

## **Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

**Andrew DAVIES**

Support person present: No.

1. My name is Andrew Gregory Simon Davies. I am known as Gregg. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1960. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### **Background**

2. I have a BSc (Hons) and a Certificate in Management.
3. I have been employed as a teacher at the Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School, Elstree and a teacher, Housemaster, Head of Department, Deputy Head and Temporary Head of the prep school at Fettes College, Edinburgh. Thereafter I was Headmaster of Shiplake College, Henley-on-Thames.

### **Employment at Fettes College**

4. My employment at Fettes College lasted between September 1989 and August 2004, during which dates I was a teacher, Housemaster, Head of Department, Deputy Head and Temporary Head of the prep school.
5. References were provided from my previous school. I was interviewed separately by [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED] CXL the Head of Science, David Kennedy, and the Head of

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Biology, Dr Peter Coshan. I know references were followed up because my current Head of Department told me when I returned.

6. I did not hold a PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate of Education) and did not have GTCS (General Teaching Council for Scotland) registration until later in my time at Fettes.
7. I had two visits to Fettes prior to my starting date and David Kennedy and Dr Coshan were in constant touch with me as soon as I was appointed. There was no formal appraisal when I started but informally there was plenty as the labs had inter-joining rooms. I was a tutor in Moredun boarding house and I remember being accompanied by the housemaster, <sup>FTF</sup> [REDACTED] on my first duty as he told me what was expected of me. Although safeguarding was not a term used at the time I remember he expressly stated what was required of me, how the privacy of the children should be respected and I particularly recall him telling me that if any child appeared sad, I was to let him know. The word "sad" struck me and I was ever alert for this. There was no further training in addition to this, however, at that time, I felt I had been given sufficient information to perform the role.
8. I was appointed as Housemaster of Carrington House in 1994 and I had formal training with the Boarding Schools Association (BSA). I recall a day of lectures run by two ex-heads of boarding schools, although I'm not sure if that was before I was appointed or during my appointment. Ultimately, in 1996, I became a tutor for the BSA for budding houseparents and we produced formal accredited training. When I was made Deputy Headmaster I attended several conferences.

### **Policy**

9. I wrote a house handbook whilst I was Housemaster. The Deputy Head, Judith Campbell, brought in many checks and policies around safeguarding.

10. Judith Campbell was appointed as a Housemistress first and then as Deputy Head. She brought in many policies and procedures for those looking after boarders. This was not just in response to changing legislation but also to ensure best practice.
11. We were also inspected by CSCI (Commission for Social Care Inspection) but they did not know much about boarding schools and pupils. Certainly, when I was Deputy and then Head of the prep school, between 1999 and 2004, we had child protection questions which we had to ask and record answers to. I always asked whether applicants had been subject to disciplinary proceedings in previous employments. I wrote their answers down at the time of interview and thereafter handed those notes to the secretary to the Headmaster, however I don't know what then happened to those notes.

### **Strategic planning**

12. When I was Deputy Head I was involved in development planning. Care for residential pupils was a major strand of every plan from when they were started in 1998.
13. The school's strategic approach is detailed in the Development Plans and I have provided the Inquiry with copies of the 2001 – 2002 and the 2002 – 2003 plans. The following are excerpts from the School Development Plan 2001 – 2002 and the School Development Plan 2002 – 2003:

#### ***'REVIEW OF OBJECTIVES FROM THE 2000 – 2001 PLAN.***

*Below are the summaries of reviewers' conclusions: more detailed reviews are available.*

#### ***CARE & WELFARE OF RESIDENTIAL PUPILS          JAC***

*Strengths: House Development Plans were completed and Hms are now in the process of auditing these in order to develop their plans for next session. The*

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whole process of House Development planning is now established. The Guardianship policy is now implemented. Staff were given INSET on the Welfare of pupils on School Trips at the start of the Autumn term and subsequent trips have followed the new guidelines; these will be developed into a pack/guide for the new session. Revisions to the existing Critical Incident Management Policy will be completed by the start of next session. Work has been done on risk assessment to produce generic risk assessment forms to be used by departments and for social events within the school. The form will be adapted as it is used.

