

**In the matter of**  
**THE WHITE REPORT**  
**-and-**  
**THE ISLINGTON GAZETTE**  
**-and-**  
**SANDY MARKS**

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**JOINT OPINION**

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**Introduction**

1. We are instructed by the London Borough of Islington (“the Council”) to advise in relation to new information that has been brought to light by the Islington Gazette. The information concerns a former Islington Councillor and some-time Chair of Islington’s Social Services Committee and Mayor of Islington, Sandy Marks. We are instructed to advise as to whether or not this new information could reasonably be said to call in question the integrity of a report known as “the White Report”.

**The White Report**

2. The White Report was a report commissioned by the Council in 1995 following serious allegations about child care practices in the borough. The allegations had been made principally by the Evening Standard. The allegations were investigated by Ian A White CBE MSc (then Director of Social Services for Oxfordshire County Council) and Kate Hart MSc CQSW (Principal Officer of

Oxfordshire County Council) who completed their *Report of the Inquiry into the management of child care in the London Borough of Islington* ("the White Report") in May 1995.

3. As summarised in the White Report itself, the Evening Standard articles *"asserted that children in care were working as prostitutes and using Children's Homes to entertain customers, that children were seduced into drugs, homosexuality and prostitution, that some children were sexually abused, gang raped, knifed and that fears of an organised child sex ring were dismissed by management and not properly investigated ... that Children's Homes had been out of control at times with lapses in security and discipline as a result of low staff levels and poor management"*.
4. The terms of reference for the White Report were, in summary, that:
  - a. The Inquiry team should initially identify and list all allegations of misconduct by staff employed (currently or formerly) by the Council and of inappropriate treatment, including neglect and abuse, of children accommodated by the Council, including specific allegations by the London Evening Standard Newspaper in November 1992 and December 1993;
  - b. The Inquiry team should check this list against Reports on similar issues previously provided to the Council and identify which allegations have yet to be fully and independently reviewed;
  - c. The Inquiry team should collate information in respect of each allegation and prepare a clear chronology of events and advise as to what should happen in relation to each allegation, e.g. whether it should be referred to the police, or investigated internally, whether staff disciplinary or grievance procedures should be invoked;

- d. The Inquiry team should review an earlier investigation undertaken by Mr McAndrew (completed February 1994) concerning missing files and, to the extent that they consider appropriate, should enquire into the disappearance of relevant files in the period being enquired into, advise on the explanations, if any, for their disappearance and whether any management or disciplinary action should be taken;
  - e. The Inquiry team should also advise generally on the state of practice in the Council's Social Services child care provision, cross-referencing to anything recommended in an earlier report by Mr Cassam and Mr McAndrew (July 1993).
5. The Inquiry Team interviewed over 30 people, including Islington Council officers and ex-officers, the press, Mr Cassam and Mr McAndrew, police officers, Department of Health / Social Services Inspectorate officials and three Islington Councillors, including Sandy Marks who was then Chair of Social Services Sub-Committee.
6. In summary, and with particular reference to the matters that may be pertinent to the issue on which we are instructed to advise, the White Report concluded that:
- a. The policy of decentralisation based on Neighbourhood offices from 1982 onwards, combined with much changed personnel and equal opportunities policies, began to create an environment where the morale, management competencies and professional standards of the department declined. These problems were exacerbated by financial considerations, the way the departmental organisation changes were imposed, the appointment of middle managers who were not qualified to manage social services practices, the poor quality of residential care management,

the aftermath of lengthy industrial action and working relationships with other agencies which were not as good as they should have been.

