for a year and a half between October 2021 and January 2023. Most recently I joined Cognita Group, being appointed as Head of School for Stamford American School, Hong Kong.

8. During my time at the Edinburgh Academy, I was for a number of years chair of the Edinburgh Heads grouping of independent schools. Most of the independent schools in the city were part of that grouping and also included Loretto School Musselburgh for a time. I was a full member of the Headmaster and Headmistress Conference. I sat as a representative for Scotland on the National Academic Policy Committee for 6 years. That was a significant sub-committee within the national structure of HMC.

### **Employment with Edinburgh Academy**

9. I was employed by the Edinburgh Academy between August 2008 and August 2017 as Rector of the School. The previous Rector, John Light, had been employed by the school for quite a few years. I know that he was supportive of the Court of Directors' decision to move to a co-education model and to end boarding at the School. I recall there being a positive and full handover from John Light upon my appointment. I am not party to the reasons behind the Court of Directors' decision to seek an appointment of a new Rector, but I understood the previous Rector was reaching the later point in his career. My impression was that my recruitment was a fully organised and planned process of succession.
10. The Rector of the School is effectively, in business terms, the chief executive officer of the organisation. The role involved all aspects of school life whether they be financial, educational, pastoral. It involved overseeing student and staff guidance and welfare. It was an all-encompassing responsibility within a fully independent school answerable to the Court of Directors, who were my governing body.
11. As part of my recruitment to the role, full references were provided alongside any academic certificates and clearance as part of the PVG system. I am certain that the Court of Directors contacted my referees prior to my appointment. There was a probationary period as this was standard part of the school's contracts. I do not remember what that period was. I was, and remained, registered with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) whilst Rector at the Academy.

12. As Rector at the Academy, I was answerable to the full Court of Directors for the running of the school. However, when it came to regular contact, my line manager was the Chair of the Court, initially Mr. Simon McIntosh, who was the Chair of the Court of Directors. He was later replaced by Mr. Michael Gregson, who had formerly been the Vice Chair. I met with both Chairs for regular updates and meetings. The frequency of contact just depended on their diaries. I would estimate I met with them probably every two to three weeks for a full meeting.
  
13. In my role as Rector, I attended a lot of meetings with the governing board. As part of this, I had diarised meetings with the Executive Committee. Those meetings were almost monthly. That committee consisted of myself, the Bursar, the Head of the Junior School, Senior Deputy Rector and the Head of the Finance and Education Committees, and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Court of Directors. There were further Court of Director sub-committee meetings such as the meetings of the Education Committee and the Finance Committee. Latterly, there were meetings held by the Child Protection and Wellbeing committee which also had Court of Director involvement. For all these, Committee meetings were regularly held, on average every six weeks. The full Court of Directors formally met on five occasions throughout the year. That consisted of four meetings and one all-day strategy meeting. I produced comprehensive reports for each of those meetings.

### **Policy**

14. I had involvement in, and responsibility for, policy in relation to child protection. Our duty of care as a day school, ran to all the activities, trips and overseas trips undertaken. We were very cognisant of the responsibilities involved with that. We kept ourselves very much up to date with the evolving child protection and wellbeing framework that was being put in place under Get It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC). GIRFEC had been talked about prior to my time at the Edinburgh Academy and I remember attending briefings on its original outline, well ahead of the formal introduction. There was policy sharing before GIRFEC was put to statute, so I had a good understanding of GIRFEC from an early stage. We adopted GIRFEC as part of the best practise approach we took within the sector across Scotland. Our model for

well-being, and our holistic approach to developing care, was very much modelled around GIRFEC.

15. I do not recall with certainty the timeline with regards to the School's adoption of GIRFEC, but I know we were one of the early adopters. Some of the practises of how GIRFEC was to be managed and operationally how liaison with external agencies would proceed did pose challenges for us as an independent school. However, there was no resistance to the goals and we agreed with the principles of it. I remain positive towards GIRFEC and some of my current school's well-being approaches are centred around the GIRFEC model.
16. We were also fully engaged in discussions surrounding the 'named person' policy. Although that was postponed for a year, we brought all our processes in line with the original Scottish Government's intended timeframe. We were proud of the level of our engagement with both GIRFEC and 'named person' approach and that came through strongly in our inspections.
17. There was a whistleblowing policy in place at the time I was appointed as Rector. I recall that the policy they had in place was sufficiently robust to pass my initial scrutiny. We updated our whistleblowing policy over time, as we did with all our policies. Looking back, as with any policy, there is always room for improvement and therefore we regularly reviewed all policies.
18. I do not recall any staff members having recourse to formally use our whistleblowing policy. We did have staff come forward with grievances attached to other staff members. That required proper investigation within the agreed process of our grievance procedures. I would not categorise those instances as directly being examples of whistleblowing, nor would I categorise any of those grievances in the realms of concerns about abusive behaviour.
19. Our school policies that were in place were not in the main written from scratch. I inherited a full and robust set of policies in place, written under the previous Rector. As you would expect, legislation and best practise guidance evolved, and we responded to that in redrafting our policies. We used the guidance provided by the Scottish Council for Independent Schools (SCIS) as our main source of reference

when we were evolving our policies. SCIS was very much in touch, and up to date, with the best practise and the guidance that was coming through to the sector during that period.

20. There was no overlap between the policies I inherited for day pupils to those that were in place for residential care, prior to my starting at the School. Both sets of policies were discreet from one another, so I did not inherit residential care policies, as this had already ceased upon my arrival. To the best of my recollection, the policies I inherited had been previously informed by SCIS guidelines and were comprehensive. I had no particular concerns surrounding the policies that I saw upon arrival other than a conscious understanding to maintain a process of updating these on a systematic basis. Clearly, the policies that I inherited adapted and evolved in response to changes in policy and legislation over my nine years at the school.
21. Staff were made aware and participated in a continual process of renewal and update to all our policies. There was a systematic review and update of all the policies in the first two to three years of my time at the school. As this was done we benefitted from the experience that new appointments of staff brought into the school. I also think, around about that time, SCIS provided further updates for policy provision.

