

Reasons for rescuing orphans, destitute, neglected or imperilled children: analysis of the work of the Waifs and Strays Society in the late nineteenth century

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Abstract

This article examines the early work of The Church of England Incorporated Society for Providing Homes for Waifs and Strays by assessing 6824 applications for children's admission to care in the late nineteenth-century. It is based on an archive study of records kept by the Children's Society in England and Wales between 1882 and 1899. A consistent in-depth analysis of the Waifs and Strays Society's policies in practice over 12 years is provided in parallel with the pressures families experienced during a time of harsh Poor Law policies. The focus identifies reasons why children were received into care from poor families when strong moral and political philosophies underpinned privileged professionals in power and in control of children's destinies. Also examined is how the Waifs and Strays Society's policies are reflected in the applications for care. The research addresses the gaps about the practice of the work of early social workers in the community.

Keywords

Domiciliary assessment, poverty, nineteenth-century, childcare

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Context

When the doctor saw Mrs W the mother of six year old Charles in 1893 she was 'delicate' and suffering from malnourishment, 'her health has now given way, chiefly through the want of proper food and the doctor has decided that she can go on in her present way no longer' (The Church of England Incorporated Society for Providing Homes for Waifs and Strays (WSS)). Contemporary surveys such as that of Henry Mayhew (1861; Andrew Mearns (1883); Charles Booth (1891); and Benjamin Seebohm Rowntree (1901), identified the extent of poverty. Mrs W was not the only mother to be malnourished during this time and there was an overlap with poverty and illness. The mother of three-year-old Lilian died of the effects of starvation and the father died of consumption (WSS5928). Children were also starving as in the case of 11 year old Ralph who was hospitalised after his father died (WSS3619).

Poor families such as these living in England and Wales had limited options when faced with crises due to poverty, ill health or misfortune during the latter decades of the nineteenth-century. Most were dependent on the state or voluntary agencies for help. Poor families also bore the impact when the Government introduced a purge on public spending from 1869. The 'crusade' against outrelief generated by the Goschen minute restricted outrelief. Goschen, President of the Poor Law Board, also a member of the Cabinet, advised guardians to offer relief in the workhouse only and distinguish between the 'reputable' and 'disreputable' poor. Clear boundaries relating to responsibilities between poor law and voluntary action were established with an emphasis to reduce state help and promote voluntarism (Hollen Lees, 1998; Thane, 1996, 2012; Hurren, 2007; Lewis, 1995; McKinnon, 1987; Kidd, 1999).

Reformers such as Florence Davenport and Mary Carpenter had contributed to shifts in attitudes towards childhood and child-welfare (Cunningham, 1991; Hendrick, 1997; Heywood, 1978; Pinchbeck and Hewitt, 1983). State provision for children with family problems was usually admission to a Poor Law institution (Crompton 1977). A rise in residential childcare services provided by voluntary agencies offered an alternative to the workhouse during the late nineteenth-century. Additionally, the advent of childcare legislation generated an increase in the need for industrial schools generally met by voluntary agencies (Parker, 1990).

This study focuses on the work of The Church of England Incorporated Society for Providing Homes for Waifs and Strays (WSS) founded in 1881 by Edward

Rudolf, supported by the Established Church, and adds to the work of Harriet Ward (1990). Ward examined aspects of separation for 400 children admitted to the WSS during the period 1887 to 1894. By analysing 6824 domiciliary assessments of families and children in England and Wales during the period 1882-1899 alongside other documentary sources this study has 12 years of consistent in-depth analysis. WSS policies and procedures were analysed in line with their mission statement *Twenty-Four Reasons For Supporting the Church of England Central Society for Providing Homes for Waifs and Strays*, (Church of England Incorporated Society for Providing Homes for Waifs and Strays, 1886), creating a clear set of eligibility criteria. This analysis describes the pressures that families in the community were under, providing an insight into how WSS policy worked in practice under Rudolf's management.

A dataset using information from 6824 application forms of children admitted to the WSS was created using SPSS analysis software. Some files were unavailable due to damage or conservation. The following information was collected: gender, date of referral, date of birth, age, family home and county location, reason for care, whether the child was committed. Reasons for care were categorised into the variables as shown in Table 2.

