

CALDERDALE SOCIAL SERVICES INQUIRY

MEMBERS OF THE INQUIRY

Mr Brian Roycroft CBE - Chairman
(Director of Social Services, Newcastle City Council)

Mr Bill Miles MA LLB (Cantab)
(Formerly Chief Executive, West Yorkshire County Council)

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(Barrister-at-Law)



July 1989

Dear Councillor Rogers

We have pleasure in submitting our report to your committee, and regret its delay due to the serious illness of one of our members. The report is unanimous.

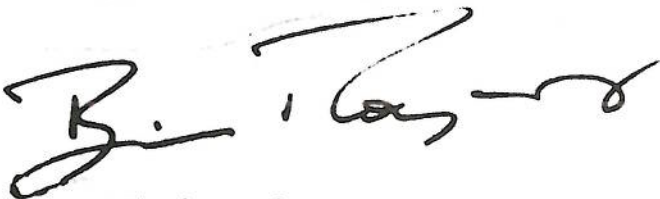
We should like to express our appreciation for the complete co-operation from all the Members of Calderdale Council, the Chief Executive and all the officers we have approached for evidence or help. We have been gratified by the number of members of the public who have come forward voluntarily to offer, verbally or in writing, information and advice sometimes at a cost and inconvenience to themselves. Particularly, we should like to express our thanks to Mr Brian Horner, our Secretary, and Mr Andrew Stubbs, our Clerk.

In conducting our Inquiry and in preparing our report we have been conscious of the distressing effects of this case within the community of Calderdale. It is inevitable that the nature of these events should raise issues and comment beyond our strict terms of reference. We have thought, however, that part of our task in producing an accurate picture and to draw fair and unbiased conclusions was to examine "rumours" and to ascertain whether they had any foundation of truth.

We reach a number of conclusions and make recommendations for improved practice, some of which will be pertinent to other local authorities, ACAS and Central Government. The procedures for appointing Chief Officers, have been implemented by Calderdale before our inquiry commenced.

Finally, our report is about events which have occurred and are now part of history. The demands on the Council and particularly the Social Services Department are heavy, and increasing. We hope our report will help the healing process and unite the Council in support of the services and staff who help the most needy, frail, and handicapped people of your Borough.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Taylor', written in a cursive style.

(Chairman)



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CALDERDALE SOCIAL SERVICES INQUIRY

1. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INQUIRY

- 1.1 On 24 November 1988 Dr R A Ryall was convicted at Leeds Crown Court on two charges of indecent assault against a boy under the age of 16 (referred to in this report as John B), and two charges of indecent assault, two of gross indeceny and one of buggery against a second boy under the age of 16 (referred to as Thomas D). He was sentenced to six years imprisonment. At the time of the offences Dr Ryall was the Director of Social Services with Calderdale Borough Council. He had resigned from that post on 8 August 1988.
- 1.2 Calderdale announced that they would establish an independent inquiry to examine the circumstances of Dr Ryall's appointment, service and resignation. In February 1989, we were appointed to conduct that inquiry, and were given the following terms of reference:-

To investigate and report to the Council (through its Social Services Committee) on:

1. The recruitment methods used and procedures followed in appointment of Dr R A Ryall to his first post with Calderdale in April 1984.
2. The recruitment methods used and procedures followed in the appointment of Dr R A Ryall to the post of Acting Director of Social Services in December 1984 having regard in particular to disciplinary action taken against him in November 1982.
3. The recruitment methods used and procedures followed in the appointment of Dr R A Ryall to the post of Director of Social Services in March 1985 having regard in particular to disciplinary action taken against him in 1982.
4. The circumstances surrounding the resignation of Dr R A Ryall on August 8, 1988, and the extent to which these circumstances and the events which gave rise to his resignation demonstrate:
 - a) any abuse of Dr Ryall's position during his employment by the Council;
 - b) any inadequacy in the management or practice of the Social Services Department, whether in relation to an individual case or generally.
5. Whether the events which gave rise to the employment, promotion or resignation of Dr R A Ryall raise any questions regarding the

management, procedures and practice of any other Department of the Council and its staff.

and to make recommendations for consideration by the council (through its Social Services Committee) of any means by which organisation, management procedures and practice could be improved or made more effective having regard to the circumstances of Dr R A Ryall's resignation.

- 1.3 Persons having information on matters within the terms of reference of the inquiry which might assist it in its task, were invited to come forward. An advertisement to that effect setting out the means by which that could be done was published in the local press. A copy of the advertisement is contained in Appendix 1. Further publicity about the inquiry and an invitation to potential witnesses to come forward was given in the local press and on television on 8 February, when we commenced sitting.
- 1.4 The inquiry sat for 12 days at the Calderdale Town Hall in Halifax. We sought to conduct the proceedings on an informal basis, so as to ensure that witnesses were not intimidated. We sat alone, except for our clerk. Witnesses told their story in private, one at a time, and at the conclusion of their evidence were given an agreed note of their evidence to us. Each witness had the opportunity of being accompanied by a friend, or a legal or trade union representative. Over 70 people gave verbal or written evidence, some on more than one occasion, and help with pertinent information came from a number of official sources. A list of these is set out in Appendix 2. In addition we had available to us statements made to the police during their investigation of the charges against Dr Ryall.
- 1.5 We are very grateful for the co-operation which we have received from Calderdale Council, its officers, Members and former Members, Members of Parliament, and members of the public. Many of the events which have concerned us took place at least six years ago. In some cases the memory of witnesses has faded somewhat over that time, and there have been occasional conflicts of evidence. However, we are in general satisfied that the evidence available to us during the inquiry was sufficient to enable us to reach informed conclusions upon all the issues contained in our terms of reference.
- 1.6 We have endeavoured, by the usual means, to protect the identity of the children involved in this Inquiry, their parents, relatives, and any persons who are or were clients of the Social Services Department. With these exceptions we have used the names and titles of all people necessary to our narrative.

2. CALDERDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL

2.1 Calderdale Borough Council is a Metropolitan District created in 1974 by the amalgamation of the County Borough of Halifax and 8 smaller District Councils or parts of councils. It has a population of 192,000 and a rateable value of £16.9m. It is one of five districts in the County of West Yorkshire and, in terms of population and rateable value, is the smallest by a substantial margin. Of the 36 Metropolitan Districts in England, Calderdale ranks 32nd in population and 35th in rateable value.

2.2 As a Metropolitan District, Calderdale is responsible for Social Services functions. There are 116 Social Services Authorities in England and Wales. In terms of population, Calderdale ranks 97th amongst those Authorities.

2.3 A number of witnesses who work in the Social Services Department in Calderdale have told us that in their view the Department is under-resourced. We have tried to form a view on this matter by comparing Calderdale's spending on social services with the social services component of the Council's Grant Related Expenditure Assessment (the amount which the Government calculates is needed to be spent in order to provide a standard level of service). In 1986/87, although the Council's budget as a whole was 9.5% above Calderdale's total Grant Related Expenditure Assessment, the Social Services Budget was 1% below the Grant Related Expenditure Assessment component for that service. In the following two years budgeted spending on social services increased by 25.8% in cash terms. By 1988/89, when the Council's budget as a whole was 11.1% above Calderdale's total Grant Related Expenditure Assessment, the social services budget had risen to the same percentage, 11.1% above the Grant Related Expenditure Assessment component for social services. Calderdale's percentage spending above Grant Related Expenditure Assessment on all services is the highest of all Metropolitan Districts. We have concluded that although a few years ago social services functions in Calderdale were under-funded, the situation has changed significantly since then, and social services expenditure as a whole is now relatively generous when compared with other Metropolitan Districts. In part however this is attributable to a high level of provision on services for the elderly, rather than on the child care services with which this Inquiry has been mainly concerned.

2.4 Before dealing with the main issues before the Inquiry, we think it relevant to draw attention to the political composition of the Calderdale Council. Between 1980 and the spring of 1989 Calderdale was a hung authority, that is to say no one political party had an overall majority. The appointment of members to committees has

reflected that situation, so that the number from each party on the various committees was approximately proportional to the number in each party on the whole Council. The three main parties each appointed a spokesperson. In Calderdale there was not the political stability or the continuity of service by members which characterises many local authorities. Committee membership, party spokespersons and Committee Chairmen changed frequently. In the municipal year of 1984/85, the year in which Dr Ryall was appointed as Director of Social Services, the Chairmanship of the Social Services Committee changed after six months from Liberal (now Democrat) to Conservative, although Labour was the largest party throughout the year. In these circumstances members saw their main task as taking ad hoc decisions in committee. There was less emphasis by members on strategy, the long term development of the service or the formulation of policy. In particular, no single member was or saw himself as politically accountable to the Council or the community for social services functions.

3. APPOINTMENT OF DR RYALL TO HIS FIRST POST

- 3.1 In 1973 local government was being reorganised. New authorities were created by the Local Government Act, 1972, to take responsibility for functions from 1 April 1974. Within a few months, the new authorities needed to prepare organisational structures for their departments, establishments for the posts which they needed, and make appointments. It was a very hectic time.
- 3.2 In December 1973, Calderdale Council advertised nationally for candidates for a newly created post of Assistant Director (Professional, Technical, Research and Development), the third ranking post in the Social Services Department. Dr Ryall was an applicant. He was then 31 years of age. He had read history at Oxford University where he obtained an MA degree, was captain of the University athletics club, and was chairman of the University scout and guide club. After service as a housemaster at an Approved School in Durham, he went to Cambridge University where he obtained a post-graduate diploma in Criminology, and went on to obtain a PhD degree for which he wrote a thesis on "The Impact of Approved School Training on Delinquent Boys". Thereafter Dr Ryall became deputy headmaster of an Approved School in Birmingham, and then Professional Adviser to the Wessex Children's Regional Planning Committee based in Southampton. His leisure interests were athletics, orienteering, scouting and photography. He was and remains a bachelor.
- 3.3 Dr Ryall's references in support of his application were impeccable. His then employer referred to him as an outstanding, able and experienced man, with proven skill in the field of treatment of the adolescent child and in the initiation of original research. His Director of Research at Cambridge commended his thesis as an excellent piece of work, spoke of his ability to organise research and intelligence activities, and referred to him as a friendly man who gets on well with others and displays a sound and mature judgement.
- 3.4 The then Director of Social Services for Calderdale, Mr D Taylor, drew up a short list for the post. The Social Services Committee of the Council interviewed two candidates, and Dr Ryall was offered and accepted the post.
- 3.5 We are satisfied that the recruitment methods used, and the procedures followed by the Council in the appointment of Dr Ryall to his first post with Calderdale Council were in every way satisfactory. They were consistent with local government practice. Notwithstanding the pressures upon them at that time, the Council made good and sufficient inquiries as to Dr Ryall's education, qualifications, experience and

personal qualities. Those inquiries and the other information before the Committee did not reveal any grounds for concern as to past behaviour or as to what his future conduct might turn out to be.

