

**5. We note that you advise on page 146 of your Part C response that there were no policy reviews following any specific investigation. Are you able to advise if any significant or serious case review or internal practice review was carried out after the convictions referred to in your response? If not, why not? If so, are you able to advise us of the lessons learned and shared and provide us with a copy of the findings?**

Not known

ACC have forensically re-evaluated William Watson's files and those of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who were the children in his care and against whom crimes were committed leading to Watson's conviction in 2013.

We herewith submit further evidence to the Inquiry, the records are in response to questions in the Section 21 notice, Fostering A – D case study.

**William Watson**

ACC herewith submit William Watsons records to the Inquiry (see Q5 - 5.8 + 5.13 ACC W Watson Annex C > Tab 1):

- 01 - P141485 W Watson File 1.ocx
- 02 - P141485 W Watson FPDR
- 03 - P141485 W Watson SAR.ocx

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] were both fostered by William Watson and his wife [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are referred to and case managed as a pair. Their individual records contain information about them, each other and relating to both children.

[REDACTED]

ACC herewith submit [REDACTED] records to the Inquiry (see Q5 - 5.8 + 5.13 ACC [REDACTED] Annex C > Tab 2):

- 01 - [REDACTED] File 1.ocx
- 02 - [REDACTED] FPDR

[REDACTED]

ACC herewith submit [REDACTED] records to the Inquiry (see Q5 - 5.8 + 5.13 ACC [REDACTED] Annex C > Tab 3):

- 01 - [REDACTED] File 1.ocx
- 02 - [REDACTED] Access Request.ocx
- 03 - [REDACTED] FPDR

ACC recognise that some of the language, references and opinions expressed reflect the social values of that time. However, the records do not clearly set out the decision-making processes or planning that might have occurred and which one might expect to see in contemporary social work practice, particularly where concerns of neglect and child safety are identified.

Below we have included details of the contemporary allegations and the local authority's response along with analyses on ACC's current practice on same points.

The quotations below are verbatim and as such original spelling mistakes have been retained.

**William Watson Becoming a Foster Carer:** File 1 WW Page 19 explains that *“Mr Watson informs that he and his late wife married in 1955 and tried to conceive for a period of two years without success. He advises that he was thereafter medically examined and was found to be infertile. He reports that his then neighbour was a Social Worker, who was aware of the couple's circumstances and had approached his wife with a view to the couple fostering children. Mr Watson reports that he and his wife began fostering in 1957 whereupon they had numerous children within their care for varying periods of time.”*

**Current Practice and Assessment:** In reference to recruitment of foster carers, it would not be considered unusual for a social worker to encourage others within their family, friends or local community to consider fostering or adoption. It serves a purpose to society as well as for the individuals concerned.

Currently, foster carers would be required to be members of the PVG scheme and undergo a rigorous process of checks, education and assessment. This allows for objectivity and safeguarding measures to feature in the process. ACC understand the process in the 1950's would have been less rigorous; ACC do not know what that process would have entailed or what safeguarding measures were in place.

Within [REDACTED] file, in the case record there are a number of references within the supervision record saying, "report in the file". However, these appear to have been saved in [REDACTED] file. Within these reports there are various conflicting references to the quality of care and supervision provided. Clearly there were concerns about Mr Watson's ability to meet the children's needs after his wife passed away in 1968 and many references to the children benefitting from a female presence. The sourcing of a housekeeper and exploring supports within the family and community, bears some relation to current practice, in terms of supporting the family to ensure the children are protected from further instability, disruption, harm or neglect.

## ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

**1972 Allegation and response:** [REDACTED] File 1, page 154 4 September 1972

*"Mr Faggans [area Social Work Organiser] from Inverness rang up today really very concerned about these two girls. They had gone in to the typist in the Social Work Office and apparently had been in the habit of doing this really for a chat, but today they had indicated that their foster father had been interfering with them. Mr Faggans appeared very concerned for the girls and his suggestion that the doctor should be asked to see them was, I thought the right one.... I felt the girls should come away tonight from Mr Watson and Mr Faggans appeared to have made arrangements already about this and to have looked out a foster home who would take them."*

And continuing for entry of Sept 5 1972;

*"the doctor had seen the girls and that there had been no damage done really although there had been signs of something. The position appears to be that certainly there is no police action to be taken."*

**Response:** The girls were removed to another foster home on 4 September 1972, the day the abuse allegations were made. After a brief period of fostering with another family [REDACTED] was moved to Urquhart House Children's Home on 13 September 1972 and [REDACTED] was moved to the same home on 17 September 1972.

