



Social Work

Chas Archard
C Williamson
v Jamieson

Alan G Baird - Director
Social Work Department
6 Kirkton Road
DUNDEE
DD3 OBZ

FAX 01382 436022
☎ 01382 436000

REPORT TO SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER ADMINISTRATION SOCIAL BACKGROUND REPORT

The following child:-

Surname TARBETT
Christian Names or Forenames WILLIAM
Date of Birth 09.07.91 Sex Male
Address [REDACTED]
School attended Auchterhouse Primary School, Auchterhouse, Angus
Religion Protestant

BASIS OF REPORT REQUESTED

Section 73(2) Annual Review

FAMILY COMPOSITION

Name	Dob/ Age	Relationship to child	Employment/ School/Other etc	Income/ Source	Residence if different
Linda Robertson	17.6.69	Birth mother	none		not to be disclosed
David Tarbett	8.4.47	Birth father	none		7D Bonnethill Ct Dundee

Report compiled by Ingrid von Arnim

Date completed 14th Jan 2003

Sent to Reporter 14th Jan 2003

Signed *Ingrid von Arnim*
Designation Social Worker

Child's Name: William Tarbett

Introduction to William's Circumstances

William was placed in the care of the Social Work Department on a Place of Safety Order at a Childrens Hearing in September 1994. The Panel at that time had serious concerns about the behaviour of William and his siblings [REDACTED], and the lack of adequate parental control. William was three years old at that time. In October 1994 William and his siblings were placed on a Supervision Order (Away from Home). The Supervision Order has been continued since that date.

Placements in the care of the Local Authority

William lived with his older brother [REDACTED] in successive foster placements, from September 1994 to December 1995 with Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] from December 1995 to January 1996 with Mrs [REDACTED] from January 1996 until March 1997 with Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] and with Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] from March 1997, first with [REDACTED] and then on his own, until March 2000. (The placement with Mrs [REDACTED] was seemingly an unhappy one for the boys - they made allegations suggesting an incident of physical abuse, which were investigated but not substantiated). At the end of March 2000 William was placed with Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] and has remained with them to date.

In 1996 The Social Work Department decided that William (and his siblings) were unable to return home and required long-term substitute care, with appropriate placement to be identified for each child where they might stay without further disruption. The Social Work Department then sought such a placement for William without success for three years. It is unfortunately the case that there is a serious shortage of long-term placements for primary-age children, particularly boys, across Scotland.

In 1998 [REDACTED] left his placement with Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] and went to Strathmore Cottages before being placed at Thornbrae School in Northumberland, where he stayed for two years. In September 2000 he returned to an 'Ace' placement in Cupar, Fife, where he has remained to date. Also in 1998 William's sister [REDACTED] was placed with permanent foster carers in Crieff.

Given continued dispute with the birth parents, particularly Mr Tarbett, over the future plans for the children, the Social Work Department referred to *Children 1st* in 1997 and early 1998, for independent assessments regarding:-

- 1 The contact arrangements between William, [REDACTED] and their parents
- 2 The potential likelihood of either parent being able to have the children returned to their care

The first assessment concluded that (a) parental and sibling contact should be separate in order for each child to gain the most out of each contact (b) Parental ability to manage contact was limited, therefore contact should be carefully planned, managed, and supervised by the Social Work Department and limited to 45 minute sessions once per month (c) Contact should involve enjoyable activities. This was agreed at the Childrens Hearing on 1st April 1998 and the same conditions repeated at subsequent Childrens Hearings to date.

Child's Name: William Tarbett

The second assessment (14.4.98) concluded that rehabilitation was not feasible with either Miss Robertson or Mr Tarbett and reinforced the earlier assessment of the Social Work Department and decision of the Adoption and Fostering Panel.

Given the assessment that William could not return home, but that birth family contact was important to him, the plan to place William in a long-term foster placement remained unchanged and renewed efforts were made to secure a placement, without success. Notwithstanding the insecurity William experienced in living with a 'temporary' family, William spent three years with Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] and established a degree of security and a radical improvement in his behaviour and overall functioning during that period.

During this time William attended Longhaugh Primary School, where he struggled to progress academically. In 1998 he was diagnosed as dyspraxic and requiring additional and specific educational support to help him meet his potential within mainstream schooling.

In February 2000 a suitable placement was finally identified and approved by Dundee City Council fostering and adoption panel and William was placed with Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] and their three sons, now aged 10 to 15 years, at the end of March 2000. William's mother was fully involved in the plan and was in agreement. At the time of placement the [REDACTED] family lived in north-east Dundee and William transferred to McAlpine Primary School in April 2000. The school was fully committed to William and he made exceptional progress, both academically and socially, while he was there.