4. 1974-1982

- 4.1 Dr Ryall took up the post in the Social Services Department in Calderdale in April 1974. He had responsibility for forward planning, and the development aspects of the Department's work, and overall responsibility for training. He also carried out a range of additional work outside his normal responsibilities including supervision of the running of a community home school (Dobroyd Castle), and the establishment of a new children's home with assessment facilities. In a small authority with a high level of social need, there was nothing unusual about such an arrangement, particularly in the light of Dr Ryall's previous experience. From 1976, Dr Ryall was responsible in the Social Services Department to the Deputy Director of Social Services, Mr Jones. Following a departmental inquiry about the pressures on the Deputy Director after a foster child abuse case, Dr Ryall took on responsibility for all residential services in the Department, including children, the elderly, and people with a mental disorder. Although not professionally qualified, he proved to be a man with considerable ability, apparent integrity, and good judgement. He had a pleasant friendly personality and considerable charm, although witnesses describe him as something of a loner. After some two years in post Dr Ryall applied on two or three occasions for more senior posts in Social Services Departments elsewhere, and on one occasion for the post of Deputy Director of Social Services at Calderdale. He was not successful in any of these applications.



5. THE 1982 INCIDENT

5.1 In about October 1982 an incident involving Dr Ryall and young boys took place. Two brothers, aged about 10, were in the habit of going to the car park of a local supermarket near their home, to assist shoppers with their trolleys. They earned pocket money in that way. One person they assisted was Dr Ryall. He gave them larger sums of money than their usual tip. At his suggestion they went for a ride in his car. On a subsequent occasion Dr Ryall arranged to meet them in the local swimming baths. He paid for them and bought them snacks. Later they went to his house. They were asked to strip to running shorts and vests, wear animal masks and simulate fighting. Dr Ryall then took photographs of them. Dr Ryall himself later went to the boys' mother to ask if he could take the boys camping, introducing himself as "a man from the Social Services". The mother refused. The boys had an elder brother who was in the care of Calderdale Council. He had a social worker, a Miss Lamb. The elder brother told Miss Lamb of his brothers' association with Dr Ryall, whose identity was not known at that time. Miss Lamb visited the home to see the mother. Miss Lamb reported the incident to the police and to the Area Director of Social Services, Mr Green. At that time both Miss Lamb and Mr Green believed from the description given to them that the man involved was Dr Ryall. The incident was quickly reported by Mr Green to Mr Jones, the Deputy and to Mr Taylor, the Director of Social Services who informed the Chief Executive, Mr M Ellison. The matter was again reported to the police, this time at senior level.

5.2 The police investigated the incident. After interviewing the boys, the police, although satisfied that the events had taken place, concluded that there was no indecency involved in the taking of the photographs at Dr Ryall's home. No offence had therefore been committed. They did not take any action. Dr Ryall was not interviewed. Neither the police nor anyone else in authority ever saw the photographs. The police advised the Calderdale Social Services Department that they did not intend to take action, but did not give the Department any information about the incident. (In 1988, the police made further investigations into the 1982 incident. The two boys were interviewed again, but the police reached the same conclusion as in 1982, namely that no criminal offence had taken place.)

5.3 In these circumstances disciplinary proceedings were instituted against Dr Ryall for putting himself in a position where his actions could be misconstrued. In addition to what had been told to Miss Lamb, Mr Jones, the Deputy Director of Social Services, saw the boys, and their parents, and obtained a reasonably accurate account of what had occurred. Although this account is

consistent with the results of the police investigation, the disciplinary proceedings instituted by Calderdale would have been facilitated had the police supplied Calderdale with a detailed report of their investigations and their reasons for not taking any action. The parents did not appear to be worried and were not expressing concern. At the disciplinary hearing there were present Mr Taylor and Mr Jones, and the Council's Legal Officer, Mr Norrie. The hearing was conducted in accordance with Calderdale's local disciplinary procedure agreement which is set out in Appendix 3.

- 5.4 Calderdale Members are not involved in disciplinary hearings unless an appeal is made by the officer concerned. This is common practice in authorities of Calderdale's size. However where the subject matter of a disciplinary hearing is particularly sensitive or significant - for example where the outcome may affect the reputation of an important service provided by the local authority - then we believe that the chief officer taking the hearing should take soundings of those key elected members who are politically accountable for that service. In most authorities those members would be the chairman and vice-chairman of the service committee. In Calderdale the members involved would be the party spokespersons on that committee. No such soundings were taken before the disciplinary hearing against Dr Ryall. We believe that although this may not have affected the outcome of the disciplinary hearing it would have been a prudent step to take.
- 5.5 At the hearing Dr Ryall appeared to be very shocked. He admitted the substance of the facts alleged against him. He maintained that he had become involved with the boys at the supermarket in a perfectly normal way, that nothing improper had occurred at his home, but he recognised that he had been foolish and he was sorry. Mr Taylor gave Dr Ryall a first and final warning. The two other officers present believed that this was an appropriate punishment for the disciplinary matter which did not involve a criminal offence.
- 5.6 The incident and the result of the disciplinary hearing were communicated to the Chief Executive, Mr Ellison. He informed the three councillors who acted as party spokespersons on the Social Services Committee. All three were shocked. Councillor Mazey (Conservative) believed that a warning was not sufficient and that Dr Ryall should have been dismissed; the other two members, Councillor Lawler (Labour) and Councillor Miss Riley (Liberal) appeared to be satisfied with the punishment imposed. The incident and the disciplinary hearing were not publicised within the Department.
- 5.7 We have concluded that the 1982 incident was in general treated in a proper way by Calderdale Council and its

councillors. The allegations revealed to Miss Lamb were quickly reported to the senior management in the Department and to the Chief Executive, Mr Ellison. The police were brought in at a very early stage. When their inquiries revealed that no criminal offence had been committed, a disciplinary hearing was held. Of course, it would have been possible for Mr Taylor to have dismissed Ryall. However, there was no evidence that indecency had taken place. The incident, although bizarre, appeared to be an isolated one, and dismissal would probably have led to an appeal with possible reinstatement which would damage the Department's credibility. Dr Ryall was in all other respects a very competent senior officer. Subject to our findings referred to later in this report about supervision, we do not criticise in general the confidentiality which was attached to the 1982 incident and the disciplinary hearing. We do however believe that Miss Lamb and Mr Green, who reported the incident to their senior management, should have been told of the disciplinary hearing and its outcome. This would have provided those officers with some comfort and support for the action which they took. However, if Dr Ryall was to be retained in post and given a second chance, further publicity of the 1982 incident would have undermined his position as a senior officer in the Department. At member level it was clearly a sensitive issue; although disciplinary procedures at that stage are a matter for chief officers, not elected members, prior consultation with key members would have been helpful. The three members who had a special responsibility for social services in Calderdale at that time were, we believe rightly informed, even if after the event. It was for them if they felt it appropriate to share their knowledge with their political colleagues. In 1982 no-one realised the significance which knowledge or ignorance of the 1982 incident would have.



6. THE APPOINTMENT OF DR RYALL TO THE POST OF ACTING
DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

- 6.1 Following the disciplinary hearing Dr Ryall continued his duties as Assistant Director. He carried them out competently. There was no reason apparent to the senior management of the Council to suspect Dr Ryall's behaviour. However, neither Mr Taylor nor Mr Jones made any inquiries as to Dr Ryall's conduct or as to his relationship with young people, whether known to the Department or not. The supervision extended to Dr Ryall by his supervisors did not cover or attempt to deal with his association with young boys outside the office.
- 6.2 In 1984, the Social Services Committee and Mr Ellison became concerned about the management of the Social Services Department. There had been an internal inquiry following the manslaughter of a child in care by foster parents, which found the management of the department at fault. Reports were frequently not being implemented. We have been told that Mr Taylor and Mr Jones had an aloof, laissez-faire style. Departmental administration was not satisfactory. In November 1984, the Social Services Committee became very concerned about the failure of the officers to implement the recommendations in an organisation and methods report about domiciliary services. The report required management to determine criteria on which domiciliary services would be allocated following which additional resources would be provided. Mr Ellison instructed Mr Taylor and Mr Jones several times to take action, but they did not respond. On 21 November 1984, the Committee passed what was in effect a unanimous vote of no confidence in Mr Taylor and Mr Jones. The same day the trade union also passed a similar vote of no confidence in Mr Taylor following a dispute on the implementation of yet another report. Two days later following discussion with Mr Ellison both officers took early retirement on agreed terms. These criticisms did not concern Dr Ryall. Mr Ellison realised that Dr Ryall was the next senior officer remaining in the Department, that he would probably be asked to assume responsibility for the Department as Acting Director until a permanent successor was appointed, and that he would be a candidate for the permanent post. He therefore asked Mr Taylor before he left on 23 November, whether there had been any subsequent disciplinary action against Dr Ryall following the 1982 incident. Mr Taylor said that the warning had given Dr Ryall the shock of his life and that it appeared to have had the desired effect. However, Mr Taylor had made no inquiries as to Dr Ryall's behaviour, and he did not know that at that time Dr Ryall had already established an association with John B which would ultimately lead on to serious criminal offences against John B and Thomas D.

6.3 There was an immediate need for the appointment of an Acting Director to take charge of the Department until a permanent head could be recruited. The top two levels of the Department, having resigned, there were two posts at third tier level, one occupied by Dr Ryall, the other an administrative post which had existed for only two weeks by an officer on secondment from the Chief Executive's Department. There appeared to be no realistic alternative to the appointment of Dr Ryall as Acting Director. However, the Acting post was advertised internally, a step which was consistent with the council's policies on equal opportunities. Surprisingly there was one other candidate in addition to Dr Ryall, a Senior Social Worker on a grade much inferior to Dr Ryall and with no senior management experience. The Social Services Committee interviewed both candidates on 11 December 1984. The Mr Ellison did not advise the Committee of the disciplinary action taken against Dr Ryall in 1982, or of the reasons for it. The Committee appointed Dr Ryall as Acting Director. We consider in detail subsequently in this report the propriety of not informing the Committee of the 1982 incident. However, in relation to the appointment of Dr Ryall as Acting Director, we believe that this non-disclosure did not affect the outcome of the appointment. In any event there were no other serious contenders for the post, and Dr Ryall was already de facto Acting Director. We are satisfied that the recruitment methods used and the procedures followed in the appointment of Acting Director were satisfactory. They were surprising only in the time and effort spent in reaching a decision which was almost inevitable and had only temporary consequences.

7. THE APPOINTMENT OF DR RYALL AS DIRECTOR

7.1 In December 1984, the Association of Directors of Social Services offered their assistance in the selection of a new Director. The party spokespersons decided not to take up the offer, but to rely on references and a Committee interview. The Council advertised nationally the permanent post of Director of Social Services in January 1985. The full Committee met to shortlist applicants in February 1985, and from the full list of 27 applicants a shortlist of six was drawn up. In fact, one shortlisted candidate withdrew before interview, so when the Social Services Committee met to appoint their new Director on 20 March 1985, they were choosing from five applicants, one of whom was Dr Ryall. Dr Ryall's application is set out at Appendix 4. The Committee had full authority to make the appointment without confirmation by the Council. At that time, the Committee comprised six Labour councillors, one Independent Labour, four Conservatives and four Liberals.

