

# COVER SHEET

[REDACTED]

1st Witness Statement of David Smith

Date signed: 02 December 2020

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IN THE MATTER OF THE PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO UNDERCOVER POLICING

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I, David Smith, c/o Designated Lawyers, PO Box 73779, London, WC1A 9NL, WILL SAY AS FOLLOWS:

1. This witness statement is made in response to a Rule 9 request dated 17 September 2020. It provides my recollection of my role within the Special Demonstration Squad (SDS) of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS).
2. I am known in this Public Inquiry by the nominal HN103.

**Personal details**

3. My name is David Smith and my date of birth is <sup>1</sup> [REDACTED] 1939.

**Police career before and after serving with the Special Demonstration Squad**

4. I joined the MPS in February 1959 and Special Branch in August 1962. On joining Special Branch I was a Detective Constable (DC). Prior to joining the SDS I worked in naturalisation, on 'C Squad' (which dealt with public order), in telephone interceptions, protection work and 'E Squad' (monitoring the right wing). After working on the SDS (in the approximate period of 1970-1974), I worked again in naturalisation, protection and 'B Squad' (which dealt with Irish

[REDACTED]

matters). I transferred out of Special Branch in 1979. In November 1981 I returned to Special Branch as Chief Inspector on C Squad (which at that time also dealt with the right wing and animal rights issues). In 1985 I moved as a Chief Inspector to 'A Squad' (which dealt with protection duties) and was promoted to Superintendent in February 1986. From approximately August 1988 to October 1989 I was the Chief Superintendent of C Squad and part of my responsibility included the SDS, but I was not involved in the day to day management of the squad at that time. I retired from the MPS in 1989.

### **Special Demonstration Squad – Formation**

5. The SDS's primary purpose was getting intelligence on demonstrations and public order, so that those responsible for the policing of those events would be better informed and better able to maintain public order. After the large scale 'Vietnam' demonstration in the spring of 1968 where the police nearly lost control of public order, there was a choice of either escalating the number of police at such events and resorting to the use of things like rubber bullets, water cannons or tear gas or utilising intelligence to better police such events. Obtaining that intelligence meant either relying on informants or infiltration by undercover officers. The former were not always reliable and the loyalty of an informer could be dubious, so the decision was made to rely on undercover officers. I understood that this had been put to the MPS Commissioner at the time and the Home Office had approved the formation and then the continuation of the SDS. I was not privy to those decisions, but I do remember Chief Inspector Phil Saunders coming into the office one day when I was on the squad to confirm there had been approval from the Home Office for another year of

[REDACTED]

the SDS. I also believe part of the reason for the SDS annual reports was for the approval of the Home Office.

6. I do not know who was involved in the decision to form the squad, but I imagine it would have had the full support of the head of Special Branch, the MPS Commissioner and the MPS's public order division 'A8'. I also imagine the decision went to the Home Secretary.
  
7. Regarding the difference between work on Special Branch and the SDS, Special Branch officers ordinarily would attend public meetings of political groups where they would listen and take notes, not overtly. This was not unusual, officers on Special Branch had been doing it for years. The difference with that and what the SDS did was that the SDS appointed a specific individual, an undercover officer, to a specific group over a long period of time – typically two to three years and occasionally longer. A further difference was that the public meetings Special Branch attended would typically be of no less than 20 people. The SDS could attend smaller meetings where everyone knew each other. The undercover officer on the SDS could also go to after meeting informal discussions and sometimes drinks whereas the Special Branch officer would not have done so.

### **Selection for the Special Demonstration Squad**

8. I was approached by Chief Inspector Phil Saunders and asked if I wanted the job of Detective Sergeant in the back office of the SDS. I had been aware of the SDS before being approached to take on the role, in that I knew Conrad Dixon had an undercover squad called the 'hairies'. This was common knowledge in Special Branch, I would imagine that perhaps 80-90% of the Special Branch

[REDACTED]

knew of it. I did not know the specifics of which officers were on the squad or where they were deployed, but I knew there was a group of undercover officers in the field providing intelligence on the issue of public order.

9. I think I had a good reputation in Special Branch from the work I had done on the protection squad and, because I had worked on C Squad, I already understood the area in which the SDS operated. There was no interview, I was just offered the role, I liked the sound of it and so I took it. I joined the SDS in approximately October 1970 and left in about October 1974.

### **My Role**

10. I believe I was the first 'office manager' in the SDS, this was largely an administrative role. The Chief Inspector and Inspector on the SDS when I first joined were Phil Saunders and [REDACTED] <sup>2</sup> [REDACTED] HN294 [REDACTED], respectively. They wanted someone to work in the SDS back office to deal with all the paperwork which was coming through the squad so as to give them more time to be with the undercover officers. I remained in that role throughout my work on the SDS in this period. I was at the time a 'First Class Detective Sergeant', I do not think that rank distinction exists anymore, and remained in that rank whilst on the SDS. In the last few months in this role I also undertook relief work for the protection squad in Special Branch, as I had been promoted to Detective Inspector (DI) in the Autumn of 1974.

### **Dates of Service**

11. As stated above, I joined the SDS in October 1970 and left in late 1974, but I cannot recall precisely when.



## Training and guidance in the Special Demonstration Squad

12. There was not much training for my role in the SDS, I did not really need it. It was similar in many respects to the work I had been doing elsewhere in Special Branch. I would be handed the paperwork from the SDS, which had been brought back by the Detective Chief Inspector (DCI) or DI from their meeting at the safe house, I knew how to process it, which I discuss below. The only difference between the work I did on the SDS compared to what I had been doing in other parts of Special Branch was the source of the intelligence I was processing which was from the undercover officers. I was not given a briefing as to which officers were in each group as it was evident from their reports.

13. Undercover officers on the squad were given some guidance on joining, particularly not to be agent provocateurs. There was no guidance on intimate relationships, but the officers were treated as mature adults who knew not to bring the police force into disrepute by engaging in such activity. The undercover officers were told not to get too involved with individuals in the groups, it was obvious from that guidance that this would include not getting involved in intimate relationships. They also knew as police officers they were not to get involved in crime. There was no repeating or refreshing of training. I did not receive any race equality training prior to or during my time on the SDS. I was not aware of any training manuals for undercover officers to use whilst in the back office prior to deployment. They would be expected whilst waiting to be deployed to meet with the undercover officers who were currently deployed to learn about targets and methodology. They would also view the intelligence which they would in turn be expected to produce when deployed.