In February 2001 the [REDACTED] family moved to a large farmhouse near Auchterhouse in Angus so that all the children in the household could have more space and a room to themselves. William settled well into the large household and also into rural life, relishing the opportunities the location gave him to observe and participate in farming activities.

Along with two of the [REDACTED] children, William transferred to Auchterhouse Primary School, where he made slow but consistent academic progress. He was well-liked by his teachers and peers.

Birth family contact

From 1998 William has had monthly individual contact with each of his parents, and contact as often as could be arranged with his siblings, given the geographical distance and numerous commitments of all the children and their respective carers. While contact between William and his mother began to achieve some regularity and quality, contact with his father was generally erratic and of poor quality. However, following William's placement with Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] Mr Tarbett became more consistent in attending his four-weekly contact with William, and William's anxiety surrounding contact with his father began to diminish.

In March 1999 William's mother had another child, [REDACTED]. In December 2000 she had a further child, [REDACTED] who has Down's Syndrome. Both children live with their mother in Dundee and William has contact with them on some occasions when he meets with his mother.

Child's Name: William Tarbett

In November 1997 Mr Tarbett made an application to the Sheriff Court to acquire parental responsibilities for all the children under Section 11 Children (Scotland) Act. The Social Work Department submitted an initial report in December 1997 which concluded that the application should not be granted as it was not in the best interests of any of the children. In October 1999 Mr Tarbett failed in his attempt to acquire parental responsibilities. Mr Tarbett appealed the Sheriff's decision. However, because of numerous legal delays, the proof hearing did not take place until August 2002. Mr Tarbett's appeal was overturned. Mr Tarbett therefore has no legal parental responsibilities.

Child's circumstances since last Review (February 2002)

Placement

At the last Annual Review it was reported that William had settled exceptionally well into the [redacted] household. He had developed a strong, open and trusting relationship with his foster carers, who gave him every encouragement, including open acceptance of his relationships with his birth parents and siblings. Mr and Mrs [redacted] had also set clear and strong boundaries to his behaviour, which William had generally accepted and was increasingly responsive to. After some initial difficulties with the carer's own children, all four children had found their own 'place' in the household, although there remained the occasional conflict. Mr and Mrs [redacted] were highly sensitive to William's particular needs, while ensuring that he was treated equally with their own boys. William developed an affectionate and trusting relationship with Mr and Mrs [redacted] and the latter reported that he had developed solid relationships with their own children.

Mr and Mrs [redacted] had been approved to offer a further placement, with the proviso that this must not jeopardize William's place in the family. They hoped to offer a long-term placement to a younger, female child.

However, in July 2002 a 13 year old boy was placed with Mr and Mrs [redacted] on an emergency basis. The child has a diagnosis of ADHH. Although this was intended as a short-term placement until other arrangements were made, the placement has continued, and is likely to continue until at least July 2003.

This placement has had a significant impact on William's sense of 'belonging' to the [redacted] family and his perception of the amount of positive attention that he feels he receives. There has been a consequent reduction in his responsiveness within the family, and a deterioration in his behaviour, which has become increasingly aggressive and difficult to control, with consequences for the whole family. Mr and Mrs [redacted] stress that difficulties were already becoming evident prior to July 2002, but agree that the arrival of the new boy has increased and highlighted the problems William presents within the family. Mr and Mrs [redacted] have become increasingly frustrated by William's emotional withdrawal from the family and feel that there has been a major breakdown in the relationship between William and themselves. William reports feeling that they 'do not love' him.

William is aware that the placement is in danger of breaking down, and his parents have been informed. The social work department is working with all parties to improve the family situation, while recognising that it is necessary to have a contingency plan in place. Regular network meetings are taking place between the carers, their resource worker and William's

Child's Name: William Tarbett

social worker, and the social worker is working with William on improving his behaviour. Regular respite care on a monthly basis has been introduced for both William and the other child placed (separately), in order to give Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] a break and time with their own family.

Social and Emotional Development

William made good progress in these areas following placement with Mr and Mrs [REDACTED]. William was beginning to express appropriate emotional responses to those around him, to express affection and anger, and also to control his emotions and reflect on his behaviour and its impact on others around him. Although much of this was due to normal emotional development, William was also being greatly assisted in this process by Mr and Mrs [REDACTED].