7.2 The Council's disciplinary procedure which applied to the warning given to Dr Ryall in 1982 is contained in a collective agreement negotiated with the appropriate trade union and set out in Appendix 3. Clause 6.2 of that agreement provides that after a period of 15 months, a final warning "shall be physically expunged from the employee's personal record". By 1984, the period of 15 months since Dr Ryall's warning in 1982 had run its course. In accordance with the agreement, the written warning had been removed from Dr Ryall's personal file. Mr Ellison took the view that the disciplinary agreement prevented him from disclosing the 1982 incident to the Social Services Committee when Dr Ryall was a candidate before it, both for the post of Acting Director and for the permanent post of Director. Before the Committee met on 20 March 1985, he did however remind Councillor Mazey - the 1982 Conservative spokesperson who had already been told of it - of the 1982 incident, probably in the expectation that information would be passed on to the Conservative Councillors on the Social Services Committee. But, apart from telling one member who did not pass it on to the others, that did not happen. The Labour spokesperson on the Social Services Committee was Mrs A Mahon, now Member of Parliament for Halifax. She had heard rumours of the 1982 incident and went to see Mr Ellison before the interviews for the Acting Director post. She asked him about the rumours, and he confirmed to her the existence of the disciplinary warning 1982. Before the interviews Mrs Mahon told the members of the Labour Group about it. The Leader of the Conservative group on the council at that time was Councillor Sharp. He had heard rumours of the 1982 incident and also went to see Mr Ellison about it. Councillor Sharp has told us that Mr Ellison told him of the disciplinary proceedings and that he went on to

say that Dr Ryall was not likely to be appointed as Director. Councillor Sharp was satisfied with this, and did not pass on the information. In the Liberal party, the Liberal spokesperson of 1982 treated her information as confidential and told no-one. In addition to these formal disclosures, some councillors on the Social Services Committee had picked up rumours or tea-room gossip about the earlier incident involving Dr Ryall, but in general they attached little importance to them, since their knowledge of the incident was so uncertain.

7.3 At the Social Services Committee meeting on 20 March 1985, there were twelve Members present, five Labour, four Conservatives and three Liberals. Some knew of the 1982 incident, some had heard rumours, others knew nothing. The Committee had before them the applications of the five candidates. In Dr Ryall's case, his referees, Mr Taylor, the former Director of Social Services, and Mr Irving, the Chief Financial Officer of Calderdale, were not asked to give references. In normal circumstances this is not unusual in the case of an internal candidate, whose experience and personal qualities will be well known already to officers advising the appointing committee and to many of the members themselves.

7.4 When the interviews had been concluded, Mr Ellison was asked for comments on each of the candidates. In doing so, he made a firm recommendation in favour of one of the external candidates. He did not advise the Committee of the warning against Dr Ryall, primarily because in his view to have done so would have been contrary to the disciplinary procedure agreement, but also because he believed that the warning had been effective, that Dr Ryall had made outstanding progress in the Social Services Department, and that the warning of 1982 was in any event known among elected members. The Committee's decision to appoint Dr Ryall was a very close thing. At one stage the Committee were equally divided between Dr Ryall and one of the outside candidates, although not the candidate recommended by Mr Ellison. But in the end Dr Ryall won the day. Most of the councillors present at the Committee who did not know of the 1982 incident and who supported Dr Ryall, now say that they would not have done so had they been made aware of the incident. Whilst there is something of hindsight in this, we believe that the decision was so close that Dr Ryall would not have been appointed had his earlier warning and the reasons for it been formally disclosed.

7.5 The dilemma which faced Mr Ellison stemmed from paragraph 6.2 of the Calderdale Disciplinary Procedure Agreement. This has its origins in section 6 of the Employment Protection Act 1975. That section authorises the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) to issue codes of practice containing

such practical guidance as the service thinks fit for the purpose of promoting the improvement of industrial relations. Under that Act, ACAS issued in June 1977 a code of practice on Disciplinary Practice and Procedures in Employment, which was approved for the purposes of the Act by the Secretary of State for Employment and which gives guidance to employers and trade unions on drawing up and operating disciplinary rules and procedures. The Code is set out at Appendix 5. Paragraph 19 of the Code provides that except in agreed special circumstances, breaches of disciplinary rules should be disregarded after a specified period of satisfactory conduct. We have concluded that the ACAS Code is limited to disciplinary procedures and has no application to appointments. It would, nevertheless, remove all doubts if the disregard contained in paragraph 19 of the Code were specifically limited to disciplinary matters. In 1986, ACAS issued a handbook which was publicised by the Local Authorities Conditions of Service Advisory Board (LACSAB). In relation to time limits for warnings, the handbook provides for disciplinary warnings to be "disregarded for disciplinary purposes". However that advice has not been incorporated into a statutory code with the result that the 1977 code and the 1986 handbook are not identical.

7.6

The Calderdale agreement however, goes further than the ACAS statutory code and no account appears to have been taken of the subsequent handbook. We find that the provision in the agreement about expunging warnings from the record is ambiguous. Within Calderdale itself, some officers believed that the agreement meant that warnings should be expunged for all purposes, others believed that only in disciplinary hearings were spent warnings to be disregarded. For our purposes we have not found it necessary to express a legal opinion about the interpretation of the current Calderdale agreement. We are firmly of the view however, that where an officer applies for a post, whether within his employing authority or outside, a prospective employer is entitled to all relevant information about his qualifications, experience, personal qualities and reputation. As we see it, an applicant for a post puts in issue the whole of his record, both good and bad, so far as it is relevant to the post applied for. There is no case for part of the record to be withheld. The weight to be attached to the record is of course a matter for those making the appointment. No doubt they would attach less weight to a warning which had occurred at some time in the past than one which was more recent. We believe that had information about the 1982 incident been made available to the Social Services Committee when they met to appoint a Director of Social Services in 1985, then Dr Ryall would not have been appointed. We recommend that Calderdale should amend its disciplinary procedure agreement, so as to provide quite clearly that a spent warning shall

be disregarded only for the purpose of future disciplinary proceedings. For other purposes a warning would remain on the record, and would properly be a matter to be taken into account in an appointment.

- 7.7 We understand that the drafting of the Calderdale agreement is similar to that found in procedure agreements in some other local authorities. We suggest therefore that our views on this point should be drawn to the attention of ACAS and LACSAB, who may wish to give further advice to local authorities. In particular we recommended ACAS and the Secretary of State for Employment to consider the desirability of incorporating the informal advice given in the handbook into a code of practice with statutory backing.
- 7.8 The principle, which we advocate, of a full disclosure of the record of an applicant for a job in so far as it is relevant to the post applied for, is not, in all cases, consistent with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. That Act prevents in certain circumstances the disclosure of information about previous convictions. However, the Act does not apply in relation to the assessment of the suitability of a candidate for a post in a social services department where the holder has access in the normal course of duties to young people. This would include a Director of Social Services in a local authority. Thus had the 1982 incident amounted to a crime for which Dr Ryall had been convicted, the Act would not have prevented any disclosure of the 1982 incident to the committee when he was appointed as Director.
- 7.9 The recruitment methods used and procedures followed in the appointment of Director in general accorded with local government practice at that time. However the Committee should we believe have had the benefit of an assessment of the professional skills and experience of the candidates from an outside professional in Social Services, even though we doubt if this would have made any difference to the outcome since Dr Ryall's professional competence was not in issue. We also believe that there are advantages, at least as far as the appointment by local authorities of chief officers is concerned, in complementing the traditional interview with a more detailed assessment of the candidates, including perhaps literacy, numeracy and psychometric testing. We have been told that the appointment procedure in Calderdale now provides for assessors to be present and for a more sophisticated process of assessment. We also recommend that whatever procedure for making appointments is adopted, it should be documented and publicised, so that both candidates and members of appointing committees are made aware of what will be expected of them. In particular the taking up of written references should be applied to home candidates as well as to outsiders.

8

A RELATIONSHIP IS ESTABLISHED BETWEEN DR RYALL AND THE
B FAMILY

8.1

In 1980 Mr and Mrs B became foster parents on behalf of Calderdale Social Services Department. They took part in a scheme to provide foster care for problem adolescent children. In 1982 they fostered a boy who had serious behaviour problems, but amongst his few strengths was the fact that he was a good athlete and a runner. The social worker handling this case sought means of stimulating him and of helping the foster parents to bring him to some degree to normalcy. The social worker knew that Dr Ryall, then the Assistant Director of Social Services, was a keen athlete and was involved in hobbies connected with athletics. At the invitation of the social worker Dr Ryall visited the foster home of Mr and Mrs B and attempted to make a relationship with the foster boy and interest him in running. This worked for a little while but he eventually left the foster home and in February 1983 died in tragic circumstances unrelated to this inquiry.

8.2

This introduction of Dr Ryall to the foster home of Mr and Mrs B was the start of a relationship and which varied in intensity but was to last until August 1988. Mr and Mrs B had two children of their own, John B, born in September 1970, and Jane B in July 1973. John B saw the foster boy running with Dr Ryall and joined them. This natural introduction lead on to John B taking part in day trips to orienteering meetings and in due course Mr and Mrs B accepted that John B would be away from home, occasionally overnight, in pursuit of these hobbies. Dr Ryall became a friend of the family visiting quite frequently and eventually Jane B joined orienteering trips with Dr Ryall and her brother, always with other members of the orienteering club. Although Mrs B suspected that Dr Ryall was possibly "gay", not until 1986 did she entertain any suspicions that there was anything untoward in his relationships with the children.



9. DR RYALL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE B FAMILY AND JOHN B - 1983 to 1986

- 9.1 For some time the relationship between Dr Ryall and the children appeared normal. Orienteering is a vigorous and demanding sport which makes full use of the open countryside widespread in Yorkshire, and can occupy a full day or several days. It was not unusual for one of both of the children to stay overnight at Dr Ryall's home. However, when John B was about 12 or 13 years old (about 1983 his own remembrance of the occasion) and was staying at Dr Ryall's house, he (Dr Ryall) started taking photographs of John B with his clothes on. John B then was asked to take off some of his clothes, which he did, and Dr Ryall continued taking photographs. This was followed by more occasions when John B stayed at Dr Ryall's house and photographs were taken, eventually leading to photographs in which the boy was completely naked. According to the boy Dr Ryall gave him money to allow him to take these photographs. He paid a few pounds each time, but it was not a regular fixed sum.
- 9.2 About a year later, in 1984, when John B was about 13 or 14 years old Dr Ryall suggested to him that he would pay him more money if he would agree to take part in mutual masturbation and oral sex. John B agreed and a pattern of sexual activity involving mutual masturbation and oral sex commenced and continued for about two years until sometime in 1986. This often included taking photographs of each other, or photographs together using a remote airline attached to the camera. The boy states that the last time Dr Ryall did anything indecent to him, was before he was received into care in 1986.
- 9.3 During 1984 and 1985 the domestic circumstances of the B family changed, Mr C took up residence with Mrs B; Mr and Mrs B were divorced; and Mr C and Mrs B married on 31 August 1985. For the sake of clarity in this narrative we shall now call them Mr and Mrs C and the children John and Jane B.
- 9.4 Mrs C's sister, who we shall call Mrs D, lived quite close by and she had two sons, the youngest of whom was called Thomas D. Thomas D is therefore a cousin of John B and a close friend, and five months younger. When John started going on orienteering events with Dr Ryall Thomas sometimes accompanied them. On one occasion the three of them went on a three day orienteering event at Scarborough and they all slept in tents, John and Thomas sleeping in one tent and Dr Ryall in another. Thomas went orienteering three or four times that year with John and Dr Ryall and then lost interest in the sport. Thomas D saw little of Dr Ryall until early in 1987, and Mrs D says she was worried about his relationship with Dr Ryall, and discouraged contact.