### **SUMMARY OF ACTION FOR 2001 – 2002**

- |           |   |           |            |
|-----------|---|-----------|------------|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>CARE &amp; WELFARE OF RESIDENTIAL PUPILS</b>   |           | <b>JAC</b> |
| 1.1       | Implement new procedures and documentation for welfare of pupils on trips in UK and abroad. | Dec '01   | JAC        |
| 1.2       | Develop Risk Assessment procedures.   | Dec '01   | SNR JAC    |
| 1.3       | Revise Child Protection Guidelines in line with new Edinburgh & Lothian Guidelines.         | April '02 | JAC        |
| 1.4       | Review and revise the School Rules.   | June '02  | JAC        |
| 1.5       | Develop drugs policy and action plan in response to the Scottish Executive document.        | June '02  | JAC        |

### **REVIEW OF OBJECTIVES FROM THE 2001-2002 PLAN**

Below are the summaries of reviewers' conclusions: more detailed reviews are available.

- |           |   |            |
|-----------|---|------------|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>CARE &amp; WELFARE OF RESIDENTIAL PUPILS</b> | <b>JAC</b> |
|-----------|---|------------|

*Strengths:* An INSET held at the beginning of the Autumn term on documentation for all School trips led to development and refinement of an

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*inclusive form incorporating trip details, basic medical information and risk assessment. A working group made considerable progress in designing and implementing risk assessments for Academic Departments. Risk assessments for School events and functions were also designed and implemented. New Guidelines for the Management of Incidents Involving Drug Misuse were implemented in January, based on the Scottish Executive document.*

*There was an unannounced HMI Care and Welfare of Residential Pupils Inspection in January and February. The Inspectors found 'very good child protection procedures in place' and did not see any need for revision of guidelines. They agreed that School Rules should be reviewed and revised.*

*Issues:*

*1] Having introduced risk assessments in some areas of the School it is now necessary to ensure that assessments are done as a matter of course for all trips, activities and functions. Boarding House risk assessments should be carried out.*

*2] Following research and consultation, the School's policy on drug misuse should be re-stated and parents informed of procedures if drug misuse is suspected.*

*3] Procedures and practices in the Prep School should be brought into line with those in the Senior School.*

*4] The School Rules are under revision.*

## **REVIEW OF OBJECTIVES FROM THE 2002-2003 PLAN**

*Below are the summaries of reviewers' conclusions : more detailed reviews are available.*

### **1. CARE & WELFARE OF RESIDENTIAL PUPILS JAC**

*Strengths: As a follow-up to the recommendations in the recent Care and Welfare Inspection, there have been developments in arrangements in the Prep School which are detailed in the Prep School Development Plan. The provision of shower facilities in Arran and in Kimmerghame has been greatly improved.*

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*The revised School Rules are due for publication in June. Arrangements for indulgence and Sunday leaves have been revised to give senior pupils greater freedom; cultural leaves have been further encouraged. The whole Upper Sixth form has now taken on responsibility for meal duties in the Dining Hall. Improvements have been made in the consistency and quality of House Development Planning. Pastoral CPD needs will now be co-ordinated. PSE arrangements have been revised and a fuller programme is to be implemented next session, largely through the Quest Programme.*

*Issues:*

*1] The introduction of a Pupil Forum next session will facilitate pupil / staff discussion and suggestions.*

*2] Residential Tutors would benefit from more regular meetings together for discussion and training purposes. A programme of meetings is planned for next session.*

*3] Tutors will need to be provided with suitable materials and guidance for PSE sessions together with any additional training individuals require.*

#### **Other staff**

14. Whilst Temporary Head of the prep school I managed all teaching staff. As Deputy Head of the senior school I had a number of middle managers who would report to me.

#### **Recruitment of staff**

15. As Deputy Head I was involved in the recruitment of staff at the school. The key participants in the recruitment process were <sup>SNR</sup> and the Head of Department, however my role in the process involved focussing on the pastoral side of the applicants' experience and what they might additionally provide the school.

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16. Through conferences and membership of Boarding Schools Association (BSA) I learnt about best practice in recruitment.
17. References from former employers were always requested and scrutinised and on most occasions references were actually spoken to.

