

Memorandum

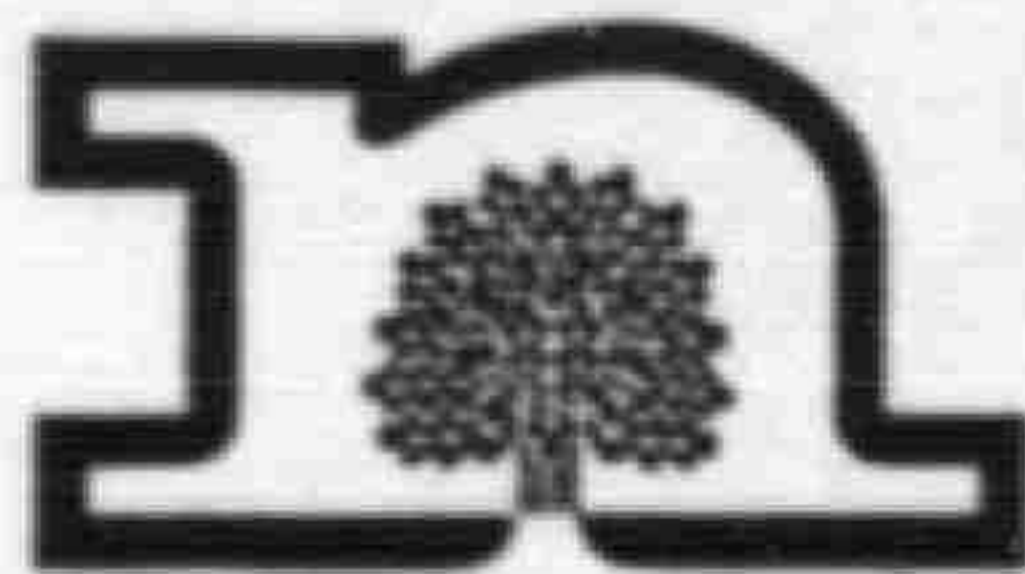
Information Office

Nottinghamshire County Council
ICSA Request No 5 - NCC Response F1

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10 The Chairman Social Services Committee;
The Director, Social Services Department;
Assistant Director (Children's Division);
East Area Director;
Principal, Beechwood Community Home;
Senior Professional Officer - Fostering and Adoption.

from John Goodwin, Senior Information Officer.



Your ref

Our ref

Please ask for

Tel extension **DPA**

Date 21.3.89

c.c. Moira Dalton, East Area Social Worker.

DPA

Beechwood File.

Beechwood Community Home and The Sun newspaper

As you know, allegations have been made to The Sun newspaper about misconduct at the above Community Home. These were the subject of a meeting on Tuesday, 21st March, convened by the Assistant Director (Children's Division), Mr. Dennis Watkins.

There was a feeling at the meeting that although The Sun had sent a reporter, Mr. John Askill, to interview a resident and had obtained taped allegations, it might be minded not to publish a story because of doubts about the truth of the statements.

Nevertheless, it was possible that a decision to publish might suddenly be taken and, pending the Department's investigations into the allegations which were being quickly put into action, a statement should be ready for issue to the press. The agreed text was:

"We understand a newspaper reporter has been told of alleged activities at Beechwood Community Home which staff had no knowledge of.

"There is reason to doubt the veracity of the allegations, but now that they have come to light we have a duty to vigorously pursue them, as is our normal practice."

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Nottinghamshire County Council

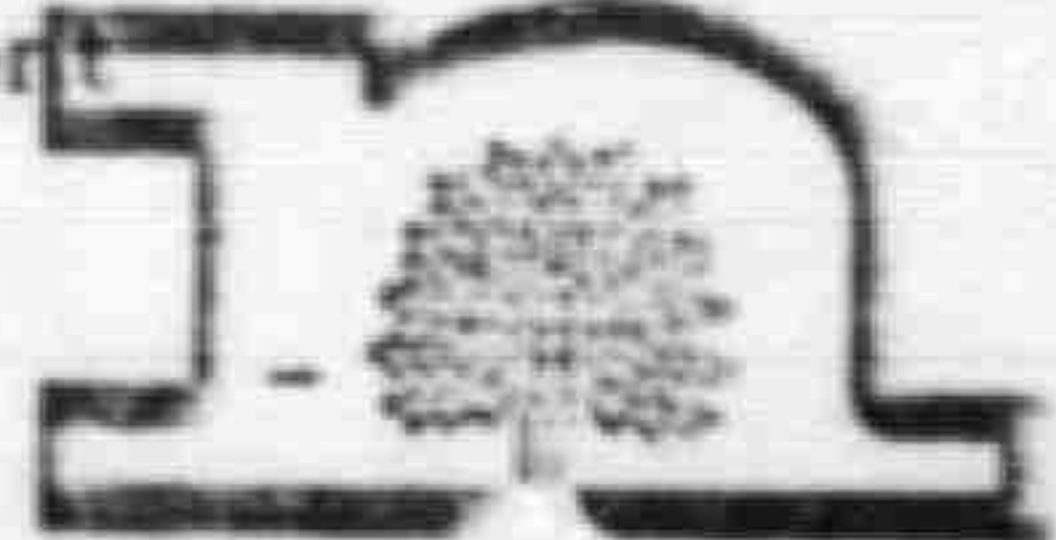
Beechwood
Principal J Fenwick
379 Woodborough Road
Nottingham NG3 5GX