- 9.5 Dr Ryall kept a number of erotic magazines in his house, and John found them. He took several of these magazines home and they were discovered by his mother who took great exception to this and severely reprimanded Dr Ryall for allowing the boys to see the magazines. According to Mrs C, Dr Ryall appeared to be suitably ashamed.
- 9.6 Until 1986, Mrs C and Mrs D had no suspicions of any sexually improper behaviour in Dr Ryall's relationship with their children, but they became concerned because he was giving all three children far too much money and lavish presents. He was spending very freely on the children. In the spring of 1986 a suspicion crossed their minds that there may have been some sexual motive. Both mothers questioned the children together but they were assured that there was nothing untoward.
- 9.7 Life was not proving easy for Mrs C and during 1986 she began to have problems disciplining and controlling her children. According to her Dr Ryall trespassed upon his relationship with the family and advised them on how in his view the children should be disciplined. Dr Ryall says that he felt that this was in the best interests of the children and that they were being handled in a clumsy manner, but Mrs C resented this interference. She found that her sister was having a similar problem with Thomas, so they decided to prevent Dr Ryall from seeing the children. Both boys were instructed to tell Dr Ryall that they would not see him again. Thomas did so but John refused. Mrs C says that she rang him up and told him that she didn't think he should see the children for a while because they were getting out of control, but she was persuaded by him that it was she who was handling it wrong. She talked about this with her husband and her sister and they had some concerns.
- 9.8 After discussions it was decided that Mr C should telephone Dr Ryall and ask him to stop seeing the children. Mr C says he felt very angry with Dr Ryall who he thought was causing problems for his wife and John. There are differences of opinion as to the nature of this telephone conversation, but certainly Dr Ryall did not visit the house for quite a long time. Mrs C thought she had put a stop to Dr Ryall seeing the children, but she later learned that they were going behind her back and seeing him without her knowledge.
- 9.9 In October 1986 Thomas D got into trouble with the police over setting fire to a post box. Dr Ryall telephoned Mrs D and offered help, eventually attending juvenile court in January 1987 willing to speak on Thomas' behalf. He did not give verbal evidence but a letter from him was submitted to the magistrates and subsequently Thomas was given a conditional discharge. It would be very unusual for the the Director of Social Services to appear in any individual case, and Dr Ryall

must have been aware of the effect this would have on the considerations of the court.

- 9.10 An important feature of Thomas D's character and behaviour should be noted at this point. He was addicted to playing gaming machines and was always short of money for his weakness. He has admitted that he has stolen from his parents and it was soon clear that he had an opportunity to satisfy, at least in part, his need for money, from his relationship with Dr Ryall.
- 9.11 After the court hearing Dr Ryall took Mrs D and Thomas home and convinced Mrs D that boredom had been one of the causes of the boy's problems. He encouraged Mrs D to allow Thomas to visit him, with a friend, to play with computers in the belief this would help. She agreed.
- 9.12 So the relationship with Thomas D grew in intensity. At first it was linked to the orienteering trips when the two boys and Dr Ryall would go away together. On some occasions when, with their parents' consent they stayed at Dr Ryall's house indecent photographs were taken. According to John on about three occasions Dr Ryall showed pornographic videos on the television set and they watched them together. This is not, however, substantiated by Thomas, nor is there any other evidence to support this statement. Dr Ryall vigorously denies having done this.
- 9.13 It would appear that at about the time that Dr Ryall's relationship with John B began to diminish so it increased with Thomas D.



10.1 THE HISTORY OF JOHN B AND JANE B IN CARE

Mrs C's difficulties were not all resolved by her second marriage in August 1985, indeed the following twelve months had many problems. Firstly, there were behavioural difficulties with the children and then there were a number of family bereavements. These events probably contributed to Mrs C suffering a breakdown in June 1986. She felt she was unable to control the children and therefore on the advice of her doctor sought help from the Social Services Department. On 9 June Mrs C phoned the emergency duty team to say that she could no longer cope with John (then 15 years) and Jane (then 12 years). The social worker on duty (Mrs O'Hanlon) was extremely busy but called on the family in an attempt to see if there was anything that could be done to alleviate the problem immediately. It was her assessment that the children needed to be received into care on a voluntary basis (Mrs C was covered in a rash and clearly very agitated). It is proper procedure for her to enquire whether there are relatives, friends or neighbours who could care for the children temporarily, or until the crisis was over. The C family decided that Dr Ryall was the best person to approach, which suprised Mrs O'Hanlon but she decided she would treat him like anyone else. A telephone call was made to him and both Mrs O'Hanlon and Mrs C spoke to Dr Ryall. It was agreed that the children should go to his house that night and that the following day more permanent arrangements would be made by the social work intake team. The children were collected by Dr Ryall and taken to his own house. Nothing has been suggested nor is there evidence to suggest that anything improper took place. On the following day, 10 June 1986, the children were placed at a Children's Home in Alloefield View.

10.2 The Intake Team at Northgate House Office of the department were responsible for supervising the B children and the social worker was Mr Johanson. On 12 June 1986, Tina Booth, Houseparent at the Children's Home, 'phoned Mr Johanson. The children thought they would spend the next weekend at Dr Ryall's house. Mr Johanson spoke to Dr Ryall who said he would prefer the children not to come. A few days later the case was reviewed for decisions to be taken about the care of the children. The review took place on 17 June 1986, and Dr Ryall is referred to on the form as a family acquaintance.

10.3 After the review on 17 June, Mr Johanson 'phoned Dr Ryall to tell him of the discussions. There appeared to be an ambivalent reaction from Dr Ryall to his involvement at this stage. 19 June 1986 Dr Ryall wrote a memorandum to Mr Johanson, Mrs C had 'phoned him and there had been some question over the involvement of Jane B's father (Mrs C's first husband) about giving the children treats. On 18 July 1986, the social

worker 'phoned Dr Ryall telling him that John was being a problem both at school and at Alloefield. 4 August, Jane wrote to her social worker, Mr Johansen, saying that she wanted to return home. Whilst the mother seemed agreeable to taking Jane she was reluctant to take John so the decision was deferred. However, Mr Johansen left the employment of Calderdale during August 1986, and the records do not indicate whether social work help was being offered to the family. The records do indicate to us that at this stage the children's mother seemed to bring Dr Ryall into the case in a manner which undermined the position of those who were caring for the children.

- 10.4 In September 1986 a new social worker was introduced to the case. Mr Cunningham was newly qualified and had just started work in the intake team. A review took place in September and on the review form it stated that John saw Dr Ryall every two weeks. Jane continued pressing to go home and was discharged to the care of her mother on 14 September. She had been in care a little over 3 months, and the health of Mrs C was improved. Jane maintained a relationship with Dr Ryall, and according to her mother continued to visit his home to do housework for him. Mrs C believed he paid her daughter over generously but draws no implications from this comment. Jane was received into care again in April 1988.
- 10.5 On 25 September, Mr Cunningham found out by accident that Dr Ryall had arranged a weekend in which he had picked up Jane from her home and collected John from Alloefield View, and taken them to his own home for the weekend. Mr Cunningham had been told that John was proving difficult in the Home and was having a very bad time at school, so he spoke with his mother and she told him of the children's weekend visit to Dr Ryall and of the problems John was having. Mr Cunningham discussed this with his senior social worker, Mr Shires, in an attempt to clarify Dr Ryall's involvement. Mr Cunningham felt that Dr Ryall was behaving unprofessionally. It is a clear rule, and a common part of social work practice, that the social worker holding a case must be consulted before children are allowed home for an overnight visit. Dr Ryall was aware of this.
- 10.6 In October 1986, staff at Alloefield told the social worker that John had complained to Dr Ryall about the punishments that he had received. Dr Ryall has declared that he had always supported the staff, and the evidence of houseparents to us indicate that this was generally the case. In October and November the social worker, Mr Cunningham, became more concerned about Dr Ryall's involvement in the case. He was told of another occasion in which the children had stayed overnight in Dr Ryall's home. He had not been consulted prior to either of these visits. He felt

that Dr Ryall wanted his connection with this case to be seen in terms of his role as a family friend, yet he was exercising his authority as Director of Social Services to avoid the normal regulations.

- 10.7 In September 1986 Mr Cunningham went to his senior social worker Mr Shire and voiced his concerns requesting that they be brought to Dr Ryall's attention. Although he felt Dr Ryall's actions were out of order Mr Shire took no action. This disappointed Cunningham, because he says these matters were completely outside his experience. However, the second unauthorised visit and Mr Cunningham's continued anxiety about a number of relatively minor incidents prompted him to take these problems seriously. Whilst Mr Cunningham was expressing his concerns about the relationship between Dr Ryall and John B, he had no proof of any impropriety between them. He regarded the behaviour by Dr Ryall as naive rather than evil.
- 10.8 One of the incidents which raised the anxieties of Mr Cunningham and Mr Shire was another example of Dr Ryall apparently interfering in the social work progress of the case. Mr Cunningham found out that John B had been allocated an intermediate treatment worker during the previous (summer) school holidays. This was strange for two reasons. Firstly, the social worker had not requested such a service for him, and secondly it seemed inappropriate because the boy was not a persistent offender which is the usual reason for involving intermediate treatment workers. Mr Cunningham pursued questions on this matter and through Mr Eccles, the senior intermediate treatment officer, found that the Director of Social Services had started this involvement and it was on his suggestion that the intermediate treatment officer, Margaret Alvarez, became involved. This involvement did not last long.
- 10.9 In November 1986, Mr Shire drew together the concerns he shared with Mr Cunningham. They were primarily around Dr Ryall's unauthorised visits and taking the children home, and the setting up of the intermediate treatment programme, but also included John B's behaviour in the home. They felt that this was more than a friend of the family should be doing and that Dr Ryall was compromising his position as Director. Mr Shire did not feel he could talk directly to Dr Ryall about it but decided to talk to his superior, the Area Director for the Halifax office, Mr Stuart Green. Mr Green is a qualified, experienced and respected senior officer whose experience at this level of management goes back to 1974, and has held his present post since 1980. In this discussion Mr Green and Mr Shire talked about whether they should telephone Dr Ryall. In the end they decided to send him an official memorandum. Mr Shire drafted the memorandum and it was approved and signed by Mr Green and was despatched to the Director of Social Services on 17 November 1986 (Appendix 6).