### **Training of Staff**

18. I was involved in both the training and the personal development of staff.
19. As Housemaster I trained house tutors and prefects and developed a handbook for both boarders and tutors. The handbook had dos and don'ts for tutors and included guidance on how children's privacy should be respected. Additionally, no new tutor would be allowed to complete their first duties unaccompanied. As Deputy Head I was involved in a number of INSET sessions. I was also in charge of the appraisal system, or Review and Development as we called it.

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

20. As Deputy Head I set up a staff appraisal system, I ran it and I monitored it.

### **Living arrangements**

21. As Housemaster I lived in connected accommodation on site and there was a lock on the connecting doors. Housemasters were encouraged to make the house as homely as possible and both my wife and I were keen to ensure that was the case. All the boarders knew that they could come to my door at any time, I made that very clear. I wanted it to be their home. Additionally, boarders would come in for birthday parties and other significant events, when my wife would bake them a cake and they could bring in a small group of their friends.

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22. There were a number of houses run by at least three resident staff. There were other properties on site which were used by some staff.
23. Housemasters, both male and female, tutors, matrons and Housemasters' partners had access to the children's residential areas. I can't recall whether there was a lock on the access doors and it would, however, be fair to say there were very little controls over access.

### **Culture within Fettes College**

24. Generally, I thought the culture was good during my period of employment at Fettes College. Older pupils knew, through role modelling and PSHE (personal, social, health and economic) lessons, that respect needed to be earned. However, there were still some who thought that older age brought privileges. I would say that it was not in the culture, but some individuals did not wish to adhere to school rules and expectations.
25. 'Fagging' did not exist in my time, as far as I am aware.

### **Discipline and punishment**

26. There was a strict behavioural policy regarding how children were disciplined and punished at Fettes College, as is detailed in a document entitled 'Vademecum'. I have provided a copy of this document to the Inquiry.
27. The Vademecum details the formal policy in relation to discipline and punishment and pupils were made aware of it when joining the school and at the beginning of each year by housemasters. Records were kept in hard copy by house staff and latterly on the computer management information system.
28. Prefects had limited 'power' in regard to discipline. They could report but not punish.

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

29. As Deputy Headmaster I was involved in the day-to-day running of the school.
30. I was responsible for operational duties between 2000 and 2004, at the times I was not Acting Head of the prep school.
31. I would say that no-one who has responsibility for the day-to-day running of any school either then or now could say categorically that they could be confident that, if any child was being abused or ill-treated, it would have come to light at or around the time it was occurring.
32. I can say that the relationship between staff and pupils was very strong. Every child had a tutor, every child had a housemaster and every child could speak to any of the medical and non-teaching pastoral staff if they wished. I can say with confidence that all pupils had at least one member of staff to whom they could turn and it would be up to that child who they spoke to, if they so wished. Judy Campbell, as Deputy Head in charge of child welfare, was outstanding in her policy writing and in her checking of implementation.
33. Those reasons will not have changed today and have both social and psychological origins, which I would be happy to discuss at length. The social circles in a boarding house are very strong and I can think of a number of examples whereby boys were, and are, able to find a member of staff to confide in, should they so wish. It is, however, fair to say that it is possible for abuse to go undetected as children may well not wish to report it. It is crucial to encourage them to do so as, pragmatically, abusers will find ways to access children. Education remains the prime conduit to make children aware of what should be allowed and what cannot be allowed. However abusers can form close attachments to the abused, such that the abused will not want to report.

### **Concerns about the school**

34. The school was not, to my recollection, ever the subject of concern, in school or to any external body or agency, or any other person, because of the way in which children and young people in the school were treated.

### **Reporting of complaints/concerns**

35. There was a 'Central Complaints Log' for the recording of complaints made by any child in the school, or another person on their behalf. I have a minute from a Senior Management Team meeting in 2004 and I have provided a copy to the Inquiry. That minute states:

*'9. Central Complaints Log            JAC*

*JAC introduced SCIS's recommendations on a Central Complaints Log. It was agreed that this was a necessary measure. JAC will take this forward and liaise with AMH to produce an electronic method of recording the information in order to keep extra work for staff to a minimum.'*

### **Trusted adult/confidante**

36. I do not think there was an independent listener to whom a child could speak to about any worries they had when I was at Fettes College.

### **Abuse**

37. The *Vademecum* from 2003, to which I have previously referred, clearly gives the definition of "abuse" that applied in relation to the treatment of children at the school.

