



DIRECTIONS TO LAMBETH LONDON BOROUGH COUNCIL

In the exercise of the powers conferred on the Secretary of State under section 7A of the Local Authority and Social Services Act 1970 I hereby direct the Lambeth London Borough Council in the exercise of its social services functions under Part III of the Children Act 1989 -

In these Directions -

"the Act" means the Children Act 1989;
 "the Authority" means Lambeth London Borough Council;
 "child" has the same meaning as in section 105(1) of the Act ;
 "local authority foster parent" has the same meaning as in section 23(3) of the Act;
 "looked after child" has the same meaning as in section 22(1) of the Act , the local authority for these purposes being Lambeth London Borough Council;
 "residential children's accommodation" means a community home within the meaning of section 53 of the Act ; a voluntary home within the meaning of section 60 of the Act or a registered children's home within the meaning of section 63 of the Act;
 "Working Together" means the joint Department of Health, Home Office and Department of Education and Employment 1999 Guidance "Working Together to Safeguard Children".

1. To make arrangements to ensure that by 31st August 2001 -

- (a) all children in respect of whom payments are being made by the Authority under section 17 of the Act, on a recurring basis for or towards their accommodation or maintenance , have been identified and assessed to determine whether they are placed by the Authority under section 23(2) (a) or section 23 (2) (f) of the Act and if not so placed whether they should be so placed;
- (b) where it is determined under 1(a) above that a child is or should be placed under section 23 (2) (a) or section 23(2) (f) of the Act all relevant regulations under the Act in respect of that child are complied with;
- (c) all looked after children have an allocated social worker to supervise their care and to implement and progress their care plans;
- (d) all looked after children have a detailed and up to date assessment of their needs;



- (e) the cases of all looked after children are reviewed at a minimum at the frequency required by regulation 3 of the Review of Children's Cases Regulations 1991. If there is a change in a child's needs or circumstances such a review must be carried out as soon as reasonably practicable. The reviews must include monitoring the progress of the implementation of the care plan or adapting that plan in accordance with changes in the child's assessed needs;
- (f) there are arrangements in place under regulation 8 of the Review of Children's Cases Regulations 1991 for the implementation of decisions arising out of the review of a child's case. These arrangements must be recorded in writing;
- (g) there are procedures in place under regulation 9 of the Review of Children's Cases Regulations 1991 to monitor compliance with the Review of Children's Cases Regulations 1991. These procedures must be recorded in writing;
- (h) all looked after children placed by the Authority under section 23(2)(a) of the Act (whether placed by the Authority directly or by a voluntary organisation under an arrangement under regulation 8 of the Foster Placement (Children) Regulations 1991), with local authority foster parents are visited at the frequency required by regulation 6 of the Foster Placement (Children) Regulations 1991;
- (i) all children in the care of the Authority and placed by it under section 23(2)(a) of the Act with a person who falls within section 23(4) of the Act are visited at the frequency required by regulation 9 of the Placement of Children with Parents Regulations 1991;
- (j) there are procedures in place to ensure that all looked after children accommodated in residential children's accommodation are visited at intervals of not less than eight weeks. These procedures must be recorded in writing.

2 To make arrangements to ensure that by 31st August 2001 -

- (a) all children on the Child Protection Register have an allocated social worker to implement and progress their protection plans;
- (b) all children on the Child Protection Register have a detailed and up to date assessment of their needs;



- (c) unless there are exceptional reasons that justify departing from this, the cases of all children on the Child Protection Register are reviewed at a minimum at the intervals set out in paragraph 5.90 Working Together or where there is a change in a child's needs or circumstances as soon as reasonably practicable. Where the authority considers such exceptional reasons exist they must be recorded in writing. These reviews must include monitoring the progress of the implementation of the protection plan or adapting the plan in accordance with changes in the child's assessed needs;
- (d) procedures are in place to ensure that out of hours and hospital staff can gain prompt access to the Child Protection Register. These procedures must be recorded in writing;
- (e) as the body with the lead responsibility (by virtue of paragraph 4.4 of Working Together), for the establishment and effective working of the Area Child Protection Committee a written statement defining the role and remit of the Area Child Protection Committee is produced . If such a statement cannot be produced all reasonable steps to produce one must have been taken;
- (f) a formal protocol with the police to guide inter-agency working in relation to child protection has been agreed. If a protocol cannot be agreed all reasonable steps to reach such agreement must have been taken.

3. To make arrangements to ensure that by 31st August 2001 -

- (a) the Family Finders Action Plan resulting from the Best Value Review of the Family Finders Unit in November 1999 is implemented;
- (b) the approvals of all local authority foster parents are reviewed at the frequency required by regulation 4 of the Foster Placement (Children) Regulations 1991;
- (c) all prospective local authority foster parents are checked against the list maintained by the Secretary of State under section 1(1) of the Protection of Children Act 1999 ;
- (e) there is guidance in writing from the Authority on making decisions about the suitability of local authority foster parents and prospective local authority foster parents where either the foster parent or members of their household over eighteen years of age have previous criminal convictions or cautions other than those which are set out in Schedule 4 of the Foster Placement (Children) Regulations 1991. This guidance must be issued to all staff (whether employed by the Authority or a voluntary organisation with



whom the Authority has made an arrangement under section 8 of the Foster Placement (Children) Regulations 1991) who are concerned with the approval and review of foster parents under regulations 3 and 4 of the Foster Placement (Children) Regulations 1991.

DPA

By authority of the Secretary of State for Health

Date 15th November 2000