

CASE REVIEWS

Summary of Review Meeting and Recommendations for the Future

Date of Review..... 13.9.85 at Carolina House

Name	Present Address	D.O.B.
<u>TOMMY TARBETT</u>	c/o Carolina House,	16.3.73
<u>LISA TARBETT</u>	Strathmore Avenue, Dundee	7.8.74

Participants:

Mr. F. Cura, Assistant Fieldwork Manager, Dundee West
 Mr. H. Tosh, Officer-in-Charge, Carolina House
 Miss Linda Craig, Care Officer, Carolina House
 Mr. J. R. Anderson, Senior Social Worker, Dundee West
 Mr. P. Devlin, Social Worker, Dundee West
 Mrs. P. Bouchier, Review Officer
 Tommy and Lisa Tarbett, Children in Care

Summary of Discussion + Goals/Tasks for the Future (Goals to be listed separately)

Reports from the social worker and members of the residential staff as well as from the children themselves were circulated prior to the meeting. Forms A014 and A014a were not available on this occasion but their completion was requested in time for the next review. In the absence of background reports some time was spent discussing the circumstances of the Tarbett family and the reasons for the reception into care of Tommy and Lisa in particular. The children's parents, David and Helen Tarbett, have been known to the RSSPCC since February, 1968. Their home situation was characterised by domestic violence with the children being left unattended on numerous occasions and repeated financial difficulty affecting the whole family. Mr. Tarbett has convictions for wife assault and breaches of peace and his wife has deserted the family home on numerous occasions. During her absence the children have either been cared for by their paternal grandparents or received into the care of the local authority. Placements within care have included Roineach Mhor, Nimmo Place Children's Home (Perth), Dundee Children's Shelter and Carolina House. The three oldest boys, David, Graham and Derek have shown disturbed reactions to this disruption and their behaviour has given cause for concern over a number of years.

The parents' relationship continued to deteriorate and the couple finally separated in early 1982 when Mrs. Tarbett went to live in London. Derek, Tommy and Lisa were left in the care of their father. (Graham and David had been placed in residential establishments some time prior to the breakdown of the parental home) Within a short period of time, Mr. Tarbett declared himself unable and unwilling to continue to care for the three youngest children and they were received into care in February, 1982, initially placed in Burnside House Assessment Centre and subsequently transferred to Carolina House Children's Home, Dundee. Parental rights were assumed in January, 1984 and upheld following an appeal by Mr. Tarbett.

Tommy and Lisa settled happily at Carolina House, adjusting to the establishment's move to Strathmore Avenue without difficulty. Intensive preparation towards placement in a foster home was undertaken during 1984 but the children withdrew from this programme after introductions to a family had taken place. It appears that their strong feelings of attachment and loyalty to their natural family were the underlying reasons for this decision. Lisa responded well to contact with the foster family but was unable to proceed without Tommy who remains adamant that he does not wish to be fostered. A negative response to the whole idea of fostering from Mr. Tarbett and his oldest sons is recognised as exerting a strong pressure on the children to resist any further moves in this direction.

Recommendations made at last review

- (a) Tommy and Lisa to continue to reside at Carolina House.
- (b) Mr. Devlin to 'ease into' role of social worker for the children over the next two months.
- (c) Family contact to continue as at present.
- (d) Mr. Devlin to have ongoing contact with residential staff.
- (e) Mr. Devlin and residential staff to encourage the children to do a write up of their feelings for the future prior to the next review.
- (f) Date set for next review.

The above recommendations were agreed to have taken place with the possible exception of (b). The final transfer of the case to Peter Devlin from Gordon McIntosh had only been effected in June, 1985. As a result of the interruption caused by Carolina House and social workers' holidays it has proved difficult for the children and Mr. Devlin to establish a close working relationship. This fact was mentioned by both children in their written comments to this review. After some discussion on the issues involved it was agreed by Mr. Anderson and Mr. Devlin that the fortnightly visits which have been resumed recently should be established as a regular pattern and that Mr. Devlin would also use the intervening weeks to see Tommy and Lisa at Carolina House while visiting the Ghosh brothers for whom he holds responsibility. Mr. Tosh and Miss Craig felt this would be acceptable to the children and they themselves agreed to the plan later in the review.

Copies to:-

Area Fieldwork Manager, Dundee West
Mr. Cura, Asst.AFM, Dundee West
Mr. Tosh, OIC, Carolina House
Mr. Anderson, SSW, Dundee West
Mr. Devlin, SW, Dundee West
Admin, Dundee West (Paradise Road)

Signed

Signed Patricia Bouchner
(Reviewing Consultant)

Date 26.9.85

Feedback re Resources to Field Work Director via Area Controller

Tommy and Lisa Tarbett (contd)

On the question of contact with the natural parents, residential staff agreed that this was noticeably important to the children. Some concern was expressed about Mr. Tarbett's lack of commitment to the children's home visits - it appears that he is often absent from the grandparents' home on these occasions and the children themselves express their wish that he could be there more often. Within the past few weeks the children's paternal grandmother, who appears to have provided a consistent focus for the children, has died. With the help of explanations and support from members of the care staff, both children have been helped to understand this event and were able to attend the service rooms and funeral without being too distressed. Lisa was upset initially but Tommy has not allowed himself to show evidence of his deeper feelings to date.