Both felt that the memo was blunt and to the point and that they were making it clear that in their view Dr Ryall should keep his role as family friend separate from his role as Director of Social Services.

- 10.10 Dr Ryall replied to Mr Green on 20 November 1986. (Appendix 7). In it Dr Ryall appears to play down his involvement with John. He denies that he is interfering in the case, but expresses regret that the two visits of the children to his home were done without consultation with the social worker concerned, and states that he would ensure that this would not happen again. Dr Ryall goes on to deny that he has interfered with, or influenced any decision making process in respect to either John or Jane B's stay in care. He refers however, to one exception where perhaps there was, he agrees, a blurring of his role when he intervened and arranged for intermediate treatment to be organised because he felt John's behaviour was deteriorating.

- 10.11 Mr Shire has said he was amazed by the reply and a bit shocked that Dr Ryall had sent a point by point defence of his actions. Mr Shire and Mr Green felt upset by one paragraph in particular which seemed to contain a thinly veiled threat. It is worth quoting the paragraph in full:

"The possible problems of conflict in roles in this situation go beyond issues relating to its manipulation by John B. It has been inevitable that over the last few months I have seen, in some detail, from the perspective of the consumer, something of the services provided by both residential care and the fieldwork service. However, because of the role from which I gained these perceptions, I have felt it inappropriate to pursue, or make comment on, matters which in my role as Director I might have wished to make a note of."

The memorandum left both the Area Director and his senior social worker uncertain, but they felt their actions had achieved their objectives.

- 10.12 14 November 1986, John was moved to a Children's Home at 193 Huddersfield Road. This was not a positive time for him and in the review which took place on 16 December 1986 John stated that he liked orienteering, and people said that he flaunted his relationship with Dr Ryall.
- 10.13 In January 1987, Mr Cunningham left the Calderdale Social Services Department. John broke his leg and was in hospital for some time. Dr Ryall, and some members of his family visited John while he was in hospital, but his mother was still taking no active part in John's life.

- 10.14 For nearly four months at the beginning of 1987 there is a gap in the social work involvement with John B because of a shortage of social workers. The case was being held by the intake team, but Mr Shire was not able to allocate a social worker to carry on the case. Eventually it was transferred in April 1987 to a long term child care team and Mr James Poole, social worker in the team lead by Mr Gibbons, senior social worker. On the first occasion that Mr Poole made contact with his client John B he had not read the files, but was surprised that the boy constantly dropped the name of Dr Ryall and inferred that he had some special relationship with him. Following a discussion with his senior social worker and an examination of the file, he found out about John's relationship with Dr Ryall and saw the term used that Dr Ryall is a "friend of the family". Although unqualified Mr Poole is a thorough social worker and followed up his early meetings with John by visiting the boy's mother at her home. In the course of these discussions, Mr Poole recalls, Mrs C says that as far as she was concerned Dr Ryall had been a nuisance and wanted to exert his influence with regard to her children. She complained that she was annoyed at Dr Ryall's interfering in her family matters and that he was a bachelor with no experience of paternity or indeed married life and its consequences.
- 10.15 On 9 June 1987, a statutory review was held at 193 Huddersfield Road, and Mr David Thorp, Assistant Area Director of Social Services was the reviewing officer. Mr Poole was surprised to hear that a copy of the completed review report was to be sent to Dr Ryall because of his role as a family friend, not in his capacity as Director of Social Services.
- 10.16 About this point Mr Poole, became increasingly angry with the involvement of Dr Ryall in his client's case. He wrote some notes to be included in the child's file in which he said he was not happy about this relationship and used words which suggested that perhaps there was an unusually deep and unhealthy relationship between John B and the Director of Social Services. He made no reference, nor implied, that there was any sexual relationship. Mr Gibbons, his senior social worker, sent for Mr Poole some days afterwards, and expressed concern about the contents of the case notes. It appeared the matter had been brought to his attention by Mrs Patricia Ackerman, the typist. When typing the case recordings Mrs Ackerman had felt that there were some matters that were both personal and irrelevant. Mrs Ackerman would normally have taken these matters to Mr Poole, but he was absent and so she took them to Mr Gibbons. Her recollection was that the offending paragraph included phrases like: "Ryall being an interfering busybody". She confirms nothing sexual was mentioned. It was just an opinion, and Mrs Ackerman felt strongly it was something she

would not like to have seen written about anybody without firm proof or evidence. She felt it would have been the same even if the name mentioned had not been that of the Director of Social Services.

- 10.17 Mr Gibbons asked Mr Poole to destroy the offending part of the report. Mr Gibbons felt that it was not relevant and did not substantially contribute to the progress of the case. Understandably there are different perceptions about this discussion, and Mr Gibbons feels that he left the decision to Mr Poole, whilst Mr Poole feels that he was instructed to delete the offending paragraphs. By whatever means a decision was reached when the file was returned to Mr Poole the offending paragraphs were not contained therein and are not on the file to this date.
- 10.18 Mr Poole was concerned about this matter and he went over the head of Mr Gibbons to speak to the Area Director, Mr Stuart Green. Mr Green does not recollect this particular discussion but firmly states that he agreed with the decision of Mr Gibbons. He felt that the notes in question reflected a style of recording that was in the realms of fantasy and was what somebody else had said rather than direct evidence. He felt that these notes reflected gossip, and case notes on a file are not for gossip. Mr Green does not recall Mr Poole making a big issue of it at the time, but he supports the stance taken by professional social workers that case recordings should accurately reflect events and the evaluation of these events in a clear and unequivocal fashion, not tainted with gossip.
- 10.19 In a variety of meetings between Mr Green and Mr Poole (as well as colleagues they are also friends who have known each other for a very long time) Mr Poole continued to express anxieties. Both suspected that Dr Ryall was a homosexual. Mr Poole suspected that the relationship between Dr Ryall and John might be a sexual one. Mr Green thought that Dr Ryall would not use his position for any sexual activities. The question of whether there was a sexual relationship remained unanswered. For Mr Green, this concern triggered his memory of the 1982 incident, but he made no direct connection between the two.
- 10.20 We have tried to understand Mr Green's dilemma in the late summer of 1987. He was in an extremely difficult position. For the second time one of his social workers was raising anxieties about a case in which Dr Ryall was involved,, and this time expressing unsubstantiated worries about a sexual relationship. Mr Green had limited knowledge of the 1982 incident. He had not been told that Dr Ryall had been subject to disciplinary proceedings. His superior a new Assistant Director, Mr Guer, did not know about the 1982 incident. Mr Green felt he could not move with confidence unless there was a basis of fact. He had

expressed to Dr Ryall his concerns about his apparent unprofessional behaviour in a memorandum, and this had seemingly stopped some of his most flagrant interventions. Mr Green still felt Dr Ryall was being naive, but he had no evidence that anything improper was happening. However, the suspicions remained and Mr Green decided to attempt to gather more information. In particular he asked Mr Poole to tell him if anything new caused him concern.

- 10.21 Mr Poole's suspicions were not allayed by the statements of one of the houseparents at 193 Huddersfield Road. This houseparent used phrases describing John B as "Oh, you mean the big chief's bum boy" inferring Dr Ryall. When questioned later the houseparent (who was a peripatetic social worker) made it clear that he had no suspicions that there was a sexual relationship between Dr Ryall and John and indeed stated that John often bragged about his sexual exploits and conquests with a variety of girls.
- 10.22 Between the statutory review on 9 June 1987 (mentioned in para 10.15 above) and April 1988, John seemed to make erratic but perceptible progress. Dr Ryall kept contact with him and became involved in any crisis, for example, when Mrs Booth discovered a note in September written by John which looked suicidal, Dr Ryall visited him immediately he was informed.
- 10.23 On 1 October 1987, Mr Poole took John out to play snooker and spent some time talking to the boy. He was sullen and unhappy and Mr Poole tried to explore the relationship with Dr Ryall. John responded by saying he was a friend and Mr Poole got no more explicit information.
- 10.24 Jane B had been displaying serious behaviour problems for some while and in April 1988 she ran away from home before being received into care at her own request. In the ensuing months Dr Ryall was involved with both Jane, who was in a voluntary Children's Home, and John. John had by this time left school and started work and again was using his relationship with Dr Ryall to manipulate other staff. Again, concern was felt that Dr Ryall was involving himself too much in the social work decisions that have to be made on the children's behalf. In July 1988 Jane ran away from her Children's Home and eventually contacted Dr Ryall by telephone. In agreement with the social worker in the Emergency Duty Team foster parents were found to take Jane immediately and Dr Ryall found the girl and took her to them.
- 10.25 Dr Ryall was arrested on 5th August and has since played no part in the lives of the children he first met six years earlier in 1982.