Process of assessment

Outlined in *Twenty-Four Reasons For Supporting the Church of England Central Society for Providing Homes for Waifs and Strays* are the intentions for the care of children admitted to the organisation. Different groups of children were to be accommodated: widows' children, destitute children, rescued children, committed children and pauper children. Accommodation would be in one of the homes, or if aged seven under a foster home. Certified Homes were available including those for 'Girls rescued by the Industrial Schools Act Amendment Act 1880 from the most immoral purposes'. Some children would be emigrated. Children were to be educated in 'natural conditions', have a good training for domestic service and farm work, to break the cycle of behaviour of their parents. Accommodating a child would not undermine the Poor Law or allow parents to abandon their parental responsibilities. Providing accommodation in the WSS rather than in Poor Law institutions was expected to save money for the state. This publication also addressed the spiritual aspects of providing care for vulnerable children and requested financial and practical support from churchgoers in their local areas.

In January 1884 eligibility criteria was established and published in *Our Waifs and Strays* (WSS monthly magazine):

- (a) Any child who shall have lost both parents, and who shall have not friends or relatives to maintain it.
- (b) Any child whose parent or surviving parent shall be physical incapable of supporting their child.
- (c) Any child whose mother shall be a widow having other young children, and who shall be doing her best to support them on insufficient means; the action of the Executive to be in co-operation with the Guardians' when desirable.
- (d) Any illegitimate child whose mother shall be striving to retrieve her character upon the understanding that a contribution be made by the parents towards its maintenance, if possible.
- (e) Any child seriously neglected or ill-treated by its parents or guardians; or subject to immoral influences.
- (f) Any child, whose parents or surviving parents shall be undergoing a term of imprisonment, provided it has no other available means of support.

Applications on behalf of children to be received into the care of the WSS were made by district visitors, rescue and mission agencies, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (later the NSPCC) and the COS. The COS an influential organisation established in 1869, (credited as the first social workers), shared the harsh philosophy of the New Poor Law and considered changing an individual's behaviour would enable them to become self-sufficient. COS members were encouraged to belong to organisations associated with charity to influence them (Lewis, 1995; Mowat, 1961; Roof, 1972; Skinner, 2015; Woodroffe, 1962; Young and Ashton, 1956). Application forms were also assessments of the family circumstances usually conducted in the applicant's home. This was a time when women, usually middle-class were becoming more active in social service (Prochaska, 1980). Even though the assessments were in the family's home elements of power, class and value judgements cannot be disregarded along with the assessor's own or organisation's agenda (Livesey, 2004; Murdoch, 2006; Skinner and Thomas, 2017; Taylor, 2015; Webb, 2007). Once submitted, the applications were reviewed by the Case Committee, comprised of clergymen, ladies and COS members, who met fortnightly to

scrutinise whether applicants were deserving, or needed further COS investigation. (Rudolf, 1922, p.10) Rudolf reiterated the need and efforts made by the WSS to ensure only suitable cases were accepted and the WSS was not colluding with irresponsible parents (Our Waifs and Strays, January, 1884, 4; WSS Annual Report, 1894, 13). To illustrate this point by May 1899 out of 10,509 total applications 7192 cases had been accepted. Care fees had to be guaranteed by a sponsor, parent, or relative, although some free places were available. Ward (1990) identified serious financial problems in the WSS.

Children were admitted were from 267 locations from 60 counties and two international locations. There were more referrals from towns and cities than rural areas.

Table 1: Age at referral to WSS

Age	Frequency	Percent
0-1	91	1.3
1.0	65	1.0
2.0	116	1.7
3.0	174	2.5
4.0	242	3.5
5.0	345	5.1
6.0	493	7.2
7.0	516	7.6
8.0	603	8.8
9.0	687	10.1
10.0	682	10.0
11.0	640	9.4
12.0	679	10.0
13.0	536	7.9
14.0	375	5.5
15.0	249	3.6
16.0	133	1.9
Over 16	94	1.4
Missing	104	1.5
Total	6824	100

More girls than boys came into care: 57.8 girls and 42.2 boys. The age distribution between genders was more or less equal until the age of 11 years, after that age significantly more girls than boys were admitted to care.