Present situation

Contact with natural family:

The need for changes to be made in the arrangements for visits to the natural family was acknowledged. Since their grandmother's death they have been visiting the home of a paternal aunt, Kathleen Tarbett, who has shown an interest in the children and responded appropriately to their birthdays. She has given a commitment to keeping in touch with them on a regular basis and the children have responded well to this. Residential staff comment that they seem to be fond of her and that 'auntie Kathleen' seems to be reliable and concerned. It was observed that the relationship between Mr. Tarbett and his sister is a reasonable one; she seems able to handle his criticism effectively. Mr. Devlin will establish the suitability of this aunt's home as the venue for the children's visits to their natural family and seek views and agreement from all concerned.

It was established that Tommy and Lisa have had no recent contact with their natural mother. In April, 1984 she was helped by the previous social worker to write a letter to Tommy explaining her inability to return to Dundee or offer the children a permanent home. This was felt to be an important element in helping the children to understand their situation as well as to hear their mother's point of view. In the past Mr. Tarbett has explained to the children that they are in care because of his wife's failure to return home.

Child in placement

Tommy Tarbett:

Residential staff commented on the work being undertaken towards helping Tommy recognise that there are limits beyond which he will not be allowed to go. He appears to be making some progress in accepting responsibility and appropriate sanctions for his actions. On 28.6.85 Tommy was involved in an incident of a sexual nature with one of the girls in the unit, apparently with her consent and co-operation. A full enquiry was conducted by the staff and information shared with both the children's families and the supervising social workers. Details of this incident are available in a report from Carolina House. Encouragement from the group appears to have been a factor influencing this experimentation. Opportunities for engaging in similar activities have been reduced by residential staff who have adjusted the sleeping arrangements in the house to effect greater separation of the sexes. It was pointed out that

Tommy experienced some difficulty at the time of his transfer to secondary school (Morgan Academy) but now seems to have settled and copes well with his studies. Many of the children presently in Carolina House also attend Morgan Academy and this shared experience is of value to Tommy. He is a keen football player and supporter of Dundee United and enjoys playing pool.

Tommy and Lisa Tarbett (contd)

Tommy is a fit and healthy teenager whose only problem at present appears to be that one of his feet has a tendency to turn inwards and he has been advised to wear insoles in his shoes which he finds uncomfortable. He is also prone to develop athlete's foot which has to be constantly controlled.

Lisa Tarbett:

As the youngest child in the group at present, Lisa enjoys the special attention of staff and older children, particularly the teenage girls, to which she responds with warmth and pleasure. She is at the stage at which she enjoys experimenting with make-up and clothes and is interested in the latest pop music. She is said to be slower than her brother and reluctant to work things out for herself. She occasionally has temper tantrums when forced to face situations but is being encouraged to handle these effectively. Comments from the school indicate similar difficulties but these are not considered to be of major concern.

The children each share a bedroom with a 13 year old child of the same sex. Both appear to be well integrated into their respective peer groups and settled at Carolina House. Tommy sees his future here until he is 16, eventually returning to rejoin his father and older brothers according to a pattern already established within the family. Lisa shows ambivalence towards the future and, indeed, was unable to answer a question about it which was contained in the written comments which she and Tommy produced for the review. As she becomes more mature and less emotionally dependent on her brother she may feel able to withstand criticism from her family and reconsider fostering or a Mainstay placement. If a suitable relative was found to have the ability and commitment to caring for either or both children, as well as the capacity to withstand the inevitable criticism from Mr. Tarbett, this was regarded as being an acceptable compromise for meeting their long term needs for care within a stable family home.

Recommendations

(a) Placement:

Carolina House has been home to Tommy and Lisa Tarbett for three and a half years and they show every sign of being happy and settled there. While the placement meets their basic need for security, consistent handling by reliable adults of both sexes and facilitating the important contacts with natural family, at their ages a substitute family placement would be regarded as the ideal for both children. At present the antagonism of Mr. Tarbett and the older brothers makes it difficult if not impossible for the children to undertake the necessary commitment to any fostering placement and their own attachment to their natural family would prejudice the forming of new and close relationships. Their feelings were acknowledged and accepted by the group and the children were reassured that neither would be put under any pressure to consider fostering in the future. However, Lisa was encouraged to discuss the idea at any time with either the residential staff or the social worker.

Tommy and Lisa Tarbett (contd)

- (a) It was agreed that the children should remain in Carolina House at present and that an alternative be actively pursued should this present itself in the future.
- (b) The social worker will have contact with Tommy and Lisa in Carolina House each week, alternating their own special visit with less formal contact in the course of his commitments to other children in the unit.
- (c) Ongoing contact with the residential staff will be maintained by the social worker.
- (d) New arrangements for visits to the Tarbett family will be established by the social worker and communicated to residential staff, children and family members together with expectations of commitment and co-operation.
- (e) Background information will be sent to the reviewing officer, specifically forms A014 and A014a, in accordance with area review procedure.
- (d) The next review will be held at Carolina House on Tuesday 4th March, 1986 at 10.30 a.m.