10.26 We asked ourselves four questions about the period of time in which the children were in care, up to August 1988.

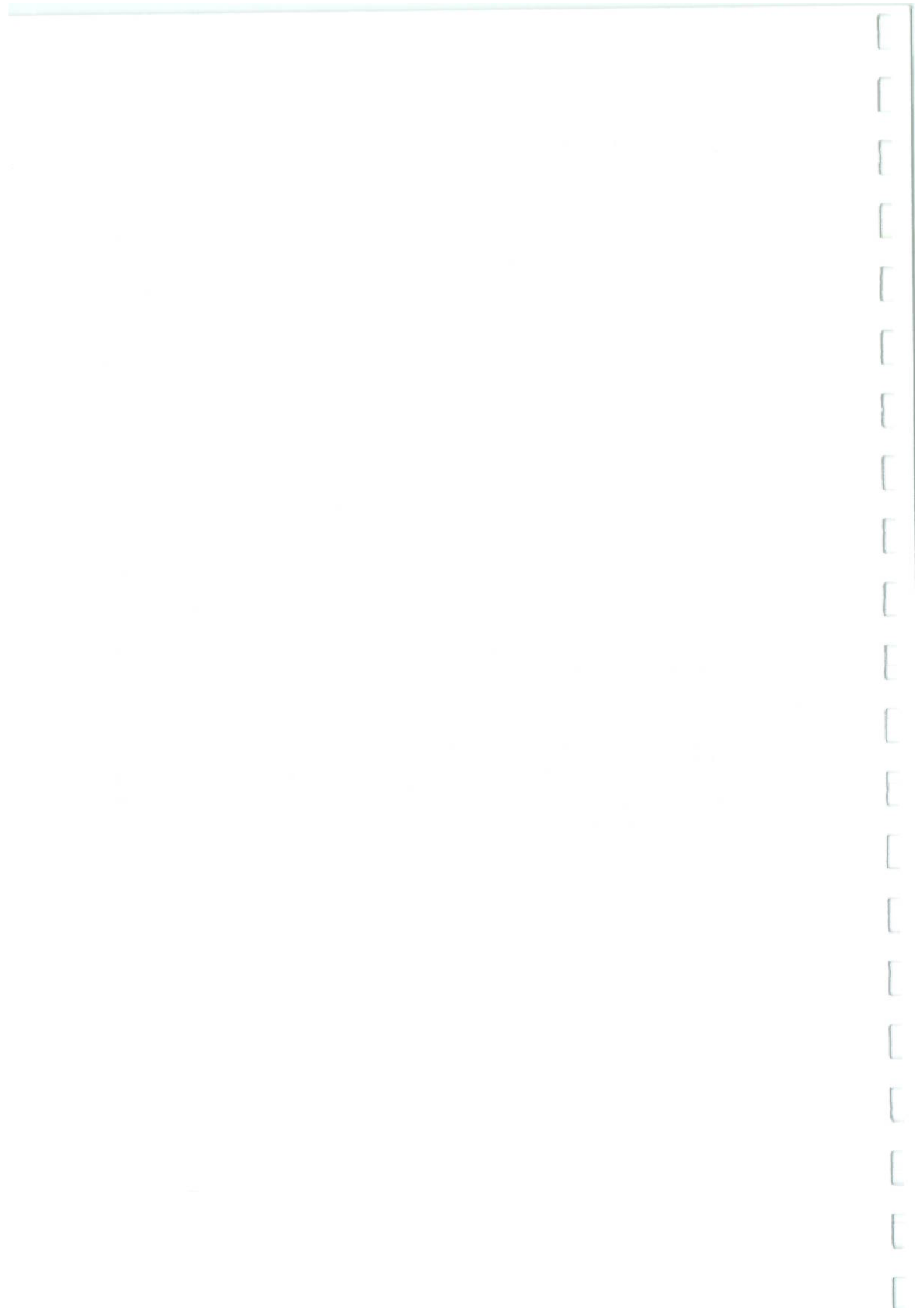
1. Was the involvement of Dr Ryall in the care of John and Jane unprofessional?
2. If it was, could the social workers have done more to prevent it?
3. Should they have detected Dr Ryall's earlier sexual relationship with John?
4. Should Mr Green, or any other senior member of staff have taken more positive steps to uncover the nature of the relationship at an earlier stage?

10.27 Dr Ryall found himself in a difficult position when John and Jane were received into care in June 1986. Even if his prior relationship with the children had been entirely innocent it would not be easy to separate his position as a close friend of the children from his position as Director of Social Services. Both children made strong demands upon him, and John in particular regularly attempted to use his friendship to influence those who had direct authority over him. When she ran away from a testing situation Jane turned first to Dr Ryall for help to change her circumstances. Against these demands Dr Ryall presented a weak defence and although there is evidence that he supported staff against some of the worst manipulations he clearly and knowingly flouted accepted professional practice on a number of occasions. After November 1986, there is no evidence that he took the children to his home overnight without consultation, his involvement was still seen by the social workers as interfering and restrictive to their proper handling of the case.

10.28 When some aspects of Dr Ryall's relationship with the children, particularly John, became apparent in the autumn of 1986, the social worker in charge of the case, Mr Cunningham, acted, in our view, with commendable firmness to ensure that the matter was taken up with him. Whilst some criticism might be levelled at Mr Shire for delay, it was eventually he who drafted the memo signed by Mr Green in November. The memo appeared to have the desired effect of stopping Dr Ryall's more obvious unprofessional activities the reply carried, as we have seen, comments which Mr Green and his senior social worker felt were threatening. Mr Poole was very anxious about the relationship and held suspicions which he discussed with Mr Green but no evidence of improper sexual behaviour came to light. In our view the social workers responded properly by drawing the matter to the attention of Dr Ryall in the first instance and then maintaining a discreet watch thereafter. It must be remembered that all the evidence presented to us

supports the view that no sexual impropriety from Dr Ryall took place during this period with either John or Jane.

- 10.29 We have discussed earlier the very difficult position of Mr Stuart Green (para 10.20). Whilst he was the only person in the Department aware of the 1982 incident (Mr Taylor, Mr Jones and Miss Lamb having retired) he was not aware of the outcome of the police investigations nor of the disciplinary action. Complaints were being consistently made to him about Dr Ryall's involvement with the B children, but they were related to unprofessional and naive behaviour, not criminal activity. He took action in two ways firstly, as to his perception of unprofessional behaviour by writing to Dr Ryall, and secondly as to suspicions of the nature of the relationship, by agreeing with Mr Poole to watch the situation carefully. It should also be remembered that when the police began their investigation in the spring of 1988 following the referral from Mr Pearson, it was Mr Green who pointed them in the direction of John and Jane B.
- 10.30 It should also be borne in mind that Dr Ryall was highly regarded by his staff and members of the Council for the sound way he was leading the Social Services Department. Without exception Councillors, Chief Officers, or Social Services Officers who gave evidence to us supported the view that Dr Ryall was a competent and thorough Chief Officer.
- 10.31 It is our belief that Mr Green acted properly, circumspectly and with the best interests of the children in mind. He believed that Dr Ryall's behaviour was unprofessional, but he was a friend of children who were in care because of a disturbed family background. In these circumstances children need every supportive friendship they can maintain. It is particularly deplorable that Dr Ryall betrayed their trust.



DR RYALL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THOMAS D

- 11.1 The relationship between Dr Ryall and Thomas D is not central to our terms of reference, but a brief history is recorded here to complete the picture of Dr Ryall's activities during this critical time and to see if this relationship might have raised alarms earlier than it did.
- 11.2 Thomas D was never in the care of Calderdale Social Services Department, nor to our knowledge was it ever considered. We do, however, understand that he was at one time supervised by a Probation Officer. In the previous chapter we have shown how Thomas met Dr Ryall, became interested in orienteering, then lost contact with Dr Ryall for some time, renewing this contact at Dr Ryall's initiative in January 1987, when he appeared before the Juvenile Court.
- 11.3 Thomas D's sexual activities with Dr Ryall fell into two phases: the first when he was with John B and included mutual masturbation, oral sex, and photographs; the second from early 1987 until July 1988. It is clear from the evidence of both boys that there was no sexual activity between Dr Ryall and John after John had been received into care, but intensification between Thomas and Dr Ryall. According to Thomas this activity took place mostly on a Saturday morning when ostensibly he was being paid by Dr Ryall to do gardening and clean his car. He was being paid £15 on each occasion and this money was vital to sustain his addiction to gambling machines. Dr Ryall knew of this weakness and his need for money and this created a dependency relationship which Dr Ryall attempted to enlarge to include buggery. Some attempts at buggery were unsuccessful, but Dr Ryall succeeded on at least one occasion.
- 11.4 Towards the end of 1986, Thomas D began to ring Dr Ryall at his office. This became a regular occurrence, sometimes to the consternation of Mrs Ena Dolan, the secretary to the Director of Social Services. On at least one occasion Mrs Dolan found Thomas in Dr Ryall's office and she several times chided him for pestering the Director. Dr Ryall gave her reassurances and she believed that he was doing all that he could to assist an unhappy and rather disturbed young man. There was nothing obvious in the relationship that would suggest to her that anything improper was taking place. Indeed, Dr Ryall received many other normal calls and messages from children in care as well as from staff. Mrs Dolan remembers him being invited to the engagement party of one girl who had been in care and on other occasions he was helpful when the children of members of staff had got into some sort of difficulties. There was some office gossip about these contacts with Thomas but it was entirely about the nuisance factor.

11.5 The relationship became more intense during 1987 and the beginning of 1988 and the last known contact between Thomas and Dr Ryall was in mid-July two weeks before Dr Ryall's arrest.

12. DR RYALL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH JANE B

- 12.1 Our narrative has referred to the lengthy relationship with Jane since the time that Dr Ryall became involved with her family up to his arrest in August 1988. Following his arrest Jane made a number of allegations about her relationship with him including comments that suggested he had attempted to molest her on several occasions when she stayed at his house. It is clear that Jane had a very close relationship with Dr Ryall and was very dependent upon him. Both to members of staff in a Children's Home and to her social worker, she described this relationship in strong emotional terms.
- 12.2 The Police have investigated her allegations and have decided to take no action. The Social Services Department have sought specialist advice and have responded to her needs in a sensitive manner. It is not possible for us to determine whether these allegations are well founded or are the symptoms of distress that might be expected when an important relationship in a young girl's life is dramatically disrupted. We are however satisfied that it has been appropriately handled by both the Police and the Social Services Department.



13. THE CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO THE ARREST OF DR RYALL

- 13.1 Dr Ryall was arrested on 5 August 1988. This came as a shock to almost all of those who had dealings with him. Yet we know that he had been committing offences against Thomas D until as late as July of that year. We felt that it was appropriate to consider the circumstances which led to his arrest.
- 13.2 At the time of Dr Ryall's appointment as Director in 1985 there was some awareness of the 1982 incident, and also of a rumour to the effect that Dr Ryall had been asked to leave a scout troop in Sowerby Bridge. Further reference is made to this rumour later in this report. Both these matters caused concern in some quarters as to Dr Ryall's suitability as Director which persisted after his appointment. It was based on incidents which had taken place several years previously rather than on allegations about his current behaviour. Only a few social workers knew of the connection with John B and there was scarcely any knowledge of Thomas D.
- 13.3 The 'Halifax Courier' carried an article in 1985 giving details of Dr Ryall's appointment. Shortly afterwards Mr Brian Walters, then their local government reporter, received an anonymous telephone call. The caller, a woman, asked how the Council could possibly appoint a man to this post who was known to keep the company of young boys. Mr Walters pressed her for further information but she rang off. At that stage the matter could not be taken further, and although Mr Walters made a number of discreet enquiries about Dr Ryall he had no success.
- 13.4 Councillor Hall told us that shortly after his election in 1987 customers had approached him at his stall on Halifax Market with rumours that Dr Ryall had been disciplined and that he had also been run out of the scouts at Sowerby Bridge. He was sufficiently concerned to see Mr Ellison and he recalls being told about the 1982 incident.
- 13.5 These are examples that indicate that concern about Dr Ryall may have extended to members of the public.
- 13.6 It was Mr Raymond Pearson who played a central role in the events which ultimately led to Dr Ryall's arrest. Regrettably he felt unable to give evidence to the Inquiry. Although it would have been helpful if he had taken a different view, we were supplied with a copy of the statement that Mr Pearson gave to the Police on 14 March 1988. We felt confident that he had provided them with a full account of all that he knew concerning Dr Ryall.
- 13.7 Mr Pearson had served as a member of Calderdale Council from 1975 until 1985. He had been deputy leader of the

Conservative group. We understand that he was not informed of the 1982 incident and the resulting disciplinary hearing until after Dr Ryall's appointment as Director. He was told about it after his departure from the Council. Mr Pearson was concerned that he had not been told in 1982 that there had not been a police investigation. Evidently he was unaware that there had been one in 1982. Mr Pearson felt that Dr Ryall's post as Director gave him access to vulnerable children. He told the police that he had raised the matter with various councillors who knew of the 1982 incident and who had expressed their amazement at Dr Ryall's appointment; that Mr Ellison was aware of the situation and had expressed his concern; and that Mr Walters knew about it but had told him that those above him would not print the story. When Mr Pearson contacted a national newspaper they said they could not print the story because no complaint had been made. It would appear that Mr Pearson had found it difficult to make any progress in resolving the matter.