Table 2: Reason for care

Reason for Care	Frequency	Percent
Parent ill or disability	386	5.7
Parent died	1340	19.6
Moral danger	633	9.3
Abuse	192	2.8
Neglect	973	14.3
Child's behaviour	372	5.5
Destitute	381	5.6
Child's health needs	134	2.0
Parent's mental health	76	1.1
Financial	952	14.0
Other	1088	15.9
Not known	297	4.4
Total	6824	100

The major reasons for care were associated with illness, death, poverty and child protection. Health problems when a parent was ill, or died, made up 25.3 per cent of applications; poverty due to financial problems or destitution accounted for 19.6 per cent of applications; and child protection applications, children in moral danger, abused and neglected amounted to 26.4 per cent, making a total of 71.3 per cent of applications. Similar descriptions of children's circumstances can be found in the histories of Dr Barnardos and Dr Stephenson's Homes and other institutions (Murdoch, 2006; Philpot, 1994; Taylor, 2015; Wagner, 1979).

Accommodation could be in foster-homes, cottage homes, certified homes or the industrial schools. Foster-carers were usually women recommended by the local clergy and/or parish ladies. Placements in the parish were supervised by people connected to the WSS (Ward, 1990, 94-98). Boarding Out regulations were based on those from the Local Government Board guidelines *WSS Annual Report* (1891, 12). Some children were deliberately placed a substantial distance from their families to limit relatives' contact. Some parents hoped to be reunited with their children. The WSS took over various Homes and also accepted children from workhouses.

The following sections illustrate how the assessment process addressed the WSS philosophy and their eligibility criteria.

Illness, disability and death

Medical care was prohibitive for families on low incomes and Poor Law help came with penalties. It was not until the Medical Relief (Disqualifications Removal) Act of 1885 that patients were able to have treatment from a poor law dispensary without being categorised as a pauper. The reduction of outrelief combined with limited charitable giving led to increased pauperism and lowered the health of the population. (Flinn, 1976; Stedman Jones, 1971). Additionally, generally illegitimate children or deserted wives were not given outrelief as Guardians preferred to admit these families to the workhouse (Cody, 2000; Frost, 2013; Levine-Clark, 2010).

Sometimes parents died soon after the application for care, others recovered but some illnesses left patients with long-term disabilities that prevented them from working. Widowhood often plunged parents into unforeseen poverty because if the major breadwinner was ill or died this impacted on the household economy, as did the death of a mother because a father needed childcare to keep his job. It was not unusual for a child to be admitted within a month of the death of the parent. One of the major priorities was to enable parents to find employment quickly.

Disabilities, either inherited or as a result of illness, also affected employment opportunities, as was the case of a widowed father of seven children discharged from the police force because he developed epilepsy and was unable to find other work. Rheumatism crippled a deserted father of nine children, which led to his 13-year-old son being admitted (WSS752). Six months after his wife died Mr W, who was blind and deaf, was having difficulties in caring for their two sons aged five and two. (WSS5290/1). Bereaved parents were often given a very short time to make a decision on admission following their spouse's death. Sometimes the surviving parent was also in poor health.

Mental health illnesses precipitated applications for admission to the WSS. These included suicides, asylum admission and alcoholism. Mr O committed suicide leaving behind two 'delicate' young children, a baby who was nearly blind and 10 year old George who was admitted (WSS618). Other fathers committed suicide and one father whose wife had died four years earlier left behind seven children (WSS2425). Tragic cases were reported of husbands murdering their wives then killing themselves and mothers committing suicide after childbirth.

Alcohol contributed to a number of mental health problems reported: for example the physical effects of long-term drinking resulted in two parents becoming incapable of parenting. The mother was admitted to the asylum and the father was described as an 'imbecile' (WSS1794).

Children's health needs

A scarcity of provision for consumptive and epileptic children making it 'almost impossible to provide for such children', and the need to increase provision was acknowledged in the *Annual Report* (1893).

However there were cases where a child's illness or disability had been caused by neglect or injury. Charles, aged 11, was lame and nearly blind due to mother's neglect (WSS712). Another child, George, aged 15 had his leg amputated due to his mother's negligence (WSS2298). A father of seven children badly neglected the health care of his two-year-old son as he was out at work. The child had bad eyes and needed proper care and regular medical treatment (WSS1900).

Caring for a child with disabilities with limited resources was difficult. Agencies such as the Invalid Children's Aid Association helped with treatment and care for children. Children transferred from workhouses to the WSS may have been transferred because of their disability. Training for children with disabilities was a prime consideration and a reason for admission.

Children also had mental health problems. A 14-year-old girl was committed for a short period of time following a suicide attempt (WSS809). Two other children, a nine-year-old boy (WSS534) and a 12-year-old girl made suicide attempts (WSS5427). Instances of self-harm and depression were also reported.

