

Researching Reform

Rotherham Council's Failings: An Overview Of What's Wrong Inside The Entire Child Welfare System

05 Thursday Feb 2015

POSTED BY NATASHA IN CHILD ABUSE INQUIRY, CHILDREN, FAMILY LAW

≈ 15 COMMENTS

Louise Casey, the director-general for troubled families at the Communities Department, is the author of a new report which has been published today and which looks specifically at Rotherham Council's failings to protect vulnerable children and adults from child sexual abuse.

The revelations echo Professor Jay's findings in her report, which she published last year, but what is most startling is that the failings highlighted in both these reports speak to a wider sector, and encompass the entire child welfare system. These problems are not unique to the council – they live and breathe inside every department working on child welfare.

In her report, Louise Casey writes that when she arrived in Rotherham she found a council in denial. They refused to believe they had made mistakes. They were paranoid – the media were out to get them. They were arrogant – we've won awards for our work, they said, we are beyond reproach. And perhaps worst of all, Miss Casey writes, the Council were adamant child sexual abuse was not their problem.

Except it was. And it is, both in law and policy. So how do we have entire councils running without carrying out duties legally within their remit, and ignoring allegations which touch upon the very core of their administration?

That is a big question, which we suspect stems from the top down; government at the highest level which still operates under a colonial mandate filtering down to local departments and government agencies. But that is not our immediate concern in writing this post.

The failings mentioned – protectionism, poor training, questionable priorities and practice, even criminal conduct, all carried out by the Council, are not endemic to that local authority.

Protectionism rears its ugly head inside the family justice system every day. Previous reports on multi disciplinary services failing to work together bolster Miss Casey's report, and demonstrate how, so many years on, our government departments still do not sufficiently trust one another to share data or collaborate. So what hope do vulnerable children being sexually abused have in a world where even grown ups won't share their toys?

Poor training too, is a bug bear. Miss Casey's report highlights also the lack of training and understanding of the complex crime of child abuse – so why are we still sending out social workers to tackle problems for which they are not, in the main, sufficiently trained to deal with?

Priorities too, have become self-serving mandates which local authorities and other jobbing professionals manipulate regularly, either to dispense quickly with cases or secure their own interests. Miss Casey reports that when youth services came to the Council in Rotherham to try to tell them about the abuse in their town, the council eventually chose to shut these services down altogether. She also tells us that the council refused to believe that child sexual abuse was a mounting problem for them, and that if it was happening in their town, it was a lot less prevalent than the public were being led to believe.

The 'It's not happening in my sector' state of mind has bled through the entire child welfare system. Talk to many lawyers, social workers and judges and they will say the same thing.

"We don't have a problem inside the system – these difficult cases make up only a small part of a much bigger, well oiled and perfectly run machine."

Except that those badly managed cases which make up perhaps 10% of the cases going through the system are a barometer for how well the system copes with difficult and complex phenomena related to child welfare. They are incredibly time consuming too, and set the bar for everyone else. If a system cannot process the very issues and problems it is designed to address, then, surely, it is not functioning properly.

It is not just Rotherham council that is not fit for purpose. The entire child welfare system is in need of disrupting. We need better training, better resources, a greater respect for this kind of work – after all, it requires a deep knowledge of many different disciplines and keen and penetrating minds to apply it – and above all, a cultural shift in the way we value children.

Until then, we will continue to see reports like Miss Casey's, drip feeding failings which extend well beyond council walls and police stations.



thoughts on “Rotherham Council’s Failings: An Overview Of What’s Wrong Inside The Entire Child Welfare System”

1. *said:ladyportia27*

February 5, 2015 at 11:20 am

Yes, the lack of training is just incredible. But the arrogance of these child protectors knows no bounds. They know it all. They are the Gods after all with their God complexes and their sadistic schadenfreude disease- celebrating each victory of a child taken from home.

To me having to remove a child means the child protectors have failed and not won.

No heed is paid to the trauma involved for the children on removal.

No heed is paid to the damage this trauma does for the rest of that child’s life and the life of the family.

The corporate care system is so good?? that social workers are trained to remove children from parents who have been in their care??

Police should of course be investigating child sexual abuse and not social workers-as child rape and abuse is a criminal offense- so why would anyone accept that the LA investigate itself as the corporate parent?

Prisons are full of children who have been cared for by the child protectors, so clearly another failure. The mindset is that looked after children amount to nothing anyway- they are the disposable kids – as I heard them referred to when I was a teacher.

There was never a way to talk to social workers- oh they knew everything with their box ticking exercises. No intuition, no gut feelings allowed and these are the things that tell us the real truth.

There are other cities like Rotherham and its not just Asian abuse rings either.

But try and mention that to any Minister and yo get that look – the look that looks right over you as if you are deluded. Even if you have the paperwork to show that social workers, lawyers, judges etc knew of the children inside the abuse rings, you still get the bums rush. Its like “oh do not tell us , we do not want to know, the judge ordered the children into this placement, so nothing we can do about them being raped and tortured”

Its always pass the parcel game in the child protection business. As long as the money keeps rolling in, who cares.

There are a few journalists who have written on the matter and done their best, but there is a culture of hiding abuse of children in corporate care.