### **Strategic planning**

22. I was involved, and was responsible for, leading the discussions in school and with the Court of Directors over strategic planning. During the period I was with the School, the Court of Directors worked very closely with the senior leadership of the school when it came to strategic planning. Together, we were very much responsible for the strategic planning and policy creation.
23. As an independent school we were entirely contained with regards to our strategy requirements, policy formulation, registration requirements and all the other practical things that are required to be done as a large school that caters for the care and wellbeing of its staff and pupils. This was a demanding exercise that required close attention. The School Roll expanded considerably over the nine years I was there. I

think by the time I left the School it comprised of over 1,200 individuals across the pupils and staff.

### **Other staff**

24. I do not recall exactly how many staff members there were in total at Edinburgh Academy, however, there would have been well over a hundred. The Senior School was located on Henderson Row, the Junior School was located on Arboretum Place and our playing fields were located at Newfield next to the Royal Botanic Gardens. Everybody had a shared responsibility under different remits in terms of the structure and guidance of the school across those sites. Those who had a direct line to myself included the Bursar, who oversaw the non-academic aspects of school life, the Head of the Junior School and the Senior Deputy Rector (effective Head of the Senior School).
25. During my first year at the school, I redefined the Deputy Rector position into the role of Senior Deputy Rector (effective Head of the Senior School) alongside the Head of the Junior School. These roles were responsible for day to day running of the respective school sections. Two or three years before my departure from the Academy, we created the role of Deputy Rector of Teaching and Learning.
26. At the end of my first year at the Academy, I restructured the senior leadership and created the more delineated roles of Deputy Rector Pastoral and Deputy Rector Academic (Director of Studies). Both roles were filled through internal appointments. The clarity of their previous roles and responsibilities was enhanced to reflect their new responsibilities. Mr. Michael Bryce was the staff member who was appointed as Deputy Rector Pastoral. In addition to his senior role he was also an excellent Teacher of Geography. Retaining a teaching purpose was not unusual. I also did some history teaching. As a leadership team we collectively agreed that it is good practise to maintain teaching experience and to keep contact with the classroom.
27. The creation of the Deputy Rector Pastoral was more an evolution of a pre-existent role rather than an entirely new one. The previous structure emphasised the Year

Head's role within the School. Those roles were arranged across the School in a rolling horizontal structure. We felt that creating the new role would add weight to the importance and significance of pastoral care within the school. It was also to create the time allowance to co-ordinate, oversee, plan, and support the expanded team of Year Heads as the School was growing the number of pupils. We also wanted to respond to the changing demands of the increasingly co-educational environment within the School, evolving the nature of the school practises and routines in response to that.

28. The Pastoral Team had weekly meetings and there were regular one-to-ones across the team. In addition to creating the senior role of Deputy Rector Pastoral we also created more 'off timetable' non-contact time for those with a pastoral responsibility. I did not attend the weekly pastoral meeting, this was delegated. However, I did have weekly one-to-ones with the Deputy Rector Pastoral. That was the same with the Deputy Rector Academic, Senior Deputy Rector, the Head of the Junior School and the Bursar. During my meetings with the Deputy Rector Pastoral we would do case reviews and talk about broader issues concerning pastoral care within the school. We would also discuss staff training and support.
29. We held a bi-weekly Senior Leadership Team meeting. We structured our agenda to address pastoral, operational and academic issues. The reporting on pastoral issues was not just 'to me' but also 'by me' onwards towards the Court of Directors. Within the Court of Directors reports, from day one of my time with the school, there was a section of reporting around the pastoral care provisions within the school.

### **Recruitment of staff**

30. I had a central role when it came to the recruitment of staff. We modelled our recruitment practises on the model and guidelines that existed within Scotland. I personally took best practise from my time working in London under the Independent School Inspectorate (ISI) inspections. The School followed what you would expect to be the best practise safe recruitment practises at that time. We formally advertised roles with clear job descriptions. We had an application form which contained



requirement for full declarations of professional experience. Any gaps in employment had to be accounted for within that form. There was also a space for the declaration of any prior convictions and any other medical or professionally related disclosures, the expected standard set of declarations that were required to meet good practise recruitment.

31. References were always taken up. We made sure that we took up references with the most recent employer. We always made sure that PVG was in place as a condition of employment with the School. Anyone who was not able to meet the standards we required would not be appointed.

### **Training of staff**

32. I oversaw a programme of training for the staff at the school. It was a collective effort in terms of how that was practically put in place. There were many others within the School who were involved and took this forward across our annual calendar. We had a Professional Development Committee that was principally led by the Senior Deputy Rector and the Head of the Junior School. We offered mixed programme of training using both internal and external providers to support our staff development programme.
33. With regards to child protection and training, we used the expertise of Dr. Sue Hamilton extensively as an external consultant. She was well known in the city as someone who could provide structured training and best practise guidance in child protection. She was involved throughout most of my time at the school. Towards the tail end of my time at the school, we created a Child Protection and Wellbeing Committee. That was chaired by one of the Court of Directors, Mr. Bruce Beveridge. Dr. Sue Hamilton was recruited and paid to join that committee as an external consultant.
34. As part of my own registration with GTCS, there was an ongoing requirement to engage with my own professional development. As Rector, I undertook a range of training and relevant updates across a range of areas. That included a higher level of

child protection training. I do not have access to the records of my training for that period.

35. SCIS provided a detailed training programme for Heads of School and all staff. Of which I made regular use as did the school generally. This programme of continuing professional development (CPD) was supported by their helpful guideline documents in a number of areas of school life. I made sure I had regular updates to my training through professional memberships, some of this being formal but at other times informal. I was a full member of the Headmaster and Headmistress Conference. That involved aspects of preparation and training. We had regular meetings within the Scottish Division which also had some training elements. I sat as a representative for Scotland on the national HMC Academic Policy Committee. I recall a range of training programmes that I undertook including a certificated course in health and safety.

