

IN THE BRISTOL EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL

CASE NUMBER: 1400727/2020

B E T W E E N:

Betty Knight

Claimant

v

Havant & South Downs College

Respondent

WITNESS STATEMENT OF SUKI DHESI

I, Suki Dhesi, of Havant & South Downs College, College Road, Purbrook, Waterlooville, PO7 8AA will say as follows:

1. I make this statement for the purposes of giving evidence at the Southampton Employment Tribunal on 22nd November – 02nd December 2021 in relation to the claims that Betty Knight is pursuing against Havant & South Downs College.
2. I am the Vice Principal – Students, Learning & Quality, and I have been at the College for service 7 years.
3. I have significant experience of undertaking grievance investigations, of approximately 10 years.
4. On 7th February 2020 I was asked by Angela Dunn, People Services Manager to undertake the investigation into Betty's grievance.
5. I had not had an interaction with Betty prior to these proceedings. I did not know anything of the allegations.
6. I was asked to investigate Betty's formal grievance email dated 6th February 2020, addressed to [REDACTED] (pages 268-269). The formal grievance related to a lesson observation conducted on 3rd December 2009.
7. I had the autonomy to make independent findings in the process.

8. Before commencing the process I read the information referred to in the formal grievance email, including all correspondence between Betty and Nicola Kingsley, Claire Scott and Stephanie Richardson.
9. As a part of my investigation, I interviewed Stephanie Richardson on 10th February 2020 (pages 271-273, Claire Scott on 13th February 2020 (pages 276-278), and Nicola Kingsley also on 13th February 2020 (pages 279-281). Nicola Kingsley, Claire Scott and Stephanie Richardson were interviewed as Betty referred to these individuals in the formal grievance email sent to Angela Dunn on 6th February 2020. In the interview with Stephanie Richardson, it was made clear what happened during the lesson observation. In addition, it was made clear how the observation judgements were agreed between the two observers (Stephanie and Claire) and arrangements for feedback. Feedback was given by Claire Scott but agreed by Stephanie Richardson, they both agreed on the development pathway.
10. The interview with Claire Scott highlighted that joint observations were being conducted with all learning managers as Alton teaching staff and managers were new to the process. Claire stated that Claire and Stephanie knocked on the door before entering Betty's lesson on 3rd December 2019. They asked Betty if they could enter. They sat apart and remained in the room for around 25 minutes. Claire shared her the judgements with Stephanie immediately after the lesson in a different room and made sure Stephanie was in agreement. Claire emailed Betty the reflection form and asked if she could come to the feedback meeting at the end of the day with the complete reflection form. In the feedback on the same day Betty and Claire discussed the lesson, it was made clear by Claire that Stephanie and Claire had judged the lesson to be in the 'development' pathway. Betty made clear she did not want support regarding her teaching. The 'development pathway' means a coach works with the teacher for up to 6 weeks, then there is a re-observation. Claire encouraged her to reflect. Claire was no longer involved from this point as the matter had been referred to People Services, as Betty did not agree to receive support.
11. The interview with Nicola Kingsley provided the history of Betty's role within the English Department. In relation to the lesson observation, Nicola was aware of the situation as Betty had emailed her on 13th December 2019 stating the whole experience left her feeling singled out and even suicidal. This led Nicola to reply on 16th December 2019 stating that the observation is a supportive process and made Betty aware of the wellbeing support available. Betty responded in the evening stating that she did not feel like talking. The matter was referred to People Services.

12. Jon Myers and [REDACTED] and colleagues in the English Department were not interviewed as these individuals were not involved with the lesson observation in any way. It would not be appropriate to interview students about a lesson observation. They are not trained observers and are not able to make evaluative judgements about teaching, learning and assessment.

13. Stephanie's responsibility was to performance manage Betty as her direct line manager.

14. We tried to arrange a meeting with Betty, however she did not feel well enough to attend (page 274).

15. I considered all of the available evidence and compiled my investigation report (pages 282-293), the conclusions are detailed on pages 291-292.

16. On 17th February 2020 I provided Leona Berry (Vice Principal – People Services) with the report of my findings (pages 282-293). I recommended mediation and various supportive measures to try and resolve the situation as detailed in the report.

17. I attended the grievance hearing on 9th March 2020 and presented the conclusions and recommendations of the investigation report (pages 294-302). I also answered questions asked by the Chair of the hearing Richard Barlow but Betty did not attend.

18. I had no further involvement in the process following the submission of the Investigation Report dated 17th February 2020 and attendance at the hearing on 9th March 2020.

STATEMENT OF TRUTH

This statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief

Signed:		Dated:	31/10/21
	Suki Dhesi		