

**ORGANISATIONAL MODULES 2024**

**MUCKAMORE ABBEY HOSPITAL INQUIRY  
WITNESS STATEMENT**

**Statement of Caroline Stevens  
Date: 25 April 2024**

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I, Caroline Stevens, make the following statement for the purpose of the Muckamore Abbey Hospital (MAH) Inquiry.

The statement is made on behalf of The National Autistic Society in response to a request for evidence by the Inquiry Panel.

This is my first statement to the Inquiry.

There are no documents produced with my statement.

**Qualifications and positions**

1. I am a qualified Pharmacist. I hold a degree in Pharmacy (1987-1991). I hold a master's degree in business administration (2008-2010).

2. I have held the following positions.

- 1991 – 2002 - Consultant Pharmacist and Store Manager at Boots The Chemist
- 2002 – 2003 - Clinical Ward Pharmacist, BUPA Hospital, Leicester
- 2003 – 2005 - Pharmacy Manager, BUPA Hospital, Leicester
- 2005 – 2007 - Operating Theatre Manager, BUPA Hospital, Leicester
- 2007 – 2009 - Managing Director, Aston University Day Hospital
- 2009 – 2011 - Commercial Director, British Lung Foundation
- June 2011 – 2013 - Chief Operating Officer (Interim), British Lung Foundation
- 2013 – 2019 - Chief Executive, KIDS Charity
- 2019 – present - Chief Executive, National Autistic Society

## Module

3. I have been asked to provide a statement for the purpose of M1: Patient Advocacy and Representation.
4. My evidence relates to paragraphs 10 to 13 of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.
5. I have been asked to address a number of questions/ issues for the purpose of my statement. I will address those questions/issues in turn outlined in the Inquiry letter dated 06 February 2024.

**Q1. An explanation of the role of the National Autistic Society in providing advocacy services for patients at Muckamore Abbey Hospital (MAH) and/or their relatives across the time period covered by the Terms of Reference, that is between 02 December 1999 and 14 June 2021.**

**In answering this question please provide:**

- i. An explanation of the type(s) of advocacy and representation services provided by the National Autistic Society for patients at MAH and/or their relatives.**
6. A review of our case records indicates that there are two individuals within the care of the National Autistic Society that have an affiliation to the Inquiry, however, these individuals were not in the care of the National Autistic Society at the time in question.

Person 1 (March 2020 – June 2021)

7. This gentleman was a patient at Muckamore hospital. The National Autistic Society did not have an active contract with the individual at this time and was not actively supporting the individual. However, the social worker involved in the gentleman's care was in contact with the National Autistic Society as it was hoped

that we would be able to provide day support. The National Autistic Society completed observations which was termed 'In Reach' by the Social Worker.

8. This involved a single member of staff observing the individual with staff from the Muckamore Hospital. There were no interactions between National Autistic Society staff or the individual whilst he was interacting with the hospital staff at Muckamore Abbey. The purpose of this was to observe how staff communicated and worked with the individual so that the NAS could establish a suitable placement for the individual.
9. The Muckamore staff would then leave the room and wait in the corridor whilst the National Autistic Society staff member tried to interact with the individual. This was very dependent on the individual and the time spent with our staff was extremely limited and very rarely met the hour allocated to do this.

Person 2 (Currently transitioning to service)

10. This gentleman was transitioning to our services but for a number of reasons the transition did not take place. We had no interactions with this particular supported person at Muckamore and understand that the person we support was not involved with them at the time we were trying to complete the transition.
11. This gentleman is currently transitioning to our service in Belfast and the service was informed during a general conversation that the family is involved with the Muckamore inquiry. There has been no formal discussion or documentation provided to verify this.
  - ii. **An explanation of the method(s) by which a patient at MAH and/or their relatives is made aware of the advocacy and representation services offered by the National Autistic Society.**
12. Contracts for support provided by the National Autistic Society are agreed with the Funding Authority responsible for the people we support. Each package of support is tailored to the needs of the individual and reviewed on a set frequency. Each

packaged of care involves discussion with the funding authority, appointed social worker and family members of the people that we support.

- iii. **An explanation of the method(s) by which the National Autistic Society can communicate any concerns about MAH which are raised by MAH patients and/or their relatives.**

13. In the event that any concerns relating to the people within our care can be raised through our internal safeguarding and risk escalation processes. These concerns are reviewed and then directed as appropriate by our internal Safeguarding Team who support the notifications of safeguarding concerns to the local authority safeguarding team or in the event there is a requirement to the Police. Each case is reported and assessed independently to determine the most suitable course of action that is to be taken.

- iv. **Where possible, the number of MAH patients and/or relatives who have engaged the National Autistic Society's advocacy and representation services, broken down by year.**

14. As per our response to 1i, there are two individuals known to the National Autistic Society who have links to the Inquiry taking place.

**Q2. Do you wish to draw to the attention of the Panel any other matters not covered by the above questions that may assist in the Panel's consideration of paragraphs 10-13 of the Terms of Reference?**

15. Nothing further to add.

### **Declaration of Truth**

The contents of this witness statement are true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I have produced all the documents which I have access to and which I believe are necessary to address the matters on which the Inquiry Panel has requested me to give evidence.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Jones" or similar, written in a cursive style.

Date: 25 April 2024