

(1) Haringey London Borough Council (2) Hackney London Borough Council v MRS S & 7 Ors (2006)

[2006] EWHC 2001 (Fam)

25/07/2006

Barristers

Jo Delahunty KC

Court

Family Division

Summary

The court set out care arrangements made for children who had had a parent convicted of assault and wilful neglect in respect of ritual harm associated with witchcraft to one of the children.

Facts

The applicant local authorities made various child protection applications in respect of four children (B, R, P and E). B, who was born in 1994 and had arrived in the United Kingdom from the Democratic Republic of Congo, was discovered in a state of undress and suffering from substantial non-accidental injuries. Criminal proceedings were instigated that led to the discovery that there had been ritual harm to B associated with “ndoki” or “kindoki”, a traditional belief prevalent in Congolese culture colloquially referred to as witchcraft. The criminal investigations resulted in convictions of B’s maternal aunt and P and E’s father for assault and wilful ill-treatment of B and the conviction of R’s mother for aiding and abetting them.

Held

HELD: The case had raised understandable public concern and it was important that the public should know what became of those concerned. Therefore the court set out what had happened to the children following the child protection applications. R remained in the care of his father and stepmother; however, their removal from the UK for immigration reasons was imminent and the local authority continued to explore alternative placements. Supervised contact had taken place between R and his mother. P and E remained in the care of their mother, who had been acquitted of any charges, and a supervision order and protection plan remained in place. B had been placed with foster carers and that placement would continue under a care order. B’s mother, who was living in Angola, had since come forward and requested contact with B; however, despite arrangements for letters to be sent and received and despite the fact B had written to her mother she had received no reply.

Permission

Lawtel 