However, this has been a difficult year for him in a number of respects. In February 2002, as a result of lifework being undertaken, William began to talk about abuses to other children that had allegedly taken place in a previous placement. This was a traumatic event for him, and was followed later in the year by further disclosures about abuses he alleges he experienced, and which are now under investigation. William has also experienced a very erratic pattern of contact with his mother, who was previously reliable, and the placement of a child with severe behavioural and learning difficulties within the [REDACTED] household. He is in final year at primary school and has expressed his anxieties about the transition to secondary school. In addition, he is now 11 years old and it is to be expected that he may be progressing into puberty.

These events have exposed William's uneven pattern of development and ability to cope. William has suffered a continuing tendency to labile moods and strong and inappropriate reactions to events around him, which have increased in frequency and intensity during the year. The Social Worker and carer have continued to consult with Dr Esparon, Child Psychiatrist and Mrs Sheridan, Child Psychotherapist on strategies to help William deal with his impulsive anger and inability to express his feelings more appropriately. The Department of Child and Family Psychiatry has recommended that William should have some form of psychotherapy to address his anxieties and vulnerabilities, but is unable to provide this treatment. Referral through his GP to another source is being considered.

On the other hand, William has become far more reflective and articulate, if he is given time to marshal his thoughts and feelings, and shows far greater understanding of his own actions and their relationship to events around him.

Education

William has been in a small composite class at Auchterhouse Primary School since March 2001. He is now in P7. He is well integrated into the life of the school and is popular with his teachers and peers. The school has taken a proactive and pragmatic approach to William's slow educational development and has produced an IEP for the academic year which focuses on his mathematical and language/conceptual development. William continues to have Learning Support, provided by his teacher. There is a slow but continuous improvement in his achievement in all basic areas. William will transfer to Monifieth High School in August 2003. He will initially be placed in a small unit and receive learning support to assist his integration into the school.

Child's Name: William Tarbett

Health and Physical Development

William is a sturdy boy who enjoys good general physical health. He is rarely ill. He has an excellent appetite. He sees the dentist at regular intervals and, while he has no general dental problems he is about to undergo orthodontic treatment for incorrect growth of his secondary teeth.

As previously noted, William has a specific motor-visual deficit (dyspraxia). In general this does not interfere with his normal functioning, although there are days when he can tire easily and his motor skills and concentration deteriorate. Sensitive support of his condition at home and school during the last two years has minimized the impact on his development.

Birth Family Circumstances – Current

There have been some major changes in birth family circumstances over the past year which have impacted on William's level of contact with birth family members and his relationships with them. In May Ms Robertson's partner, the father of [REDACTED] died suddenly. Ms Robertson became increasingly depressed and unable to cope with the care of [REDACTED]. Although she moved back to Dundee from Perth, and now lives with her mother, who provides some support, Ms Robertson was unable to use the support offered to her over the ensuing months by the Social Work Department, and her situation has not improved. On 7th January 2003 [REDACTED] were placed on the Child Protection Register under the category of Neglect-At Risk.

Mr Tarbett continues to live in Dundee and has regular contact with Ms Robertson. Nothing is known of his personal circumstance. Neither parent has attended William's LAC Reviews during the year. In October 2002 Mr Tarbett lost his appeal to acquire some Parental Responsibilities in respect of [REDACTED] William and [REDACTED].

Birth Family Contact

Parental contact was amended at the Children's Hearing of 1st April 1998 to take into account the conclusions of the report prepared by *Children 1st*, which recommended that all contact should be on an individual basis. Contact gradually improved over the past years as a result.

During 2001 monthly individual contact between William and his parents was regularly maintained and settled into a routine which William is happy with. Each contact was for one hour, supervised by Mrs Petrie, who has known the family for many years. Previously, Mr Tarbett's unreliability in attending contact was a source of great anxiety and upset for William. However Mr Tarbett became increasingly reliable in attending contact, and, although the quality is very limited, he is now more attentive to William's needs and wishes. Until May 2002 Ms Robertson's attendance at contact was very reliable. However, following the death of her partner she has become increasingly erratic in her attendance for contact with William, [REDACTED] and has managed only three contacts with William since July 2002.

Linda Robertson's poor contact record has been discussed with William, with a view to requesting a variation, but William has indicated he wishes to maintain contact at the current level.

Child's Name: William Tarbett

William has also had contact during most school holidays with his siblings [REDACTED], living in Perthshire and Fife respectively. As [REDACTED] increasingly makes a separate family life for herself the contact between her and William is superficial in quality, but important to the maintenance of family contact, which William values. William is also aware that [REDACTED] is likely to be adopted by her carers, but has been reassured that contact between them will continue on the same basis. In between direct contact, William has some telephone and e-mail contact with [REDACTED].

