

## The Independent Review of Children's Social Care 2022.

Finally the long awaited review of children's social care was published this week after a comprehensive multidisciplinary review of the state of current children's services. It is well worth a read although how achievable many of the proposals are likely to be, is open for discussion.

Josh MacAlister makes reference to many of the recommendations taking 10 years to implement. Let's be mindful that the Ministry of Justice's review of the Youth Justice System in England and Wales published in 2016 has still not managed to implement a key recommendation in relation to custody in the development of a "Secure School".....some 6 years on. Some key highlights from the report that may impact on SCH's are:-



- The proposed phasing out of HMYOI's and STC's which are to be replaced by an increase in Secure Children's Homes and Secure Schools on a regional basis.
- A more professionalised children's residential sector with registration and leadership and management training....not dissimilar to the model operated by Social Work (ENGLAND) .
- The creation of 20 Regional Care Cooperatives bodies to consolidate a number of functions currently performed at smaller scale by local authorities into a network of Regional Care Cooperatives (RCCs), including:-
  - (a) having the sufficiency duty in an area, therefore planning for future needs,
  - (b) running and creating new public sector fostering, residential and secure care services in the region,
  - (c) commissioning not-for-profit and private sector provided care for children as necessary, where the RCC chooses to do so.
- That at a national level, responsibility for children living in secure children's homes - for welfare or justice reasons - should become the responsibility of the Department for Education (DfE)....."so that this failing area of policy is given prominence in a Department that is more likely to focus on children." How this relates to Marydale (Nugent Care) as a non-local authority service is not clarified within the report.

**SAN have, for over 10 years suggested that the oversight of SCH's should be undertaken by one body. This would aid economies of scale with regards to systems development, placements costs, operational models in both care, education and health and security by removing some of the disparities of service delivery as evidenced between YCS contracted home and those providing the more complex challenges of welfare provision.**

- SCH's are clear in that they must retain an element of independence that enables localised service creativity in development and improvement dependent on local or regional need.....This could fit nicely within the proposed RCC model. However some concerns relating to SCH occupancy, as previously raised by the ADCS, is reaffirmed within the IRCSC report which states that .....*"the current secure children's home system does not work as effectively as it could in making best use of its availability either, with 28% of that capacity unused in 2020 (Department for Education, 2021). Whilst the prospect of recommending an increase in the number of secure children's homes, or detaining children for justice and welfare reasons at all, does not always sit comfortably, it is necessary to ensure there is sufficient capacity to end the use of inappropriate and damaging YOIs and STCs in their stead. "*

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A reminder for all practitioners, operational and strategic managers, to get things in perspective.....

### *I woke myself up,*

*because we ain't got an alarm clock.*

### *Dug in the dirty clothes basket,*

*cause ain't nobody washed my uniform.*

### *Brushed my hair and teeth in the dark,*

*cause the lights ain't on.*

### *Even got my baby sister ready,*

*cause my mama wasn't home.*

### *Got us both to school on time, to eat us a good breakfast.*

### *Then when I got to class, the teacher fussed.....*

*.....CAUSE I AIN'T GOT NO PENCIL.*

**By Joshua T. Dickerson**

(via Calderdale Youth Justice Service)

**Aycliffe Secure Centre identified an under-utilised piece of land within the centre and decided to develop this area into useful outdoor space for young people to enjoy.** Article submitted by Aileen Conlon (Head Teacher-Aycliffe SCH):

A feasibility study was commissioned and Durham County Council Design Team worked alongside care staff, education staff, young people and facilities staff to come up with some designs to make best use of the space.

It was decided to split up the area and have 2 separate areas, one would be a typical park area with a few activities and space to “chill out” in the fresh air. The second area was to be developed into an educational area where the school at the centre could work with young people on horticulture and gardening. A funding bid was submitted to DfE for approval in June 2019 and this was approved in July 2019. The project then went to a full design stage and Durham County Council design team finalised the plans alongside staff and young people.



After design, a tender process was carried out and contractor employed. Unfortunately, due to Covid restrictions the work was not able to be completed in the original timescale but once restrictions were lifted the project commenced and was completed in March 2021. Following the successful funding to create a ‘living Classroom’ and start a Horticultural curriculum at Aycliffe a number of objectives have been completed to date.