## Duties

14. I have been referred to an unsigned and undated statement which has my name on it (MPS-0723088), that statement was provided by me to Operation Herne. Whilst its content is broadly correct I did send back a version to Operation Herne with some corrections, but I was never sent a final version for my approval and signature. The statement describes that my primary function was in supervising reports and going to occasional meetings with officers in the field. To clarify, I only very occasionally attended meetings with the undercover officers (when the DI or DCI were unable to). I would attend the safe house at least once a month as I would have gone to a social event afterwards. I also went four or five times more a year on top of that if needed, that would include attending instead of the DCI or DI or if I was required to take some Special Branch files down to the safe house. My main role was to process the hand written reports submitted by the undercover officers, putting them into appropriately worded documents and disseminating that intelligence to the relevant Special Branch Department.

15. The vast majority of information produced by the SDS came from handwritten reports from the undercover officers which were given to the DI and DCI at their weekly meetings with the field officers at the safe house. These were bundled up in batches of 15-20 and given to me at New Scotland Yard. I would go through them, adding the phrase 'the following information has been received from a secret and reliable source'. I might change things if the English was a bit clumsy or make it a bit more presentable. I only made stylistic changes or perhaps added a line to explain the context. I would make those changes on



the original handwritten document, add the relevant Special Branch and Security Service file references and then send it to the typing tool, I would not change them more than that. I would not have converged two reports together from two different officers reporting the same incident, I do not recall ever copying one note into more than one report, although the person compiling the threat assessment, which I discuss below, may have done so. The typing pool would then produce five copies: an original for the file, a copy for circulation, two for the Security Service and one for the file in the SDS office.

16. Those final typed up reports were then stamped 'Secret'. At that time the SDS did not fall under a particular squad in Special Branch, I think the SDS fell under the direct responsibility of the Commander of Operations of Special Branch. In the early period the reports would have the name of the undercover officer on the bottom. After a time, the management in the back office realised that those names would reveal who the undercover officer was (though it was never explicitly stated that they were the source in the report), so their names were removed. The majority of reports would then be signed off by the Chief Inspector of the SDS or Inspector, it would then be taken by me to the relevant Chief Inspectors within Special Branch who would action and minute the information as necessary, as such you also see the name and signature of the relevant Chief Inspector from a Special Branch squad at the bottom of the SDS report also. If the intelligence was more urgent, I would send the report to the Superintendent or Chief Superintendent in Special Branch and possibly even for the Commander of Special Branch to see. I cannot quite remember how and if I passed the information directly to A8. It would have been unusual for me to pass it directly and there may even have been a Special Branch liaison officer

[REDACTED]

in post to act as a conduit between Special Branch and A8. Had I passed the information directly to A8 I might have altered some of the information slightly, but only to make the information a bit vaguer, for example altering the precise time the protestors were expected at an event, so that suspicion within the group would not be aroused by the police attending too punctually. Those changes were only made to protect the source. If I did provide information directly to A8, it would have only been a dozen or so times a year. Otherwise and usually, the report from the undercover officer would remain unaltered. I believe that eventually another officer called [REDACTED] became the Special Branch liaison officer who took over the role of communicating with A8. However, I am uncertain of when this role was initiated, but it would have reduced my role in that respect. I would not have therefore needed to alter any information sent to [REDACTED] (or their equivalent) on the understanding [REDACTED] would consider whether alterations were required to safeguard the source.

17. The Chief Inspector on the Special Branch squad who received the undercover officer's report would then decide how to minute something. For example, he may have noted that the information was to be passed to A8, or that someone more senior was to review the intelligence, or that someone else in Special Branch was to review it for the purpose of a threat assessment. I was not involved in the decisions taken by the Chief Inspector at that time, but I gained an understanding of that process from my experience on Special Branch and from when I was later a Chief Inspector on Special Branch.

18. One of the principle aims was for Special Branch to produce accurate threat assessments on forthcoming demonstrations for A8. The overall knowledge of

[REDACTED]

the relevant groups and specific items of SDS information were fed into Special Branch threat assessments. Those assessments were usually compiled on a Thursday morning for the weekend ahead and sent to A8, as they needed to make the necessary planning based on that assessment. The threat assessments were compiled by C Squad mostly, but B and E Squads would have done them also. An assessment would give the background to the event, the organisations involved in it and the numbers likely to attend. It would give a specific forecast of the risk of public disorder. These threat assessments were written almost always by Inspectors or Chief Inspectors within the relevant Special Branch squad.

19. After a large event, such as a demonstration, there would also be a report compiled at Inspector or Chief Inspector level within Special Branch with a summary and appendix including those who were known to have attended. SDS information would have fed into those reports. In the case of large demonstrations, the numbers attending would be agreed with A8 who would give Special Branch details of any people who were arrested. This would then be sent to the Home Office and Security Service depending on the size of the event. These reports could be 1-2 pages long for small demonstrations to 5-6 pages for larger ones.

20. I recall people from other parts of Special Branch would come into the SDS back office at New Scotland Yard and say they were interested in a person. I would make a note of the request and place it and the relevant Special Branch file, if needed, into a bag to be taken to the safe house for the appropriate undercover officer(s) to be asked about.



21. I would help out with the management of the undercover officers if needed, that is when the DI or DCI were unavailable. I was not involved in giving the undercover officers guidance or training, I left anything substantial to the DI and DCI, but I would attend the regular monthly social events.
22. I also attended any significant demonstrations of which there was usually two or three a month, usually on a Sunday. I was not undercover when doing this, but would have been in plain clothes. I would view the demonstration, monitor it and then quickly return to the office to take any phone calls from the undercover officers, who would phone in with information about the identities of those present and confirm their well-being. Seeing the demonstration helped with understanding the context of the reports which I would then have to review.
23. I recall very occasionally taking a bag over to the safe house for meetings with the undercover officers with files and photos of potential targets which may assist in their tasking, I would have been asked to do that by the DCI or DI, or if either were unavailable, which was unusual, I would undertake the duty on their behalf. I was not involved in the tasking of the undercover officers, those discussions were had between the DCI, DI and undercover officer. As I understood it, there was little change in the organisations that were targeted to those which were targeted in 1968. The main change that I recall was after the IRA bomb went off outside the Parachute Regiment's headquarters in 1972. I remember Phil Saunders saying as a result that the SDS needed to improve and enhance its coverage of the Irish groups and so we did.
24. The undercover officers had formal undercover identities but I do not know how those were created or sorted out, it was not through me or with my assistance.