Birth Family Relationships and Quality of contact

William's relationship with his father remains ambivalent and superficial. During contact very little meaningful communication or interaction is observed between them. Nevertheless, William looks forward to contact and is much less anxious now that his father's reliability has increased. William is strongly aware of his familial relationship with [REDACTED] and enjoys contact when they attend, although they have done so less frequently over the last year.

William has an affectionate, easygoing relationship with his mother, which was reciprocated by her. However, recently Ms Robertson has been unable to focus on William's needs at all, having failed to attend many contacts, reviews and meetings. William is strongly aware of his mother's preoccupations elsewhere and has been kept up to date by his social worker. He identifies strongly with her two young children as his siblings.

The most important relationship in William's birth family is with his brother [REDACTED] as noted above.

Lifestory work with William has continued throughout the year. He generally finds this enjoyable and interesting and has been increasingly curious to know about his family history and his parent's life circumstances and takes great pride in the information he has and the size of his family. He is very unjudgemental about events. However, some of the work, particularly during February/March 2002 has been quite traumatic for him, and has possibly contributed to the general difficulties he has been experiencing this year.

Family Background

Mr Tarbett has five adult children from a previous marriage. These children were all looked after by the Social Work Department, initially at Mr Tarbett's request. Mr Tarbett reported that the three elder boys returned to his care. [REDACTED]

Since coming into care in 1994 William has had some regular contact with his elder sister [REDACTED] (24 years) and her daughter [REDACTED] and very occasional contact with his elder brother [REDACTED] (26 years).

William's mother, Linda Robertson, was brought up in the care of the Social Work Department, [REDACTED]

Ms Robertson and Mr Tarbett's cohabiting relationship appears to have been characterised by violence and hostility with frequent separations and reconciliations. The children were, to a greater or lesser extent, brought up against this background, and received poor, sometimes neglectful, parental care. William, [REDACTED] were received in the care of the Social Work Department in September 1994 as a direct consequence of the conflictual parental relationship and its impact on their care and subsequent behaviour. Since their separation Ms Robertson has maintained that she does not intend to renew her relationship with Mr Tarbett. Nevertheless, it would appear that Ms Robertson maintains at least some communication with Mr Tarbett. Ms Robertson does not talk about this with the children unless they raise it.

Until recently Mr Tarbett has seemed to the Social Work Department to remain quite preoccupied by the ending of his relationship with Ms Robertson. Mr Tarbett frequently raised concerns and allegations regarding Ms Robertson's behaviour. It is Mr Tarbett's view, as expressed to previous social workers, that the children's mother does not love them, because she has not fought to have them returned to her care as he has.

Circumstances Leading to Compulsory Measures of Care for William and his siblings

(Compiled 1998 by Mr Robin Duncan, Senior Social Worker, from the children's social work files)

There has been regular and more or less continuous Social Work department contact with [REDACTED] and William throughout their lives. The principal reasons for the Department's involvement and the concerns raised, have been:-

1. Parents acrimonious relationship and their willingness to involve the children in this conflict.
2. Frequent disruption to the children's lives caused by the many separations and reconciliations of their parents.
3. Lack of appropriate supervision of the children
4. Parents inability to provide appropriate boundaries to the children's behaviour. The children's sexualised language and behaviour
6. The children's aggressiveness towards one and other.
7. A series of child protection investigations involving both parents and focusing on inappropriate chastisement of the children
8. Mr Tarbett's refusal, or inability, to work with the department or other agencies for the children's benefit.

The children were received into care for the first time on 21st January 1994 ([REDACTED] aged 5 years 7 months, [REDACTED] 4 years 10 months and William 2 years 4 months.) Ms Robertson had left the family home and Mr Tarbett felt unable to care for the children. They

Child's Name: William Tarbett

came into care for the second time on 22nd September 1994 after the children's hearing made a Place of Safety Order. They have remained in care ever since. Further details of these difficulties and examples of the parenting the children received are outlined below.

Previous Social Work Department involvement with Mr Tarbett and Ms Robertson

Mr Tarbett has five children by a previous marriage. The relationship ended in 1979 and the children were received into care. [REDACTED]

Ms Robertson and her older brother were received into care when she was 18 months old. Her parents had separated and both had been convicted of neglect. She spent all her childhood years in the care of the local authority apart from a two year period, 1980 -1982, when she returned to her mother's care. [REDACTED]

Mr Tarbett and Ms Robertson met and began their relationship when he was 39 and she was 17. Ms Robertson and Mr Tarbett set up home in Whitfield shortly after they met. Ms Robertson became pregnant [REDACTED]

After [REDACTED] birth in 1988, it would appear that their relationship deteriorated quickly. It continued to be problematic, with numerous separations and reconciliations. When together, the relationship was reported as acrimonious, with many arguments, fights and incidents of physical violence. Both parties were described as strong willed and unwilling to back down. The children were present during many of their parents' arguments and witnessed physical violence between them.