A specialist Horticulture teacher was appointed, who works alongside the Food teacher to develop a ‘plot to plate’ curriculum and ethos, and the outdoor classroom ensures that learning can take place all year round. Accreditation is delivered via the Royal Horticultural Society Awards, as Aycliffe is now a proud member of the RHS green-schools programme.

**Materials that would typically just go to waste are being incorporated into a new composting system and the aim is to work towards Eco-school’s award as all produce is completely organic.**

**The project also offers routes into a number of opportunities to allow young people to experience possible career options, ranging from agricultural and land based careers to floristry.**

**SAN** this month said a sad farewell to **Kieran Hill, Service Manager** (Aldine House Secure Childrens Home) after 12 years (8 as Service Manager) who leaves to do other things. Kieran has previously been a member of the SAN Core Group and has successfully enabled Aldine House to become an **OUTSTANDING** service. He will be very much missed especially for his total commitment to child centred practice. **Toby Fisher** is now the interim Service Manager so please welcome him to SAN and I’m sure colleagues from the SCH estate will offer any support and guidance that he requests. Finally, Good luck Kieran in all that you do....You will very much be missed!

## Confinement and Restrictive Measures against Young People in the Nordic Countries – A comparative Analysis of Denmark, Finland, Norway. and Sweden .



Norwegian social work, prison officer and assistant governor colleagues from the Bufetat Region West, Youth Unit West, Bjergvin Prison : Berit Elisabeth Svee Solberg, Arne Magnus Hægland, Morten Stien, Ida Lindstrom Dahl, Bard Mellin-Olsen, Christian Roger Jacobsen, with staff from Adel Beck ... Gillian Laird, Headteacher (Adel Beck) (2nd left), Francis N'Jie, SAN Chair (2nd right) and Rachel Buckland (Case Manager and Interventions Officer) (right)

**Bård Mellin-Olsen** (4th from right) and five colleagues from the Norwegian Youth Justice systems (custody and community) visited Adel Beck SCH in Leeds to discuss and share practice in relation to how young people are prepared for transition and resettlement back into the community.

Child and family welfare, that is, the policies and practices of protecting children have historically been responsible for handling troubled and troublesome children and young people. However, the practices of managing these children and young people have developed in different ways in the four Nordic countries.

Locked or secure institutions are still a part of child welfare in Denmark and Sweden, while Finland and Norway closed these institutions in the last decades of the twentieth century.

**Bård** shared with us his article which reviews and compares the use of confinement and other restrictive measures against young people under 18 in child welfare and/or the criminal justice systems in Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Norway.

*“Young people are confined for a variety of reasons, including protection, care, treatment, and punishment. However, confinement of young people is a contested issue because it can be viewed as necessary but also potentially harmful.”*

*Comparisons of legislation and practices reveals that while there are some similarities in the service provisions for young people, there are also significant disparities among the four countries regarding the organization, function, and frequency of the use of confinement and restrictive measures.*

*While Denmark and Sweden use secure welfare institutions, Finland and Norway apply other restrictive measures. Despite the differences in approaches to confinement in the Nordic countries, the use of confinement is guided by the principle of the child's best interest, and the child welfare system is the main frame for confinement and intervention. The article discusses these disparate practices from the perspective of children's rights and identifies new avenues for research and practice.”*

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Click on full article below.

[Confinement and restrictive measures against young people in the Nordic countries – a comparative an \(tandfonline.com\)](https://tandfonline.com)

### SAN National Conference :

Many thanks for those that were able to attend the first post covid National SAN Meeting held in Birmingham in March 2022 since September 2019. It was great to see “real” people and some for the first time ever.

Julie (Kylloe House) did buy a round which led to a very interesting following day that covered a number of issues and updates (not because of Julie's bought round), with one of the main subject topics for discussion being .....:-

#### **Developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for SAN members.....**The definition of an MOU is.....