[REDACTED]

I was not involved in the cover accommodation or employment arrangements, save that I ensured the undercover officers had the money to pay their rent. I would be given money in sums of around £2,000-£5,000 every two or three months. I would give out this money for rent, which was usually between £60-80 per month per officer. There were no bank accounts used, as far as I am aware. The officers used rent books.

25. I was not involved in the set up or financial arrangements for the SDS's safe houses, that would probably have been the responsibility of the DI or DCI.

[4]

26. I have been referred to an extract from the account of [REDACTED] HN326 who I am told served in the SDS between 1968 and 1971, who in his witness statement to this inquiry described the processing of the reports of undercover officers. As outlined above, the system in my time was a little different from the system that [4] HN326 describes during his time on the SDS. To clarify I would very rarely type up a report, I would only do this where I had to urgently type up a telephone message. Nevertheless, I can understand that [4] HN326 as an undercover officer, would not have been privy to the full workings of the system in the back office.

27. Instinctively the undercover officers knew what to report, they had usually been in Special Branch for a while and knew the importance of recording basic details like day, date time and place. Reporting on meetings of groups gave an indication of the strength of a group. The size of the membership of a group was always important, generally, a number of between 2,000 and 4,000 protestors at a demonstration was considered to pose the greatest threat; any



smaller and the group would tend to be more manageable, any larger and the group would be likely to be watered down by moderates.

28. Undercover officers knew to include enough detail of the meetings they attended to show what the target organisation was doing, where it was going and how its members felt about issues. They knew this from their experience of having attended meetings previously as Special Branch officers at public meetings. I think sometimes information was included which may not have been needed, but aside from those I discuss below, I cannot now recall seeing anything which I thought should not have been included. Probably, sometimes early in the undercover officer's SDS career, they may have included more information as they would have been unsure about what was of interest. It must be born in mind that details may not appear to be of interest until sometime after the event. With intelligence you are trying to keep 'ahead of the game', obtaining relevant information after something has happened is often too late, the point of SDS's intelligence was about the prevention of public disorder. There is also a need in intelligence to sometimes prove a negative, for example in the Irish scene it might have become relevant to consider whether the IRA was utilising sympathisers in support groups. As it turned out, the IRA generally did not use local sympathisers on the British mainland, but rather used supporters who would travel over from Ireland. As such, the undercover officers reporting in the Irish 'field' helped to prove a negative in respect of terrorism. I would not have edited anything in or out of the undercover officers' reports in any event. The analysis of that information came at the point of composing of the threat assessment.



29. I do not recall ever getting any feedback from any of the recipients of the intelligence. I do not recall A8 ever saying thank you, but they were accustomed to Special Branch providing them intelligence and so a thank you would not be expected. They may have told us about a problem where they had been surprised by the occurrence of a protest, its numbers or the level of disorder which Special Branch had not anticipated. I do not recall a specific example from the period I was on the SDS. Despite this apparent lack of praise, the relationship between Special Branch and A8 was invariably excellent and based on a high level of mutual trust. I do not recall feedback from other recipients, other parts of Special Branch or the Security Service.

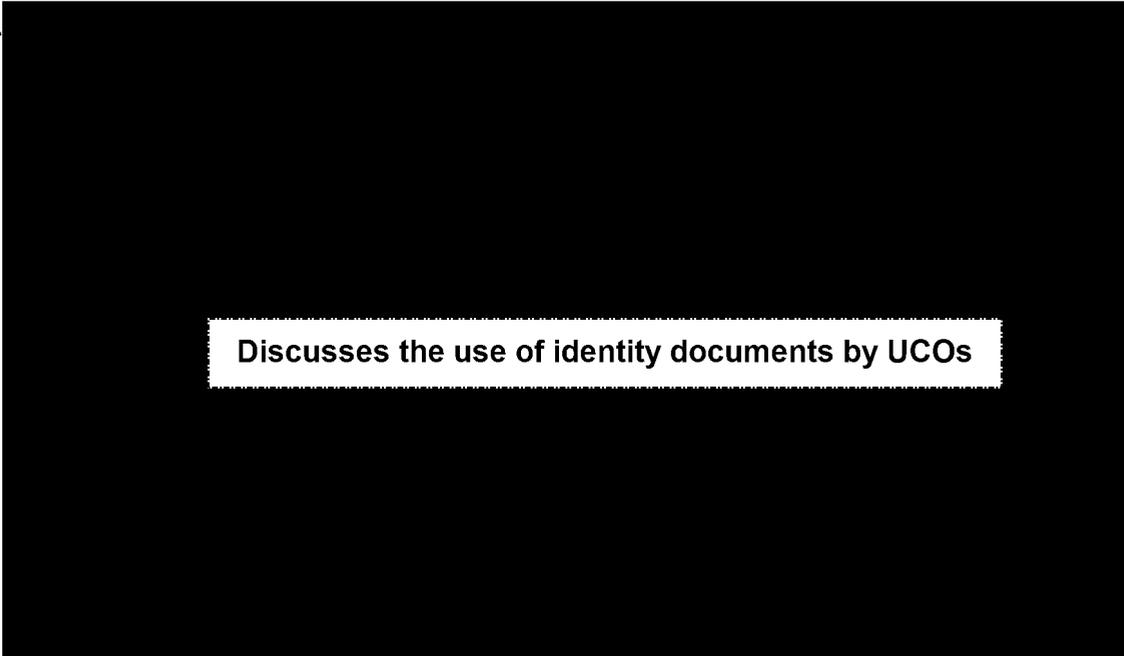
30. The SDS would keep individual reports produced by the officers in the back office at New Scotland Yard. Each of the undercover officers had a file with every report they made in it. I think their file remained in the SDS office in New Scotland Yard until after that officer then left the squad, they were retained and whilst I was on the SDS I do not recall any such file being removed or destroyed. I imagine at some point some of the older files would have been removed to Special Branch archives. The file was kept in the same safe as the main squad file, plus other Special Branch files temporarily held by the SDS. Those other Special Branch files would have been retained for temporary safe keeping before being returned their normal storage location in Special Branch. They would have been taken down to the safe house if the undercover officer needed to see them, then returned to the SDS back office and from there back to Special Branch storage. The SDS would not have destroyed any of files. The main squad file would detail the original documentation for the setting up of the



squad and contain the SDS annual reports. I was not involved in the SDS annual reports; they were prepared by the DI then signed off by the DCI.