Both Ms Robertson and Mr Tarbett made numerous allegations to the Social Work department about each other and about each other's care of the children. These included:-

- That Ms Robertson [REDACTED]
- That Mr Tarbett had assaulted her.
- Allegations from both parents against the other of physical abuse of the children/ inappropriate care of the children/ being drunk while in charge of the children.

Many of these allegations were made in front of the children. Workers noted that neither parent made any attempt to keep the children separate from their relationship difficulties.

Mr Tarbett frequently directly involved the children in his disputes with Ms Robertson, for example:-

- Telling the children that their mum's "away with a Paki" or that she doesn't love them.
- On another occasion he left the three children at the Social work department in Whitfield saying it was Ms Robertson's turn to care for them.
- On one occasion, when they were living separately, Mr Tarbett took [REDACTED] to sit

Child's Name: William Tarbett

outside Ms Robertson's flat in the car even though [REDACTED] had had nine teeth extracted under general anaesthetic only two hours previously.

Following their more serious disputes Mr Tarbett and Ms Robertson frequently separated in the early years of [REDACTED] life. This normally meant that Ms Robertson would leave and [REDACTED] would stay with Mr Tarbett. From the time [REDACTED] was three years old, the separations more often involved him and his brother and sister leaving with Ms Robertson. The Social Work department may not have known about all the separations that took place, but there are 26 such changes in living situation recorded for [REDACTED] prior to the first reception into care. Again these changes frequently happened in a way that was highly unsettling for the children.

- On one occasion when [REDACTED] was living with Ms Robertson, Mr Tarbett removed him from the Social Work assistant who was taking him to the child and family centre
- On another occasion when Ms Robertson had been granted interim custody of [REDACTED] William, Mr Tarbett forced entry into Ms Robertson's fiat and removed the children. On this occasion the interim custody had not been properly served so they could not be returned to their mother.
- On a further occasion Ms Robertson and the three children were required to leave the Women's aid shelter where they were staying after Ms Robertson had assaulted another resident.

Ms Robertson frequently said she wanted to finish the relationship once and for all, but found it hard to manage as a parent by herself. Mr Tarbett also constantly sought to undermine her ability to cope on her own. As a result there was a long-standing pattern that even after bitter separations, they were reconciled

Concerns over lack of appropriate supervision.

When the children were in the care of Mr Tarbett or Ms Robertson, whether jointly or separately, there were periodic concerns about the level of supervision they received.

- While living with Mr Tarbett, [REDACTED] was seen a number of times unsupervised in the Hilltown.
- On one occasion [REDACTED] were picked up by the police in the Wellgate having stolen pot plants. They were then aged 5 and 3.
- On another occasion [REDACTED] arrived at Lilybank Family centre nearly two miles from home, alone, on his scooter. Mr Tarbett's response was that if he could make it to the centre alone he could get himself back.
- While living with Ms Robertson there were reports from neighbours that the three children were playing outside completely unsupervised. On one occasion they were found outside at night having opened the unlocked front door of the fiat themselves.

Child's Name: William Tarbett

Ms Robertson acknowledged that she sometimes felt unable to provide close enough supervision for the children, but argued that when living with Mr Tarbett he undermined her attempts to impose appropriate controls. Mr Tarbett took the view that since he was catering adequately for their physical needs, there was nothing wrong with the way he was caring for the children.

Concerns over lack of appropriate boundaries to the children's behaviour

Linked to the concerns about inadequate supervision were worries about the children's behaviour and the fact that Mr Tarbett and Ms Robertson appeared unable or unwilling to impose appropriate controls. The children were observed to be aggressive towards one and other and to behave in an inappropriately sexualised manner (see below). Both Mr Tarbett and Ms Robertson had difficulty controlling the children. In addition to finding it hard to manage the children's behaviour, they also presented, through their own actions some very unhelpful examples.

- The children frequently witnessed violence between their parents, between adults and children and with people outwith the household.

- On one occasion the children watched from the car as Mr Tarbett got out and assaulted [REDACTED]

Both parents' use of alcohol affected their ability to relate appropriately to the children at different times.