Rescuing children from abuse, neglect and moral danger

The legal situation frustrated those working in childcare because parental rights were prioritised over child protection. The beginning of a child protection movement was seen in the establishment of the London Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children, later the NSPCC, which raised the profile of abused children (Behlmer; 1982; Heywood, 1978; Pinchbeck and Hewitt, 1983; Ward, 1990). State intervention into family life during the period under review followed in regard to child protection, school attendance and children's

employment (Davin, 1996). Marianne Moore (2008) is of the opinion that the Industrial School Amendment Acts were invaluable in the child protection movement. In 1885 the WSS acknowledged legal difficulties hampered the ability to act on behalf of neglected children, as it was difficult to prove neglect. Also acknowledged was the contradiction of rescuing children: 'It is creating a dangerous precedent to relieve him or her of the children; yet these are suffering and sinking hopelessly in ignorance and vice' (WSS, Annual Report, 1885,10). Fears from the middle and upper classes in the late 1860s and 1870s that their comfortable moral and economic standards would be threatened by the 'residuum' became more real (Stedman Jones, 1971).

Despite legislation to protect children it seemed in some areas the authorities were reluctant to use it. Proving child abuse and neglect in the courts was problematic. Four years after her mother died Catherine, aged ten years, was living in dreadful conditions and cruelly treated by the people that had taken her in. The referrer thought the man in charge of Catherine was unfit to be the guardian and sought advice from the Chief Constable of East Sussex who advised he could not interfere (WSS2364). In another case the referrer highlights the reluctance of local magistrates to implement action as there was no evidence despite Victoria, aged 12, not having attended school for ten months (WSS4718).

Frances, aged six, was rescued from her home where her mother was a prostitute. Neighbours had reported Frances was left unattended, wandering the streets and alone without food, light or heating. Her mother was imprisoned for six weeks with hard labour for neglect and Frances was not allowed home (WSS3067). Lizzie, aged 12, was rescued from her immoral widowed father whom she shared a bed with and who left her alone in the house when he went out drinking (WSS3676). Another feature of abuse was the circumstances of an older daughter kept at home to help out in the home as in the case of ten-year-old Caroline. Her mother had been dead for 10 years and her father, a drinker, exploited her in the home, expecting her to do all the housework (WSS1969).

Children were not always committed if they were seen to be in moral danger, being abused, or neglected. Voluntary agreements seemed to be reached with the parents. Rescue agencies were active in protecting women and children. Two little girls aged five and six years were admitted when their mother was in hospital because their father was immoral. The Society for the Protection of Women and Children were involved in this case and helped procure a court order prohibiting contact with the father (WSS682/3). One father had been habitually

abusing his daughter. She had had five children by him; only two had survived (WSS2138/9).

Following a mother's death two months earlier, a father, a drinker, was neglecting his children and accused of abusing his ten-year-old daughter. 'Medical evidence was given [in court] that the father had tampered with the girl, but as the doctor said that the child was not injured the case was dismissed' (WSS740). An 11-year-old girl alleged her father had been sexually abusing her. The case was dismissed as there were questions over the truthfulness of her claim (WSS5289).

In some cases the assault had further implications as in the case of an 11-year-old girl subjected to an attempted assault by the 18-year-old son of her mother's employer where she was a housekeeper. Her mother could not leave her situation as she had no other place to go to (WSS6028).

Jackson (2000) identifies the influence of moral attitudes of the time in relation to the treatment of girls who were sexually abused that was based on the duality of innocence/corruption, associated with class and gender. Misogyny amongst the professions contributed to attitudes understanding sexual abuse as shown in the examples above. Girls who had been abused were considered corrupted and polluted. Consequently they were isolated from their families in institutions and taught to forget their experiences and regain their innocence. Cale (1993), who analysed 356 committed girls in the WSS industrial schools, considers that young girls who had been exposed to sexual behaviour were seen by the authorities to be in need of protection and training to avoid affecting the next generation.

Parents' lifestyles, such as addiction to drink, involvement in crime, or living a nomadic existence, led them to neglect their children, endangering their lives. Mrs E, the mother of Lily aged seven, and James, aged five, was found lying on a bed with a black eye caused by her husband, from alcoholic poisoning and starvation. The bed had no covers and was 'alive' [with bugs]. The children were 'swarming with vermin, their boots had been pawned, badly fed and clothed' (WSS4092/3).