#### **Supervision / staff appraisal / staff evaluation**

36. I was involved with staff appraisal and evaluation. We had a full programme for both teaching and non-teaching staff. It was very much a line management driven process. There were mid-year 'check-ins' and an end of year review with line managers. Progress targets were extracted from those checks-ins and reviews. They were collated, and held, as part of the staff records alongside any records of any professional development the individual had undertaken over the course of the year.
37. The appraisal and evaluation programme set professional development goals that were in line with the school's strategies and objectives for the year. Those goals were set annually. Below that there was usually a departmental priority or objective. Over and above those goals there were personal objectives and training requirements that individuals were expected to meet. Appraisal and evaluation varied depending on the staff member's role. The main emphasis was specifically concerned with the provision of professional education for the teaching staff.

### **Living arrangements**

38. There were only four members of staff who lived on campus across the three sites. I lived in School House on Arboretum Place. That was the Rector's house and was located within the grounds of the Junior School. The Head of Grounds lived in the grounds of the Junior School and was adjoined to the third property. During my time at the Academy this third property was principally occupied by the Head of the EA Sports Centre. It had previously been used as a lodging for gap students when the School was still a boarding school, prior to my arrival. The fourth property was occupied by an onsite janitor who lived on the Henderson Row site for out-of-hours work purposes.
  
39. There were no boarders during my time at Edinburgh Academy. Boarding had stopped the summer before I joined the school. Boarding had been winding down for a few years before that. The boarding houses were closed and sold before I arrived. Therefore there were no responsibilities when it came to boarders during my time as Rector, my focus was on bringing forward a successful co-educational day school package of provisions.

### **Culture within the Edinburgh Academy**

40. The School had a great tradition in terms of valuing a breadth of education. Students had the opportunity to pursue academia but also to pursue their other interests. Students were encouraged to actively take part in the breadth of experiences available. The School had a tremendous history with regard to Scottish rugby, and that was very much part of the culture, but there were many other things that the School excelled in such as its tradition in music and the arts. The purpose of the school leadership was to support those traditions and also to find a modern expression in those activities that enriched the lives of our students.
  
41. The structure of pastoral care structure altered quite considerably during the time I was at the School. This related to the organisation of Year Head roles and the support for students as they progressed through the stages of their school career. An

important focus but not to the exclusion of others was creating opportunities and expectations of success for the girls coming into the school as co-education was fully introduced. Turning co-educational had some issues that needed to be addressed. There were small numbers of girls and there were disproportionate balances of genders within year groups. It took quite a few years to get to a place where there was a more balance space when it came to things like sports and activities. However, with a lot of effort, we got there in the end.

42. Every school has its own identity and sense of self. The Edinburgh Academy had a strong sense of its own identity. There was a sense of collective purpose. It was quite traditional in that way. That collective identity was a very strong current in the school. As a formerly mainly boys' school, there was a tradition of having strong robust conversations. Things were never really allowed to settle under a stone for any length of time because we wanted to get things out in the open. There was quite a strong culture of openness in that regard.
43. Any School that has been around for a very long time needs to reinvent itself. That reinvention occurs in cycles. I saw the culture and ethos I inherited as having value. In wanting to move the school's ethos forward, I did not want to lose that collective identity but, at the same time, I wanted to promote more of a sense of individuality. I wanted to promote a recognition of individual needs and expression in equal measure. That was my sense of the culture at the School and how it moved forward during my time as Rector. We worked quite hard to find ways to express our understanding of a modern interpretation of what adolescent needs were and how a character could be formed and expressed. That was something that we prioritised throughout the pastoral care that we provided and heavily invested in. We created more time and opportunity to allow staff to focus on that balance with students. That was a common directive from the Court of Directors all the way down. We worked hard to achieve that priority.

### **Discipline and punishment**

44. There were clear structures in place when it came to school discipline. Expectations were set and they were made very clear to all. Everybody was involved in providing

and enforcing our Code of Conduct from the student's Class Teacher to the Heads of Year, Deputy Rector Pastoral, to the Senior Deputy Rector and the Head of the Junior School. Matters of concern only got to my desk if they had been through those earlier stages of guidance and correction.

45. The first rule in the school was to "behave in a civilised manner." I inherited that rule and maintained it throughout my time with the school. I thought it was an excellent rule that defined what all the other expectations should be. We would have discussions with pupils, and sometimes their parents, about what an appropriate 'civilised manner' would look like in a school setting at the individual's age and stage.
46. There was a formal written policy with regards to discipline. That was contained within the student and staff handbooks. The nature of the student handbook evolved over the nine years that at the School. However every student was introduced to it as part of the student induction to the school. We re-visited the student handbook on an annual basis with all students. Understanding the culture within the school was regularly applied in a group context. It did not just apply to individual behaviours and understandings of expectations. One of the strengths of the School was that we held regular whole school or year group meetings. This was seen in both Junior and Senior Schools. These meetings provided an opportunity for students to influence culture but also to understand discipline. It is fair to say we did not always find success when it came to impressing our culture and expectations on students, but we consistently tried.
47. Like most schools in Scotland, there had been a history of corporal punishment at the Academy but that was long gone by the time I started at the School. The aim, during the time I was at the School, was very much to allow students take responsibility for their own behaviour. We encouraged students to make remediation for their actions. If there was a dispute with other individuals, we would offer them the opportunity to apologise. We would move on from that where the apology was sincere and was accepted by the other individual. Where there were repeated behaviours, we had the option of using other sanctions such as verbal warnings, lunchtime preps, lunchtime detentions, Friday afternoon detentions, which were either one or two hours long, and finally a Senior Deputy Rector's detention.

48. The ultimate sanction was suspension or permanent exclusion from the school. Suspensions and expulsions were reported to the Court of Directors in the reports I provided to each full Court of Directors meeting. There were not many cases of permanent exclusion happening over the nine years I was with the School, but it did come up. A suspension leading to permanent exclusion would only be considered where there was a lack of engagement with a process of correction or there was gross misconduct in terms of behaviour. There was only one occasion during my time at Edinburgh Academy where permanent expulsion was sanctioned by the Court of Directors that related to the behaviour of a parent of a student at the School, rather than the students own behaviour.

