

Carole Stokes: Commemorative Statement in respect of Lee Henry Spencer

Date of Birth: 23 September 1998

Date of Death: 27 August 2019

Lee Henry Spencer was born on 23/09/98 at 04.26 in Harold Wood, Romford. He was the youngest child of 3, having an older brother, [personal/sensitive] and [personal/sensitive] his sister [personal/sensitive]

We lived in the Romford area until August 2017, when we moved out to Coggeshall.

Until Lee was 4 we lived with his dad. The marriage then came to an end [personal/sensitive]. Lee moved with me and his siblings to a new home locally so that the change was not too big for the children. His Dad started a new relationship and moved [personal/sensitive] permanently from 2006 and then marrying in 2009. He did maintain a relationship with the children, collecting them every other weekend and taking them on holiday once a year. This lasted until teenage years when for one reason or another the visits dwindled, he did still see him over the years but not regularly.

From an early age Lee was always so energetic. He loved playing sports and loved playing games in the garden and could brighten up anyone's day with his cheekiness. All of our memories with him was us being up to something. Whether it be playing football, hockey, skating, climbing or even playing on the PlayStation. One memory in particular I remember fondly, was going to watch Lee play for his school team who were winning the game and the ball being mainly at the other end of the pitch. I remember that I looked at him in the goal and Lee had scaled the goal and using the top bar as a monkey bar practising his gymnastics because he was bored. He was very caring and loved by everyone. His relationship with his nephew and nieces was amazing, they loved him so much.

Lee continued through his schooling locally in Romford. He was always a challenge due to his hyper activity, which was useful when it came to sport. He represented all of the schools he went to in various sports, including football, running and swimming. Although he was unable to concentrate too much he did come out with some exam results. In September 2016, he started college to train as a plumber. He completed year one, then in year 2 he was given the opportunity of an apprenticeship, which, unfortunately he did not continue, due to contract issues. This really upset him and resulted in the first signs of him starting to have issues with his confidence.

In early 2017, we decided this was a good time to make the move out of Romford so that Lee could start his 2nd year of college in a new area. We did so by moving to Coggeshall in August

2017. Lee then started attending Colchester institute in September 2017. He nearly got to the end of the course but he was frustrated and struggling with confidence which led him to giving up and leaving college just before the end of his last exams, so he never received his qualifications. From then on he tried to work hard, finding new jobs in different places but just a small mishap would make him leave the job. His last job started in April 2019 at Millbank. He really seemed to enjoy it and was really happy when he was given a permanent contract in July 2019.

From 2016 to 2019, we had various problems with Lee's mental health. Finally in March 2019, Lee knew he was struggling so we suggested he go to the doctors. He was prescribed some anti-depressants which he started to take and was feeling better in himself, so he decided to stop the medication, stating that he was not depressed and so didn't need them. Lee then declined again and in June 2019, he declined terribly which resulted in him referring himself to the Lakes. He spent 4 days in there and was diagnosed with Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder (EUPD). He came out of hospital feeling optimistic and very positive.

When Lee was released from hospital, he was handed over to the community team and was told they would be contacting him to allocate him to a key worker within 2 weeks who would be able to find him the help and therapy he needed and also to learn the skills he needed to cope with the way his head worked. I chased Essex Partnership University Trust (EPUT) on several occasions over the next 3 months but no contact to Lee was ever made by them.

Lee had spent the week before he died staying at his friend's house as the boy's parents were away on holiday. They worked together and had taken the week as annual leave. I spoke to Lee via text every day. I remember that he enjoyed himself playing on quad bikes and chilling out.

Lee then came home on Thursday evening and spent the weekend relaxed, chilled and ready to go back to work on the Tuesday morning. On Tuesday morning, I found that Lee was not in his bed when I woke up and went to check on him. I kept calling his phone to find out where he was. The worst call ever came around 8.30am on 27 August 2019, from a police officer asking to come to my house. My heart shattered there and then, I knew we had lost him.

My relationship with Lee was always close, he was my baby boy. Through his teenage years we had a bond. No matter what was happening around us with all of the stresses we had, we always checked in on each other. He also had a good relationship with ^{(personal/sensit} his step dad. [we] got married in 2016 having been together since 2014. They were always friends and [he] never tried to be a dad to him. He shared everything with me (sometimes too much) but I preferred that. There are no surprises when his friends tell me stories about the things

they got up to. We were especially close for his final 2 years as ^[his brother and sister] had both left home, so we had more time alone at home. I miss him.

Our family will never recover from losing Lee. Not an hour goes by without his name going through my head. I cry nearly every day just about silly things that he should be here for. Every time there is an event I think he should be with us. He has missed out on all of the stepping stones of his nieces and nephews growing up; his friends and family; life events and just life. He should be here with us.

Lee has left a massive mark on all of the people that he met in his life and I don't think life will ever be the same without him. Lee is thought about every single day and I really wish he could have seen how many people were there for him. There were over 300 people at his funeral and countless people that had the pleasure of knowing him. Whenever we are out and bump into people that he knew before he passed or only just met, they will always have a funny story to tell me about him. His memory will live on forever, he was one in a million and I just wish he knew that.

Please find attached to my statement pictures of Lee I would like to submit to the Inquiry.



Carole Stokes -
Commemorative Exh