

REDACTED

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167324.0**CONFIDENTIAL****ASSESSMENT REPORT**

ref: LH

b. 8.3.76

Reason for Referral / Services Provided

On RE 91 the Department for Family & Community Services (REDACT) referred LH to the Child Protection Service (FMC) for an emotional assessment and medical examination following a statement he had made to Police in which he alleged sexual abuse by Brian Perkins, an adult who worked at St. Anne's Special School, and provided respite care to students.

For this purpose, Peter Mulhearn interviewed LH on two occasions (4.10.91, 18.10.91), NE on one occasion (20.9.91) and NF on the two occasions he attended with LH (4.10.91, 18.10.91).

Dr. REDACTE medically examined LH on 18.10.91. Refer to Medical Report dated 24.10.91.

Background Information

FACS provided the following information :

The Darlington Police interviewed LH who told them that Brian Perkins, an adult volunteer from St. Anne's Special School and another man, Robert Hawk, forced him to give oral sex and they had oral sex with him. Police have found nude photographs of LH and other children.

LH is physically and mentally disabled, is under the Guardianship of the Minister (Department for Family & Community Services), and lives with NE and NF who are fostering him. NE reported that she has not observed any change in LH behaviour.

FACS understood that LH had been abused in his woodwork class, at Brian Perkins' home, and possibly on the school bus. NE was reported to be very agitated and feeling some responsibility for having allowed LH to be cared for by the perpetrator.

Case Conference

FACS held a Case Conference with representatives from St. Anne's Special School, Catholic Education Department, Child Protection Service and FACS to plan a co-ordinated response by the school and FACS to the alleged abuse which appeared to have also involved other children at the school. Brian Perkins had been a relief bus driver, who had provided informally arranged respite for some of the students.

The Police were not planning to lay charges on the basis of LH statement because of LH intellectual disability and a need for corroboration. However, the Police were seeking both men named, and their present whereabouts were unknown.

The teachers listed approximately nine children who could have been potential victims of sexual abuse. All of these children had substantial mental disabilities and it was stated that they varied from being non-verbal to difficult to understand.

Interviews with NE and NF

NE

NE presented as being extremely distressed and so I spent most of the interview with her discussing the effect of LH allegation on the family. NE believed that LH recollection of the experience would quickly fade, although she had already arranged for him to receive therapy from

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Effect of Abuse on the Family

NE said that she had been devastated by LH abuse, and expressed concern about any possible negative effects on LH. NE said she regretted having allowed LH to stay at Brian Perkins' flat, and that her feelings of responsibility had been allayed by FACS telling her that she had not been responsible for his abuse.

With regard to the effect on LH, NE said "He has no memory bank". That is, she expected that his memory would recede quickly. NE said that LH was enjoying all the attention his disclosure had precipitated and that he was pleased he had acted correctly by telling.

NE reported that LH had previously seen REDACT for assistance with his developing sexuality, and interest in girls. Thus, she was eager for him to revisit RE again.

NF

NF had returned from an overseas trip some time after LH disclosure. NF opinion was that the abuse had no adverse effect on LH. NF said that LH liked the attention which had followed upon his allegation, and that the sexual abuse may not have necessarily been experienced by LH as negative.

Interviews with LH (4.10.91, 18.10.91)

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LH immediately engaged in conversation upon meeting me, and when I asked about his understanding of the assessment's purpose, he said "To talk about me, and Brian (Perkins)". LH maintained a smiling presentation and often laughed, but at times he looked serious.

In the first interview, I talked with LH about his friends, school and interests. LH said "Everyone is my friend at school" and proceeded to name particular people. At school, LH liked woodwork, cooking, drawing and going on the bus. LH also described the sports in which he was interested and that he had been to the Handicapped Olympics in Melbourne.

LH answered my questions and for the most part, I believe I understood what he said, although I often checked by repeating what I heard. Sometimes, LH did not agree that my understanding was correct and communicated this to me by looking at me curiously instead of agreeing or by restating what he meant.

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On this occasion, LH described his abuse by Brian Perkins. LH said that Brian rubbed oil all over his body and massaged him on the back, the front and on his penis. LH talked about seeing Brian play with LE and "make him hard". LH clarified that it was LE penis that became hard. LH said that Brian did this to LB also, and then LH was allowed to do this with LB as well.

LH also talked about being tied up with rope and smacked by "Brian's friend". LH said that Brian also took some photos at his place. LH listed several other children who had been touched by Brian or whom LH had touched.

LH indicated that these behaviours were "not okay" and that if somebody did them to him again, he would tell the Police, his teacher, NF or NE

When I asked LH if he worried about what happened or felt okay, he said, "Don't have to worry about it, it is all over".

Summary and Conclusion

LH [redacted] was referred to an assessment after he had made a statement to Police about sexual abuse by Brian Perkins. During the CPS assessment, LH [redacted] made specific allegations that he had been touched on the penis by Brian. LH [redacted] also named other children whom he had seen being similarly touched by Brian. Thus, in my opinion, LH [redacted] has been sexually abused by Brian Perkins.

The assessments of both NE [redacted] and NF [redacted], together with LH [redacted] comments to me, do not indicate any grounds to conclude that LH [redacted] has been traumatised by his experience. Rather, LH [redacted] caregivers believe that he has enjoyed the extra attention he received following his disclosure, and they doubt that he experienced the abuse as traumatic. Certainly, there had been no observable change in LH [redacted] behaviour in association with the incidents.

NE [redacted] co-operated with a complete assessment for LH [redacted] and had arranged for LH [redacted] to see RED [redacted] as a precautionary measure to ensure that his interests have been met. NF [redacted] also endorsed the actions taken by NE [redacted] in his absence.

Recommendation

I endorsed the plan for LH [redacted] to see REDACTE [redacted] a therapist who specialises in the areas of sexuality and sexual abuse of adolescents, and at the time of the assessment, an appointment had been made to see RED [redacted]. Because of this referral, and no apparent concerns about LH [redacted] emotional functioning, I recommend no further action.



Peter Mulhearn
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CHILD PROTECTION SERVICE

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