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PERSONAL AND IN CONFIDENCE

Mr W Theaker

**DPA**

26 November 1987

Dear Bill

I am writing to enquire whether there has been any further progress in your consultancy work with Lambeth in respect to their stated intention to produce improved guidelines for the investigation of malpractice by staff.

Earlier this summer you discussed with Jack Barnes, Arran Poyser and myself some serious concerns, on your part, about the quality and adequacy of Lambeth's arrangements for disciplinary hearings in such cases. You reported that your concern arose from your close knowledge and examination of the process of investigation undertaken by Lambeth, and by the Metropolitan police, into two recent cases of alleged sexual abuse of children by members of care staff in residential homes run by Lambeth. In both instances you reported that it was your view that sufficient evidence existed for a responsible employer to regard the individual members of staff to be a risk to children. In both cases, however, the limitations of the disciplinary process, or the evidential basis, proved inadequate to sustain further action.

Arran Poyser and I have discussed this matter, without divulging the instigator of our interest, with Robin Osmond. He shares some of your concerns, but cannot take action beyond the limits presently set.

At the time of our conversation with you in the summer you anticipated progress could be made by the publication of a working group report on improved disciplinary hearings in Lambeth SSD by the working group to which you are a consultant. We have noted with some apprehension that the expected publication date in September passed without issue and since then Arran Poyser has learnt from Robin Osmond that there is some uncertainty about the report, its status, and likely publication date.

E.R.

I would be pleased to learn your own understanding of the current state of affairs on this. The uncertainty about the publication of the report could be seen by some as further reason for an anxiety and concern about the willingness of the Social Services Department to act responsibly in these and future instances of a similar nature. I would be interested to know your views on this and whether you think that there is a case for bringing these continuing concerns to the attention of the Chief Executive. Perhaps you have already felt prompted to do this?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

**DPA**

David Lambert  
Assistant Chief Inspector