

Notes of a meeting between Teresa Johnston C.H.O and Beverley Clarke, Team Leader, South Vale, on Friday 9th June 1989.

I received a message from Beverley Clarke to say she would like to see me on Friday morning. I confirmed with her that I would be available.

**Sensitive/Irrelevant**

1. Issues re: children's care

Lack of awareness of the needs of black children. No ethnic meals, black children's requests for ethnic meals trivialised and ignored. Black children having to use the same skin products/hair products as white children; no awareness/total disregard of needs.

Concern about the level of general child care. No key-workers, no individual work done with children, punitive environment, excessive control, emotional and physical abuse, inappropriate restraining, children humiliated, intimidated and bullied. Beverley talked about the children who had moved from St Saviours

and described how all the spark had gone from them, they seemed not to question and challenge, as if they had no fight left. She talked about the use of physical restraint and how that was used to deal with all outbursts the children had. She went on to say that she had been used to working with children in a non-threatening, non-physical way and found it difficult to work in a way that she found threatening to the young people. She gave an example of an incident where she was dealing with a young boy who was distressed about having to have treatment on his [redacted] DPA [redacted]. The boy needs this treatment [redacted] DPA [redacted] and as it is not a pleasant experience, sometimes it is difficult to get him to do it. Beverley was dealing with the boy, who was getting quite difficult; she felt she had the situation under control and was talking to him all the time, when one of the senior staff suddenly came into the room and grabbed the boy from behind and twisted his arm up his back and took him to the interview room. The boy was carried by his arm, which was still twisted up his back, his feet were off the ground. Beverley found this to be an inappropriate way to deal with the situation and felt completely undermined. She tried to talk to senior staff about this but has been told "We do things our way here and if you don't like it, leave".

2. Concerns re: E.O.P/Racism/Sexism

When Beverley first went to work at South Vale she was told by the [redacted] Senior position [redacted] that she had to be careful how she treated the black staff. She was told "There could be a lot of trouble if you don't treat them right and we don't want any trouble here".

Beverley has also overheard senior staff making racist remarks i.e. "We'll be alright tonight, the blacks are on shift".

Beverley then spoke about what she considers to be sexist behaviour and comments. When Beverley transferred to South Vale from [redacted] care home [redacted] she was pregnant. When she started at South Vale she had a meeting with the [redacted] Senior position [redacted] so he could talk to her about South Vale, procedures, practices etc. During the meeting the [redacted] Senior position [redacted] stated that he found women awkward to work with because they became pregnant and this caused problems in the running of the unit, first they were off for such a long time on maternity leave, then when they returned they were always having time off because their children were ill. Women, he felt, should stay at home and bring up their children, his wife had done it and he did not see why young women these days should not. Beverley had intended to tell the [redacted] Senior position [redacted] she was

pregnant, but after his remarks was too frightened to tell him. He found out later and did not comment to her about it. Beverley [ Sensitive/Irrelevant ] [ Sensitive/Irrelevant ] she is still very distressed about this and feels the stress she was put under by his remarks did not help her [ Sensitive/Irrelevant ]

Issues about sexist behaviour are evident in the way crisis situations are dealt with - the male staff are the ones who deal with disruptive children, using physical control and disregarding any work that the female staff may be doing with the children.

3. Management style of [ Senior position ]

Beverley feels that the management style at South Vale is very authoritarian. She feels very controlled and not allowed to question or comment, if she does she is labelled a trouble-maker, "one of the [ care home ] lot". [ care home ] is talked about in a derogatory way, "the O.I.C had no control of staff or children now they are at South Vale we will sort them out" etc.

Beverley also talked about the [ Senior position ] treatment of staff. She felt that favouritism was a way in which the [ Senior position ] managed. She talked about a particular member of staff who is allowed to do anything he wants without answering to anyone; at times Beverley feels the things he does actually put the young people at risk, but when she tries to discuss it or challenge it she is put down, undermined and intimidated.

Beverley also talked about the [ Senior position ] practice of singling out individual children for special treatment and taking them up to his flat. She also talked about his practice of telling children if he liked them or not. One particular child never had any new clothes bought, never got as many privileges as others. When Beverley asked other staff why, she was told the [ Senior position ] hates him. The child himself actually told Beverley that he would not get any new clothes because the [ Senior position ] had told him many times he hated him. Beverley found this difficult to believe and tried to reassure the child. A few days later when Beverley was on duty she actually heard the [ Senior position ] tell the child that he hated him.

I have asked Beverley to put her concerns in writing, which she has agreed to do.

[ DPA ]  
T. Johnston

Children's Homes Officer