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31.



32. Whilst some intelligence would have been received orally, for example by an undercover officer calling into the SDS office, there would always have been some note of it made up, even if after the event. I do not think there were written records of discussions had between undercover officers and the DCI or DI. Perhaps if some new piece of intelligence had come out of such a discussion, it would probably have been added to their manuscript report. The only other time a conversation might have led to led to information being recorded in writing is if something had happened like an arrest of the undercover officer.

33. I did not have a role in the processing of overtime claims, that was managed by the DCI and DI. I think in the time I was on the SDS the overtime would have had significant impact on the undercover officers' pay. I think up until Autumn 1975 overtime was accrued by working on rest days. I think that changed in Autumn 1975, across the MPS, whereby the ability to accrue overtime



increased. I had left the SDS by that time, but I would have thought the new system brought in would have led to an increase in the accrual of overtime for undercover officers thereafter.

34. I did not have a pastoral or welfare role, though I considered myself a colleague to the undercover officers. We all knew each other and I was there to talk if they wanted to, there was always our monthly social together. There were no formal measures for welfare on the SDS. With hindsight such a support would have been valuable particularly when the officers had finished their deployments and returned to normal Special Branch duties. However, issues like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder were not fully understood at that time or really how to deal with trauma. All undercover officers were volunteers and there was never any pressure placed on officers to stay in post if they wanted to leave, if they wanted to leave then they could. A week or two may have to be taken to achieve a smooth and explainable exit, but it could be managed if the undercover officer wanted out. In the event of a threat to their safety the officer's removal would be immediate.

35. I have been referred to Special Branch report of 22 June 1971 (MPS/0738269) which concerns a meeting at which the Provisional IRA and their preference for the use of arms as opposed to peaceful methods to achieve their aims was discussed. With respect to the monitoring and safety of undercover officers, the back office would err on the side of safety. I cannot think of a discussion where the interest in maintaining the source and the intelligence stream outweighed the safety to the individual undercover officer. The undercover officers themselves would have been aware of the degree of risk posed by their

[REDACTED]

respective groups and there was a reliance on the undercover officer reporting to the back office the risks posed. The back office might also have become aware of a risk from another source, such as the Security Service, though I do not recall any instance of that occurring, or possibly by telephone intercepts, but again there were very few of those used. As such, the back office relied on the instinct of the undercover officer to report indications of risks. I think advice was always given to undercover officers to be careful, to try and be a 'fly on the wall' and not to bring themselves to too much attention within their group. I was involved in one decision to pull out an undercover officer from his deployment, <sup>6</sup> [REDACTED] HN68, which I discuss below also. I cannot now recall when this occurred, it might have been 1974. I recall both the DCI and DI were away hence why I was directly involved in the matter. <sup>7</sup> HN68 was deployed into the Hammersmith Branch of Provisional Sinn Fein, so the risks to him were very high. The group had been involved in some sort of demonstration or event which was policed by another police force. I do not think <sup>7</sup> HN68 had been arrested, but I think the police had detained him and the group in some way. A police officer involved in the demonstration or in dealing with the matter after it had given some indication, in front of <sup>7</sup> HN68 and his group, that he recognised <sup>7</sup> HN68. <sup>7</sup> HN68 reported it to me in the office on the Monday after the demonstration had occurred (probably over the preceding weekend). I considered there was a risk to him as a result of his cover being compromised. There was a need to protect the man and the squad. I spoke to the Commander of Special Branch, that was probably Matt Rogers, and, I believe the Chief Superintendent of B Squad, who I cannot now recall the name of. Both agreed

[REDACTED]

with my concern and the decision was taken to pull <sup>7</sup> [HN68] out immediately. He was pulled out the deployment the same day.

36. I do not recall any specific formal written policies and procedures of the SDS at that time. I do not recall whether it was written down, but I do recall particular emphasis was given to not working as an agent provocateur. That said, as police officers we were all subject to the police general orders which was a large tome specifying all the police rules and regulations.

### Questions on specific issues

#### *Reporting on individuals*

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37. I have been referred to three reports [REDACTED] (UCPI0000028674), 4 January 1972 (UCPI0000010931) and 13 December 1971 (UCPI0000010932), and in particular reference to the arrangements for the care of a child, reference to a member of a group having an affair and the details of a forthcoming children's Christmas party, in my view such information would not have advanced the work of the SDS, such information would not have been indexed or acted upon and was frankly superfluous. There may have been occasions where details like attendance at an event might have been of interest, for example to show connections between individuals, it is also possible that details about an affair might have been of interest to the Security Service [REDACTED]

<sup>8A</sup>

[REDACTED] Sets out reason why [REDACTED]

However, the particular examples in these reports do not appear to me to be of any assistance to the SDS or Security Service, though of course these are only three examples from hundreds and thousands of reports and may not be representative of the reporting of the SDS as a whole. That said I think there

[REDACTED]

was a tendency by undercover officers to just report everything. This was a period before computers and concerns about data protection, with the advent of the former I think there came greater precision in what was to be kept and what could be discarded. Back then, if a report covered the key detail but also contained some superfluous information you generally kept the whole report rather than editing it out. I cannot remember ever editing anything out.

*Reporting on elected politicians / political parties*

38. I have been referred to two reports one of the 2 December 1970 (MPS-0738184), which refers to the proposed tour by Bernadette Devlin MP and a report of 27 April 1972 (UCPI0000008295) which refers to the Hammersmith Labour party permitting the use of its committee room by the West London International Marxist Group (IMG). The reporting on politicians would have been incidental to the work of the SDS, as you can see with respect to the second report I have been referred to, the focus of the report is the activity of the IMG rather than the Labour Party. To my knowledge undercover officers were not given any instruction or guidance in respect of reporting on elected politicians / political parties, albeit that these were never their targets.