- 13.8 However on 19 January 1988 an article appeared in the 'Halifax Courier' reporting an increase in child abuse statistics accompanied by comments from Dr Ryall. This was too much for Mr Pearson. on 21 January he wrote to Mr Geoffrey Dickens MP enclosing a copy of the article and expressing his concern about Dr Ryall. This letter was referred to his own Member of Parliament, Mr Donald Thompson MP who replied to the letter. In response Mr Pearson wrote to Mr Thompson on 2 February reiterating his concerns. The correspondence indicates that Mr Pearson thought that there should have been a police investigation in 1982 and not simply an internal disciplinary hearing. Mr Thompson promptly wrote to the Home Office and received an equally prompt reply from Lord Ferrers, a Minister at that Department. The correspondence was drawn to the attention of Mrs Edwina Currie MP, then a Minister at the Department of Health and Social Security. The Home Office referred the 1982 incident to the Police in Halifax shortly afterwards.

- 13.9 Meanwhile, there had been further developments. On the evening of 3 February 1988, Mr Pearson went to the Town Hall to attend a Council Meeting. He noticed a youth loitering around the Town Hall and asked a porter to investigate. He reported to Mr Pearson that the youth was waiting for Dr Ryall. Later, in the company of a political colleague, Mr P Crossley, Mr Pearson spoke to the youth who confirmed that he was waiting for Dr Ryall. Mr Pearson felt it was highly unusual for a youth of his age to be attending a Council Meeting and to be waiting for some two hours in the evening for Dr Ryall. He mentioned the encounter to some of the councillors and later to Mr Ellison. No-one other than Mr Pearson and perhaps a few of his colleagues regarded the incident as being significant. In the event Mr Pearson was right because the youth was Thomas D. Shortly after this Mr Crossley told Mr Pearson of a

conversation that he had overheard which caused Mr Pearson to report the matter to the police at Bradford. This conversation is dealt with under a separate heading later in the report. The police in Bradford referred the matter to their colleagues in Halifax, who had already started their investigation.

- 13.10 On 11 March 1988, Mr Ellison received a visit from Detective Superintendent M E Saunders and Detective Chief Inspector B E Sidebottom of the West Yorkshire Police stationed at Halifax. They informed Mr Ellison that they were investigating the 1982 incident and the allegations being made by Mr Pearson. The officers wished to see any papers concerning the disciplinary action. Mr Ellison explained that there would be no such papers on file since the formal warning had expired. He was able to put the officers in touch with Mr Norrie, Mr Taylor and Mr Jones, who had been involved in the disciplinary hearing. The officers advised that no formal action should be taken by the Council against Dr Ryall at that stage. They stressed that they were simply investigating allegations that had been made. When their enquiries were completed they would provide Mr Ellison with as much information as possible to enable the Council to consider whether further action was required.
- 13.11 The police investigation at first concentrated on the 1982 incident. Detective Superintendent Saunders carried out what was a painstaking enquiry with discretion. He had to avoid any unjustified damage to Dr Ryall's reputation and at the same time avoid alerting him to what was taking place.
- 13.12 He discovered that there had been a police investigation in 1982. Unfortunately the police records for that period had been destroyed, but he was able to trace the boys involved and to interview them. He was satisfied from their accounts of what had happened that there was no evidence of indecency. The police investigation had therefore established that there had been an earlier investigation and that no offence had been committed. That might well have been the end of the matter, but for a coincidence. One of the social workers involved in the 1982 incident was Mr Green. He was also aware of Dr Ryall's connection with John B.
- 13.13 Detective Superintendent Saunders interviewed Mr Green at a fairly late stage in his enquiries about the 1982 incident. Mr Jones had said that Mr Green might be able to help. First the officer decided to see Dr Ryall and tell him what was happening before he saw Mr Green. Dr Ryall did not object but prepared a letter of resignation from his post of Director, dated 28 June, which was found unsigned in his office following his arrest. Mr Green was interviewed on 29 June, initially about his knowledge of the 1982 incident.

During the interview he mentioned Dr Ryall's interest in John B and his own concern about what lay behind that interest. These were only suspicions unsupported by any evidence, but this was sufficient to open up a new line of enquiry. The officers then spoke to a number of social workers, some of whom added their suspicions, but all this fell short of being evidence. Finally it was arranged that a search of Dr Ryall's home would take place on 5 August 1988, in the presence of Dr Ryall and his solicitor. Whilst this was going on Detective Superintendent Saunders and Chief Inspector Sidebottom interviewed John B who told them of the nature of his relationship with Dr Ryall and the offences which had been committed against him. We understand that they were able to interview Thomas D the same day and he was similarly forthcoming about his relationship with Dr Ryall. It became apparent that offences relating to him had been carried out as recently as the previous month. Without the statements of these two boys there would have been no evidence against Dr Ryall. After the search had been completed, Dr Ryall and his solicitor went to the police station. Dr Ryall was no doubt surprised to be arrested for offences committed against the two boys. He was sufficiently self-possessed to deny the offences initially but made admissions during the following day.

- 13.14 Mr Ellison had been kept informed of the progress of the police investigation. He told the three party leaders about it, in confidence, towards the end of July. The police kept in contact as events moved speedily towards Dr Ryall's arrest. On the weekend of 5 - 8 August Mr Ellison was in constant communication with both the police and elected members. He met with the party leaders and the Social Services spokespersons on 6 and 7 August. Dr Ryall appeared in court for the first time on 8 August. He resigned the same day.
- 13.15 Mr Pearson must be given credit for bringing the police investigation of 1988. Without it the offences for which Dr Ryall was subsequently convicted would probably have remained undetected.
- 13.16 Once the complaints had been made against Dr Ryall in February 1988 the police investigation was commenced without delay. We are satisfied that it was carried out in a discreet, painstaking and efficient manner; that it was carried out as speedily as circumstances permitted; and was brought to a successful conclusion. We were impressed by the way the officers concerned had carried out their duties. Mr Ellison and those past and present officers of the Council involved in the investigation co-operated fully with the police in their enquiries. The Council and the local police force are to be complimented on their good working relationship.

The 1988 investigation would have been assisted if the Council had retained some record of the 1982 incident and of the disciplinary hearing. We have already commented upon the restrictive interpretation placed upon the Council's disciplinary code.

- 13.17 It would also be helpful if in such incidents as the one in 1982 a copy of the Police report is made available to the Council.
- 13.18 We are satisfied that on the evidence available the police were right to advise Mr Ellison in March 1988 that no steps should be taken at that stage by the Council against Dr Ryall. There was no evidence then of present offences and such action might well have hindered the investigation. Similarly, the Council cannot be criticised for not suspending Dr Ryall once the investigation had commenced.
- 13.19 There is no evidence that offences were being committed against any other boys. The Police satisfied themselves on the point. None of the offences were committed on boys whilst in care.



14. THE CASE OF MRS RIDING

14.1 This case was drawn to our attention by Mr Ellison. It had been referred to him by Mrs Alice Mahon MP. Mrs Riding had been an employee of Calderdale Social Services Department for many years. She had been the officer in charge at Theophilus Cottage, a small residential hostel run by the department. On 17 November 1984, she was suspended from duty by Dr Ryall and was subsequently dismissed for gross misconduct following a disciplinary hearing and an unsuccessful appeal to the Disciplinary Sub-Committee. The gross misconduct amounted to four offences of financial misappropriation. Mrs Riding was alleging that her dismissal had been deliberately engineered by Dr Ryall, apparently because she knew he was homosexual. If true this fell within our terms of reference. Dr Ryall had just become the senior officer in the department when she was suspended, following the departure of Mr Taylor and Mr Jones. He had been appointed Acting Director by the time of the disciplinary hearing and was made Director shortly after the appeal hearing. He might conceivably have had an interest in ensuring her departure from the Department.

14.2 We were asked to express an opinion on what Mrs Riding had to say. She told us of three incidents which might have led her to incurring Dr Ryall's displeasure. One concerned her husband. Apparently he had lost his job as a care assistant following unsubstantiated allegations made against him by a person in care. Mrs Riding blamed Dr Ryall for the loss of her husband's job. Another incident was when a new member of staff came to be appointed at the hostel. She said that Dr Ryall picked six candidates including a man known to him. She had refused to have a man on the staff and a woman was appointed. The most serious incident concerned a former resident Donald H. He had gone on a weekend camping trip with a social worker. On his return he had told Mrs Riding that there had been homosexuals present and homosexual activity had taken place. She told us that Donald had mentioned meeting Dr Ryall at a public house frequented by homosexuals. The significance of this, as we understood Mrs Riding's evidence, was that Dr Ryall would realise that Donald would tell her of the encounter and that she would then know him to be a homosexual. Thereafter she would in effect be a marked woman. She dared tell no-one other than her husband.

