

Section 21 Response – July 2018 in respect of Sycamore

Part A - Background

The information contained within this report is based on an investigation of the organisation's records between 1930 and present day. The records reviewed include the minutes of meetings of the organisation's governing body and relevant management committees; HR records so far as these are available during this period (please note that HR records are not generally retained for longer than seven years); Financial records in so far as these are available and individual case records of residential service users have also been examined where specific allegations or complaints of abuse involving those service users have been made.

The organisation has access to extensive records within its archives, including individual child records. It is likely to be possible to locate and review individual child records if specific allegations are raised.

1. SYCAMORE

- 1.1 Any information, whether in children's files or in any other record (such as a log or punishment book, a report or correspondence), relating to the care and treatment of the individuals listed in Appendix 2, all of whom are believed to have been former residents in the establishment during said period and who have made allegations of abuse, including any record showing (a) the circumstances in which they came to be admitted and the steps, if any, taken to prepare them for admission (b) the persons (such as house parents and the like) within the establishment with direct responsibility for their care, welfare and safety (c) their daily routine whilst in care at the establishment (d) the nature and frequency of the punishment or disciplinary measures they were subjected to (e) any concerns and/or complaints raised them or on their behalf about their treatment and/or the treatment of other residents whilst they are residents at the establishment (f) the extent of contact between the said individuals and their family, friends, professional and official visitors (g) the extent and content of any communications about them whilst they were in care between the organisation or anyone acting on its behalf and external bodies or persons such as local authorities, child welfare officers, social worker, inspectors, parents and other family members (h) the medical and dental care they received whilst they were in care at the establishment, including any treatment for, and the cause or causes of, any injuries suffered by them during their period in care (i) any decisions taken, whether as part of a process or review or otherwise, about their continued residence at the establishment and the reasons for such decisions (j) the circumstances in which they came to be discharged and the steps, if any, taken to prepare them for their discharge (k) the extent of continuing contact between them and the organisation in the period immediately following their discharge and the reasons for such continuing contact;**

All files released under this section 21 notice, or released under the previous section 21 notice and reconsidered to identify information which falls within terms of the present section 21

notice, have been fully reviewed with the aim of identifying all information relevant to each call of the section 21 notice. The file review tables now provided in Appendix 1 in relation to each call, are intended to identify the locations, and examples of, all information relevant to each call. Given the size of some of the children's records and the length of their stay in Aberlour, some information is duplicated or repeated throughout many documents the file, and for this reason our review documents may point to relevant examples and not provide an exhaustive list. That said, the files in their entirety are released, and accordingly in the event that there are any pieces of information of relevance which are inadvertently not captured on these spreadsheets, the data is nonetheless available within the files in full.

1.2 Aberlour have been granted an Extension to submit information in relation to 1.2 by 6th September 2018.

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1.4 Aberlour have been granted an Extension to submit information in relation to 1.4 by 6th September 2018. **However, we are able to provide the attached/undernoted policy and practice papers, guidance and statements relating to the care and treatment of children residing at the establishment during said period:-**

See Appendix 2.

The organisation had in place "Aberlour's Standards for Monitoring Performance and Practice" (hereafter referred to as "Aberlour's Standards") which set out the standards to be applied to day to day operations and care within the organisation's establishments. The organisation also had in place the following policies which complimented Aberlour's Standards:

- Accidents, Incidents, Near Miss and Work Related Ill Health;
- Adult Support and Protection;
- Business Planning Review and Report Process;
- Child Protection;
- Children's Rights and Participation Framework and Standards;
- Comments and Complaints;
- Financial Procedures;
- Framework for Assuring Quality in Child Protection;
- Health and Safety (inc. Food Safety);
- Managing Work Related Transport Risks;
- Participation;
- Performance Management;
- Policy and Procedures for Off Site Activities;
- Policy and Standards on the Safe Management of Medication;
- Practice Guidance on Managing Care Commission Reports;
- Promoting Positive Behaviour;

- Self-evaluation; and
- Whistleblowing.

-The organisation's records suggest an "off-base activities" policy has been in place since 1997 but copies of previous versions of this policy are no longer available.

-The first copy of the organisation's restraint policy and guidance is dated 2001 but the records suggest a restraint policy was in place from at least 1997 and there may have been a version of this policy used prior to this date.

- The organisation applied the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care's "Holding Safely: Guide for Residential Child Care Practitioners and Managers about Physically Restraining Children and Young People" (introduced in 2005 and updated in 2013).

Copies of previous policies and procedures were not and are not usually retained by the organisation in order to avoid confusion or the application of the wrong policies and procedures. However, in some cases contemporary versions have survived and these are provided, along with practice manuals and supporting leaflets, in Appendix 2. An independent evaluation of Sycamore Services was carried out between February and October 2006 and a link to the evaluation is also provided in Appendix 2.

