



SOCIAL SERVICES APPEALS PANEL

(SECURE ACCOMMODATION REVIEW)

**THURSDAY 15 DECEMBER 2005
11.30 AM ***

**PANEL AGENDA (LICENSING AND GENERAL PURPOSES)
SJ SECURE UNIT, ST JOHN'S
CENTRE, ST JOHN'S ROAD,
TIFFLEID,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, NN12
8AA**

* There will be a briefing for panel members at 11.15 am

MEMBERSHIP (Quorum: 3 Members)

Independent Person: Dr Gillian Bridge

**Councillors: Blann
Omar**

**Issued by the Democratic Services Section,
Legal Services Department**

**Contact: James Chamberlain, Committee Administrator
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***NOTE FOR THOSE ATTENDING THE MEETING:
IF YOU WISH TO DISPOSE OF THIS AGENDA, PLEASE LEAVE IT BEHIND AFTER THE MEETING.
IT WILL BE COLLECTED FOR RECYCLING.***

HARROW COUNCIL

SOCIAL SERVICES APPEALS PANEL

THURSDAY 15 DECEMBER 2005

AGENDA - PART I

1. **Appointment of Chair:**

To appoint a Chair for the purposes of this meeting.

2. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

To agree that the reports listed under Item 6 of the agenda be considered with the press and public excluded on the grounds the reports contain exempt information, as defined in Paragraph 6 of Part 1 to Schedule 12A of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, relating to the adoption, care, fostering or education of a particular child.

3. **Terms of Reference:**

To note the terms of reference as set out below:

“To review in accordance with the Children (Secure Accommodation) Regulations 1991 the Keeping of Children in Secure Accommodation.”

Enc. 4. **Guidance Notes:** (Pages 1 - 2)

To note the enclosed guidance notes which set out the nature of the Panel.

5. **Any Other Business:**

Which the Chair has decided is urgent and cannot otherwise be dealt with.

AGENDA - PART II

6. **The Keeping of a Child in Secure Accommodation:**

Enc. (a) Report of the Head of Children and Families and Provided Services.
(Pages 3 - 12)

To follow (b) Report of the Independent Investigator.

Enc. (c) Report of the Secure Unit. (Pages 13 - 16)

SOCIAL SERVICES APPEALS PANEL
SECURE ACCOMMODATION GUIDANCE NOTES

Terms of Reference:

“To review in accordance with The Children (Secure Accommodation) Regulations 1991 the keeping of children in secure accommodation.”

The Panel consists of 2 Councillors and 1 Independent Person, one of whom will chair the meeting. The Independent Person must not be a councillor or officer of Harrow or of the authority that manages the secure unit where the child lives.

1. Use of Secure Accommodation

1.1 A local authority must be satisfied that the criteria in s25(1) Children Act 1989 are met before it may place a child in secure accommodation. The criteria are set out in Paragraph 2.4(1) overleaf.

1.2 The authority must seek an order from the Court to continue that placement for more than 72 hours. If the Court determines that the criteria are satisfied, it may make an Order which **authorises** the child to be detained for a maximum period which it will specify.

1.3 As restricting liberty is a serious step, a child must **only** be placed in secure accommodation when there is no appropriate alternative.

2. Review of Placements

2.1 The local authority must review the placement **within one month of the child being placed in secure accommodation, and then at intervals not exceeding three months.**

2.2 The Review Panel will be advised by a solicitor and a senior social services manager. The Area Manager responsible for the child’s placement will present their reasons why the placement should continue. An Independent Person will be appointed to seek the views of the persons listed at paragraph 2.3 and to attend the meeting to advise the Panel.

2.3 The Panel must ascertain and take into account, as far as is practicable, the wishes and feelings of:-

- (a) the child;
- (b) any parent of the child;
- (c) any person who, whilst not a parent of the child, has parental responsibility for the child;

- (d) any other person who has taken care of the child, whose views should be taken into account;
- (e) the child's independent visitor, if appointed; and
- (f) the local authority managing the secure accommodation.

2.4 The Panel must satisfy itself as to whether:-

- (1) **the criteria for keeping a child in secure accommodation continue to apply;**

These are that the child is being looked after by the local authority **and**

- (a) he/she has a history of absconding, is likely to abscond from any other description of accommodation and, if he/she absconds, he/she is likely to suffer significant harm; **or**
- (b) if he/she is kept in any other description of accommodation, he/she is likely to injure himself/herself or others; **or**
- (c) he/she is detained by the Police; charged or convicted of certain serious offences; or has absconded while remanded in local authority accommodation and committed an offence and if he/she is not kept in secure accommodation he/she is likely to:-
 - (i) abscond; **or**
 - (ii) injure him/herself or others;

- (2) **the placement continues to be necessary; and**

- (3) **any other description of accommodation would be inappropriate.**

In doing so, the Panel must have regard to the welfare of the child.

2.5 If the Panel concludes that the criteria for restricting the child's liberty (para 2.4(1)) no longer apply, then unless there are exceptional circumstances it would be unlawful for the child to remain in secure accommodation. Plans must be made to ensure the child's immediate removal to non-secure accommodation.

2.6 If the Panel concludes that the criteria for restricting the child's liberty continue to apply, but decides that either the placement is no longer necessary, or that other accommodation is appropriate, then the local authority must immediately review the child's placement. The local authority is not obliged to accept any of the Panel's conclusions, but would need good reasons to ignore them.

2.7 The Panel must ensure that outcome of the review is notified to all of the parties referred to in paragraph 2.3 above.

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