

The Terms of Reference for the Strategic Management Group

Complex Investigation into Allegations of Abuse at Beechwood and Skegby Hall Children's Homes and associated matters – Operation Equinox

1. Introduction:

The Strategic Management Group has been established in accordance with the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board's child protection procedures. The investigations fall within the remit of both the chapter 'Historical Abuse' and that of 'Organised and Complex Abuse'. The procedures recognise that all investigations are different in accordance with their nature, scale and complexity "but all will require thorough planning, collaborative interagency working and attention to the needs of the victims".

2. Background:

A police investigation, known as Operation Daybreak, was launched in 2011 into allegations of physical and sexual abuse in the former Beechwood children's home. The number of allegations to date stands at 167. During the same period 107 complaints within civil claims have been made against Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City Councils. The allegations and complaints are in relation to alleged incidents within a period from 1949 to 2006. The investigation has continued to grow in its scale and complexity, which has prompted this review of its oversight and management.

These Terms of Reference were amended on 03/02/15 to reflect the decision that this Strategic Management Group also provides oversight and management of the investigations into allegations of abuse related to Skegby Hall, a former Approved School and Children's Home, and related matters. A Police operation, Xeres, was launched December 2014 following allegations of abuse dating back to 1957 and to date involves 96 allegations to the Police and 3 civil claims. The Terms of Reference were again amended in December 2015 to reflect Nottinghamshire Police decision to establish Operation Equinox, an overarching name for the individual investigations, along with significant changes in membership of the group.

3. Membership:

Chair: Alison Michalska, Corporate Director for Children and Adults (Nottingham City Council)

Vice Chair: Colin Pettigrew, Corporate Director for Children, Families and Cultural Services (Nottinghamshire County Council)

Members

ACC Simon Torr (Nottinghamshire Police)

Supt. Helen Chamberlain (Nottinghamshire Police)

Elaine Moss (Newark and Sherwood CCG)

Sally Seeley (Nottingham City NHS)

Julie Gardner (Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust)

Robin Smith (Communications – Nottinghamshire County Council)

Robert James (Communications - Nottinghamshire Police)

Stephen Richeux (Communications, Nottingham City Council)
Caroline Baria (Nottinghamshire County Council).
Pam Rossetter (Nottinghamshire County Council)e
Kevin Dennis (Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner)
Sue Gregory (Programme Manager for the SMG)
Michelle Roe (Co-ordinator for the SMG)

4.Purpose:

The Strategic Management Group (SMG) provides oversight and management of the parallel processes of the criminal and civil proceedings related to the allegations of abuse at Beechwood and related homes.

It will:

- ensure that adequate resources are available to conduct the relevant enquiries related to both sets of proceedings. This includes the required searches of both children's and staff records across both councils as well as appropriate interviewing of alleged victims, perpetrators and witnesses.
- identify appropriate resources to meet the identified therapeutic and support needs of the victims.
- Consider the support needs of the investigating team
- establish an overarching communication strategy which will include the handling of political and media issues as well as communication between partner organisations and regulatory bodies
- agree a co-ordinated approach to the response and management of specific complainants

5. Meetings:

The SMG will meet six weekly or as required at each stage of the investigation.

6. Learning:

A log of lessons learnt will be kept and will inform the review and evaluation at the end of the investigation.

SMG will provide regular updates to Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board's.