

there was an established framework for responding to allegations of sexual abuse. I consider Lambeth's failure to respond to allegations of abuse within this context.

6.7. In my other case study statements I have set out a detailed background to the requirements in relation to historical record keeping. As I have explained, it is likely that at least some of the records that are no longer available would have been destroyed in line with statutory retention periods of the time. Since 1989 regulations require that records for children in care are retained for a period of 75 years from the child's date of birth. Current regulations also require that allegations against staff working in children's homes are be retained until the person retires or for ten years, whichever is longer. It is regrettable that Lambeth no longer retains all available records both in relation to the operation of Angell Road and for the children who were placed there. Care records are a vital source of information to help children in care understand their past. Such information would importantly have also assisted the Council and the Inquiry in better understanding and analysing how the failings associated with Angell Road came to happen and their profound impact on children living there.

6.8. In responding to questions from IICSA in relation to specific allegations of sexual abuse, Lambeth is aware in some of those instances that files and relevant information had gone "missing" between the years when allegations were made and CHILE in 1999. This resulted in disciplinary proceedings being commenced against Name Redacted in 1999 which I discuss below in section 8.

- 8.71. The appeal was not heard by the Appeals Committee until [DPA] 1990 because the referral was not sent to the committee by the Director of Social Services. At the time of the appeal, LA-A81 alleged that LA-F4 had taken her out several times, over a period of six weeks, to the filming of a television show in 1988. LA-A81 stated that 'advances' were made by LA-F4 although she now believes him to have been "*using her child as bait*". At the same time LA-A81 explained that no propositions were made directly towards her but that he would ring LA-A74 at her home residence, visiting her between 10 and 20 times whilst she stayed there. It is to be noted that LA-A74 had contact with her mother at the weekends then returned to Angell Road. This points to LA-F4 using his power and status to exploit women who may have been vulnerable, although this concern was apparently not seen to be proven at his disciplinary hearing.
- 8.72. On [DPA] 1990, LA-F88 stated that LA-A81 had told her that LA-F4 had "*proposed to her*". When questioned further on the appropriateness of a member of staff "seeing" a parent, LA-F88 reportedly responded that "it doesn't bother me" [AH6-8/15; LAM004532; pg. 19] This indicates a very weak understanding of the need for appropriate professional boundaries and relationships with service users which would now be seen as grounds for disciplinary action.
- 8.73. The appeal panel were unable to satisfy themselves that charges one and two were definitely proven (sexual abuse of one more children at Angell Road; engaging in inappropriate personal relationship with parents whose children were placed at Angell Road). LA-F4 admitted that he did act in an "*unprofessional manner*" and, as such, the appeal in relation to charge three (behaving in a way incompatible with his position as a Residential Care Officer) was dismissed. [AH6-8/16; LAMXXXXXX; pg. 7] The outcome of the appeal was that in view of the serious nature of charge three LA-F4 was not reinstated nor was he entitled to receive any compensation. I find it concerning that, despite the very considerable evidence of concerns about LA-F4, the appeal panel were unable to conclude that the two most serious charges were unproven. Notwithstanding that the evidence I have available is over 30 years old, I would have thought that the evidence, including what children had reported, indicated that, on the balance of probabilities, the charges were proven.
- 8.74. I note that the Appeals Committee made recommendations about appropriate procedures for interviewing children and asked the Director of Social Services to investigate the way in which disclosure sessions with children were undertaken to ensure that they conform to the legal requirements. [AH6-8/16; LAMXXXXXX; pg. 6]