

MAIN BODY OF REPORT

Points to be covered (plus any other relevant areas):

1. Analysis of Family Background.
2. Previous History of Involvement with Hearing System.
3. The Child.
4. The School.
5. Attitude to Grounds of Referral.
6. Plan of Work.
7. Matters of Particular Concern.
8. Assessment and Possible Options.

ANALYSIS OF FAMILY BACKGROUND

Lewis, thirteen years old, and Grant, eleven years old, reside with their mother in a tenancy rented from the local housing association which was recently allocated. Until December 1997 the family lived with Mrs Duncan's partner George Wilson, this relationship was terminated by Mrs Duncan due to deteriorating relationships with all family members.

Mrs Duncan was born in Lurgan in Northern Ireland. Her father was in the RAF and in the course of her upbringing lived abroad and in various parts of the UK, depending on her father's postings. She met her husband, the father of her two boys while living with her family in Kinloss in Scotland. The marriage lasted for approximately six and a half years, breaking down when Lewis was three and a half. Lewis has some recollections of his father but both boys are said to regard John Cameron, their mother's former co-habitee of some eight years as their "dad" and refer to him as such. Mrs Duncan and the boys moved with John Cameron to Ayrshire from the North of Scotland approximately two years ago following which their relationship broke down. She went on to live independently with the boys prior to developing a relationship with George Wilson with whom she and the children resided with until recently. Both boys have an extremely close relationship with their dad, who has provided intense support over the last few months when Mrs Duncan made the decision to.

PREVIOUS HISTORY OF INVOLVEMENT WITH HEARING SYSTEM

In October 1996, Lewis was made subject to Voluntary Supervision under Section 39 (2) Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968.

2nd September 1997 Children's Hearing Decision Lewis admitted to Newfield under Section 69 (4) for residential assessment.

30th September 1997 Children's Hearing decision residential order under Section 70 naming Newfield.

THE CHILD

Lewis had considerable difficulty adjusting to the new living arrangement with his mother and new partner, George Wilson. This was compounded by a change in parenting style in relation to the male carers in his life.

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Lewis tends to be solitary in his activity, enjoying fishing and computer games. He finds it difficult to interact with his peers in a group setting, this shown through his inability to participate in an IT group he was referred to.

At last Lewis appears to be more relaxed since his mother made the decision to move from the home of George Wilson.

THE SCHOOL

Lewis changed primary schools in response to location changes while living in the North of Scotland and again moving to Ayrshire.

Lewis initially attended Marr College, Troon, where a referral to the Reporter's Department in response to problematic incidents within school, in combination with truancy issues and the school's knowledge of problems being experienced by Mrs Duncan with Lewis within the home. This action resulted in Lewis being made a subject to voluntary supervision.

Lewis's immaturity coupled with difficulties experienced at Marr College suggested he could be fairly vulnerable when moving to Irvine Royal Academy. This came to fruition with instances of truancy and feigned illness. At that time Mrs Duncan and staff at the school had great difficulty in keeping track of Lewis's movements which was complicated by him returning to Troon to visit his dad.

In September 1997 when Lewis was received in Newfield, he attended school with the resource centre he coped well with small classes and the restricted academic curriculum. Following the assessment processes a plan was formulated to reintegrate Lewis into Irvine Royal Academy over a short period of time. Full integration was complete by November 1997, however since that time Lewis appears to have lost his previous commitment and a pattern of truancy has re-emerged.

ATTITUDE TO GROUNDS OF REFERRAL

N/A Review Report

PRESENT SITUATION

In December 1997 Ms Duncan's relationship with George Wilson deteriorated to such a level the family left his home and presented as homeless at North Ayrshire Housing Directorate. At that time the family have been accommodated in a local hotel on a bed and breakfast basis. In view of the perceived difficulties which may arise from the home situation the decision to return to a Children's Hearing to recommend a variation in the order to have supervision was withheld. On 23rd February 1998 a tenancy was offered in the Castlepark area of Irvine. Missives have now been signed and the family moved to their new home on Friday 28th February 1998.

Concerning aspects of Lewis's behaviour is no longer an issue, episodes of absconsion and contacts with police are no longer evident. He now spends one night in Newfield and the remaining six nights at home.

PLAN OF WORK

Lewis now appears to be making progress in that he can show the capacity to refrain from offending and absconding. Both he and his parents are clear they wish Lewis to return home and are willing to work toward a structured plan to have him in the community.

At a Looked After Review as held on 25th February 1998, the recommendations was that Lewis be returned home, if he is able to give a commitment to returning to school on a regular basis. To this end a meeting has been planned at Irvine Royal Academy to look at strategies to support Lewis within school.

He will continue to be included in the school group which focuses on issues of non attendance and in addition Lewis will continue to be supported by writer.

ASSESSMENT AND POSSIBLE OPTIONS

Lewis has benefited from a period within Newfield Assessment Centre. He has responded well to the secure environment and the clear consistent boundaries, which is reflected in his behaviour, however, it is acknowledged that the situation with schooling has regressed in recent weeks. The plan outlined above will afford a short period for Lewis to make a commitment to attending school regularly, before alternative options are explored.

It is therefore requested that the Hearing continue the case for a further three weeks.

CAROLINE GARRIGAN
SOCIAL WORKER

CG/CG