- b. They identified 32 allegations against named staff including sexual assaults on other staff, encouraging boys to be rent boys, sexual misconduct with residents, sale of drugs, poor child care, staff involvement in paedophile rings and child pornography. Of those, four were subject to disciplinary action, following which two were dismissed, one faced charges of child abuse, 13 were not subject to any investigation and in others investigations or disciplinary action were not completed. The Inquiry team concluded that it was clear that Islington did not initiate the type of investigation they should have and as a consequence the possibility remains that staff engaged in abusive behaviour are now working elsewhere in the field with potentially serious consequences.
- c. The management system was demoralised, unsupported and with fragmented leadership and in parts staffed by people not from a Social Services background and therefore who would not know what to look for and how to respond to the management of child care issues.
- d. Use of agency staff presented a risk. However, the Inquiry had not been able to substantiate (one way or another) an allegation that at least one staffing agency in Islington was run by paedophiles and heavily used by Children's Homes and therefore a natural conduit for paedophiles to infiltrate the system.
- e. The state of some Children's Homes at the time was very poor indeed. There had been a lack of investment in Children's Homes. Line management standards were poor.

- f. Allegations of organised abuse were checked out and investigated fully with the Metropolitan Police, Social Services Inspectorate and others and (with the exception of one conviction in relation to a staff member at a residential school), Islington did investigate these allegations and the team found no evidence to support assertions of organised abuse.
- g. All individual children's cases were checked by the team and the team concluded that the Council had maintained contact with them where possible and provided or offered ongoing support appropriate to their individual needs and circumstances.
- h. There is much evidence of confusion and poor management of written records at the time. Islington did not deliberately withhold key information, nor is there evidence to support the allegations of collusion, but there is sufficient evidence to support the assertion that missing files were a feature of poor administrative systems.
- i. Generally, the key themes from earlier reports included that there was a lack of up-to-date training in child protection, poor supervision of staff, absence of management monitoring and reviewing in critical case decision-making and a lack of systems for monitoring the department's work, quality standards and implementation.
- j. Islington did not respond as quickly and comprehensively as it should to these earlier reports and, although considerable strides have been made, there are still a number of areas that need to be addressed. (The Report made a number of recommendations as to what needed to be addressed.)

7. The record of the Inquiry team's interviews with Councillors, such as it is, is to be found in Chapter Seven of the Report, which is headed "*The Position Today*". The Report records (p 60):

#### **The Political Situation**

When the Evening Standard articles were first published, Members told us that they had no prior knowledge of the state of management in Islington Social Services Department and that indeed in some respects, Member/Officer relationships were very poor, if not at breaking point. Comments such as "*The department had drifted a long way from the corporate centre*" and "*the department had developed a reputation for poor management and negative attitudes*" were made.

Today there is a new Chief Social Services Officer and senior team responsible for child care services and there is a new head of Neighbourhood Services. From the work we have carried out it is clear that there is a heavy commitment by the Members of Islington Council to put things right and to put Islington's sad history behind them. We know of the investment in residential child care services and the way they have adapted the neighbourhood structure to reflect the professional needs of a modern child care service. We know from the Chief Social Services Officer of open access to the Leader and Committee chairs and much improved trust and credibility existing between senior Members and Senior Officers in the department. We know that there are for example regular meetings, that there is a 'need to know system' in place and that the Council has spent a considerable amount of time thinking through the criticisms that have been made of it. It is our view that the department is now very much more to the centre of the corporate and political management arrangements in Islington and that this position creates the basis for future strengthening and development of the service.

#### **Organisational Arrangements**

Many of the previous reports outlined in section 2 drew attention to the inadequacies of the management structure ... The position today seems to be very different. In the last six months the Council has responded to these criticisms by making significant changes to the child care management structure of the department.

#### **Sandy Marks**

8. Sandy Marks was elected to the Council in 1982, joined the Social Services Committee in 1983, became Chair of Social Services Committee in 1991, ceased to be Chair of the Social Services Committee in 1995 and became Mayor of Islington in 1996.
9. She was therefore on the Social Services Committee during the period that the allegations of abuse that ultimately formed the subject of the White Report were made, with the first of the earlier reports considered in the White Report being

made in 1989, and she was still Chair of the Social Services Committee when the White Report was commissioned. Although we have seen no documentary evidence confirming this, it seems likely that she stepped down around the time that the White Report was completed in May 1995, with a view to becoming Mayor the following year.

