

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT ON THE LEEWAYS INQUIRY PART III - THE CHILD PSYCHIATRIST1. Introduction

This is the third of the three reports I was asked to produce analysing the Leeways Inquiry Report.

The only person not employed by the Council and mentioned in the Report is the Child Psychiatrist. [redacted] is [redacted] and was employed by the Council on a sessional basis to assess children for placement.

2. Criticisms of the Child Psychiatrist

2.1 The first reference to [redacted] is in paragraph 6.2(ii) of the Report where the "eminent witness" referred to is [redacted]

2.2 Paragraph 9.7 refers critically to [redacted] role, [redacted] method of assessment of the children, that there was little evidence [redacted] interviewed the children alone and that [redacted] was oblivious to aspects of Cooper's child care which arose causing concern elsewhere. Paragraph 11.4 says the Panel were not convinced that anyone with the possible exception of the Psychiatrist would have blindly supported Cooper had they been confronted with a convincing case against him.

2.3 [redacted] was employed directly by the Social Services Department for some 15 years on a fee paying basis to assess children from time to time. Since 1983 [redacted] was no longer used by the Council. [redacted] agreed to see me only recently and I interviewed [redacted] at length and covered the areas of concern with [redacted] in depth.

2.4 Briefly [redacted] was offended at the Report's criticism in paragraph 9.7 of the manner in which [redacted] conducted [redacted] assessment and clinical observations as [redacted] felt these were not part of the Inquiry's work and therefore not relevant. [redacted] said the Panel did not question [redacted] in detail on this issue. [redacted] felt it was a misinterpretation of [redacted] comments added to criticisms by social workers which [redacted] was not given an opportunity to challenge. In fact at no stage did [redacted] feel [redacted] was being prevented from talking to the children. [redacted] thought, it was an overstatement that [redacted] was oblivious to Cooper's child care practices it was just that [redacted] drew different inferences from these. [redacted] confirmed that in [redacted] view the circumstances in which the photographs were taken would not have distressed the children. [redacted] was surprised at the reference in paragraph 11.4 to [redacted] "blindness" as [redacted] comments were qualified and relative in contrasting the degree of damage children had suffered in causing them to be at Leeways with anything that may have happened afterwards. [redacted] felt there was a confusion between moralistic values and experiential values.

2.5 [redacted] confirmed [redacted] was aware of differences of opinion between some staff and Cooper and that some social workers would not place children at Leeways latterly. There were criticisms of registration but [redacted] believed this was just a difference of professional opinion. [redacted] claimed [redacted] was not aware of Cooper's sexuality or that anything was wrong at the Home.

3.

Conclusions

I am bound to say that like the Inquiry Panel I find it hard to accept [redacted] viewpoint on what happened. Because of [redacted] background and professional experience, as explained to me, [redacted] saw nothing wrong in the way leeways was run and took a different view of others' reservations about Cooper. [redacted] was able to add little that is not already in the Report.

I have received no evidence about [redacted] from any other source. In the light of his explanations to me of [redacted] position I am not able to draw any conclusions which would enable me to recommend a course of action to Members. [redacted] no longer works for the Council in any capacity and the Committee may feel that this position should remain.