- On one occasion Mr Tarbett returned after drinking to find that [REDACTED] had wet the bed and hit him in the face (see child protection investigations below).

- On another, Linda Robertson was found to be drunk while the children played unsupervised outside.

While Ms Robertson was caring for the children, she was noted on a number of occasions to be very down, emotionally flat and unresponsive to the children's needs.

The children's understanding of what was acceptable behaviour was moulded to a significant extent by the example they were being set.

Children's sexualised behaviour and language

When [REDACTED] was four, concerns were expressed about his sexualised language and behaviour by staff at the child and family centre. There were related concerns about [REDACTED] amid allegations by Mr Tarbett [REDACTED]. These were the first of persisting concerns in relation to the fact that all three children clearly have knowledge of sex and sexual language quite inappropriate for their age. The concerns persisted when the children were in foster care and were noted when [REDACTED] started school.

- [REDACTED] was found, for example, simulating sex with other children, [REDACTED]

Child's Name: William Tarbett

- The children would speak about specific sexual acts.

A referral to Polepark family counselling centre was made in May 1993 and again in December 1994. On the second occasion work was done with [REDACTED] and William. In relation to the sexualised behaviour, the workers concluded that it was unlikely that [REDACTED] had been sexually abused, but likely that he had witnessed sexual acts between adults.

The allegations in relation to [REDACTED] were considered by a child protection case conference which, at that stage, could find no evidence to support them. Mr Tarbett continued to talk about the details of the allegations with the children present, despite being told that it was not appropriate for them to be involved in these discussions.

Children's aggressive behaviour

The social workers, health visitors and family centre workers involved with the children all commented from the earliest involvement with the family, on the aggressive relationship between the children.

- The children were observed to hit, bite and kick each other while their parents were present.
- They fought and jumped over the furniture while their baby brother [REDACTED] was in the room.

This behaviour appeared to be accepted by the parents. Ms Robertson maintains that she tried to impose tighter controls, but that this was undermined by Mr Tarbett who allowed the children more leeway. The aggressiveness between the siblings continued after they moved into foster care and was one of the main reasons why it proved so hard for them to stay together with the same carer.

Child Protection Investigations

In addition to the general and long-standing concerns about the parenting that the children were receiving, there were a number of specific incidents that were investigated more formally. Between December 1991 and September 1994 there were 15 observed incidents or allegations which led to enquiries, and 9 of these were followed up with a formal child protection investigation.

Very briefly the focus of these investigations was:-

- Dec 91 Mr Tarbett hit [REDACTED] in the face while he was asleep for wetting the bed. (Charges dropped by procurator fiscal but grounds found to be established by sheriff in relation to Children's Hearing).
- Jan 93 Ms Robertson hit [REDACTED] with wellington boot. Found to be accidental.
- Feb 93 Ms Robertson alleges Mr Tarbett hit [REDACTED] with a yardstick and hose from vacuum cleaner. Not pursued through lack of evidence.
- Mar 93 Investigation into [REDACTED] sexualised behaviour and language and concerns

Child's Name: William Tarbett

- May 93 Allegation by Mr Tarbett that [REDACTED]
- June 93 [REDACTED] hurt nose when pulled off table by Mr Tarbett. Accepted as accidental
- Aug 93 [REDACTED] alleged that Mr Tarbett threw him across the room -parents refused to give consent for medical. All children placed on 'at risk register'; [REDACTED] on grounds physical abuse (proven) and physical neglect (suspicious).
- Feb 94 [REDACTED] alleges Mr Tarbett assaulted him. No further action.
- May 95 [REDACTED] and his sister found playing in the Wellgate centre.

Mr Tarbett's unwillingness to work with agencies for benefit of the children.

Throughout the time of his involvement with the department Mr Tarbett maintained that there has been nothing wrong with his parenting of the children. He was adamant that his children should be returned to his care and completely opposed to the Social Work department's plans. Mr Tarbett's refusal to acknowledge any shortcomings made it virtually impossible to work with him to reduce the level of concerns or make a rehabilitation feasible. This has been a continuing problem in relation to planning for the children.

- When Mr Tarbett was granted interim custody of [REDACTED] in 1989 one of the conditions was that [REDACTED] care should be subject to the supervision of the Local Authority. The Social Work department had to take this back to the court because Mr Tarbett refused to meet with the supervising worker.
- The Children's hearing in September 1994 that took a Place of Safety order on all the children, gave as one of their reasons, 'Mr Tarbett's point blank refusal to adhere to the conditions of the care order, to work with the Social Work department or other support agencies.'