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38. At the beginning of each academic year the pastoral Deputy Head communicated and explained the definition of abuse to staff working at the school.
39. I am not sure when that definition was introduced nor whether it ever changed.

### **Child protection arrangements**

40. Staff, including managerial staff, were given guidance and instruction on how children in their care at the school should be treated, cared for and protected against abuse, ill-treatment or inappropriate behaviour towards them at regular staff and housemaster meetings.
41. The Vademecum from 2003, which is the only file I have, provides the guidance and instruction that was given to staff on how to handle, and respond to, reports of abuse or ill-treatment of children by staff, other adults, or fellow pupils.
42. The amount of autonomy, including discretion, that was given to staff, including managerial staff, in relation to these matters was dictated by professional expectations.
43. I am unsure what child protection arrangements were in place to reduce the likelihood of abuse, ill-treatment, or inappropriate conduct by staff, or other adults, towards children at the school.

### **External monitoring**

44. I am aware that initially the CSCI visited the school, that they spoke to children individually and in a group and that staff were not present. They also spoke to me and they gave feedback. It was good feedback and, in retrospect, it was helpful. However

there remain times when even modern safeguarding advice has to be altered slightly to ensure the proper emotional care of boarders.

### **Record keeping**

45. Hard copies were initially kept by the school during my employment at Fettes College and then records were kept on computer.
46. I am confident that in my time at Fettes the school's policy on record-keeping, record-keeping in practice, and the quality of the records as a source of information was documented correctly.
47. I cannot comment on the historical position as regards record-keeping.
48. I cannot remember if there was an existing policy on record-keeping when I arrived. There most certainly was when I became Housemaster and this was checked by the then SNR [REDACTED], FTF [REDACTED]. The hand-written notes' quality depended on the writer. House tutors had to report to the Housemaster at the end of every duty session and a verbal hand-over was given. Any serious issues were reported upwards to the SNR [REDACTED].

### **Investigations into abuse – personal involvement**

49. I cannot recall ever being involved in any investigation on behalf of the school into allegations of abuse or ill-treatment of children at the school or into inappropriate behaviour by staff or others towards children.

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

50. I was never involved in the handling of reports to, or civil claims made against, the school by former pupils, concerning historical abuse.

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

51. I did not become aware of police investigations into alleged abuse at the school.

### **Helping the Inquiry**

52. There are many lessons that can be learned to protect children in a boarding school, now and in the future.
53. I have worked in boarding schools for thirty-two years. They can be the most marvellous of places of education for many, but not all. I had a fabulously rewarding professional period as a Housemaster, which were the best and hardest years of my life. I wouldn't swap the time for the world. The relationships I made with pupils are now cemented as they have become adults.
54. There has been terrible abuse of youngsters. However, so much good has been done too and I hope that isn't forgotten amongst this. Money does not buy love. Some of the children under my care had no love at home but received it in an appropriate way and through their boarding experiences at Fettes. It meant they prospered and developed into thoughtful, inquisitive and caring young people who fulfil roles which serve and contribute to the society in which they live. So much good can come from the right boarding community.
55. Things changed around the time I became Housemaster. Behaviours of senior boys in a boarding house were monitored more rigorously. Gone were the days of prefects running the houses, as had happened historically and as various alumni would tell me.

I would always have concerns about hierarchical structures in a boarding house and even now, house staff need to constantly monitor relationships between more senior boarders and junior ones. The joy for me was in the conversations one had with the youngsters. Some of these, I will admit, were undertaken without modern safeguarding protocols, and would be severely frowned on now, and one can see why in retrospect. Society has changed and has become much more inclusive and boarding schools have wanted to mirror that.

56. In ensuring, quite rightly, safeguarding protocols now, some pastoral conversations will not happen which will also affect, adversely, the mental health of young people. As housemaster, I had to tell a boy of the death of a close family member. A boarder would need a high level of emotional support and my actions at that time would now have to be more carefully choreographed in light of safeguarding protocols. What is clear is that it is a minefield for those involved in the pastoral care of young people whilst they are at school and it does not matter whether it is a day school or a boarding school.

**Other information**

57. 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...12<sup>th</sup> May 2021.....