Death from drug addiction was reported in the case files. Children were living in a 'squalid and destitute condition.....the mother lying dead in the house as there being no one to look after them...father incapable of caring for them'. The

mother was probably addicted to opium, which possibly caused her death (WSS788).

Children who were committed under legislation were usually taken into care if they were under 14 years of age until they were 16 years old and were deemed to be in moral danger, neglected, or out of parental control. Some committed children from other Homes or workhouses were transferred to the WSS and placed in the WSS Certified Homes. Parents of committed children were typically prostitutes, or alcoholics who neglected their children, or had caused the children physical harm, or placed them in moral danger. Children who were out of control of their parents were also committed.

Lone fathers expressed difficulty in managing daughters without a mother's influence. Running wild and running the risk of getting into trouble was a reason two little girls aged five years and nine years, were referred to WSS. Their mother had deserted the family (WSS1142/3). Coping without a mother was difficult for fathers with boys too. Two brothers who were the youngest in a family of six children were difficult for their father to cope with after their mother died (WSS2109/10).

Children such as Elizabeth, aged 11, reacted against their circumstances. Elizabeth was kept at home to do the housework whilst her mother was at work 'with inevitable result she became refractory and got into bad company' (WSS4956). Other children, like nine-year-old William, became uncontrollable and also neglected whilst his mother worked every day from seven am to six pm (WSS6309).

Problems with impromptu placements arose. Carers who had taken a child when they were small found the child's behaviour challenging as they grew up. Children with behaviour problems had experienced bereavement, abuse, step-parenting and other traumatic experiences. Their behaviour could be explained as reactions to their experiences. The children could be unhappy and insecure. Descriptions of out-of-control behaviour could also be enhanced in order to secure admission (Ward, 1990).

Poverty and destitution

Scrutinising the children's files revealed evidence of strategies adopted in the neighbourhood to help desperate families to avoid destitution also found elsewhere (Davin, 1996; Ross, 1993). If possible, relatives or friends took a

vulnerable child into their homes but financial problems placed extra strain on these families leading to the request for care. Older siblings tried to keep their family together. Eleven-year-old Violet's older siblings removed her from their violent father but could not afford to continuously care for her (WSS2052). Since their parents died three younger brothers were cared for by their older brothers, but due to their limited incomes were malnourished through poverty (WSS578). Neighbours looked after six children after their mother died of consumption until plans were made for them (WSS5599).

Mothers were encouraged to find work in order to solve their financial problems. Having children taken into care was seen as preferable by the authorities to receiving outrelief or living on charity (Skinner and Thomas, 2017). Sometimes just one child would be accommodated as this arrangement could enable a mother to manage childcare and work. If a mother found a living-in situation it was not always possible for children to accompany her so a child or children went into care. On occasions when an employer permitted children to live in their home the situation broke down when the children annoyed the employer and they went into care.

Deserted wives were forced into the workhouse because Guardians refused to pay outrelief to them. Mrs S moved in with her father after her husband deserted the family, but the family was so poor the grandfather pawned the child's clothes (WSS583). Extreme poverty forced families into the workhouse temporarily as happened to Mr B's family when he was out of work as the children were starving (WSS1545). Mrs T's daughter Georgina, aged 11 years, was admitted because in desperation her mother had pawned a lodger's goods and was sentenced to two years in prison (WSS2694).

Destitution could arise when a lone parent or carer died leaving children without anyone to care for them. Homelessness caused by a relative's death could result in destitution as in the case of an illegitimate child and mother who lived with the grandfather. On his death they were left homeless and therefore destitute (WSS1543).

Teenagers could be forced into destitution as in the case of 14-year-old Lily M, an orphan, who was ill-treated by her employer where she lived in. She was left homeless when she left the situation as she had no relatives to help (WSS2676). In the early years of the WSS teenage boys found sleeping around London Bridge were accommodated by the organisation. Some of them were orphans, others had lost contact with their parents or were victims of abuse.

Accepting pauper children into the WSS, one of the *Twenty-Four Reasons* provided the 'proper work of the Poor-Law' was not compromised. Not being brought up as a pauper was considered to be beneficial to many destitute children. Pauper children had already been accepted into the WSS and the results of the 'first experiment in taking children from the Poor Law Guardians, under the Pauper Education Act' was described in the 1884 *Annual Report*, 13. Ten children admitted to the WSS alongside 'our usual class of children' made improvements, which encouraged the WSS to continue this work. Accommodation in the WSS was cheaper than Poor Law accommodation, therefore saving the state money (WSS, 1886, point 22).