#### **Day to day running of the school**

49. The day to day running of the Junior and Senior Schools was delegated to the Head of Junior School and Senior Deputy Rector. They were the staff members who were in operational charge on a daily basis. Although I did remain present and active in all aspects of school life
50. I was as confident, as I ever could reasonably be, that I would be made aware of any child who was being abused or ill-treated at school. This was due to the importance of disclosure being very much part of the school's culture of understanding. Students had a variety of different key individuals they could access in their school life rather than a single point of contact. The messaging provided to the students was one of care and support for one another and a responsibility to others to report concerns.
51. It was not uncommon for concerns to be expressed to staff about the well-being of students disclosed by other students on their behalf. There were also plenty of examples of students coming forward with their own concerns. Those concerns were broad in range, not specifically to do with concerns of abuse. Reflecting back, I would say there was an open culture but inevitably there are times when students do not get things right and do not always come forward. It is at those times that staff need to step in and understand why that is happening. It was very much our understanding of our

duty of care that it is the staff's role to direct and encourage concerns to be aired and take positive actions to overcome that.

### **Concerns about the school**

52. There were occasions when concerns were expressed about how students were being treated at the school. I recall occasional articles in the popular press in relation to alleged incidents at the school. For instance around about 2014, there was an allegation reported in one of the daily newspapers that there was substance abuse at the School. That allegation resulted in a detailed internal investigation. Ultimately, it was established that the allegation made in the press was inaccurate.
53. A notable allegation, that received a lot of publicity in the popular press, surrounded an incident that was alleged to have occurred at one of our CCF Easter camps. I think that was also in 2014. The incident is well documented in the media alongside the detailed internal investigation that took place. The matter concerned allegations over behaviour on the part of senior cadets towards more junior cadets. Internally, there was a full process of investigation that concluded that the behaviour of certain students did not show the proper care that we expected from all. Those students were disciplined internally.
54. Conscious of our duties of disclosure and reporting, under child protection guidelines, the School reported the allegations to the Police. The police investigation took place and the school cooperated fully with that process.
55. In respect of referrals of staff to the GTCS by a complainant, I am aware of only one case. This related to me. I only became aware of the complaint after the GTCS wrote to me following their review panel considered the submission and found that there was no case to answer and that the complaint was dismissed.

## Reporting of complaints / concerns

56. There was a complaints and reporting process in place at the School, this was included as part of the school guidance for students. This made clear a reporting procedure and who were the key individuals identified to approach with concerns. This was policy and process was widely publicised within the school. Students were given the opportunity to use any of the key individuals as a route to disclose any concerns. We would expect any concerns to be reported by a variety of different routes. What I called at the beginning of my career, 'first line guidance' remained a key part of this, the first point of contact would be the Class Teacher. Beyond that, there was the Head of Year and people involved in the House system. The varied opportunities to support a student existed across different staff roles was what as I liked to call, a 'tartan' system. Our structures allowed us to provide both vertical and horizontal care when it came to supporting our students.
57. During my time at the School, I introduced and expanded a counselling service that was available to all the pupils in the School. That service was provided on top of the School's Doctor's role. The counselling service was provided by an independent counsellor who was employed part-time by the School and conducted counselling sessions in a designated Counsellors room in a discreet location at school. I know that children self-referred to the counsellor and the School doctor. This provided another avenue for students to report concerns if they wanted to.
58. Where there was a formal complaint, it was recorded in the register of formal complaints. Most complaints that the School dealt with did not become formal complaints. Informal complaints or concerns would still be recorded outwith the formal structure of the Register of Complaints. They would be recorded in the notes within the student's file. The student file itself was held either, in the Rector's office (Senior School) or Head of Junior Schools Office (Junior School). Heads of Year would also keep their own working files.
59. The system for recording concerns or informal complaints evolved under the guidance of GIRFEC. There were regular meetings to discuss the ongoing well-being of the students. There was a Director appointed from the Court of Directors who met twice



a year with me and the Child Protection Officers, who were the Head of the Junior School and the Senior Deputy Rector. The meeting was held to undertake case reviews of any major case concerns. Below that, both the Child Protection Officers had their system of meetings with the key pastoral leads and undertook case reviews on a regular basis. Where concerns were expressed, in whatever form, it would most likely be either the Head of Year or the Deputy Rector Pastoral who would be responsible to report those things to the student's parents.

### **Trusted adult / confidante**

60. In addition to the routes offered at school, there were external agencies and people available for children who wanted to complain or report issues. Childline was available and publicised within the School. I am aware that some students made use of this to report their domestic concerns, I do not however know whether children made complaints or reported matters that were school related via Childline. Child and Adolescent Mental Services (CAMHS), a unit at The Royal Edinburgh Hospital, was another avenue of support for students. We were in contact with them on a number of cases.
61. As mentioned above, we expanded quite considerably our availability of medical, counselling and educational psychological support for our students. When I started at the School, there was access to a School doctor but limited access to any counselling service. The counselling service was something that was established and I worked with one of the members of the Court of Directors, who was a medical specialist, to identify means to make this provision. The thinking behind providing direct access to a counselling service, rather than accessing one via a doctor, was that we recognised that counselling was a more specialised service. We felt that a counsellor at school would be able to provide the specialised psychological counselling that was commonly regarded as good practise in terms of supporting young peoples' needs.
62. The expense of the counselling service was a cost that we absorbed as a school rather than it being an extra cost for parents or pupils. We grew the service's capacity. In time, there was more than one day during the week when students could access that

support. Access could be obtained through self-referral or, depending on age and state, via a referral from the parents. I cannot recall the exact level of take-up for the service, but we did, on a yearly basis, expand the number of hours that the counsellor provided.

63. We had regular contact with external agencies. Often that was at our own instigation, but we did have referrals from the outside to us on a welfare basis. These would include Social Work Department, Police and CAMHS. There were external incidents in our students' lives where social workers referred matters back to the School. I know that the social work department were in regular contact with my Senior Deputy Rector and the Head of the Junior School as part of their duties as Child Protection Officers.