### **Islington Gazette: most recent allegations**

10. In May/June 2017 a series of articles appeared in the Islington Gazette concerning historic allegations of the sort investigated in the White Report, and stories of survivors of historic abuse in Islington children's homes. Included within these articles were a number of revelations about Sandy Marks. The Islington Gazette has provided to the Council some of the background evidence for those articles, and we have reviewed this. We understand that Sandy Marks disputes the content of the Islington Gazette articles. The material concerning Sandy Marks in the articles is as follows:

- a. In the article "Secret papers show how Archway was nerve centre for child sex apologists in early 1980s" (11 May 2017) there is a photograph of an extract from conference papers from 1980. It is headed "*List of \_\_\_\_\_ organizations and contact – women*". Under "*England – Fallen Angels*" it says "*(do not write the name of the organization, and put private on the envelope) CP: Sandy Marks, \_\_\_\_\_Hornsey Rise, London N19*".
- b. The article describes Fallen Angels as "*a particularly confrontational community of N19 paedophile rights activists*" who were campaigning for a trial against five members of the Paedophile Information Exchange ("PIE") to be dropped (the trial was for "*conspiracy to corrupt public morals*" by way of adverts encouraging paedophiles to contact each other). The Gazette states that documents found in the LSE library show that in April 1980 the

Fallen Angels travelled to a village on the outskirts of Barcelona to attend the annual conference of the International Gay Association (“IGA”). The Gazette states that *“Over that weekend workshops on paedophilia were held and the conference newsletter reports Fallen Angels came away having won a remarkable degree of support for the trial against PIE to be dropped”*.

- c. The same Gazette article states that *“Sandy Marks is also pictured in the newsletter, which lists her as a delegate”*. The photograph in question is included in the article. It does not appear that the newsletter identifies Ms Marks as the individual in the picture, but the Gazette reports *“after being confronted with the picture of herself in the newsletter she said she was vulnerable and had been manipulated and brainwashed by those around her”*. However, the Gazette says that as the article went to press *“Ms Marks denied being at the conference, saying the photograph ‘could not have been taken at the event’”*.
- d. The same Gazette article states that at the conference, the Fallen Angels circulated a 10,000-word paper called *Corrupting Children: Children, Paedophilia and the Struggle* that *“decried child protected as ‘a racket’ and gave a summary submission on paedophilia, which Ms Marks’ initials on it”*. The Council has been provided with a copy of that paper, which does indeed contain three sets of initials including “SM” at the end. It is, of course, possible that the initials “SM” refer to someone else.
- e. The same article alleges that another document found, typed minutes of a meeting of a group calling itself Conspiracy Against Public Morals (“CAPM”), appears to show Ms Marks attending along with PIE chairman Tom O’Carroll (who was subsequently jailed for possessing child pornography). The Gazette reports Ms Marks as saying that *“she did not know Tom O’Carroll and strongly denied being at the meeting or a member of the*



organisation". We have seen these minutes. A "Sandy" is listed as being present at the meeting and the minutes record "Sandy is to work on designs for lettering and a logo". Of course, this may be a different "Sandy".

- f. The Gazette also reports that a set of handwritten minutes for the Gay Rights Committee of the National Council for Civil Liberties records a discussion about Sandy Marks and Tim Brown allegedly producing a book on paedophilia. Ms Marks is reported as describing this as "the most ridiculous suggestion ever", that she has dyslexia, struggles to write even a few hundred words, and has never met Tim Brown. She is reported as saying the minutes were a "complete fabrication". We have seen some handwritten notes which state: "Suggested AF write a book(let) on the age of consent. An attempt to find alt. to Tim Brown/Sandy Marks' book on paedophilia?...".
- g. In the article *Islington kids' homes scandal: shame of ex-mayor Sandy Marks' pro-paedophile past* (11 May 2017), the Gazette reports that when first approached Ms Marks had said that she had "no memory of the period" and she has "huge gaps" in her memory for health reasons caused by the illness ME, but that she "later came clean about her pro-paedophile past after being shown evidence – saying she was 'a complete bloody idiot' who had been manipulated by those around her". The Gazette states that the evidence she was shown was "a key piece of photo evidence". This is presumably a reference to the photograph of the IGA conference, but it is not clear.
- h. In the same article, Ms Marks is reported to have said "I'm not a paedophile" and "I don't really understand how I could have been so stupid. I don't understand how I could have got myself into it. Maybe I didn't read the stuff – I don't know. I can't see me having stood up and said: 'These are my views'." She added:

*“There’s no defence for thinking that it’s OK, but there were reasons why at the time. And I guess with growing up – becoming more my own person – I was able to say: ‘This is what I think, not what somebody else tells me is what I think.’”* The report says she also said: *“If children were being abused while I was chair of social services and I didn’t stop it, that’s shameful. But I didn’t know. It’s my fault that I didn’t know.”* And *“If the investigation had been done properly then people should have been charged. If I was in their shoes, I would want something done, even this long after.”*

- i. However, the article also says that *“just before the Gazette went to press, she changed her story again to say the allegations were ‘untrue and unfounded’”*.
- j. In the same article, the Gazette refers to an interview with Dr Liz Davies, *“the original whistleblower on the scandal”* and reports that Dr Davies *“tried to alert senior Islington officers and councillors – including then leader Mrs Hodge – to fears a paedophile sex ring was operating in the borough”* and that Dr Davies said *“Sandy Marks was at the centre of the council through this time”*.
- k. In the same article, the Gazette claims that *“Labour stalwart Ms Marks ... was in a key position to advise former council leader Margaret Hodge after the abuse scandal was exposed”* and reports Margaret Hodge as saying *“If Sandy Marks did hold those views, I was not aware of them. Furthermore, I signed a petition calling for the banning of the PIE in 1983”*. (Although it is not mentioned in the Gazette article, by way of context, we note that Margaret Hodge was Leader of Islington Council from 1982 to 1992. It has been reported that when the Evening Standard allegations that became the subject of the White Report were first published in 1992, Margaret Hodge described the newspaper report as a *“sensationalist piece of gutter journalism”*. A Telegraph article by Eileen Fairweather, *Jimmy Savile sex abuse: ‘Islington is still covering*

up' (6 April 2014), states with regard to this remark that *"Mrs Hodge has since apologised and explained that her officials lied to her."*)

- l. The same Gazette article contains details of an interview with the Evening Standard journalists who exposed the abuse scandal in October 1992 (Eileen Fairweather and Stewart Payne). The Gazette reports that Ms Fairweather and Mr Payne *"met Sandy Marks a month before the story was published [in 1992] and say they were 'shocked' by her response. Eileen Fairweather and Stewart Payne ... wanted to inform the then chair of the social services committee of the horrors they were uncovering. In the meeting, they laid out damning evidence of abuse gathered from whistleblowers. 'We spoke to Sandy Marks to ask for her to help protect the whistleblowers, and to tell her that their claims were true', said Ms Fairweather. 'But she didn't seem to want to engage at all with notions of abuse. I can't now remember her exact wording, but she indicated that she was indifferent to what the kids got up to sexually – she had a very libertarian view, and spoke as if they were free agents. She said she saw the role of the councillors when they inspected the homes as being to check things like: were the washing machines working? I have never forgotten it. It was very shocking."* The Gazette continues: *"Ms Marks asked to see the evidence but would not agree to protect sources' confidentiality"* and that Ms Marks, for her part, said *"she was presented with no evidence of current abuse and only fully understood the seriousness when she saw the articles"*. The Gazette reports Ms Marks saying: *"The first evidence, if it was evidence, I read in the Evening Standard. So that was the first time I'd seen anything in writing"*.
- m. Sandy Marks remains active in the Islington area in the field of disability rights. The Gazette reports that she is a director of Islington Personal Budgets Network Community Interest Company, which has received a grant from the Council to establish a *"centre for inclusive living"* including a

£27,457 salary for Ms Marks. The Gazette understood that this grant was to be “reviewed” by the Council. However, we understand that Ms Marks resigned as a director in July 2017.