*Legally professionally privileged material*

39. I was not aware of legally privileged material being an issue when serving on the SDS, it is not something we would have had knowledge about. That said instinctively had I been aware of legal advice being reported and known to Special Branch I think the facts of the advice would not have been disseminated out of Special Branch to any officer involved in the legal matter. Apart from the legal consideration, Special Branch would not have divulged any such

[REDACTED]

information coming their way because of the risks to the undercover officer and the existence of the SDS, providing such information would have made the likely source of the information identifiable. There was not a specific instruction or guidance given to undercover officers on the topic nor about the reporting of the activities of members of the legal profession. There was no guidance about whether legally privileged information provided by the undercover officer should appear in a final report. Had such an issue arisen I would have reported it to my superiors.

### Attendance at activist meetings

40. I never attended any activists' meetings on the SDS, as I mention above, I did attend and observe larger demonstrations.

### Premises and meetings with other Special Demonstration Squad undercover officers

41. The SDS had an office at New Scotland Yard where I was mainly based. I recall there being a safe house in [REDACTED] <sup>9</sup> West London which changed within a month of me joining. I think it then moved to [REDACTED] <sup>10</sup> North London for about 18 months. The squad then left that one, due to a security concern about a target of one of the undercover deployments being in the area, and moved to one in [REDACTED] <sup>11</sup> West London [REDACTED] <sup>12</sup> and then one in [REDACTED] <sup>12</sup> South London. I think there were two flats at one point. I cannot recall now precisely.

### Management Structure

42. During my time on the SDS the DCIs were DCI Saunders, until around February 1972. I recall DCI Derek Kneale and DCI [REDACTED] <sup>13</sup> HN332 [REDACTED]. I cannot recall

[REDACTED]

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precisely in which order, I think probably DCI [HN332] came after DCI Kneale.

15

The DIs were DI [HN294] from 1970 to 1972, and at some time DI Geoff Craft for the latter part of my work on the SDS. On the admin side of the squad I recall John Cheetham became the permanent back office DC, he started around 18 months before I left the squad. Prior to John being on the squad generally, other than me, the other admin worker was the incoming or outgoing undercover officer.

### Individual Managers and Administrators

#### *Phil Saunders*

43. As the DCI, Phil Saunders was the man in charge of the day to day running of the SDS. He would see all the reports of the undercover officers in their final form. He would meet the undercover officers at the safe house 2-3 times a week, he was there to support them, he was also responsible for the squad's annual reports. He was an intelligent and understanding man, firm but fair and well regarded by all. He did not have a cover name. We were based in the back office at New Scotland Yard and so would talk regularly as you would naturally with someone you shared an office with. He would bring back the undercover officer's reports to me at New Scotland Yard from his meetings at the safe house, perhaps highlight any reports which were priorities for me to process.

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[REDACTED] HN294 [REDACTED]

18

44. [REDACTED] HN294 [REDACTED] was the DI with Phil Saunders he undertook similar duties to Phil Saunders, they worked as a team. He was perhaps less sympathetic than Phil Saunders, perhaps a little more formal in his management style. He did not

[REDACTED]

have a cover name and our personal interactions were just like those between me and Phil Saunders as outlined above. The extent of my interaction with the undercover officers, as I explain above, did not really change when under the management of each of the DCIs during my time on the squad.

45. I have been referred to the minutes of a meeting of 13 January 1972 (UCPI0000030066) between members of Special Branch, the Security Service and SDS. I note Conrad Dixon is listed as present, I think he may have been a Chief Superintendent of one of the Special Branch squads at that time, possibly C Squad and therefore it would have been natural for him to be at such a meeting as the most relevant Chief Superintendent from Special Branch, given the meeting was about coverage of extreme left-wing groups. I was the DS Smith referred to in that report. I do not think the leadership of the Young Liberals would have been aware of the deployment of undercover police officers into their youth wing. With respect to that issue, at the time the Young Liberals were quite active in public order issues, there was an overlap in membership with the Anti-Apartheid Movement and the Stop the Tour groups. There were areas of potential disorder arising from the group's activities, the cause of those groups may not have been a concern but their methods in achieving them were. I believe the Young Liberals were on the periphery of an area of interest to the SDS and I think <sup>19</sup> [REDACTED] HN298 [REDACTED] from my memory, used them as a way to get into other groups.

46. I have been referred to a document dated 27 May 1972 (MPS-0724171) concerning the authorisation of a trip by <sup>20</sup> [REDACTED] HN344 [REDACTED] to Londonderry, I have

[REDACTED]

[21] no memory of that matter, indeed I do not remember [REDACTED] HN344 [REDACTED] being on the SDS at all. I cannot think if he was on the squad why I would not recall him.

[22]

[REDACTED] HN332 [REDACTED]

[22]

47. [REDACTED] HN332 [REDACTED] was also the DCI in charge of the squad, as I mention above I cannot recall specifically when. He undertook the same duties as the other DCIs and we had similar interaction as that I have outlined above.

[22]

48. [REDACTED] HN332 [REDACTED] had been on CID before Special Branch, I would describe his management style as uncomplicated and straightforward he was also enthusiastic and energetic. He did not have a cover name.

#### *Derek Kneale*

49. Derek Kneale was again the DCI, he undertook the same duties and we had the same kinds of interactions as I have set out above. He became the DCI near the end of my tenure on the squad, and I got to know him better in work he did in other parts of Special Branch. He was firm in his management style, but not oppressive, he was intelligent and understood what was involved. He did not have a cover name.

#### *Derek Brice*

50. Derek Brice was a DI on the SDS, I recall he was involved in setting up arrangements for [REDACTED] [23] the procurement of SDS vehicles. [REDACTED] [23]

[REDACTED] [23]. I seem to recall he was not officially appointed as the DI for the squad, [REDACTED] [24] He was

[REDACTED]

avuncular and ambitious, but he did not trample over everyone in that ambition.

He had a pastoral approach to things. <sup>24</sup> [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He did not have a cover name.

*Geoffrey Craft*

51. Geoffrey Craft was a DI on the Squad, he may have overlapped with Derek Brice on the squad at one point. He was quite 'black and white', you could talk to him, but he was quite unequivocal in his views. He did not have a cover name.

**Undercover Officers**

52. I would interact with the undercover officers at our monthly socials and on the occasions that I visited the safe houses, as I mention above.