### **Abuse**

64. The Edinburgh Academy had a clear definition of "abuse" in relation to the treatment of children at the school. I do not recall the exact wording of the definition. However, in the broad terms, it referred to both the physical, emotional and psychological manipulation, either by peers or adults, of an individual to the detriment of their health and wellbeing. The definition very much recognised that abuse had many different forms and was not simply physical in nature. It recognised that it could occur where there was an imbalance in power relationships and that there was potential impact on emotional and mental wellbeing.
65. Our definition of abuse was shared with staff through regular inset and child protection training. Regular updates were provided to students with regards to mental health, their own well-being and the duty of care related to other students for their well-being. Clear guidance was provided to students as to what was considered inappropriate behaviour at the school.
66. We did not invent our own definition of abuse during my time at the School. There was already a programme of staff training and structures that supported child protection were in place when I arrived. We certainly made sure that our definition of abuse changed over time as our guidance documents were updated and the

understanding of the nature of neglectful and abusive relationships was further refined under the GIRFEC programme. We updated and reviewed our child protection literature and procedures constantly. In doing that we improved, developed and reinforced our definition and response to concerns over potential abuse, as we recognised it as a very important part of school life and ensuring student well-being. Job remits of staff coming in to pastoral leadership roles were revised and updated to take account of this focus. That resulted in there being an added emphasis placed on care, wellbeing and the pastoral support systems that existed within the school. From various views that have been fed back to me, I do think that the pastoral side of school life became even stronger during my time at the School.

67. Specific incidents of abuse of pupils, either current or historical, were not discussed in the Edinburgh Heads grouping. These remained matters that were appropriate for the schools themselves to keep confidentiality for the sake of all involved. I do however remember discussion surrounding general concerns within the sector relating to historical abuse allegations and the appropriate way to respond to these. The topic would have been part of the frame of conversation at that time as there was media coverage and discussion over a public inquiry into allegations being brought into place. John Edwards, who was Director of the Scottish Council of Independent School, was a regular attendee at our meetings and was a valuable source for briefing on the government response to the issue. As part of his general updates on sector related matters, he would brief us as to where matters stood with regards to Scottish Government policy, GTCS initiatives and issues of general concern.
68. I believe that SCIS provided some guidance on the area of responding to historical allegations of abuse to all its members. However, I do not recall the detail. With regards to guidance extending as to how to respond to the proposed Inquiry, the only recollection I have is a general appreciation of the importance of being open and engaged with the process of the inquiry as it unfolded. I do know that SCIS has always been very supportive of the Inquiry's work and its purposes.

## **Child protection arrangements**

69. Good child protection arrangements are instilled through policy, practise and reinforcement. That was the approach that we took. We had different layers of advice and detail when approaching the provision of guidance to staff on how children in their care should be treated, cared for and protected against abuse, ill-treatment or inappropriate behaviour. This approach targeted the level of interaction and nature of contact that staff would have with students, however all staff were trained in child protection. We had clear guidance, policies and statements with regards to child protection, duty of care and appropriate professional behaviours. Everybody understood those expectations because they were clearly laid out. The guidance, policies and statements went through various iterations and updates. They were there from day one and continued right through until the time I left the Edinburgh Academy. I am very confident that the structures and systems that were in place with regards to child protection remain at the School and I suspect have been further enhanced in light of new guidance.
70. Our staff training, policies and statements were used as a building block for induction and the continued education of our existing staff. There was a full programme of training given to each staff member upon arrival at the school. That was led by the Child Protection Officers. Over and above that, every staff member had annual child protection training within their yearly cycle of professional development. This allowed updates to be shared and any policy revisions to be understood. I recall that, on several occasions, we used the services of Dr. Sue Hamilton to provide that annual training. We employed Dr. Sue Hamilton because we wanted to make sure that our training was fresh, up to date and clear in terms of what expectations were. We aimed to create, and maintain, a culture of understanding among all at the School, that the goal of creating a safe environment regarding Child Protection was the absolute requirement of all staff to engage with.
71. As part of our continuing professional development of staff and in setting the professional expectations for all Teaching staff, our policy and training made reference to the GTCS's professional standards. Those standards were fully embedded within the School's expectation of professional standards. We guided staff through their

GTCS Registration and their annual statements. That was a further way to enforce our professional expectations of staff. This worked well for staff who came in from outside the Scottish teacher training system as it allowed them to see not just our own expectations with regards to professional standards, but what was expected at a national level.

72. There was very clear guidance provided by the School surrounding child protection and trip management. That was particularly so where there were residential trips or students travelled overseas. Guidance was provided surrounding what was appropriate when it came to sleeping arrangements, supervision and so on. That was all factored into the trips policies we had in place. The Child Protection Officers oversaw the signing off on all such trips. No trip went on out of the School without the Senior Deputy Rector, Head of the Junior School, signing it off in terms of the paperwork.

### **External monitoring**

73. We were regularly inspected throughout my time at the School. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) moved towards a system of proportionate prioritisation of inspections. We had a full inspection under the format they were using at the time. That was early on during my time at the school and a full report was produced. After that inspection, we had annual review inspections. I produced a Quality and Standards Report for those annual reviews. The reports were reviewed with the visiting inspector. There followed a write up which was shared with myself, the Court of Directors and lodged with HMIe.
74. Inspectors did speak with the children during their inspections. That did not happen on every single occasion but student feedback was structured into their programme of inspection. I think that was done as a group interview. The practise at the time was that staff would not be present when inspectors spoke with the students. Inspectors spoke to me, senior colleagues and a selection of staff and feedback was provided. That feedback was documented so I assume the relevant file notes are kept at the School.

75. As referenced above, there was an incident on a CCF Easter camp that resulted in fairly wide press speculation. Following this a full HMIE safeguarding review was undertaken into the School in 2016. The inspection was conducted by HMIE Ms Aileen Monaghan and another of her colleagues. The inspectors came in and reviewed all our documentation and practises. I remember we had previously worked with the lead inspector on our annual reviews and our quality and standards reports. HMIE came back to us with a very positive report and some reference to best practise being seen. We were given more than a clean bill of health with regards to our procedures, preparation and our responses with regards to child protection.