### **Advice**

11. We are instructed to advise as to whether or not this new information about Sandy Marks could reasonably be said to call in question the integrity of the White Report.
12. In our view, this new information can reasonably be said to call in question the integrity of the White Report in certain limited respects as follows.
13. First, while there is clearly dispute about Sandy Marks’ involvement in Fallen Angels collective and other pro-paedophile groups, the evidence of her name as a contact for the group in the 1980 IGA conference papers suggests that she had some (not insignificant) involvement with the Fallen Angels.
14. Secondly, as set out above, Sandy Marks was one of three Councillors interviewed by the White Inquiry team. On the basis of those interviews, the White Report recorded apparently as a finding of fact that *“When the Evening Standard articles were first published, Members told us that they had no prior knowledge of the state of management in Islington Social Service Department ...”*. In our view, had the Inquiry team been in possession of the new information about Sandy Marks set out above, it is unlikely that they would have accepted this assertion at face value. They would in our view have been likely to have wished to question Ms Marks more carefully on the following issues:
  - a. Her own involvement in Fallen Angels, and possibly other pro-paedophile groups (as set out above), its nature, extent and duration;

- b. What, if any, impact that involvement had on the way she carried out her duties on the Social Services Committee, whether as Committee member between 1983 and 1991, or as Chair between 1991 and 1995;
  - c. What Ms Marks knew about the “*state of management*” of Islington Social Services Department (as it is referred to in the White Report), including in particular whether she had been aware of any abuse allegations prior to the Evening Standard’s story in 1992;
  - d. Whether in her dealings with Fallen Angels, and possibly other paedophile groups, Ms Marks had become aware of anything relevant to the allegations of “*organised abuse*” that that were the subject of the White Report.
15. Although these issues may appear on their face to be serious substantive issues that are potentially relevant to some of the Report’s main conclusions, we have described them above as having a “*limited*” impact on the integrity of the White Report because they are unlikely to be issues that open up significant further lines of inquiry. This is because as a ‘mere’ member of the Social Services Committee between 1983 and 1991, Ms Marks is unlikely to have been in a position to have had any significant impact on the Council’s handling of the abuse allegations that were made during this period, or on any of the management issues that form the core of the White Report. As Chair, it is apparent from the documents we have seen that there was more scope for her to influence these matters, but there is nothing in the White Report that indicates that the reason why allegations were not investigated as they should have been was because of any action or inaction by Ms Marks. Rather, the problems appear from the White Report to have been lower down the organisational structure.

16. Nonetheless, the matters we have identified are matters that should be investigated.

**Next steps**

17. In our view, it would be appropriate for the Council to commission an independent investigation to consider the new evidence that has emerged in relation to Ms Marks. The investigation should focus on the four matters we have identified above. We have set out suggested terms of reference in Annex A. It should be up to the appointed investigator to decide which witnesses to interview and which documents to review, but based on the information we have seen relevant witnesses are likely to include: Ms Marks and ... (names of suggested witnesses have been redacted).

**JAMES GOUDIE QC**

**HOLLY STOUT**

11 September 2017

## Proposed Terms of Reference for Independent Investigation

The Independent Investigation should:-

1. Investigate the evidence as to:
  - a. The nature, extent and duration of Sandy Marks' involvement in Fallen Angels, and any other pro-paedophile groups;
  - b. What, if any, impact that involvement had on the way she carried out her duties on the Social Services Committee, whether as Committee member between 1983 and 1991, or as Chair between 1991 and 1995;
  - c. What Ms Marks knew about the "*state of management*" of Islington Social Services Department (as it is referred to in the White Report), including in particular whether she had been aware of any abuse allegations prior to the Evening Standard's story in 1992;
  - d. Whether in her dealings with Fallen Angels, and possibly other paedophile groups, Ms Marks had become aware of anything relevant to the allegations of "*organised abuse*" that were the subject of the White Report.

And:-

2. Consider what difference, if any, the evidence in 1. above may have made to the White Report.