

Mr D Lambert SSI

From: J Rowlands SSI  
Date: 7 December 1992

cc:

Mr Mansell SSI  
Mr Hillier CS2C

LONDON BOROUGH OF LAMBETH: COMPLAINT ABOUT MANAGEMENT OF RESIDENTIAL  
CHILD CARE BY COUNCILLOR TAPSELL

1. I refer to your minute of 3 December 1992. I believe events have moved on but I do not have details.
2. It was not my intention, in the minute of 5 October 1992 to advise that SSI met with David Pope over this matter, only to write to him. I have a worry about the extent to which SSI might be seen to be helping Lambeth to sort out its problems and thereby become implicated in those problems.
3. The net outcome of reading these papers for me is to be depressed by the obfuscation that (inevitably, perhaps) has developed since Councillor Tapsell wrote her relatively clear letter to you originally. Some strange thinking is evident in the report of the meeting of 29 October. For example;  

"After leaving care, he was convicted, put on probation for one year and taken (sic) up a career as a Residential Care Worker." That sentence seems to me to be extraordinary.
4. So does the next sentence: "The disciplinary hearing was chaired by David Pope as a non-line manager." First of all I would have thought that the Director of Social Services was in the business of line management. Was there suggestion that he would somehow be independent of immediate line management? Clearly he could not have been. But also neither should he have been. Disciplinary hearings are part of line management. The important thing is that he should not have been prejudiced by being involved with the discovery and investigation of the "offence".
5. It seems extraordinary that sexual behaviour between an 18 year old and a 13 year old boy is accepted as "horseplay" and not constituting a sexual assault. Where does Lambeth get its ideas from?
6. In paragraph 2.8 of this Report, are we to understand that there is some sort of pact between Lambeth employers and the Police not to investigate? This seems to me to be extraordinary.
7. Again, in paragraph 2.1 "Mr Forbes said he thought the grounds for registration were risk to children, not fraud or embezzling". Does Mr Forbes think that embezzlers and con people are the sorts of people we want to look after children in the public care?
8. All this is very worrying.

9. Clearly we cannot investigate. That is not SSI's role. If we were to inspect then I think we should inspect the management of children's residential services and not simply the residential services themselves. However, it seems to me the real question is the competence of the local government machine in Lambeth. It seems to me that SSI can only get at a bit of this.

**DPA**

JOHN ROWLANDS

**DPA**