14.3 We were supplied with Donald's file which contained details of the camping weekend which we discovered had taken place in July 1982. In addition we received copies of a handwritten note made by Dr Ryall which recorded that Mrs Riding had telephoned him on 7 July about Donald and as a result he had gone to see her at the hostel that evening. The note purports to summarise the account she gave Dr Ryall of what Donald

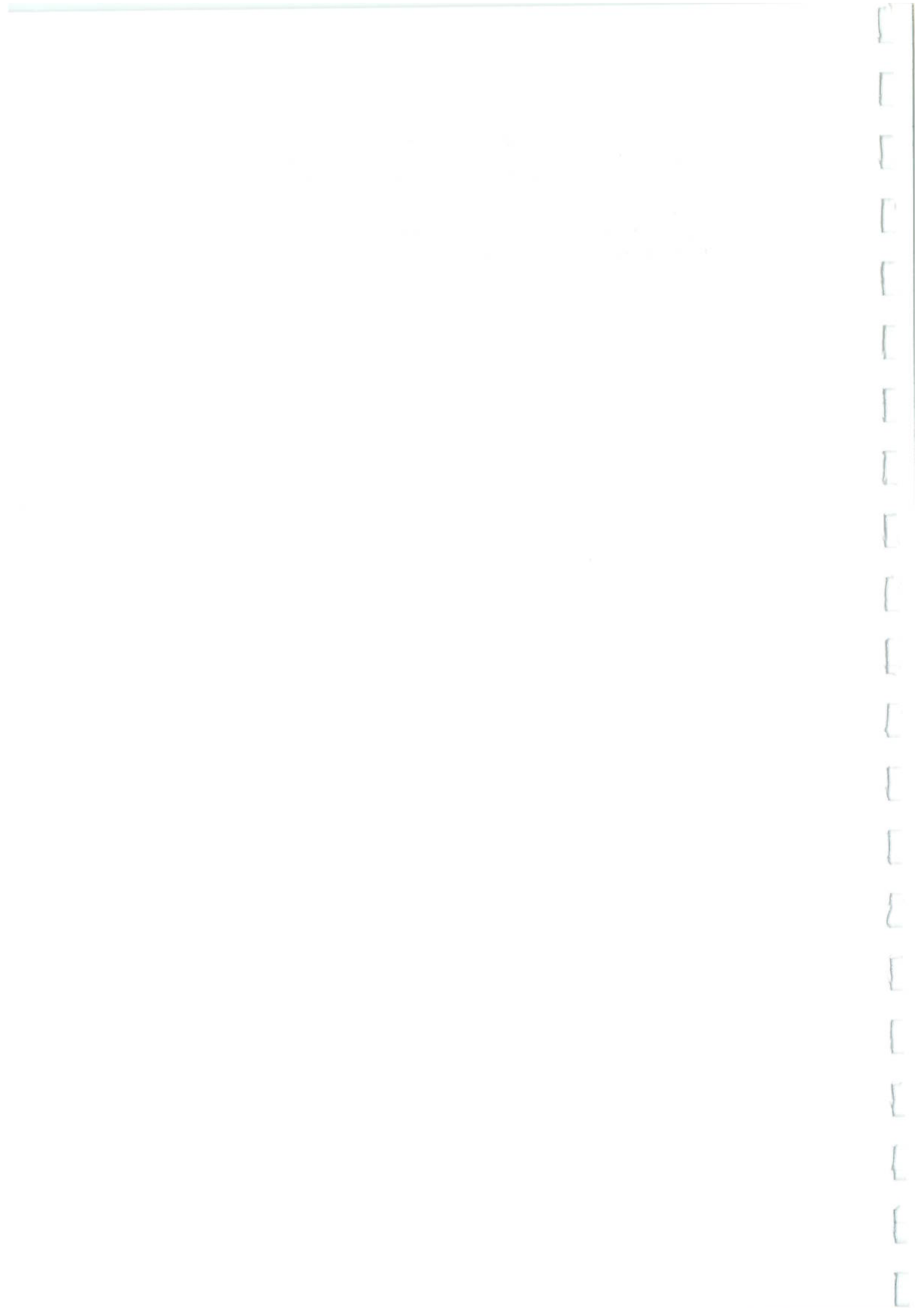
is supposed to have told her about the weekend including references to homosexual activity. Dr Ryall passed this note on to Mr Jones, then his superior officer. Mr Jones also received information about the weekend from Donald's own social worker and conducted an investigation into the matter. Mrs Riding did not tell us of her meeting with Dr Ryall. She did not appear to have been inhibited from reporting Donald's account to Dr Ryall or from mentioning the suggestions of homosexual activity, when, if concerned for her position, she might have chosen to speak to Mr Hones or Mr Taylor. Dr Ryall made no attempt to edit or suppress the note.

- 14.4 We did not think it appropriate to redetermine the disciplinary proceedings against Mrs Riding. Our concern was whether there was any evidence to suggest that Dr Ryall had behaved improperly towards her either before or during those proceedings. We were supplied with a file containing documentary evidence, witness statement reports of investigations, and notes of the hearings. We also heard from several of the participants who were all satisfied about the way in which the proceedings had been conducted and about the merits of the outcome. It was apparent that the allegations made against Mrs Riding had originated from the other staff at the hostel who had brought them to the attention of a senior officer of the department. He carried out an investigation and concluded that Mrs Riding should be suspended pending an audit report and possible disciplinary proceedings. Only then was Dr Ryall informed of the situation and he confirmed the decision. Mrs Riding suggested to us that the allegations had been fabricated by the staff. A similar suggestion was advanced at the disciplinary hearing, namely that the staff were trying to force a change of leadership. We found no evidence to support this or which cast doubt upon the evidence against her. There was no evidence of any earlier involvement by Dr Ryall or that he was responsible for the allegations being made.

- 14.5 We carefully considered Mrs Riding's evidence but found no evidence to show that the incidents she referred to had any bearing on the disciplinary proceedings. We found that there was no satisfactory evidence of a meeting between Donald and Dr Ryall in a public house and noted that no criticism of Dr Ryall's behaviour towards Mrs Riding was made during those proceedings. We were satisfied that there had been a full and proper investigation of the allegations against her; there had been a case for her to answer; the correct disciplinary procedure had been followed; the proceedings had been properly conducted; and the decision reached was reasonable in all the circumstances. We have no hesitation in concluding that the circumstances surrounding Mrs Riding's dismissal disclose no improper conduct on the part of

Dr Ryall or any other Council employee. We see no grounds for re-opening the disciplinary proceedings or for reviewing the decision to dismiss Mrs Riding.

- 14.6 An account of the disciplinary proceedings against Mrs Riding and the incident concerning Donald H are set out in separate appendices.



15. RUMOURS ABOUT DR RYALL

- 15.1 This section of the report deals with a number of matters which can only be described as rumours concerning Dr Ryall. We felt that our terms of reference permitted us to make an attempt to determine whether there was any evidence which might prove or disprove these rumours and to comment upon them.
- 15.2 Several witnesses told us of rumours that Dr Ryall had been asked to leave a scout troop based at Sowerby Bridge. These rumours were vague and unsubstantiated and seem to have been in existence before Dr Ryall's appointments as Acting Director and Director. There were suggestions that there had been a complaint by a parent or that he had been caught in some way touching a boy. Most witnesses were unable to take the matter further. Mr Pearson had drawn it to the attention of the police but Det Supt Saunders had understood that if it had happened at all, it had taken place some 13 years ago. He thought that this was too long ago to warrent further investigation.
- 15.3 One member of the public, who wished to remain anonymous, told us that this information had been passed on to at least one Councillor and / or the Council at the time of Dr Ryall's appointment but that the Council did not act upon it because there was no hard evidence. This witness admitted that he had no direct knowledge of the incident but knew of it by rumour because he was involved with the scouts at Sowerby Bridge at the time. He thought it had happened in the mid to late 1970's. Another witness told us of an incident that he recalled happening six years ago. This witness was a member of the St John's Ambulance Brigade and he had been teaching first aid to Cubs at Sowerby Bridge when a man he believed to be Dr Ryall had entered the meeting and been asked to leave in no uncertain terms by the Cub leader. Councillor Hall - another witness - directed us to Mr Michinenski, the Chairman of the Halifax North District Executive, which does not include Sowerby Bridge. Mr Michinenski recalled that the Sowerby Bridge Scouts had been mentioned to him after the Ryall court case and he had asked about Dr Ryall's involvement at the end of the next Executive meeting. No-one seemed to know much about it and no-one said he had been asked to leave or had any criticism of him.
- 15.4 We were greatly assisted by the evidence of Mr Graham Backhouse who had been involved in the Scout movement at Sowerby Bridge for many years. At one time he had been Assistant District Commissioner, immediately superior to Dr Ryall. He had moved away to York for three years and on his return had taken over from Dr Ryall as Group Scout Leader. Mr Backhouse was quite unequivocal in his evidence. If there had been anything improper going on he was so active in the

Scouts at Sowerby Bridge that he would have found out about it. Anyone making a complaint would have gone to see him or one of the other leaders. He had discussed it with one leader and with a friend who was there the whole time and neither was aware of anything against Dr Ryall. Mr Backhouse was certain that Dr Ryall had not been asked to leave the Scouts at Sowerby Bridge, but left to do more orienteering. He went on to say that Dr Ryall had been a first class Scout Leader. He knew nothing about an incident at the cub meeting. There had been an incident in the same group in about the 1970s which came to light through "cubs talk" as a result of which the man involved quickly left the movement. That man was not Dr Ryall.

- 15.5 We contacted the headquarters of the Scout Association at Baden-Powell House in London. They examined their records and wrote to us as follows:

"Dr Ryall held warranted appointments in the scout movement in three different counties over the years. From 1961-1966 he was an Assistant Scout Leader in Hertfordshire. From 1973-1974 he was a District Scout Leader in Hampshire. From 1975-1977 he was a Scout Leader in the Halifax (Sowerby) District of West Yorkshire. We have no other information on him. There is therefore no reason to believe that his service was unsatisfactory. If his departure from the movement was as a result of improper behaviour, then it appears that we were not informed of this."

- 15.6 The Scout Association operate a system whereby a report is submitted to their Records Office on the termination of the appointment of a Scouter. It gives the reason for the cancellation of an appointment. If Dr Ryall had been asked to leave the scouts in the circumstances as alleged the details ought to have been passed on to Baden-Powell House.

- 15.7 The circumstances of Dr Ryall's departure from the scouts took place many years ago. It is possible that some witnesses may have confused him with another person who left in the 1970's. We can only report that the Scout Association have no record of an enforced departure and point to the evidence of Mr Backhouse. If the Council, or any councillor involved in Dr Ryall's appointment, had been aware of the rumour then they would have been unlikely to have found any evidence to substantiate it.

16. CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

- 16.1 One allegation which we have examined was that there had been a party at Dr Ryall's home, attended by social workers, at which a film of child pornography had been shown. This was mentioned by Mr Pearson to the police, As recounted in his statement, Mr Pearson was told about the party by Mr Crossley following a conversation he had with a Council officer.
- 16.2 Mr Crossley was later interviewed by the police. We heard evidence from him and were supplied with a copy of his statement. His account differs from that of Mr Pearson. Mr Crossley now says that when he reported to Mr Pearson he had mentioned child pornography to encourage him to go to the police about Dr Ryall, but there was no evidence of it in what he had heard, nor was there any reference to Dr Ryall.
- 16.3 We heard from Mrs Green, Dr Ryall's next door neighbour from 1981 until the date of his arrest. She did not know him well. He was a man who valued his privacy and did not do much entertaining. Although it was not easy to see people coming and going, they would have to park their cars on Dr Ryall's drive or the road outside. She was aware of a family, and two boys who visited from time to time. The only party that she could recall had been shortly after they have moved in and there had been a gathering of orienteers one tea-time, with a lot of cars parked outside.
- 16.4 Detective Superintendent Saunders told us that the police were satisfied, that there was no evidence of a party being held at Dr Ryall's home which involved social workers and child pornography films. Likewise we heard no such evidence.
- 16.5 One witness told us of a colleague who had at one time been connected with Dobroyd Castle and had told the witness that there had been incidents of suspected impropriety there involving Dr Ryall. This person declined to give evidence to the Inquiry. No other witness mentioned such an incident. Those who had had some connection with Dobroyd Castle knew nothing of such an incident. We could take the matter no further save to say that we have no evidence to support the allegations.