Organisational policy and practice papers, guidance and statements were informed by National Policy and Guidance, (e.g. Holding Safely – A Guide for Residential Child Care Practitioners and Managers about physically Restraining Children and Young People published by Scottish Executive in 2005) which would underpin organisations policies and practice.

1.5 As regards staff and/or volunteers working at the establishment during said period or any part thereof (a) what qualifications (if any) staff or volunteers acting as residential care workers required to possess (b) how they were recruited, trained and managed (including guided, advised and instructed, supervised, monitored and supported);

What experience/qualifications did such staff have?

There is limited information about the experience/qualifications of staff working within the establishments in the early years of their existence but the following key points can be extrapolated from the organisation's historic records.

Statutory and regulatory requirements and guidance on experience and qualifications during this period were limited, if not non-existent. It was not until 2009 that statutory and regulatory requirements on qualification levels came into place.

The organisation did not have set requirements as to experience and qualifications but the standard expected of the individuals undertaking these roles is evident in governance and management discussions about this issue.

In terms of experience, the organisation generally sought staff with some form of experience in the work they would be undertaking for the organisation, for example, the Lady Superintendent was expected to have past experience overseeing a large residential child care establishment and houseparents were expected to have past experience working in residential child care.

In terms of qualifications, historic records suggest that, although it was not a requirement, many of the houseparents employed by the organisation had some form of qualification in social work or child care. The organisation often employed social work students to carry out vacation work with the organisation with the aim of retaining these students as staff if they were suitable.

Staff were encouraged to undertake further training and qualifications and the organisation often sent staff to undertake courses.

Job specifications from 1998 referenced that Project Workers (a prior job title for residential staff) should have a relevant professional qualification (e.g. social work, youth and community education, teaching, psychiatric nursing) and/or substantial experience of working with troubled young people in a community, domestic, or residential setting.

From 2005 a set list of qualification requirements is evidenced in a relevant job description. Post holders were ideally expected to hold one of the following qualifications:

- CQSW
- DipSW
- CSS
- Diploma in Community Work
- Diploma or Degree in Community Education
- Diploma in Counselling
- SVQ 3 Care
- SVQ 3 Promoting Independence
- SVQ 3 Caring for Children and Young People
- HNC Social Care

Scottish Social Service Council (SSSC) requirements from 2009 were for staff to hold a relevant HNC (the preference was HNC in Social Care) and SVQ level 3. The SVQ could be in Care, Health and Social Care, Caring for Children and Young People, or Promoting Independence. Managers were expected to have reached SVQ level 4 and have a relevant management qualification.

Job descriptions for residential staff at all levels have reference to these SSSC requirements since late 2008.

(b) How were staff recruited, trained, guided, advised, instructed, supervised, monitored and supported?

The establishment was managed on a day-to-day basis by the Service Managers and the Assistant Service Managers (or individuals of equivalent titles).

The organisation's records do not enable the identification of which individuals worked at which establishment during the whole period of its operation. Employment records are not ordinarily retained for longer than 7 years.

Service Managers were responsible for the day-to-day operation of their services and oversaw the staff working within those services. The Head of Care and Education oversaw and supervised the Service Managers.

The organisation adopted a culture of regular supervision of staff with formal supervision taking place on a 6 weekly basis.

Full details of the way in which supervision was undertaken within the establishment in the past are not available but it can be expected that for the majority of the time a similar approach will have been taken to that adopted at present, although there may have been periods during which formal supervision of staff was not given the appropriate priority. This was particularly true during the earliest years of the establishment as staff were dealing with developing a new service and all the challenges which arise in that regard.

At present, the Head of Care and Education attends occasional team meetings and implements External Manager Audits as well as attending children's meetings (LAAC reviews etc.) as and when required. The Assistant Director line manages the Head of Care and Education and makes unannounced visits to the establishment. Both the Head of Care and Education and the Assistant Director are copied into weekly updates to the relevant local authorities.

Both members of senior management are heavily involved in overseeing the work of the establishment at a practical level.

The Assistant Director was responsible for overseeing the establishment on behalf of the organisation and as explained above was heavily involved in overseeing the work of the establishment at a practical level.

The Assistant Director made regular unannounced visits to the establishment to assess the establishment's operations. There are regular visits to each of the establishments by members of the Senior Leadership team including the Director of Children and Families and the Chief Executive.

There are indications from historical job descriptions that although child care qualifications were not essential for residential workers until 2009, they were desirable in recruitment selection from the late 1990's onward.