As well as refusing to work constructively with the Social Work department, Mr Tarbett consistently undermined attempts by Ms Robertson to care effectively for the children. He always sought to find out where she was staying, even where this meant tracking down the address and phone numbers of Women's Aid refugees. He would then harass her or try to influence her to return.

- Mr Tarbett phoned a Women's aid hostel where Ms Robertson was staying with her youngest child, at 2 am, sounding under the influence of alcohol, and put one of the other children on the phone.
- Workers at another Women's Aid hostel told Mr Tarbett that Ms Robertson was no longer there after receiving as many as 20 abusive phone calls in a day.

There was no evidence over this period that Mr Tarbett developed any insight into the children's emotional needs or the way his own behaviour could have a seriously detrimental affect on them.

Child's Name: William Tarbett

Reception into care

On 26th June 1992 [REDACTED] and William were received into care for a few hours while Ms Robertson was interviewed by the police. This followed an incident where Ms Robertson had assaulted another resident at the Women's Aid hostel where they were staying.

They were received into care for the second time on 21st January 1994. This followed a particularly acrimonious period in the relationship between Mr Tarbett and Ms Robertson. The events that led up to this reception into care were, briefly:-

On November 27th 1993 Ms Robertson left the house on her own at 3 am after an argument with Mr Tarbett and under the influence of alcohol. The following day she lodged a court action requesting the return of her son [REDACTED] to her care. She returned home on December 14th.

On December 17th Mr Tarbett alleged that Ms Robertson kicked [REDACTED]. Social workers who visited to investigate found no evidence. They were concerned that neither parent was present and the children were 'running amok'. Mr Tarbett's son, who was ostensibly in charge, was in the bath.

On December 26th Ms Robertson left the house at 4 am with [REDACTED]. She claimed that Mr Tarbett assaulted her two nights previously. Police returned the children to Mr Tarbett. Ms Robertson returned the next day.

On January 20th 1994 Ms Robertson left the home with [REDACTED].

On January 21st [REDACTED] and William were received into care on Mr Tarbett's request. Mr Tarbett stated that he was troubled with gout and unable to care for the three children on his own. Ms Robertson believes he only did it to get at her.

[REDACTED] returned to the care of Mr Tarbett 10 days later, [REDACTED] and William returned a week later.

The third reception into care, was 8 months later on 22 September 1994. The events that led to this decision were, briefly:-

On September 2nd 1994 the children moved from Ms Robertson's care (in a Women's Aid hostel) to Mr Tarbett when Ms Robertson said she was no longer able to care for them. Staff at the hostel were also concerned that [REDACTED] behaviour was a danger to other children.

Mr Tarbett made it clear that he was not willing to co-operate with the requirements of the previous Children's Hearing order which specified that [REDACTED] were to attend at St Matthew's for an assessment of their behaviour and that the children should be allowed access with Ms Robertson. On September 21st Mr Tarbett threatened that he would bring the children to the Children's hearing and leave them there.

At the Children's Hearing on September 22nd a Place of Safety order taken by the Children's Hearing on Michael, Linda and William. The Hearing's reasons for this decision were:-

- Mr Tarbett's point blank refusal to work with the Social Work department or other support agencies.

Child's Name: William Tarbett

- Mr Tarbett's clear inability to exercise control over the children, thereby placing them at risk.
- Mr Tarbett's continuing denial of access to the children by Ms Robertson.

Mr Tarbett appealed the decision of the hearing, but the sheriff subsequently dismissed the appeal.

When the Place of Safety order expired, the Children's Hearing made a supervision order requiring the children to remain in foster care. The reasons the Hearing gave for this decision included:-

- The children's behaviour improved following reception into care.
- Mr Tarbett's refusal to co-operate with the supervision order and work with Social work department and other agencies.
- Ms Robertson's inability at this time to offer the children a home.
- Mr Tarbett's attitude to the care of the children, which the Hearing regarded as totally selfish and failing to meet their physical and emotional needs.

Rehabilitation

It was agreed that work needed to be done with both the parents and the children to consider whether rehabilitation was a feasible option. The rehabilitation assessment was organised in several parts and addressed; the parents relationship, previous difficulties with the children and the parenting skills needed to meet the needs of the children. Mr Callum Strathie from St Matthew's Family Centre was contracted to work individually with Mr Tarbett and Marion Selfridge, Social Worker, to work with Ms Robertson. Joint sessions with both parents were then planned involving both Mr Strathie and Ms Selfridge.

██████████ and William were referred to Polepark Family counselling centre, for work in relation to their difficult and sexualised behaviour.