### **Record-keeping**

76. I am confident that all the records we held at the school would be robust from the period I was at the School. There were records created for all our senior leadership meetings, as were all school committee or Court Committee meetings. Records were kept in either the Rector's office, the Bursar's office or if related to Junior School meetings, the Head of Junior Schools office. Meeting documents and minutes were distributed before and after meetings. The formal documentation created following all our Court of Directors or sub-committee meetings, were held in the Bursar's office. Minutes were always kept of the committee meetings I attended. There was a designated minute taker at each meeting. At the Court of Director meetings that responsibility was usually given to the Bursar.
77. We kept records of our pastoral meetings. I know that because I was always copied into these. That was one of the ways in which I kept touch with the regular conversations that were being had. They were chaired by the Deputy Rector Pastoral. The Head of the Junior School had similar meetings with his team and records were also kept of those.
78. We held student records that comprised of school reports and correspondence of any importance that came into the school. Those were held in the Rector's Office or Junior School Office. We kept student records both electronically and in hard copy.

79. Data protection legislation and guidance changed significantly during my time at the School. We were obliged to keep records up until a certain point and not thereafter. I know that when the original Inquiry put out a call for establishments not to dispose of records, which would previously have been formally safely disposed of because of data protection, we subscribed to that and held onto records, after that request was received.
80. As part of their investigations, the Police made a request of the School for contact details relating to year group cohorts of pupils at the School from the nineteen sixties through to the early seventies. That request was in connection to allegations of historical abuse. We did a systematic review of what we had. We also approached the solicitor firm that represented the school during that period to ask if they had records from that period that were relevant. To my recollection, they did not. This process showed that our historical student records were limited and not clearly structured, however, anything we had we shared with the police.
81. I can only speculate when consistency of record-keeping at the Edinburgh Academy, became the norm. The staff files for staff who worked with the school during the time I was there appeared to have been kept up to date by my predecessors. This was maintained during my own Rectorship. I also recall that student records had been held for a period of 7 years after their departure from the School and then safely disposed after that time. If historical allegations of abuse, ill-treatment or inappropriate conduct, were made historically I understand that these would be recorded within the Court of Directors' minutes. I know that those minutes were systematically kept.
82. The only historical records I am aware of that relate to allegations are in connection with allegations made by the former pupil, now actor, Mr. Iain Glen in an interview with a journalist in 2001. I think there was an allusion to a former member of staff who had an unhealthy interest in young boys. I understand that Mr. Glen subsequently regretted the public disclosure of those allegations and wrote to the then Rector to apologise for the public speculation this had caused. Those records were shared with me by John Light, who was the previous Rector. I have some recollection that the records consisted of a file note made by John Light of correspondence and conversations he had with someone in the Police. The note discussed his interactions

with Lothian and Borders Police regarding their understanding of the allegations Mr. Glen had made during his media interview. I am not aware of any investigations being undertaken by the police in connection with Iain Glen's allegations during the time I was Rector at the Edinburgh Academy.

83. During my time as Rector, I created a file of anything that was, or what I understood broadly to be, an abuse allegation. That file was handed on to my successor. I know that he has shared that file to the Police, as did I when a discussion was had over any allegation being made. To the best of my recollection, the file had seven entries. These entries related to either a contact that the School had received, or came from an approach about an allegation from the police. The file itself is held at the School.

#### **Reports of abuse and civil claims**

84. Since leaving my position at the Academy, I have access to my Court of Director reports but not any files concerning historical allegations of abuse at the School. I have formulated my recollections on those reports and my memories. The only past historical abuse allegation that I was aware of upon joining Edinburgh Academy were the allegations made by Mr. Iain Glen in his interview, mentioned above. Beyond that I was not aware of any alleged abuse by former nor current teachers at the School. I had awareness of Mr. Glen's allegation as it had been widely covered in the media.
85. I remember receiving correspondence early on, via the then Deputy Rector, Mr. David Standley, concerning an email correspondence received that made historical allegation of abuse. That was distinct from the historical allegations I was alerted to by the Police that I set out below. I cannot remember what the specific nature of the allegation was as I do not have access to it now. I do recall that it did not relate to any current member of staff nor recent schooling for the individual. I responded, on behalf of the school. My response was along the lines of being very sorry to learn about the concerns raised. I would certainly have acknowledged they were serious allegations and said that the alleged behaviour was not reflective of the school that we would wish to see and have today. I would have encouraged the individual to report his allegations to the appropriate authority, the Police, with the absolute understanding that the



School would support any investigation that was taken forward. That was very much the way we would respond.

86. Having been asked by the Inquiry about the name 'Brownlee', I did not immediately recall this name however on reflection I recall now that there was some inquiry made, it may have come from the Police. The detail of which I do not recall. I do not have the file notes that will have documented this.
87. In terms of how the School responded to any correspondence related to historical abuse, I was not directed to respond in in any specific manner other than to be open and supportive of an approach to the appropriate investigation authority. Given the potential for criminality, this was the Police. I did naturally inform the Chair of the Court of Directors about any such approach. The general nature of the response to the correspondent was to encourage the reporting of the allegation to the Police and assurance that the School will support a subsequent investigation. It would also be made clear that our goal was to have child protection procedures in place to protect our current pupils and ensure their well-being. If this had not been the case for the individual in the past, I would have been very sorry for that. As explained above, I do not have a copy of my correspondence but my recollection is that I was saying that we were here to support the individual through their reporting to the appropriate authorities.
88. On the occasions when the police approached me with the historic allegations, in addition to informing the Chair of the Court of Directors, I would have notified the School's lawyers. That was to gain advice on the nature of the approach and our obligations under the data access requests being made by the Police. I wanted to understand our duties in connection with that and to protect the integrity of the data that we held and shared. Where our lawyer's advice was considered in any response to correspondents over an allegation of historic abuse, it would have been to encourage the individual to report the matter to the police as the body with appropriate authority to carry out an investigation that may lead to criminal charges. Our solicitor however would not have written our response. All of that will be documented in our records at that time. Beyond that, the only thing I recall regarding historical abuse and our school solicitor, was seeking some legal advice at the time of the Inquiry being set up over its scope and nature