Social Services

Director David R. White M.A.

Telephone
Nottingham (0602) 603208

The Director of Social Services
Social Services Department
County Hall
West Bridgford
Nottingham



Your ref DSS/CMC

Our ref JWF/MP

Please ask for
Tel extension

Date 19th April, 1989

Dear Mr White,

Alleged Misconduct at Beechwood
Internal Inquiry

I understand from Mr Watkin's that your report to the Social Services Committee following the Internal Inquiry carried out at Beechwood has been accepted. May I, through you, take this opportunity of extending the very sincere thanks and appreciation from, not only myself, but all at Beechwood to Dennis Watkins, Jane Williams and yourself for the help and support during these last few difficult weeks?

Over recent years and months Beechwood has been the subject of some quite unnecessary and, certainly unwarranted, adverse attention and publicity from local and national media. A tremendous amount of anxiety and stress is created in staff over and above that that they normally feel from doing the kind of job they do and, whilst in the past, we all seem to have handled things positively, this latest "crisis" seems to have hit us all very hard. There are, of course, a number of contributory factors to these feelings that we might have the opportunity of discussing at sometime in the near future but, none the less, a whole number of people felt the pressure of these latest unfair disclosures very hard and very personally.

Consequently we were all quite delighted to receive the inquiry report and your letter that both contained a consistent underlying theme of exoneration from any form of negligence, and an understanding of and support for the difficult daily tasks presented to Residential Social Workers and Teachers in our sort of setting.

Once again, my sincere thanks on behalf of all at Beechwood and I look forward to the opportunity of you visiting at some time in the none too distant future.

Yours sincerely,

DPA

J.V. Fenwick
Principal

DPA

Nottinghamshire County Council

Beechwood
Principal J Fenwick
379 Woodborough Road
Nottingham NG3 5GX

Beechwood
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Social Services

Director David R. White M.A.

Telephone
Nottingham (0602) 603208

Mr D Watkins
Assistant Director
Childrens Division
Social Services Department
County Hall
Nottingham



Your ref

Our ref JWF/MB

Please ask for
Tel extension

Date 9th May, 1989

Dear Mr Watkins,

May I attempt to elicit your support for urgent attention to be given to the need to improve the quality of life for young people who find themselves living at Beechwood? I enclose a copy of a letter that I sent to Jane Williams on 11th April, 1989 bringing her attention to the appalling state of the interiors of both the House Units and the subsequent squalid conditions that we are expecting children to live in and staff to work around.

Since sending that letter two significant things have occurred that lend strong support to the urgent and desperate case I am attempting to highlight.

1. We recently held interviews for the post of Head of Education. The strongest external candidate withdrew before the interviews and I have enclosed an extract from a letter he wrote to Dave Headley outlining his reasons for the withdrawal. You will note he makes particular reference to the living conditions he found in both House Units!!
2. John Bradley (Senior Educational Psychologist) recently asked to see me having spent sometime showing a Psychology student around Beechwood. He wanted to express his amazement and disappointment at what he and the student had found in the House Units by way of furniture, fittings etc. He was quite appalled at the lack of attention we have had, made a point of emphasizing that he was not referring to general cleanliness and untidiness and stated that, if he were inspecting the premises in his role finding approved establishments for our Department use he would, in fact, be turning the establishment down!! He also promised that he would write to Children's Division with his thoughts and feelings etc.

I think both these experiences serve to underline the points I made in my letter to Jane and I plead for some measure of recognition of the current long term needs and some support for rectifying things. I

wonder if it is an appropriate time to invite yourself and Mr White to visit Beechwood and see for yourselves? In some recent correspondence from the Director he did indicate an interest in visiting when the opportunity presented itself.