53. The following officers served as field officers on the squad as the same time as me:

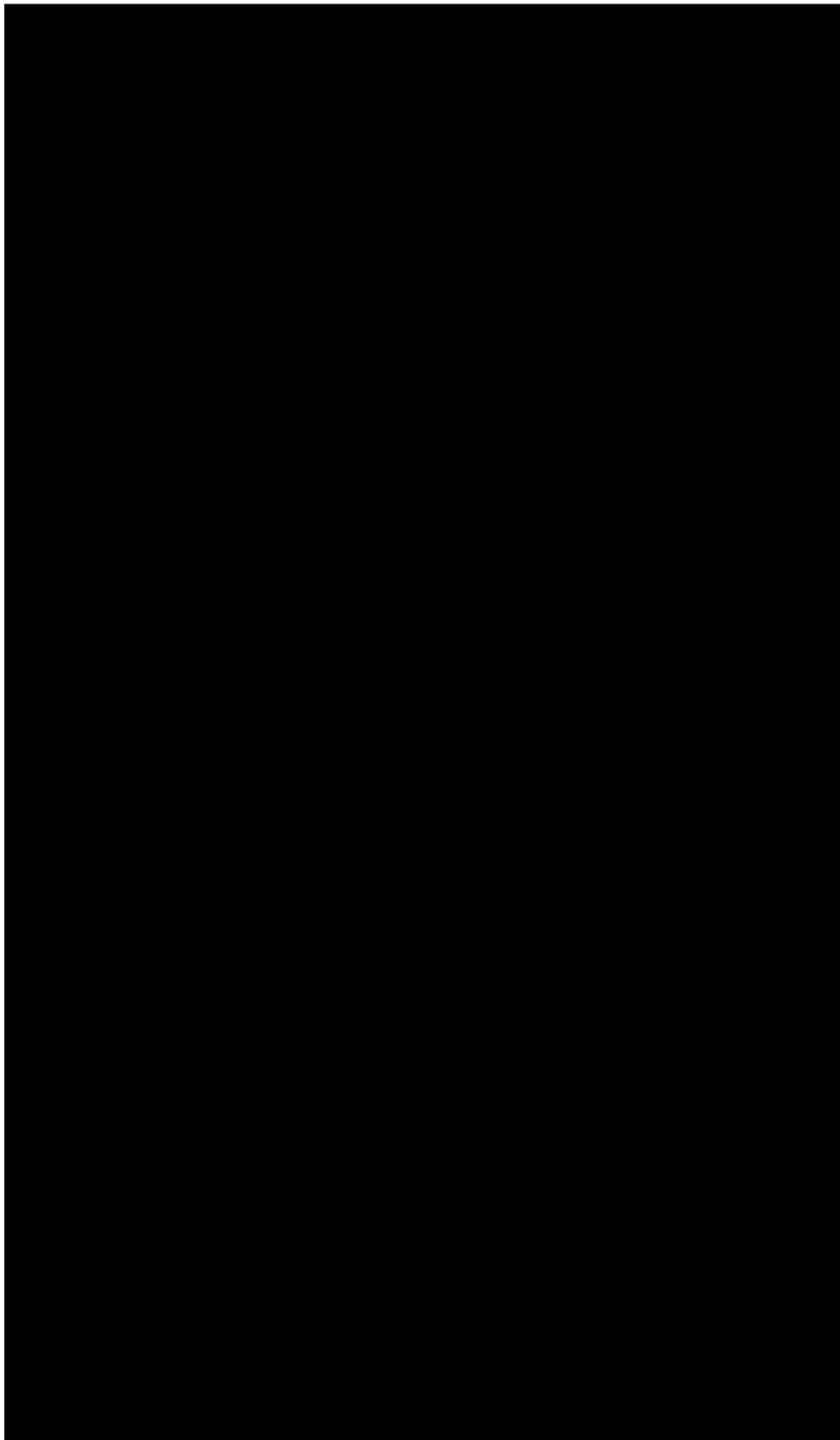
<sup>25</sup>

[REDACTED]

**HN340, HN45, HN339, Jill Mosdell, HN298, HN301, HN338, HN342/HN299, HN343, HN347, HN348, HN303, HN200, Richard Clark and others**

f. Jill Mosdell;

[25]



[26]

54. To my recollection [redacted] HN336 [redacted] did not serve on the squad at the same time as me.

[27]

55. I cannot recall [redacted] HN344 [redacted] being on the SDS at all, I recall he was in Special Branch but I cannot picture him in the SDS. I cannot recall [redacted]

[28]

HN345 at all, whether he was on SDS or in Special Branch.

[29]

[30]

[31]

56. [redacted] HN300 [redacted] HN351 [redacted] and [redacted] HN353 [redacted] may have been on the SDS at the same time as me but I cannot recall.

57. I have been asked a series of questions concerning my contemporary undercover officers: firstly, I do not recall any of my contemporary undercover officers whilst deployed reporting legally privileged information.

58. I was not aware of any unhappy relationships between members of the SDS, I do remember that on occasions the undercover officers would speak their minds. I cannot recall specifically now about what, but there was an openness and willingness to discuss things. If there were any differences, it was more an issue of personality differences than any substantive problems between managers and undercover officers. They all had different views and would air them. Some got on better than others. I do not think any of the undercover officers would have doubted that the management of the SDS were concerned about their welfare and that they as undercover officers would not have been asked to do anything they were uncomfortable doing. Whilst I was not aware of the specific conversations had between some of the undercover officers and those at DCI/DI level, I was aware of the general tenor and mood in the squad and never got the impression that any of the senior officers were forcing people to do anything they were uncomfortable with. Had they been, I think I would have become aware of it, we had social occasions every month and I would probably have learnt about such issues there.

59. It is possible that one or two undercover officers who were contemporaries of mine may have been involved in activities like obstruction of the highway. I am now reminded through the documents provided to me with this Rule 9 request

[REDACTED]

(MPS-0526782) of the arrest of <sup>32</sup> [REDACTED] HN298 for obstruction, which I discuss more below.

