

News Release



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RESPONSE TO SIGNIFICANT CASE REVIEW AND INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE DEATH OF BRANDON MUIR

Chair of the Dundee Children and Young Persons Protection Committee Alan Baird said: "In a spirit of openness and transparency, and to reflect the overwhelming public interest, we have taken the unusual step of asking for the Significant Case Review to be published in full.

"I believe that it is a thorough and accurate reflection of the circumstances leading up to the tragic death of Brandon Muir, and that the recommendations made at the end of the report are fair and balanced. I would like to thank both Jimmy Hawthorn and Peter Wilson for the professional way that they have undertaken their work.

"It is vitally important to point out that on a number of occasions the SCR notes that Robert Cunningham was involved with Brandon's family for a very short period of time, so much so that it left little opportunity for the authorities to prevent the fatal assault on Brandon.

"Speaking on behalf of all of the agencies involved in child protection in Dundee, I can say categorically that we accept joint responsibility for the issues that have been identified in the reports.

"As at the time of the HMIE report in June, I acknowledge that improvements to the child protection procedures and practices in Dundee were needed at the time of Brandon's death, and I wish to go on the record now to give my total commitment to helping to make those substantial improvements over the coming weeks and months.

"This process is already well underway, but it requires the help and support of staff at the sharp end of child protection.

"Staff who work in the field of child protection do an extremely difficult job and I have the greatest respect for the efforts they have put in and continue to make to protect the most vulnerable members of our community.

"I have already talked about the improved communications that bringing together family protection police officers and social workers has brought about and the new Child Protection Unit which will be based at Kings Cross Hospital. Work is already moving to create the unit that will bring specialists in child protection from all of the agencies together to share information on each and every case.

"With the benefit of hindsight significance can be attached to events which at the time did not seem to be leading to the tragic outcome that we now know took place. But as the SCR concludes Brandon Muir's death, which was caused by Robert Cunningham, could not have been predicted.

"This case has brought to light many of the more challenging aspects of the way that some children are cared for in our communities today. There are many lessons to be taken from it for everyone because child protection is everyone's responsibility."

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Note to editors

- The Dundee Children and Young Persons Protection Committee is made up of representatives from Tayside Police, NHS Tayside, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, District Procurator Fiscal, voluntary sector agencies and Dundee City Council
- Guidance issued by the Scottish Government requires every local authority area to have such a Committee. The Dundee Children and Young Persons Protection Committee brings agencies together and provides the structure for the joint planning, development and monitoring of services to protect children and young people.