Illegitimacy

Returning to the moral condemnation of mothers of illegitimate children, their predicaments were varied. For women who had been leading an immoral life admission to a penitentiary without their baby was an option. These women were seen to be reforming, thereby fitting the WSS eligibility criteria. An illegitimate baby, 14 days old, was admitted to the WSS after her 20-year-old mother was discharged from hospital and was admitted to a home where she could not keep her baby (WSS709). Children of unmarried mothers were brought up in different circumstances, some lived with extended family members with or without their mother. One mother kept her illegitimate child a secret and was brought up by her grandmother and was eventually emigrated. (WSS518). Young women could find themselves abused by men in powerful positions. In one case the young woman was given money by the seducer's father on condition she was never to contact him again, or ask him for anything else (WSS2354).

Moral values were strong in regard to the condoning of illegitimacy (see Frost, 2013). A grandmother, who cared for her illegitimate six-year-old granddaughter when the mother deserted, was offered a home on an estate in Suffolk but was forbidden to bring her grandchild (WSS1858). Similarly a widow in financial difficulties was refused outrelief as her youngest child was illegitimate (WSS2173). Mr T was in a 'lunatic asylum' where he had been for four years. Since his admission his wife had had an illegitimate child and was not allowed parish relief because of this (WSS2697). The WSS would not usually assist when there was more than one illegitimate child. This policy was explained in the *Handbook for Workers Part 3*.

Emigration

Rudolf was keen for children with difficult troubled pasts to be emigrated, which he explained as a 'necessity for removing children as far as possible from their former bad surroundings when placing them out in the world', (WSS, Annual Report 1893:13). Taylor, (2015) and Murdoch, (2006) report on similar processes in other institutions. The WSS was also a clearing-house for emigration and children were referred specifically for emigration. Parents were required to sign an agreement to emigration. Referrers sometimes advised that the parents were unhappy with this possibility and hoped this would not prejudice the case. However, there were parents who contested the possibility of their child being emigrated, and also those whose children were emigrated without parental consent.

Conclusion

A unique insight into the practice of the WSS, one of the major providers of voluntary children's homes in the late nineteenth-century during the evolution of the organisation has been gained. Also gained is an insight into the family circumstances of applicants who were subjected to traumatic experiences such as poverty, illness, bereavement, abuse or moral danger. Essential to the uniqueness of the project is that the data comes from a national cohort, therefore giving a more reliable picture.

A consistent approach towards the WSS policies in *Twenty-four Reasons* was adopted in the applications. Those working with the families, the early social workers, clearly frustrated by inadequate childcare legislation, were also influenced by the politics, culture and morals of the nineteenth century. The morality and political philosophy of the time underpinned assessments including concern over the decline of religious beliefs and the uprising of the underclass. Advice, or an instruction, from a middle-class visitor to a vulnerable ill-educated parent would have been difficult to reject. Advising newly bereaved parents to give up their children would be unthinkable today, but then this course of action was considered appropriate as the outcome would save money for ratepayers with probably little consideration for the best interests of the child. However, the voice of the child was rarely heard during the assessment process. Consultations with children were either not carried out or not recorded. Parent's voices were frequently absent and the narratives were predominantly from pejorative middle-class volunteers or professionals.

Admitting children from family backgrounds of poverty, and/or abuse, or disability provided them with education and training – one of the main aims of the WSS, in order for them to have a better future than their parents. Accepting pauper children from Poor Law institutions had a twofold benefit in line with *Twenty-Four Reasons* as the state was saved money, and the WSS had a guaranteed income. This was also the case in providing accommodation for committed children as the Home Office maintained these children. Although Rudolf was disappointed that more children were not emigrated there was a strong push for emigration.

Tensions were revealed on occasions between Rudolf and partner agencies that tended to focus on financial arrangements or moral judgement. Regardless of some powerful pressure at times, particularly as the WSS developed, Rudolf had to make some harsh decisions, yet ensured his priority of saving children within the moral criteria of the time was paramount. In the current climate of austerity and cutbacks in local authority provisions for children and families, how much has changed?

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