

SECTION 21 NOTICE – FOSTER CARE – A-D REPORT – FOLLOW UP QUERIES

Addendum to Part A-D Response

- In question 1.5, subsections (g)-(h) dealing with the changes since 2014 are missing. Could you please provide answers to these questions?

Sub sections G and h were answered as e and f on the original response submitted on 24 January 2020. Answers for e and f are provided below-

- e) Were there changes over time in terms of what the local authority saw as the foster carer's function, ethos and/or objective in terms of the service that the foster carer provided to children placed with him or her?

The role and function of foster carers did not change over time. Foster carers provide alternative family care for children and young people who cannot remain within the care of their birth family or wider birth family network, and they work in partnership with social work services and others to support individual care plans. The objective has always been that children and young people who require substitute family care benefit from a positive family experience that not only supports healthy physical and emotional development, but also equips and enables them to reach their full potential. The ethos behind fostering is a commitment to providing a safe home, a sense of security and belonging through positive and meaningful relationships, and the development of life skills in preparation for adulthood and independent living.

- f) If so, what were the changes and when and why did they come into effect?

N/A

- Please could you explain the case file review methodology which was employed by Glasgow City Council in preparing the A-D response. For example, it would be helpful if you could set out how many files were reviewed? Were both children's files and foster carer files examined and if so, how many, or was reading limited to only one category and if so why? If samples were taken, please confirm how files were selected for reading? Broadly what time periods did these files relate to? If you are able to give an indication of how many files were considered relative to specific time periods, that would also be helpful.

No specific files were sampled as, it was agreed after discussion that the most effective way given the scale of records involved was to review robust data held by the Child Protection Team (CP) with GCC. This information was gathered collaboratively by all GCC departments that held such information on abuse allegations which in addition to CP, included Families for Children and the Claims department.

These records hold all relevant data regarding complaints identified in relation to children in foster care. It should be emphasised that the finding-aids used by the Archivist make it impossible to distinguish between children who were adopted and fostered.

The CP Team Historical log covers allegations made from 1999 to current but refers to abuse that happened from c1960s to c2010s.

Information found in relation to foster care investigations held within the CP Team covers investigations 2006 to 2019 and this was cross referenced with Families For Children records.

The CP Team were provided with a copy of details of claims in 2018 of allegations of abuse made against GCC Social Work covering dates given in claims from 1966 to 2018 by GCC Claims Section.

In accordance with GCC Records Retention and Disposal Schedules show current retention of foster carers files is for 25 years. Social Work retention schedules in 2011 confirm 25 years was the period of retention under the Fostering of Children (Scot) Regulations 1995 - Reg. 19. There are no separate Foster Care files for GCC pre-1948

In addition, to work by GCC in collating complaints cases the historians hosted by GCC reviewed and sampled case files. The historians examined the following:

- Boarded-out volumes for 1949. These detail the location of all the Guardians employed by Glasgow Corporation and the children who resided with them. The also include visitors' notes.
In addition, as part of GCC Foster Care return, Archives staff sampled the Boarded-out volumes from 1930-1949 for any comments. They also checked the Corporation minutes from 1930-1948, which recorded references to new guidelines and procedures.

The minutes note a particular case of children being removed, which was cited in GCC original Foster Care return.

- Children out of Care files for Children born in 1945, which comprises of 9 volumes of bound case records. The historians provide a number of case studies derived from these records.
The historians sampled case records from the 1970s and were unable to identify cases specifically relating to foster children within the sample.

- As regards Part D, it is noted that in many of the answers we are directed to appendices generally rather than the appendix which is directed at answering the particular question. It is therefore difficult to marry up the appendices with the specific questions – we note an appendix headed CP Team Historical Allegations, another headed CP Teams Information Claims re Foster Care (which we assume to be in relation to civil claims), another headed CP Team Foster Carer Investigations and an extensive excel spreadsheet which has a tab 1998 – 2012 and a tab deregistered. Please can you advise which appendix specifically relates to each question. You will appreciate that question 5.8 seeks information about known or alleged abuse/abusers, whereas question 5.9 seeks information about specific complaints of abuse of children in foster care and there are various questions in relation to each point. You may wish to review the appendices to ensure that they are directed to the questions asked.

