

Mr. P. Mullins,  
Area Director,  
Gedling

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

DPA

Mr. Riddell  
4036

13 May 1987

Beechwood

Thank you for your memorandum of 5th May regarding the allegations made through Mrs. Newton. I have discussed this with Mr. Fenwick and can now report to you the outcome of those discussions.

As it happens on the 14th April the Retford Office conveyed some allegations made by [NO-A316] which were basically the same allegations that were referred to in your memorandum. Mr. Fenwick had already replied to this in a memorandum to the Retford Office on 30th April, 1987. In this case there was acknowledgement that the worker in question had used more force than necessary in restraining [NO-A316] but there was no evidence that there was any action taken by the worker that was malevolent or punitive. In the other incident involving two members of staff both officers were seen independently by Mr. Fenwick without any indication of an allegation having been made. Their stories tallied quite closely and indeed involved very aggressive behaviour by [NO-A316] and involved physical restraint by firstly the one worker who was then aided by the second worker. Both workers deny that they inflicted any pain and that they only used the necessary amount of force required to restrain her.

I think I should clarify that in your memorandum you mention that Mrs. Newton had been offering lodgings to departmental establishments and primarily Beechwood. As you go on to say that the substitute family care worker suggested that Mrs. Newton be formally investigated and approved it clearly indicates that any contact with Beechwood was not official. I understand that the department's first contact with Mrs. Newton was in relation to [Name Redacted] who is mentioned in your memorandum and she was placed by an area worker and later there were other contacts made through [Name Redacted] with youngsters who had been in Beechwood. The senior social worker in West Area has, I understand, a negative view of Mrs. Newton. I understand also that [Name Redacted] and [Name Redacted] were both guilty of excessive bullying of other children while at Beechwood although they indicated they had not personally been ill-treated.

Mr. Fenwick completely denies that staff at Beechwood are responsible for taking children or young people into the office and slapping and knocking them around without witnesses. He emphasises that this behaviour would be totally unacceptable to Beechwood and does not happen. While he cannot completely deny that staff will be guilty of swearing he also indicates that this behaviour is not tolerated by him either for staff or for young people.

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Regarding the allegations concerning [NO-A86] and [Name Redacted] (not [Name Redacted] I understand that Mrs. Newton laid on a party at her house for [NO-A316] and invited both [NO-A86] and another youngster who is subject to Section 53. Beechwood staff emphasized that these youngsters were in the care of the local authority and placed some responsibility on Mrs. Newton ensuring that they were under some supervision. I understand that both youngsters returned back to Beechwood drunk from the party and from that point on it was placed in Beechwood log that visits from any youngsters at Beechwood to Mrs. Newton are banned.

Mr. Fenwick informs me that he was on duty on the day when [NO-A86] received bruising to her face. Apparently [NO-A86] had taken [Name Redacted]'s duvet and with a biro had put pornographic drawings on the duvet thus provoking [Name Redacted] into a fight. The key worker then attempted to get the two girls apart so that clearly there was physical restraint used but it was not as seemingly interpreted by [NO-A86] that the key worker had held her while [Name Redacted] kicked her in the head.

Clearly Mr. Fenwick and his staff were concerned that allegations have been made and of course residential staff are constantly vulnerable given the numbers of confrontations which take place in any working day. We are of course placed in the position of requiring appropriately to investigate any allegations made and while staff may feel they are on the receiving end always of the criticism without being able to respond, Mr. Fenwick is quite understanding of the fact that we need to fully investigate incidents that are alleged obviously we ourselves are put in a very vulnerable situation.

I note that you explained to Mrs. Newton and [NO-A316] that you had no responsibility for Beechwood but that you would relay the matters onto County Hall for their comments and concerns. I understand that [NO-A316] has been spreading it abroad that a Mr. Mullins from Personnel was investigating her claims and this got back to the residential worker [NO-F15] who of course became very anxious, believing that County Hall was investigating him and even without the knowledge of Mr. Fenwick. When your memorandum arrived and I discussed it with Mr. Fenwick it then dropped into place for him in that you had been involved with Mrs. Newton and of course it made it possible to relieve [NO-F15] of any concerns that he was being investigated. I do not know whether you will wish to go back to Mrs. Newton but clearly the most important point to be made is that she has been used in no official way by Beechwood and indeed is viewed somewhat negatively both by the establishment and by the senior social worker, John Mills from West Area.

I hope that you will be assured that these matters have been taken seriously and have been investigated by myself through Mr. Fenwick.

**DPA**

W. Riddell  
Principal Assistant