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SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT

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Social Worker Mr. E. Titterington/JW
preparing report



SOCIAL BACKGROUND REPORT
CHILDREN'S HEARING

The following child:—

Surname JONES Date of Birth (1) 26 12 69; (2) 15 7 72
Christian Names (1) Andrew (2) [REDACTED]
or Forenames Religion Protestant
School (1) Kirkton High (2) Rosebank Primary
Address 8 Balgowan Place,
Dundee. Occupation School children

Currently in Ann Street Children's Home.

is to appear on 15 December 1983 at 2.15. at Dundee Children's Hearing
in connection with Supplementary

Having now received Dr. Fowlie's report it states that Ann Mill is psychiatrically capable of adopting a responsible and caring attitude towards her children. I also noted, with interest, the position of Mr. [REDACTED] in the household. However, I believe it is important that the children's hearing take into account the social factors in this case.

(1) [REDACTED] position in the house is not as permanent as is suggested in Dr. Fowlie's report. He has been involved with Ann Mill for over 18 months but there have been long periods when he has not been around. I have met him at Ann Mill's house but I have not seen him for some considerable time. He still has his own home and there is no word of him giving that house up. It is our opinion that while he appears capable and caring there is still an element of uncertainty as to his long term commitment to Ann Mill and more importantly her family. His presence in the house could affect Sarah who has difficulty in accepting strangers. She has had little contact with [REDACTED]

(2) As far as I am aware Ann Mill was not using any method of birth control. She was receiving an injection but had ceased this as she was becoming too fat. She may well be using another form which she has not mentioned. There is a risk if she is not using contraception that she will become pregnant. This would have quite an affect on the household.

(3) After the last hearing the children were not upset because they could not go home then but because they had to return to another children's hearing.

Andrew and Sarah Jones (cont'd).

Ann Street staff say that both Andrew and Sarah are apprehensive about going home and would prefer going home on a gradual basis, starting with overnight stays and weekends. We ourselves would strongly recommend this course of action. It would not be good practice on our part to allow children in our care to return home to a situation where there is an element of risk when no ground work has been prepared. Once a pattern has been established and the children are used to going home and also to the changes it entails, then that is the time to allow them to return permanently. The pressures on them returning home immediately would be immense and could lead to the whole idea breaking down.

On a more practical level, I would envisage a period of gradual introduction lasting until late January for the following reasons :

- (1) Sarah and Andrew have only a week to go with their present school term. Especially as regards Sarah it would be very disruptive that in her final week she started going to school from home. We feel it is essential that Sarah remains at Rosebank School and organising her being taken there daily may take a few days to set up.
- (2) Secondly during the week to Christmas at Ann Street there is the Christmas party for residents and other activities associated with Christmas. Given the time the children have been there it would not be fair that by going home they would lose out on all this. It would not prevent them however going home at weekends.
- (3) We would envisage Sarah and Andrew going home at Christmas and New Year. If they were home on home supervision they would not be supervised by our department since we are closed for the Christmas and New Year period. The first week of the children returning home is the most critical and when most support is required. Were the children to be still officially at Ann Street they will be available over the Christmas and New Year period to give advice and also to help out should an emergency arise.
- (4) It is important that time is given to allow a contract to be set up between ourselves and Ann Mill. This cannot, because of its nature, be set up over-night and we would prefer to see it in operation before a final decision is taken to allow the children home permanently.
- (5) Dr. Morton, Child Psychiatrist, feels Ann Street should still be involved with Sarah after she goes home. Sarah is very dependent on Ann Street and it will take some time for her to lose this dependency. The first weeks in January can be used by ourselves, Ann Street and also Ann Mill to help Sarah adjust to living at home. We would still see Sarah returning to Ann Street for overnights so that her time at home can be built up more gradually. This would help us monitor and assess how well she is coping with travelling to Rosebank School and would mean that for the first few weeks she need not travel there every day until she gets more used to the journey. It would also mean a lot less pressure on Ann Mill right at the start when she will have enough to cope with. Andrew during this period need not have the same amount of contact with Ann Street but we feel it is important he still knows he can return to Ann Street during this period should he feel he has to.
- (6) There is a limit to how long we can continue to reserve beds for Andrew and Sarah at Ann Street should they need to return. By deferring the final decision to the end of January it would mean that there is a longer period that Andrew and Sarah could return to Ann Street if necessary. It is unlikely that Ann Street could keep vacancies for these children longer than six weeks after the children's hearing decide that they should return home permanently. On the time-table that we propose this means that it will be well into March before the children will/

Andrew and Sarah Jones (cont'd)

/will not be able to be guaranteed a place in Ann Street and by that time we would have a good indication as to the success of Andrew and Sarah going home.

RECOMMENDATION:

Because of the factors outlined in my last report and this supplementary report, we are accepting the psychiatric opinion that Miss Mill is well enough to look after the children. However, we are concerned about the social aspects and we would be very unhappy to allow Andrew and Sarah to return immediately.

We would, therefore recommend that Andrew and Sarah's 44(1)(b) order is continued naming Ann Street and we will give the undertaking to start at once arrangements for Andrew and Sarah to return home on a gradual basis. We would also give the undertaking that we would ask for a panel in late January to consider the order being changed to home supervision and if the children's hearing is able to legally, and is so minded a date for a review hearing could well be set at this hearing.

E. Titterton
Mr. E. Titterton,
Social Worker.

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I will attend the hearing