Reference is made to FC-2 which details known or alleged abusers. In relation to query 5.9, Appendix FC-2 also details this information.

- It is also unclear how any of the appendices were drawn up, for example, was this from a file review or from a central register of complaints/allegations? Were these drawn up in response to the Section 21 notice or were they excerpts of a complaints log or record already available? If different from the case file audit referred to above, we would be grateful if you could confirm the methodology which was employed by Glasgow City Council in preparing them. Also, in relation to the excel spreadsheet, we are not clear as to the significance of the categorisation in terms of the tabs. For example, on the deregistered tab, it does not appear that all of the carers mentioned have been deregistered when the outcome column is considered.

Reference is made to FC-2 which details known or alleged abusers. In relation to query 5.9, Appendix FC-2 also details this information.

The spreadsheet headings in the first tab (1998 – 2012) were designed to assist with the overview of complaints and allegations made and the progress of investigations that resulted. It is not the case that all concerns recorded there would have been substantiated or led to deregistration.

Within the de-registration tab, some carers are listed more than once as whenever a complaint/allegation led to deregistration, all other previous complaints/allegations relating to that carer were pulled through to that page. It has been confirmed by GCC Social Work that all the carers listed on the de-registration page are no longer registered carers for Glasgow.

- Furthermore, it is unclear from the supporting documents which of these is Appendix FC-2(a) which is referred to on page 92 of your response in answer to question 5.12(b) and again on page 93 in answer to question 5.13(b). We are able to account for FC-1 and FC-2, but none of the documents are labelled FC-2(a).

Copy of FC-2(a) is attached.

- We note you advise that no internal or external investigations have been carried out in respect of abuse suffered in foster care. In respect of cases in which the local authority has found abuse to have occurred or where there have been convictions, are you able to advise why no significant case review, internal review or practice review took place? If any such review did take place, please advise us of the outcome and any recommendations or learning from that?

In relation to abuse in foster care - in those circumstances where this was established, the circumstances did not meet the requirements for a Significant Case Review (SCR). We are not aware of the SCR process being used in these circumstances elsewhere. The multi-agency CP procedures enacted to investigate allegations include by definition a consideration of learning and the fostering service in Glasgow has undertaken a number of reviews, including a Best Value Review, a Safeguarding Review and various structural, staffing, resources, training and operating procedures have been influenced by our learning in cases of abuse in foster care, but they have not been the single cause of the reviews and restructuring.

- As regards FC-1 which appears to be an inventory of the documents referred to within the A-D response, please see attached an annotated version of same. We would be grateful if all of the documents which have been highlighted on the attached copy could be made available to the Inquiry without delay. As regards document with reference SR27/5/2/3, we are only seeking paper 17 on short-term fostering, not all of the regional papers.

In terms of FC-1, this was an inventory drawn up at an earlier stage, but with small numbers of items added depending on the topic.

Now with the exception of a small number of items on the list, these documents were previously supplied for copying, and returned. It is understood that these are on file somewhere. These were supplied for GCC and the other ex-SRC authorities. The Fostering ones do need to be forwarded. Doctor O'Brien has been in contact with the SCAI and has confirmed that the Fostering files will be made available.

- Finally, please can you advise whom at Glasgow City Council is able to speak to the A-D response at hearings? It is noted in the accompanying cover letter that it is Susanne Miller, but we would be grateful if you could confirm that this remains the position and her current role?

GCC has submitted Leave to Appeal application form confirming Susanne Millar, currently Chief Officer is the appropriate person to represent GCC. Susanne Millar has been involved in GCC Social Work

Inquiry Team since Inquiry was established and has held the post of CSWO during that period.