89. If there was anything in the popular press concerning the School we would consult our media advisor, this included historical abuse allegations. In general, whenever there was a press enquiry it would come to me, I would then consult with our advisor and the advisor would then come forward with a suggested statement for the press. Our media adviser didn't advise us on what we should be saying to those who were making any allegations towards us. The advice was obtained as to how the School should respond to any media enquiries. If appropriate, I would brief the Chair of the Court of Directors before a press release was issued. Matters of press interest were noted with the Court of Directors either at our regular meetings or in a briefing paper circulated between meetings. We would aim to just respond to the press enquiry as soon as we could.
90. There were no civil claims arising from historical abuse allegations during my time as the Rector to Edinburgh Academy so there were no interactions with insurers over these.

#### **Police investigations / criminal proceedings**

91. The allegations that I remember being alerted to me, came through the Police approaching the School in 2014 or 2015. Lothian and Borders Police had received information to a unit which I think was called the Amethyst Unit, based in Livingston. I recall the Police raising allegations in connection to three individuals, namely, former members of staff by the names of Hamish Dawson, Ian Wares and IPT [REDACTED].
92. The IPT [REDACTED] allegations came to me via the Police following press coverage of his conviction in Dumfriesshire. The Police made clear to me during their conversations that the allegations they held were not to do with IPT [REDACTED] time at the Edinburgh Academy. The Hamish Dawson and Ian Wares investigations were, however, in connection to the Edinburgh Academy. We provided the police with lists of names and contact details of former pupils, as we held them, from our alumni database. They did a trawl with regards to the year groups associated with the claimants of the abuse. I remember this was information that was difficult to provide because, initially, the police were not specific on the years they needed records from.

I do know that they did then do a general reach out to quite a large number of individuals. This was fed back to me via the Academical community and individuals who had been contacted. Given the confidential nature of the investigation, we were not party to the outcome of the finding of these contacts.

93. The extent of the direction that the Court of Directors provided me when interacting with the police was that they wanted me to be open, transparent and to provide the police with whatever they needed in support of their investigation. When the police contacted me, I provided them with any information that we had. I understand that police investigations must remain confidential however it was at times quite difficult to understand what progress was being made in the investigations of the allegations shared with the School.
94. The individuals I dealt with from the police were caring and showed concern. I could see that they were engaged and investigating what were quite historic allegations. I remember conversations with the police surrounding Ian Wares and the police sharing with me the challenges they faced surrounding his potential extradition from South Africa. I do not feel I can judge how appropriate the Police's response was to the allegations that were made. I am not from a professional background which would allow me to comment on what an appropriate police investigation should look like. I am however happy to say that those individuals whom I had contact with, acted in a professional manner.
95. In being asked if the Police provided an update on their investigations to the School on regular basis, I would recall that that was not the case. There were certain touch points, sometimes initiated by me, where we tried to understand where matters had progressed. The School wished to have some knowledge of how things were progressing and so that we could support the process. However, I understood that the Police operated under their own guidelines in terms of disclosure of details related to active cases.
96. It has been suggested to me by a member of the Inquiry that one interpretation of the responses by me, including my dealings with the police, is that the school was primarily concerned with maintaining reputation and performing a damage limitation exercise. I do not accept that description or interpretation at all. I think that would be a skewed

interpretation of how I, and the School, responded to the allegations that were brought to our attention. The School tried to be appropriately open and transparent in all that we did relating to these matters.

97. I have been made aware by the Inquiry that Loretto School was exposed to similar complaints about a former teacher who sexually abused pupils and that part of Loretto's response was to contact pupils who might have been abused and ask them to contact the school. I do not personally have knowledge of the details of this Loretto School case, nor an understanding of whether the individual in question had been brought to trial. Based on that, it is very difficult for me to draw any comparisons on responses relating the handling of allegations of historical abuse attached to the Edinburgh Academy. At the time, we did not consider direct contact to former pupils as the allegations that we were aware of were being handled by police inquiry. Where the Police proposed writing to former pupils the School offered full support and provided the personal data required for this process to happen.
98. Our approach was to support the Police investigation and co-operate with their process to contact former pupils. The School provided the records needed for that. As mentioned above I am aware that this was done as it was a topic of conversation amongst that generation of former pupils who had been contacted.
99. I do not know the specifics of the nature of the abuse that was alleged at Loretto School or the timeframe when that abuse took place, so it is difficult for me to draw a comparison between the way we responded and the way Loretto responded. At the Edinburgh Academy, at the time of being made aware by the Police of the historical abuse allegations, the judged view was that the best way we could support potential victims to achieve justice was to support the Police investigation into the allegations.
100. I think the way that the School responded was correct. It clearly was an extremely important issue we were dealing with. If the allegations were founded, we were dealing with an abusive pattern of behaviour on the part of former members of staff of the school towards children and young adults in their care. That is something that nobody would condone or would wish to see happen again. Everyone at the School wanted these matters to be properly addressed and was supportive of appropriate criminal sanctions for those convicted of such behaviour. This was how we understood the

most appropriate and responsible way in which we could respond to allegations of historical abuse and support those who may have been affected.