The assessment continued until 24th February 1995 and included both individual and joint sessions, as planned. At that stage, however, a decision was taken that there was no point in continuing. The reasons for terminating the assessment were:-

- Refusal by both parents to accept any responsibility for the children being received into care.
- Mr Tarbett's refusal to acknowledge that there had ever been a problem with the way he cared for the children or that he needed to change this in any way.
- No commitment from either Mr Tarbett or Ms Robertson to maintain their relationship in a way which would allow them to care jointly for the children.

Child's Name: William Tarbett

The workers concluded that there was no merit in continuing to meet with Mr Tarbett and Ms Robertson as they remained completely unwilling to address the issues that had given rise to the children being received into care.

All three children have remained Looked After since that date, with a recommendation that they should be placed with substitute families on a permanent basis. This was finally achieved for all three children in 2000.

Child and Family's Views of Current Needs and Way Forward

William's wishes

William is increasingly understanding the reasons for being in the care of the social work department and able to express his own views verbally and through drawings. He has actively participated in his last two LAC Reviews, expressing both his satisfaction with his current placement and his wish for continuing contact with both of his parents and his siblings.

William has stated in the past that he does not want to go and live with his family and he has not indicated any change in this respect when given the opportunity to discuss the issue. Nevertheless, William has a strong sense of family identity and his parents and siblings are important to him. He looks forward to contact with them and at the moment feels that his current level of contact is right for him.

Parental wishes

William's mother believes that he should remain in the care of the Social Work Department. Until recently she has maintained a useful relationship with the Social Work Department, but this has deteriorated so that there is little communication.

William's father has never accepted the need for William to be Looked After, nor that he was other than a good parent to William. His insistence upon these points has been a constant feature of his relationship with the Social Work Department. Mr William has previously failed to attend regularly either Looked After Reviews or Children's Hearings in respect of William.

However, in the last two years there has been a significant change. Mr Tarbett appears to have accepted William's placement and no longer makes this a source of conflict. He has attended a few of William's LAC Review's (although not recently), engaged appropriately with Mrs Booth and actively agreed the plans for William in placement.

Mr Tarbett has preferred to have minimal communication with the Department in respect of William and there has been almost no direct contact of any kind, except during supervised contact with William. However, Mr Tarbett did attend his first meeting with the social worker at the Department on January 8th 2003 to discuss William's current difficulties and plans for the future.

Child's Name: William Tarbett

Social Work Department Plans

It remains the plan of the Department for William to continue in placement with a permanent substitute family, where he can have security into adulthood, but maintain contact with his birth family as he wishes. Given William's age, there is no plan for adoption unless William should indicate that he wishes this to be considered.

Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] have offered to care for William on a permanent foster-care basis and the placement, despite its current difficulties, has been highly appropriate and positive for William. Contingency plans are in place to provide William with another placement if necessary, but Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] have given themselves and William some time to try and improve the placement, with a variety of strategies now in place, in the hope that such a move will prove unnecessary.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It is the view of the Social Work Department that it remains inappropriate for William to return to the care of either parent. He remains a child whose early experiences were poor, and who has clear needs which require close attention from a variety of agencies, including Education and Social Work.

William has no wish to return to the care of either parent at present. William's mother believes that it is in William's best interests that he remains in foster care and has given her support to the placement.

2002-3 has been a difficult year for William and much remains to be worked on and resolved. In particular, William's continuing contact with his mother is problematic and the quality of communication between William and his father during contact is extremely superficial. It is the view of the Social Work Department that supervision remains essential to ensure the safety and appropriateness of contact.

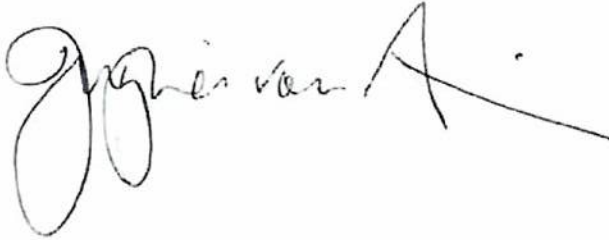
Recommendations to the Children's Hearing

The writer would recommend to the children's hearing:

- Continuation of William's Supervision Order under Section 70 (Away from Home) with his named place of residence with Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] approved foster carers for Dundee City Council
- Continuation of birth parent contact on the same basis: one hour every four weeks with each parent individually, supervised by the Social Work Department
- Respite Care on a regular basis with named carers: Mr and Mrs [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

18

Child's Name: William Tarbett

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ingrid von Arnim', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ingrid von Arnim
Social Worker
Permanence Team

sbr