

separated. The two senior units and two junior units are separated only by two doors.

History

In September 1990 an incident occurred involving an adult male intruder at the school. That intruder had sexual contact with one or more of the boys on school premises. An Education Department enquiry was conducted by Mr. Bentley and Mr. Williams involving interviews with all teaching and care staff. I have been given to understand that at the time of that enquiry answers had not been reassuring and revealed a lack of awareness of the underlying issues involved, although the school's immediate reaction to the incident had been adequate.

At the time of this incident there was no headmaster in post. Indeed there had been a period of possibly three years when there had been difficulties in appointing a headmaster, and there had been a situation with various people acting as head which had led to many problems to be discussed below.

Since then the substantive post of head teacher had been advertised and Mr. Bradshaw had taken up post in April 1991. Furthermore, additional steps had been taken to improve security against intruders.

In December 1990 Dr. Alison Frazer, Consultant Adolescent & Child Psychiatrist at Birch Hill Hospital, had contacted Mrs. Cavanagh to report several referrals regarding pupils at Knowl View School. These referrals concerned sexualised behaviour and had given Dr. Frazer cause for concern. There was also further information regarding the activities of some of these boys from the Social Service Department.

Mr. Poulton, Acting Head Teacher (January to April 1991), had discussed training needs with Knowl View staff, as a result of which Mr. Sheppard, AIDS Co-ordinator, Community Health Services Department, Rochdale Health Authority, had been invited to undertake a training session in counselling with the staff. This session revealed ongoing concerns and anxieties about activities involving some pupils. As a result of the training day held at Knowl View School Mr. Sheppard wrote a report dated 20th March 1991 outlining his concerns and suggestions to combat some of them.

On 4th March 1991 a meeting was held at Knowl View School at the instigation of the care staff. This meeting was attended by Dr. Frazer and Miss Janet Bowyer, Child Protection Team, Rochdale Social Services Department. Staff voiced concern about reported activities involving a number of boys within the school and in the town centre. Steps were suggested to prevent these activities from continuing and it was agreed that a meeting would be arranged with the police.

On 8th March 1991 a meeting was held at Fieldhouse School involving representatives of the police and Social Services. The outcome of that meeting was that the police felt that they should not be involved, and that consideration should be given to investigating the alleged activities under the Authority's child protection procedures.