

REPORT RE WORKING TOGETHER
CHILD PROTECTION TEAM LAMBETH AND THE POLICE CPT

On Monday 26th October 1998 I contact Paul CLARKE, Social Services Inspectorate to raise concerns re the working practices between the Police Child Protection Team and the Social Services Child Protection Team at Lambeth.

In June 1998 the Metropolitan Police Service were requested to assist the Merseyside Police Service 'Operation Care'. Several meetings took place, an agreement was struck that Lambeth Council would forward names and dates of birth of children who were resident in Angel Town and Highland Road homes. The Metropolitan Police agreed to assist with location of the children and to forward Merseyside letters inviting the children to disclose offences.

Lambeth supplied the Metropolitan Police with the names and address of the children resident. These were passed to the DHSS at Balham, who successfully located and forwarded 65 letters. It is now known that from these letters, a further 13 charges have been placed against the Liverpool suspect.

The replies from the children also produced other allegations involving members of staff connected to Angel Town and The Highlands Road, which are the responsibility of the Metropolitan Police to investigate.

On 28th August 1998 a meeting took place between Paul CLARKE, SSI; Nigel GOLDIE, Lambeth Social Services; Pam ROWE, Lambeth Social Services; DS Colin LEEMAN, and DC Robin McDERMOTT, Merseyside Police, and DI DRISCOLL, Child Protection Team - Lambeth.

At that meeting 'Operation Care' produced a statement which was of concern to them and a general discussion took place over the management of all Lambeth's children homes during the period 1978 to 1994, when they closed.

It was agreed by that meeting that the Metropolitan Police Service would assist in checking all of the children who had been resident in Lambeth's children's homes and that DI DRISCOLL would check the two operations ('Operation Pragada' and the 'Bulic Forsythe Murder').

On 8th September 1998 at the request of the director of Social Services, a meeting took place between Cecilia PIKE-LEES, Director of Social Services; Nigel GOLDIE, and Libby BLAKE, Social Services at Lambeth; Superintendent RANDALL and DI DRISCOLL, Metropolitan Police. The Chief Executive for Lambeth Council, Heather RABBATT, sent apologies due to Sensitive/Irrelevant

Sensitive/Irrelevant

At that meeting it was agreed that Police would focus on homes individually and wait to see that evidence would be forthcoming from 'Operation Care' letter drop. It was also agreed that the protocol between 'Operation Care', Lambeth Council and the Metropolitan Police should be put in place along with a joint press statement concerning what no appear to be 'institutionalised abuse'.

As a result, a regular Friday meeting was agreed starting on 25th of September 1998. The purpose of these meetings was to share information and ensure joint working on these issues.

Minutes were taken and produced at subsequent meetings. However, these minutes were edited and did not represent what was discussed at the various meetings. I highlight minutes from Friday 16th October 1998, which did not include a decision we had reached over the press release.

On the 16th October it was agreed that no press release would be released until it was asked for by the press. The meeting had discussed whether a blanket press release should be made inviting victims to come forward.

It was decided that due to lack of support available to victims at this time and the inability to deal with large numbers of victims, should they come forward, plus the agreement that we would focus on singular homes to ensure a thorough investigation, that this press release should not be made.

Previous decisions were constantly under attack and in particular, the decision to investigate Angel Town and Highland Road was questioned and it is my opinion, an attempt was made to steer Police away from Highland Road and Angel Town.

Libby **BLAKE** explained that the investigation of these homes would cause embarrassment to social workers currently in employment. I explained that there was evidence of criminal allegations which had to be investigated and that the decision to start the investigation within these homes had been made on 28th August 1998 already. This particular decision was the subject of discussion at every meeting.

The case of [LA-A29] raises my main concern as I am now aware that Libby **BLAKE** and others unknown to me had a meeting with 'Operation Care'. At that meeting a full disclosure was made to 'Operation Care' about the [Sensitive/irrelevant] of this young man by a care worker at Angel Town in 1996, fully documented.

I am aware of this allegation from a previous meeting with Libby **BLAKE**. However, when an officer from the Lambeth CPT attended with a social worker from Lambeth to interview this young man, all records had been removed from his personal file. These records are apparently in the possession of Penny **PENNY**. The social worker who attended also appeared not to be aware of this allegation in 1996.

No criminal justice statement was obtained as the young man acknowledged that the only disclosure he wished to make, was the disclosure he had already made to Lambeth Social Services.

At the meeting on 16th October 1998 Libby **BLAKE** and Kieran **TRAVERS**, Social Worker, informed me that Kieran **TRAVERS** had attended [LA-A29]'s address with 'Operation Care' and that a full disclosure had been made and that this was the first time [LA-A29] had made such a disclosure. This was obviously incorrect and I felt that the meeting, at this point, lacked any credibility.

This is an outline of my concerns. I have arranged a meeting on Thursday 5th November 1998 to discuss the ways we can work together more effectively. However, if the people attending do not have the authority to make decisions and that any decision they make can be overturned, there is little point in us meeting.

My main concerns bullet points

- * Decisions are being overturned without consultation;
- * Files are being tampered with;
- * An attempt is being made to control a criminal investigation and change the agreement from 08.09.98;
- * Information is being passed via unauthorised channels;
- * Meetings relating to 'Operation Care' are taking place without the knowledge of the CPT at Lambeth.