A child is 6-7 times more likely to be abused in care than at home, yet we still remove them?

That says it all really.

REPLY

- *said:***Natasha**

February 5, 2015 at 11:33 am

Thank you for your thoughts Portia. Government is still so bad at understanding child welfare.

REPLY

2. *said:***ladyportia27**

February 5, 2015 at 11:40 am

Wait until the other cities are exposed in the same way and then people will see the real truth. Maybe most will not want to believe at first and call the children liars – usual pattern.

Stats prove abused children rarely lie- but that old patriarchal Victorian “Eve ill Eve’s children are all liars” lives on. You don’t believe the disposable kids now, do you?

I noticed how social workers etc were taken in by the rare child telling lies and dismissive of the ones telling the truth. Who trained these people to get it wrong so often? The cunning abusers are so manipulative and keep in with the social workers- charming them etc. It has to be seen to be believed. Every neighbor knows the truth but the social worker is blinded and institutionally groomed by the abusers. Psychopaths are masters of manipulation but social workers are not trained to deal with them, spot them etc.

Its fascinating to observe and so scary at the same time.

Then there is the solicitors and barristers who treat the service users with contempt. I will always remember the words of a barrister – who knew all about the rape and torture of children in LA care and how she looked down at me saying “ don’t be stupid, we do not take ourselves to court”

I promised her in RCJ that a day would come when all would be revealed and her name would be in the public media. She ran away with her face and neck bright red. Then when the children were older and in trouble she came begging for the case. The children all remembered her and told her where to go. It was like all humanity was trained out of her. She only wanted the money.

REPLY

- *said:***Natasha**

February 5, 2015 at 11:51 am

That sounds terrible, Lady P.

REPLY

3. *said:***daveyone1**

February 5, 2015 at 1:28 pm

Reblogged this on World4Justice : NOW! Lobby Forum.

REPLY

4. *said:***R.Gonzalez-Portal@iaea.org**

February 5, 2015 at 3:45 pm

Dear Natasha,

Your articles are very good. Thank you for following up in this very important subject for children well-being.

Please keep up with this good work.

Thanks,

Ricardo.

REPLY

o *said:***Natasha**

February 5, 2015 at 4:09 pm

Dear Ricardo, thank you and I'm grateful to you for your engagement.

REPLY

o *said:*Dana

February 5, 2015 at 5:41 pm

I second that!

REPLY

o *said:***Natasha**

February 5, 2015 at 7:22 pm

That's really kind, D, thank you.

5. *said:***Forced Adoption**

February 5, 2015 at 5:39 pm

Many of these sexually abused children were "in care" which once again goes to show that the risks in care are far greater than those run if a baby is left with a mother with risk of future EMOTIONAL abuse.

Going into care is one of the very worst risks that any child can take.....

REPLY

6. *said:*Dana

February 5, 2015 at 5:41 pm

Poor performance is one thing, but when those failings are pointed out and they ignore them, there is a problem that goes beyond arrogance. This is not just restricted to Rotherham but as pointed out already goes nationwide.

I know of one Local Authority who failed to see the problem with kids in care as young as eight, (that I know of but possibly younger) being picked up by taxi drivers from school on their own, without an escort and taken to contact sessions but the LA have the classic answer that the drivers are vetted, they have a CRB! The letters from myself and an MP to the LA about this issue failed to elicit any changes! I have no doubt this cost cutting practice is nationwide! Any problems are just swept under the carpet of denial!

REPLY

7. *said:*David Mortimer Milton Keynes

February 5, 2015 at 7:34 pm

The problem with UK child protection policies is they are not evidence based. There is no specific legislation or regulations which require local authorities to collect & hold information on child abuse perpetrators or for them to use that information to formulate evidence based child protection policies.

REPLY

o *said:*Natasha

February 5, 2015 at 7:36 pm

Hi David, thank you for your comment. Yes, I think we need to get much better at collecting evidence, using common sense and having a functional network of professionals who all engage with each other and work meticulously. That should be the norm.

REPLY

8. *said:*Edmond Dantes

February 5, 2015 at 8:29 pm

Well, everything bad that you could say about how local authorities maltreat children through abusive child welfare will be on display in the Crown Court in Chester on the 9, 10, 11th of March 2015.

Multiple accounts of Criminality from social workers, their bosses all the way to the director of social services and the Chief Executive of the authority will be evidenced.

The local authority even tried to say that the witness was mentally ill and deluded in their desperation to cover things up. The claims are so far reaching that a psychiatrist was sent to examine the main witness to see if he was deluded. After assessing the witness and some of the evidence produced, the psychiatrist concluded the witness was very sane and far from deluded.

This is a case showing extensive criminality by a local authority to cover up child abuses and the negligence of its social work team, including safeguarding.

It is expected that press and TV will be covering the event.

REPLY

- *said:***Natasha**

February 5, 2015 at 8:38 pm

Hi Edmond, thanks for your comment. Is there anything online about this case? I would be interested to read about it, if that's alright?

REPLY

- *said:***Edmond Dantes**

February 6, 2015 at 10:35 am

What is your email address Natasha ? edmonddantes424@gmail.com

Your comment is awaiting moderation.

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15

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