<sup>33</sup>

60. I cannot now recall whether [REDACTED] HN68 was arrested, he was certainly detained by police to some extent whilst deployed which led to his withdrawal. I cannot recall specifically, but I think he had been involved in a protest or something with his group and had been picked up by officers from another police force. I do not now remember what for, it may have been relating to obstruction. I recall there was some recognition of him by a police officer from that force which <sup>34</sup> [REDACTED] HN68 then communicated to me when he called into the back office, leading to the decision to pull him from the group. There may have been one or two others who engaged in activity like obstruction and were arrested, but I do not recall now and would not have remembered the arrest of <sup>35</sup> [REDACTED] HN298 had I not been shown these papers. There was possibly also some minor public order activity such as chanting in public that some of the undercover officers engaged in. I cannot recall any other activities amounting to a criminal offence. I do not recall any of them provoking or encouraging others to commit a criminal offence. I do not recall any undercover officer giving evidence in court. I am now reminded of <sup>35</sup> [REDACTED] HN298 attending court, as I discuss below.

61. I am not aware of any of my contemporary undercover officers engaging in sexual activity whilst in their cover identities. Aside from the morality of such activity by undercover officers and the impact on the other party to the encounter, a further problem with the same is that it would have posed a risk to the undercover officer and to the whole squad of being discovered. Had it come to notice of the managers of the squad at that time there would have been



serious thought to ending the deployment, had it been a relationship as opposed to a 'one-night-stand' the deployment would have certainly been stopped. I would have considered such activity wrong and foolish at the time, I would have told the DCI and DI had I found out about it. Today I still hold that view. It would be wrong.

62. I imagine many of the undercover officers may have been involved in minor incidents of public disorder whilst deployed, for example obstruction, they would certainly have witnessed and been on the periphery of more serious incidents of public disorder but not directly involved in it, I cannot now recall any specific examples.

63. Elected politicians would regularly attend major public demonstrations and give speeches. My contemporary undercover officers would have been likely to be present at such demonstrations and report on them and incidentally report on who gave speeches and probably, briefly, what was said. However, I cannot think of any undercover officers specifically targeting or reporting on any elected politicians.

64. In my view my contemporary undercover officers profoundly influenced the MPS's ability to maintain public order, which is a cornerstone of policing. Our uniformed colleagues were able to put the right officers in the right place at the right time. It saved money and it reduced disorder. It also enabled the number of officers to be deployed to be more accurate so there were not swathes of officers who were not needed, equally when they were needed the right numbers of officers were there. The problem with public disorder is once you get into crowd hysteria or panic it is very difficult to control. You see it at football

[REDACTED]

matches and pop concerts also, crowd control is a tricky business and the work of the undercover officers assisted in the control of such situations. In parallel with this by improving crowd control the number of arrests were greatly reduced and uniformed officers were less likely to be injured.

65. Regarding the assistance provided to the Security Service, I do not know what they thought about the intelligence provided to them. Undoubtedly the interests of the SDS and Security Service overlapped. The Security Service were monitoring things from a subversive point of view, the SDS was less interested in the subtle niceties of a group's politics, but were interested in their impact on public order. Both the SDS and Security Service were interested in the same things, who was involved in these groups, what they were doing and planning to do. Countering subversion was about long term monitoring whereas there was an immediacy in the public order matters. So the SDS passed most things to the Security Service. They were less interested in the Irish scene as Special Branch had national responsibility for those matters at that time.

66. Once there was a permanent DC in the back office (present for the last 18 months of my work on the SDS) to assist in the admin of the squad, I think there was less need for the prospective undercover officer to come into the back office beforehand. Prior to that, the prospective undercover officer would work in the back office, usually for about 4-6 weeks before they deployed. It did not happen in every case. In every case the new undercover officer would have seen some of the material produced by their colleagues who were presently deployed, prior to their own deployment, but they may have done that whilst still being on another Special Branch Squad.

[REDACTED]

67. It was rare for an undercover officer to come back to the back office after their deployment. It happened with [36] [REDACTED] HN340 [REDACTED], I think he was only there to assist as there was no permanent DC to assist in the back office. I think he was probably there for a month or so, I cannot be sure and I do not remember anyone else coming to the back office after their deployment undercover.

### Questions about specific undercover officers

[37]

HN339

[37]

68. I have been told that in his witness statement [HN339] refers to crashing his unmarked police car whilst intoxicated and that he was later charged and convicted and fined in his cover name, but that the magistrates were informed he was an undercover officer. I do not remember the details of this incident but it does ring a bit of a bell. I regret that I cannot recall the actions of the SDS managers involved. I do remember that it may have happened in South East London, but cannot remember anything else. It must however be remembered that the courts' and police management's view of this kind of offence in the 1970s was very different to current views. That probably explains why I do not recall it in such detail now as it may not have been treated so seriously as it would now. I was not involved in it.

*Jill Mosdell*

69. I do not know what cover name Jill Mosdell used, but I am sure she would have used one.

70. I am informed that in his witness statement [HN340] describes attending a Red Europe IMG event in Brussels. I do not know specifically how authorisation to attend such events was given. I imagine it would have been known to the Commander of Operations of Special Branch and may have been told to the Assistant Commissioner. It would have been the natural thing to do to get such an authorisation for that practice at that level at that time. I was not directly involved in such authorisation, though I might have seen some of the paperwork.

71. I imagine part of the rationale for an undercover officer attending such an event would have been to have supported his cover identity. There may also have been some benefit in understanding what international cooperation was going on between groups. I recall there was a group call Lotta Continua, a Trotskyist group in Italy, other groups like Baader-Meinhof in Europe were of a natural interest to Special Branch to see what kind of links the groups in the UK had with those groups. The nature of Trotskyism in particular was international.

72. It is unlikely that there would have been any liaison with the police in those other jurisdictions as we could not have controlled the information had we shared it. Had the officer got in trouble whilst out of the jurisdiction, it would have been down to them to contact the back office, we would have in turn tried to make contact with the authorities in that country to try and assist them.

73. I think the funding for such trips would have been part of the miscellaneous expenses of the undercover officer. It would have been kept quite cheap in any event and likely absorbed into normal budgetary arrangements.

[REDACTED]  
[39]

[40]

74. I am told that in his statement [REDACTED] **HN340** [REDACTED] stated a photograph [REDACTED] was [REDACTED] published of **HN340** competing in a public event and he was thereafter asked to go to Scotland Yard by DI Dave Smith. I was not a DI then. I would have been a Detective Sergeant (DS). I think probably the photograph had come to our attention and I was the person asked to bring him to New Scotland Yard. I do not specifically remember this incident however, though I do not dispute it happened. I think I was probably more the messenger than being involved in any decisions regarding the incident.