I cannot emphasize too much the desperation felt among our staff about the need for things to be improved and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

DPA

DPA

J. W. Fenwick
Principal

Encl:

Nottinghamshire
County Council

Beechwood
Principal J Fenwick
379 Woodborough Road
Nottingham NG3 5GX

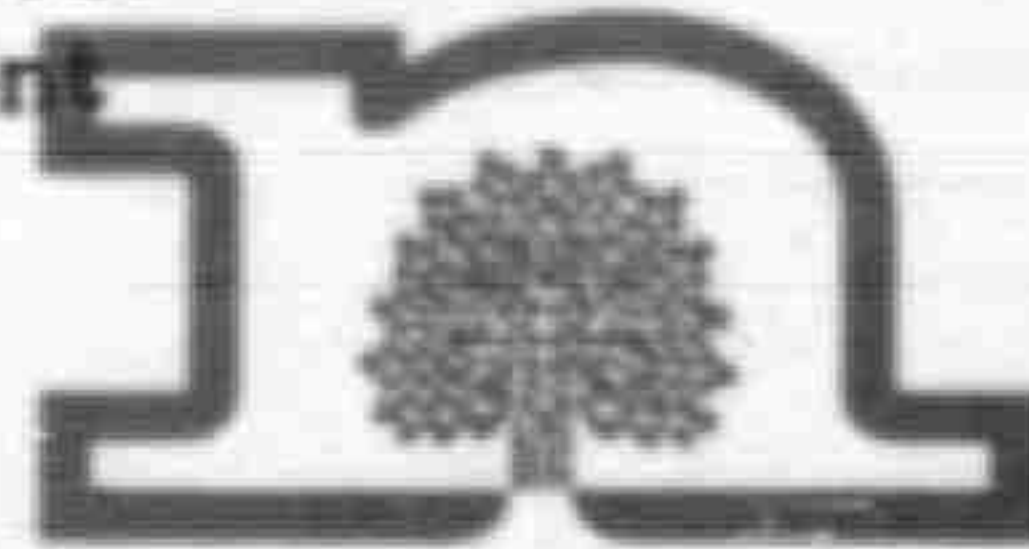
Social Services

Director David R. White M.A.

Telephone
Nottingham (0602) 603208

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A

Mr S. Thorpe
Senior Professional Officer
Social Services Department
County Hall
Nottingham



Your ref

Our ref

MLMcB/MB

Please ask for
Tel extension

Date

9 November 1989

Dear Mr Thorpe,

You will be aware that Beechwood was directed to admit a young man from Sycamore Community Home on the [DPA] 1989. I feel it is important to inform you of my reasons for not responding in a positive way to Mr Wilmot's initial approach.

The young man in question had just recently been suspended from [DPA] School and was being accommodated at Sycamore. Due to some very disturbed behaviour directed against some young women resident at the home it was felt the continuation of the placement was inappropriate as staff were unable to protect these young women.

When Mr Wilmot approached me about Beechwood accepting this young man I felt the move would be inappropriate on the following grounds:

(1) The young man is obviously in a period of crisis - his rejection by Sycamore following so quickly on his rejection by [DPA] would be very damaging to his self perception and his self esteem. This would provide no positive emphasis to the resolution of his crisis.

(2) If he had to move, under the notion of permanency, Beechwood would be inappropriate. Beechwood is not a long term home and one may well expect any review on this case to come to the decision that, if [DPA] School is no longer available, we would have to consider Skegby Hall in any long term planning. It would therefore have been more appropriate to approach Skegby but I have been told they have difficulties.

(3) The only bed available in Beechwood was in the Lindens House which already has 4 young men who are suspected of being or who are known to be sexual abuse perpetrators. A group this size could provide each other with reinforcement for the distorted way they view females.

I am as concerned as anybody about the safety of the young women at Sycamore. There is something seriously amiss where establishments (not just Sycamore) are unable to offer protection to clients in their care. The removal of young people to another establishment is not a satisfactory solution. Apart from "playing musical chairs" with young people we are expanding the number of clients exposed to these disturbed behaviour

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patterns. Part of the aim of my action, knowing we would be directed to take the young man, was to highlight this worrying position. It is not a situation that individual establishments can resolve, nor do I expect you to be able to provide an immediate solution. As a manager I believe it is my duty to inform you of these concerns.

Yours sincerely,

M.L. McBride
Second Deputy Principal

DEAR STEVE,
THIS IS A COPY OF THE
LETTER I SENT YOU THAT
YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED.

PLEASE

DPA

22.11.89.