

UNION COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

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Richard W. Matens, M.Div.
Executive Director

Statement from Union County DSS

November 18, 2013, Monroe, NC – Union County officials wish to express our concerns and compassion for the children who are victims of the abuse that was recently discovered in our county, and we wish to assure the public that this matter is being addressed with all deliberate speed. The children are currently in the custody of the social services department of another county, and they are receiving good care. None of the five children in the home of Mr. Harper and Ms. Larson were placed by Union County during the time that Ms. Larson has been employed by the Union County Department of Social Services.

The criminal aspects of this matter are being investigated by appropriate law enforcement officials. Further, Union County has asked that the State Division of Social Services conduct an independent investigation into all aspects of this matter as well as into the procedures related to Child Protective Services, Adoptions and Foster Care.

Due to legal requirements, Union County is limited in the information that it can disclose at the present time. This is due to the ongoing criminal investigation and to laws designed to protect the privacy of the children involved. However, Union County officials wish to reassure the public that the county is working with law enforcement officials and the state, with the view that those responsible for this incident will be held accountable, and that such an event cannot and will not ever be repeated in our community.