*“A memorandum of understanding (MoU) is a type of agreement between two or more parties. It expresses a convergence of will between the parties, indicating an intended common line of action. It is often used either in cases where parties do not imply a legal commitment or in situations where the parties cannot create a legally enforceable agreement. It is a more formal alternative to a gentlemen's agreement.”*

For the first time in the history of SAN, members agreed to develop a series of commitments or MOU's that we would collectively agree and respond to. We quickly discovered the complexity of such a task. The challenge was getting colleagues to collectively agree was hard. The outcome being that only one MOU was agreed which was as follows.....

**“That all SCH's, on request from another SCH, would share information which each other on systems, policies, processes and practice at pace and without delay. The exceptions being those where there is an FOI, contractual or commercial issue or restriction”.**

SCH colleagues will continue to develop additional MoU's within the coming months.....

It was further agreed that the Chair of SAN will develop a draft MOU (potentially 8 points) for consideration and approval by SAN members. ....More to follow!

# Proposal of a Pilot Blended Psycho-Social Model (Marydale Lodge SCH)

## Young People with complex needs; Mental Health and Secure Children's Provisions

(Article by Andrea Marshall, Manager (Marydale SCH))

For many years, colleagues within the NHS Secure Mental Health (SMH) Field and Managers within Secure Childrens Homes have raised concerns with the Department for Education, NHS (ENGLAND) and the Youth Custody Service, regarding the complex balancing act that SMH and SCH's have to consider in determining which service a young person who is not sectionable under the MHA 1983 but has significant mental health needs that cannot be met within an SCH, should be resident in.

Dr Kate Herod, CEO (Nugent Care)



Dr Kate Herod (right) is leading on the development of a pilot model to address this complex issue with the next steps being to create a stakeholder panel, develop a steering group including key identified partners (NHSE, CMHT, operators etc), establish terms of reference and explore funds for evidence capture. Dr Kate Herod, CEO Nugent Care, has scoped out a pilot model that will hopefully make a significant inroad into addressing this challenge. In conjunction with SAN, DfE, CQC, NHS (England) and OfSTED, an initial stakeholder event took place on 27 April 2022 which gained a commitment in principle to further develop the model which is likely to be piloted at Marydale SCH (St Helens).

**What is the Pilot?** We are proposing a twelve-month pilot; with the intention of exploring and growing an evidence base on meeting the needs of children who present with "Mental Health" needs.

**What do we mean by "Mental Health Needs"?** It is increasingly apparent, that children with "mental health needs" are often those experiencing the most barriers to placement, both within the community and within Secure and Specialist Services. Anecdotally and experientially children with high risk behaviours, and even more so those with complex presentations that includes self-harm, can face lack of adequate skilled and resilient registered children's home provision, fail to meet the criteria for detention under the Mental Health Act, (or indeed informal Tier 4 admission), and Secure Childrens Homes are concerned at not being able to fully meet their needs and so do not admit under Section 25 of the Children's Act 1989 (2004 amendments).

The proposal aims to explore this system wide gap in provision, and evaluate:-

- What do we mean by Mental Health Needs;? to explore the gap between health, secure and community understandings;
- Where should these children be cared for in order to achieve the best long term outcomes?
- What specialist resources are needed to fully meet their needs; is an enhanced clinical offer needed to meet the needs of children who have experienced trauma, or is the psycho-social model alone preferable?
- Explore the systems wide referrals and pathway management approach to placing these children to ensure that children are not left with no placement "waiting" for a secure children's home bed, if their primary need is a one met with a clinical response.

The proposal is to pilot an evaluative blended model at Marydale Lodge SCH (currently registered with CQC and OFSTED), where children who sit in between meeting threshold for tier 4 admissions and section 25 criteria will be offered a place; with the ability to provide enhanced clinical and psychiatric support.

This will be under section 25 of the Children's Act and will allow for short-term interventions and assessments to better inform community care for the child. This model aims to work collaboratively with regulatory systems to ensure that whilst safety of children is maintained, the legal and regulatory frameworks are not a barrier for good care and evaluation of more innovative approaches.

This model will allow the project to build an evidence base on how we can move forwards as a whole system ensuring that these children receive the right support in the right places, as currently we have limited evidence base for how pathways of care should be managed, leading to the currently unacceptable position of poor quality 'revolving door care.'

## Contact us at SAN

For more information about the purpose, function and services available within Secure Childrens Homes.....

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OR

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**Secure Accommodation Network (SAN)**