[41]

[REDACTED] **HN298** [REDACTED]

75. I have been referred to a collection of documents (MPS-0526782) relating to the arrest of [REDACTED] **HN298** [REDACTED] on 12 May 1972. In one of these reports there is reference to a DS Smith who I can confirm is me. I would not have been privy to the advice given to [REDACTED] **HN298** [REDACTED] that would have been given to him by the DCI. I do not know, but I can imagine he may have been advised to plead guilty if at all possible, but if the rest of his group had been pleading not guilty he would have done likewise, to avoid drawing attention to himself.

76. At page 14-15 of the collection of documents is a report signed by me. I would have been told to attend the magistrates court to take a note of proceedings by [REDACTED] **HN294** [REDACTED]. The purpose of me going was to monitor what happened and if something was said or done which was a concern to quickly report back to the back office management. To my knowledge the prosecution or magistrates did not know that [REDACTED] **HN298** [REDACTED] was an undercover officer. I imagine that would have altered had more serious charges been put forward against him. I do not know who made the decision not to inform the prosecution or court. It

[REDACTED]

was inevitable given the nature of the work of the SDS that an officer may be arrested for a minor offence and that their appearance before a court may occur. To disclose the fact of an undercover deployment more widely risked the uncovering of the undercover officer and cumulatively would risk the uncovering of the squad over time. Generally, I understood an officer would be advised to plead guilty and pay a fine.

### **The Security Service**

77. The Security Service would send over letters to Special Branch asking for information which was of interest to them. They only ever requested assistance, never demanded it. The vast majority would have been about individuals. I cannot recall them ever saying can you find out about a particular group. The groups of interest to them were known to them and us, and the groups did not make a secret of their existence. The Security Service were interested in new members and what was known about them. The letters would come in at Chief Superintendent level to the Special Branch squads, and from there were farmed out to someone in Special Branch to undertake some enquiries and report on it. That officer might get some basic information and then approach the SDS back office and ask for more information.

78. I have been referred to a minute sheet of a senior officer regarding a report on an IMG conference in which the comment 'mainly of interest to MI5' is made (MPS-0729093). As I set out above, once an SDS intelligence report was submitted to the appropriate senior officer they would decide what to do with that information. In this case it appears the officer indicated it should be sent to the Security Service. I recall at that time the IMG were involved in an internecine

[REDACTED]

struggle, they had split into what they called tendencies, in which they would expound on their interpretation of Marxist doctrine. I do not know why the IMG were having these struggles, in my view it was probably inevitable when personalities are vying for control of an organisation. Information on that struggle collected by our undercover officers was of little specific interest to the SDS, but we were aware that the analysis of it may have been of interest to the Security Service.

79. I have also been referred to the minutes of a meeting with the Security Service at which I was present (UCPI0000030066) and [REDACTED] an SDS intelligence report on an individual from late 1974 [REDACTED] 44A which refers to a response to a request from the Security Service [REDACTED] 44A ([REDACTED]). The Security Service did not have power over the SDS's tasking. As I explain above, we had similar interests and there would be a sharing of information, we did not however tell them who our undercover officers were. This was because there was a risk that their informants could inadvertently become aware of our undercover officers had we shared that information.

80. I would not describe the relationship between the SDS and Security Service as especially close. The Security Service worked closely with Special Branch as a whole, of which the SDS was a part. They were content to get copies of intelligence, which would be sent out by the relevant Special Branch squad's Chief Inspector who would minute it.

### **Senior Management and oversight bodies**

81. The Commissioner Robert Mark visited the SDS safe house probably in around 1971 or 1972. This was probably as part of a tour of the MPS which he

[REDACTED]

undertook on being made the new Commissioner. He was there for an hour or two. I was there as was <sup>45</sup> [REDACTED] HN294 [REDACTED] and Phil Saunders. The undercover officers individually gave him a briefing on what they were doing. He then spoke at some length thanking them for their work. He may have had a drink or a cup of tea with us too.

82. I do not recall any other senior officer or outside body visiting the SDS whilst I was working there. The problem was you could not have too many high profile people attending the safe house as there was an inherent risk in their attendance for the squad.

### **Leaving the SDS**

83. I left the SDS after working there for 4 years, I was promoted to Inspector and moved onto protection / naturalisation.

### **Post Special Demonstration Squad Police Career**

84. As stated above, after working on the SDS I was posted to naturalisation in Special Branch. I did not have a say in that posting, I was just told that was where I was being posted.

85. I have outlined above my post SDS career. I do not think my involvement in the SDS did any harm to my career. It was probably a feather in my cap.

86. Certainly whilst on C Squad as Chief Inspector I was aware of the receipt of information which came from the SDS. At that time, the threat assessments, which I describe above, would have come through me. I cannot now recall how SDS information would have been passed to me then. I do not think I was given

[REDACTED]

information directly from the sergeant in the SDS office (i.e. the role I had been undertaking in the early 70s). Most of the information from the SDS would not have come through me, I was responsible for the right wing and animal rights, but some of it would have. The threat assessments would have been compiled by a DI, reviewed by me and then passed to A8 as needed, I cannot now recall precisely how that worked. I am aware that the Inquiry may be contacting me again in due course with respect to my work as Chief Superintendent responsible for the SDS.

### **Any other matters**

87. The point of the SDS was the prevention of disorder. We were not trying to get convictions. The need for arrests and the amount of violence in the public order sphere was reduced as a result of the SDS's existence.

### **Request for documents**

88. I have appended to this statement an essay that I wrote in around 1979. The essay was written as part of a police training course I attended at that time. I recall the participants were invited to write an essay on a topic of their choice. I chose the policing of public disorder and the essay considers how the police can best manage disorder and how the police assess the likelihood of violence at demonstrations. I attach it as it has refreshed my memory about some of the issues relevant to the Inquiry and I think provides some insight into these issues as understood by me in the late 1970s which may be of interest to the Inquiry. I believe the manuscript notes on the document were those of <sup>46</sup>[REDACTED] who was an academic at the college.



89. I do not have any other documents or other information potentially relevant to the Inquiry's terms of reference and my memory has not been refreshed by any document which is not in my witness bundle.

**Diversity information**

90. I am a white male.

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

47

**David Smith**

Signed: .....

Dated: 2.12.20 .....