### **Specific alleged abusers**

#### *David Standley*

101. The Inquiry has made me aware that allegations have been made against Mr. David Standley. The nature of those allegations has not been disclosed to me.  
David Standley was employed at the same time as me. We overlapped one year at the start of my time at Edinburgh Academy, whilst Mr. Standley was the Deputy Rector and a teacher at the School. David Standley was at the tail end of his career when we worked together so I would estimate he was over the age of sixty. Upon his retirement Ms. Debbie Birrell nee Meiklejohn took over in the revised role of Senior Deputy Rector.
102. David Standley had been at the School for many years, I believe it was in the region of four decades. He was a very efficient administrator and was well-respected within the School. He was known by everyone within the School by current and former staff and pupils. Because of his long service, I remember hosting a leaving dinner and other events around that time. Upon retiral, he wrote a history of the School called 'Academy Lore.' The book launch of Academy Lore brought many former pupils back to the school.
103. As Deputy Rector, David Standley was present across the School and in constant contact with students, staff and parents. I am not aware of any issues of concern surrounding his interactions with the children. I remember only one complaint from a parent which related to the manner of address David Standley had made to a Senior School Assembly following an incident of vandalism of some school property in the new PE changing rooms at the School. I was not present at this Assembly. The parent objected to the manner in which Mr. Standley had addressed the pupils at the Assembly, claiming his daughter had been upset by this. That is the only incident that I recall being raised as a concern.

104. Mr Standley's role as Deputy Rector placed him in the School's Discipline and Sanctions process and policy. In his role as Deputy Rector, and within the clear limits systems of sanctions detailed in the School's Code of Conduct policy, I did not see, nor was I aware of any incident, where David Standley disciplined inappropriately or abused any children whilst I was there.

### **Leaving the school**

105. I had been at Edinburgh Academy for nine years when I was approached by recruitment agents working on behalf of Brighton College who were looking for a Founding Head to set up a school in Dubai. I know that the Court of Directors wanted me to continue as Rector but having always wanted to work overseas, I felt that it was the right time and opportunity to progress the next stage of my career. I provided three referees to Brighton College prior to my employment by them, including the Chair of the Court of Directors at the Edinburgh Academy.

### **Helping the Inquiry**

106. Over a career of over thirty years, I have seen changes when it comes to child protection across Scotland. Child protection has come to be much better understood as a priority within all schools, state and independent sector. I can see that in terms of the common language and approaches used across both sectors. There has been an improvement in the level of sophistication when it comes to understanding child welfare and needs. When I was teaching earlier on in my career, that more developed and sophisticated understanding of child welfare and needs was more commonly focused in pastoral specialisms and certain key individuals within a particular school. Now it is commonly appreciated and understood that all staff have a central focus and responsibility to deliver the appropriate support for individual students in their care. The level of training, and the expectation that is applied to all staff around child protection, is much greater than when I started my career in teaching in the early 1990's. That is

because of a change of culture and a change in professional understandings of where priorities lie. I think that is common across the United Kingdom.

107. Procedurally there were some slight variations between the English and Scottish approaches to child protection, but the overall standard of expectations was the same. As an example, I remember there being a very strong element of inspection into safeguarding during a full inspection I experienced at Alleyn's School. Those inspections were based around the ISI model of inspections. I remember the central register of staff being a key aspect of the English system with regards to registration or recruitment and training of staff with regards to child protection. The PVG tracking system in Scotland serves a similar purpose.
108. I hope to have seen and taken best practises in staff recruitment and child protection in place in the UK to other parts of the world in my most recent appointments. The child protection measures that were in place in Scotland during my time at Edinburgh Academy are of a more sophisticated standard and level than the practises I have witnessed in the Middle East and China. However, in representing British schools in these regions we have adopted UK standards and approaches to child protection when setting up our schools. The standards of safeguarding, checks, references and police reporting I experienced in the UK has always been front of my mind when recruiting new staff. We apply those standards to our work even though the legislative frameworks in those countries is different. I think that is one of the additional values offered when bringing British branded schools to other parts of the world.
109. From my perspective, from day one, there was very clearly a view within the Court of Directors at the Edinburgh Academy that there was a need for strong child protection and pastoral care. The Edinburgh Academy was not a school that was skewed more towards a sporting or an academic purpose, it valued a holistic education. The members of the Court were not in the main educationalists or specialists in child protection or pastoral care, so it was down to the professionals within the school to bring in that best practise and knowledge to the School. I feel that the Edinburgh Academy Court of Directors' interest in child protection and pastoral care was more than adequate. They fully understood what should be in place to protect the interests of the students of the School and provide appropriate training to staff for that.

110. The Edinburgh Academy has always been open to taking on board its responsibilities when assisting appropriate authorities to investigate appropriately. That was certainly the case during my time there. That is what we did. We tried to make sure that we were as pro-active as we could be when working with the Police in their timescales and under their processes. If there are more things we could and should have done in hindsight, then of course we would be willing to accept that. However, there is nothing that comes to my mind at this time that we could or should have done based on our understandings at that time.
111. Sadly, abuse will never entirely disappear. The fact that abuse is a subject of continued scrutiny and attention within schools more generally is a good thing. Likewise, it is a good thing that there is a culture of transparency within schools surrounding disclosure of all aspects of abuse and neglect. We must make sure that the opportunity for transparency and disclosure is never something that is forgotten about within schools. It is the best way we can aim to protect young people and give them a safe and secure environment to grow up in.
112. If abuse has happened in the past at the Edinburgh Academy, it is something that is of significant regret and sadness. That is particularly so when viewed through the prism of the impact had on the individual concerned. Throughout my career I have absolutely understood the need to protect the wellbeing and welfare of children in my charge or in the charge of the schools I worked at. It is the fundamental duty of any staff member, whether teaching or otherwise, to maintain that understanding in all aspects of their work. Where allegations of abuse exist, and in due course are confirmed, I find that abhorrent. That is why I have worked to make sure that there was a structure in place to minimise the opportunity for that to ever happen again.
113. What we can do is work extremely hard moving forward to eliminate, or at the very least minimise, the chance of abuse happening. That is why I support the work of the Inquiry and am happy to be involved with providing evidence. I hope the Inquiry gives those who have negative experiences in their school life an opportunity to release that experience from their lives and move forward from it. More importantly, in terms of the broader remit of the Inquiry, I hope that further guidance can be provided in terms of



child protection and how related agencies can better work together. That further guidance can only be a good thing.

- 114. 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.

Signed.....  .....

Dated..... 01 August 2023 .....