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deputy leader } *for info*

LAMBETH
Memorandum

TO Herman Ouseley Chief Executive
Attn
Your Ref
FROM Verley Chambers, Asst. Director(CS) Social Services
Our Ref DPA
Tel DPA
Date 30/1/91

4/2
Child Protection
APK
NF4

Re: SSI Report: Management of Child Protection Cases in London Boroughs November 1990

Your memo of 14/1/91 referred to the publicity given to the above report which was the result of DOH returns on Child Protection for September 1990 from London Boroughs. The report drew attention to the number of unallocated child protection cases in each borough and commented on the relationship with the number of social workers in post. The conclusion was that both Lambeth and Haringey should have taken management action to reduce the number of unallocated Child Protection cases (the actual reference in the report which was quoted in the news media was "...very serious and have proved resistant to early and substantial improvement"). The report used two separate figures of 125 and 162 unallocated child protection cases - in Lambeth. The report did not in fact examine the management actions taken by Lambeth to deal with unallocated child protection cases. As a result of the management action taken over the past years the number of unallocated CP cases have progressively reduced although the figure for children on the At Risk Register has increased by 20% to currently 792 with only 84 unallocated. Up to March 1990 we had a severe shortage of social workers:

Action Taken:

- 1 Massive recruitment campaign (1989/90); at 7/1/91 there were 13 social work vacancies (7%).
- 2 Social Workers regrading; Lambeth now pays among the highest salary grade and offer the best career range up to Senior Practitioner level.
- 3 Introduce 14 new posts of Senior Practitioners (child care/child protection) in 1990 (2 for each area) to deal with complex child protection cases.
- 4 Introduce 4 new posts of Child Protection Officers (to provide independent chairing of CP conferences), training, consultancy and advice in Child Protection Cases). Recruitment in progress.

- 5 Establish Management Workload project (in progress) to determine a more effective allocation system across the Borough both in cases allocated and in social worker allocation to geographical areas.
- 6 Development of a procedure to ensure that cases that are unallocated received attention and regular review.
- 7 Establish a senior management Child Protection Group to direct policy developments in Child Protection 1989/90.
- 8 Produced a Directorate procedure and practice manual on Child Protection which has been made available to all agencies in Lambeth.

There is a strong correlation between vacant social work posts, unqualified and inexperienced social workers, and unallocated C.P. cases. This is compounded by increased referral during any particular period. It is therefore possible for the number of Child Protection cases unallocated to fluctuate on a monthly basis unless we can maintain a high level of stability in staffing and experience in child protection work - that is our objective.

DPA

Verley Chambers
AD(CS)

DPA