



Paper No. SET/25/23	
	Tick One ✓
For discussion	✓
For approval	
For noting	

Date of Trust Board Meeting: 22 February 2023

**Agenda Item: 9.6 – NI Commissioner for Children & Young People
Publication: Looked After? A Formal Investigation
into the Life of a Child in the Care of the State**

1.0 Introduction

On 27 January 2023, the NI Commissioner for Children & Young People (NICCY) published a report following a formal investigation into the life of “Vicky”, a child who had been in the care of the Western Health & Social Trust since 2002. Vicky is now 21 years old and for the past 4 years has been living in a medium secure hospital in England under the ECR arrangements. The Report is tabled for consideration given its recommendations have relevance regionally.

2.0 Background Information

The Report details a number of failures within the Children’s Social Work system in Northern Ireland which NICCY judged valued processes over substance.

The Report identified 45 recommendations on how the system could be improved based on adverse findings throughout the investigation.

3.0 Summary of Key Points

The Trust will carefully consider all recommendations within the Report and benchmark systems and processes against the findings. The Trust will continue to work in partnership with SPPG to develop a commissioning framework for Lakewood Regional Secure Care Centre. It is anticipated that this will be completed in March 2023. Lakewood will continue to address the areas identified in the recommendations outlined for secure care services as we work toward harmonisation of shared care.

4.0 Recommendation for Trust Board

The NICCY Report is tabled for consideration by Members.

**Lead Director: Lyn Preece
Designation: Director of Children’s Services & Executive Director of Social Work
Date: 21 February 2023**