Residential Workers were termed 'Project Workers' for a period in the 1990's and 2000's. The Person Specification within the Job Description for these positions capture that the organisation was highlighting the required skills and aptitudes that the post holder would be

expected to display within the role and the qualifications or relevant experience that were ideally sought in recruitment exercises.

There is evidence within some of our earliest files, circa 1980's, that appropriate references were sought. The earliest recruitment policy available which details the procedures followed is dated 2002 and attached as an appendix.

With regards to training, since the 2000's there has been the development of a full mandatory suite of training including behavioural management approaches, CALM 1 & CALM 2, Child Protection, Health And Safety, Social Pedagogy and Dyadic Development, that supplement and support staff members SVQ Level 3 in Care and the HNC in Social Care.

As an SVQ accredited centre Aberlour has been supporting workers to obtain their SVQs for the last 10 years.

The following appendices are attached:

- 1998 job description for Project Worker/Senior Project Worker Sycamore Services
- 2005 job description for Project Worker, Sycamore
- Supervision handbook which was published in 2008
- Recruitment and Selection Procedures published 2002

See Appendix 3.

1.6 Information regarding any complaints made about staff, volunteers, and/or visitors to the establishment in relation to the care or treatment of any child residing at the establishment;

None.

1.7 (A) How the establishment and the care of children residing at the establishment were funded during said period and (b) the expenditure annually during said period by the organisation and/or the establishment on training and professional development of residential care workers employed at the establishment and on child care courses and qualifications for staff working with, and caring for, children residing at the establishment;

Group Homes/Organisation

Included in the files attached are extracts from historic minute books in relation to the Finance information for the period 1969 to 2002 inclusive. From the group home period onwards, Aberlour Finance information is for the organisation as a whole, rather than for one building/location. Some detail on the split/consolidation of accounts is included, however from this period onwards, it becomes more difficult to identify individual income and spend at each home from the records still available to us.

The following are years in which there was no information found:

- 1972-1975
- 1990
- 1996

See Appendix 4.

2. An Inventory of all documents falling within Paragraph 1 above.

Appendix 1

- 1.1.1 [REDACTED] AIY File Review
- 1.1.2 [REDACTED] File Review
- 1.1.3 [REDACTED] File Review
- 1.1.4 [REDACTED] File Review
- 1.1.5 [REDACTED] File Review
- 1.1.6 [REDACTED] File Review
- 1.1.7 [REDACTED] File Review
- 1.1.8 [REDACTED] File Review
- 1.1.9 [REDACTED] File Review
- 1.1.10 [REDACTED] File Review
- 1.1.11 [REDACTED] File Review
- 1.1.12 [REDACTED] File Review
- 1.1.13 [REDACTED] File Review
- 1.1.14 [REDACTED] BCN File Review
- 1.1.15 [REDACTED] BCN File PDF

Appendix 2

1. Copy of adult Protection policy 2013
2. Copy of Child Protection Policy 2012
3. Copy of Child protection Policy 2013
4. Copy of Child Protection booklet for young people 2010
5. Copy of document on confidentiality and Records 2011 (Status not confirmed)
6. Copy of Health and Safety Policy from 2008
7. Copy of incident reporting and Investigation Policy – undated, to be reviewed 2010
8. Copy of document entitled Policies Concerning Children dated 2001 – status not confirmed
9. Copy of promoting positive behaviour – final draft 2009
10. Copy of 'Aberlour Sycamore Services Residential Practice Manual: Learning and Living Together' –
11. Copy of 'Living at Sycamore' – complaints procedures – provided to children before or just after arrival (Copy [REDACTED] 5a Hard File copy PDF 3 P 389 – 396 – copy of complaints procedure to Sycamore Policies and procedures folder)
12. Link to independent evaluation of Sycamore Services 2006.

Appendix 3

Supervision Handbook
Recruitment & Selection Policy
Senior Project Worker – Job Description
Project Worker – Job Description

Appendix 4

Financial Information from 1969 to 2002
Financial Spreadsheet 2003 to 2014

- 3. Any record or document indicating, showing or describing the whereabouts of any record or document falling within Paragraph 1 above where such record of document is out with the possession and/or control of the organisation.**

██████████ - Hard Copy File could not be located. We understand that after leaving the service he moved to a tenancy in Fife. It is possible that Fife had responsibility for ██████████ ██████████ and would have records relating to his time in Aberlour. It was Aberlour's practice to complete monthly summaries and send copies to the responsible Local Authority.

- 4. Failing originals, copies, electronic copies, digital or other medium copies, draft or duplicates of the above or any of them.**

Appendix 2

The Dowans Report – the Dowans Complaints