**Current Practice and Assessment:** would have highlighted and investigated concerns about the care and supervision provided to all of the children, including Mr Watson's adopted son. Prior to the children disclosing abuse, the care and supervision concerns outlined would now be raised at internal fostering reviews and LAC Reviews, and very likely discussed in professional strategy meetings. The current child protection procedure entails an Initial Referral Discussion (IRD), a Joint Interview with the child, as well as a medical examination. The children, if removed from the foster carer, would not be returned until the child protection investigation was complete, and even then, there would be a robust plan of support around the children and a high level of supervision and support provided to the foster carer. Foster carers are required to attend the Fostering Panel for a formal review of their registration following an allegation or significant concerns.

The girls were removed from Mr Watson's care in September 1972 which would be in keeping with contemporary practice, but there is a lack of evidence of a strategy meeting, or for that matter evidence of discussions which would explain why [REDACTED] adopted son and [REDACTED] foster child, remained in Mr Watson's care.

[REDACTED] File 1 page 155 17 September 1972, "I [MU] got Mr Watson on his own and asked him quite definitely whether he had been interfering with the girls. He said that he knew he had been annoying [REDACTED] over a period but it was usually when he had drink, and he admitted to having been drinking quite a bit", this is a contact visit signed off with the initials M.U.

**Current Practice and Assessment:** This required a more detailed explanation to help the reader determine what was meant by "annoying".

In the first instance, Mr Watson would now be subjected to a more rigorous assessment and review process, and afforded a higher level of supervision, support and training.

There is no evidence of any fostering reports that would indicate what action was taken to formally review/de-register Mr Watson.

**1992 Report of Abuse:** [REDACTED] File 1, page 42-45. On 7 April 1992 Grampian Regional Council Social Work Department received a letter from [REDACTED] requesting access to any records held from her childhood and laterally in the letter under the section "p.s" [REDACTED] states that:

*"My foster mother [REDACTED] died shortly after her death my foster father started interviewing [sic] with my sister and myself at 13 yrs I think. It all more a blank but he's now married himself and because of guilt in what he did he burned everything to do with my sister and me and out foster mum, its really sad. I don't remember much of a happy family or birthdays and Christmases but I remember the awful sexual molesting of my foster father but feel sad he didn't keep anything of my existence."*

**Grampian Regional Council response:** Replied to [REDACTED] letter, see [REDACTED] File 1 page 41.

**Current Practice and Assessment:** Regarding the aforementioned response letter, it is to be noted that there was no acknowledgement of [REDACTED] statement that she experienced sexual abuse by Mr Watson.

Nor is there any information that [REDACTED] was asked to give consent to contact the local authority adoption team where she resides in order to allow [REDACTED] personal information to be discussed. There was also a presumption that [REDACTED] would not be able to attend the responding office in person.

Currently, a response would acknowledge the client informing of such an experience and convey empathy regarding their experience. The client would be encouraged to either contact the writer directly or write providing telephone contact details and consent to contact their local authority adoption service. Alternatively, the client would be made aware of their nearest local authority adoption service which could support them in taking their request forward.

It would be the intention of the writer to confirm the client's identity, explain the process regarding access to information, seek an understanding of the client's hopes and expectations, as well as discuss any limits to information sharing. Enquiries would be made with the client as to whether they have reported the abuse to the Police. Central to this discussion/approach would be ascertaining what personal supports were available to the client to help ensure the client's emotional and physical safety.

**Police report 2010:** William Watson's file 1 page 105 there is a record of a statement made by someone. The name has been redacted in pen (unknown when this redaction was carried out) and it is not clear as to who the person making the statement is. ACC have interrogated the redaction and it looks likely that it may be [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is spoken to earlier on the page.

The record states, *"The witness [redacted] recalls being aged fifteen, around 1972, when she appeared at the Social Work office In Fort William where they asked her If the accused had been "Interfering" with her. She confirmed this was the case and that night she was removed from his care."*

**Conviction:** On 7 March 2013 William Watson was jailed for six years for four charges of lewd, indecent, and libidinous practices and behaviour against [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

He was released on compassionate grounds on 10/11/2014 and died in hospital on 14/11/2014.

[REDACTED]

In [REDACTED]'s file 1, page 60 dated 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1971 there is a letter from Mrs Jimack, Social Worker. She reports the children visiting the office from time to time and commenting that Mr Watson is out a lot at night. The actions noted focus on financial support for the family and specifically an allowance for the girls as opposed to making enquiries as to the children's care and supervision. It is later recorded that the children were regular visitors to the social work office.

**Current Practice and Assessment:** This would again raise concerns in modern-day social work in regard to their care and supervision, and it can be the case that children seeking frequent proximity to social work offices and officers, are doing so out of unmet need or that they are leading up to a disclosure. There also appears to be a lack of information to indicate what conversations were had and how the decision not to investigate the allegation further was informed and achieved.

Current practice would require family and friends to whom the children were exposed to undergo some rigour in terms of checks, as they were key supports following the death of [REDACTED]

#### **CURRENT POLICY AND PRACTICE DOCUMENTS**

ACC herewith submit evidence of current practice to the Inquiry see Q5 - 5.8 + 5.13 ACC Annex C > Tab 4.