

David Lambert

From: John Rowlands SSI

Date: 5 October 1992

cc: Kevin Mansell
Brian Hopper CS2B
Ted Hillier CS2C

LONDON BOROUGH OF LAMBETH
COMPLAINT ABOUT MANAGEMENT OF RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE

1. Thank you for your minute of 2 October 1992. Here are my thoughts on this correspondence.
2. On the basis, solely, of her letter of 13 September, I am inclined to the judgment that Councillor Tapsell is knowledgeable about child care matters and is analytically astute.
3. As I understand it, the nub of the issue is:- what activity is Lambeth doing to enquire further into the possibility of abuse which came to light in the paperwork supporting the disciplinary action against John Carroll which led to his dismissal?
4. The way I would think about this is that this information is "possible evidence of child abuse". That means it has to be investigated within the Working Together machinery. That in turn would suggest a multi-disciplinary approach, and that in this case, a strategy discussion (5.13 of Working Together) with the police would seem to be particularly important.
5. We therefore need to know what discussions have taken place between Lambeth and the police and what the strategy is for pursuing these enquiries. It seems to me, therefore, that Councillor Tapsell is quite right in wondering what Mr Pope has asked of the police.
6. I would have thought there was a need to interview other children who have been in John Carroll's care. This would be necessary to ascertain whether any abuse occurred, and whether the children require any particular attention, either as a result of discovered abuse, or as a result of the poor care that they had apparently received whilst at

Angell Road.

7. I would have thought the possibility of undiscovered abuse having taken place in a Lambeth children's home would have made that a considerable priority for the Council's attention.
8. One cannot escape, particularly from the tone of Mr Pope's replies to Councillor Tapsell, that there is the danger of the SSD's management not taking the right steps because of being compromised by their earlier incompetencies - a familiar phenomenon in residential child care.
9. This is the second time, to my knowledge, that a Lambeth Councillor has appealed to SSI over the heads of the local, political and managerial machinery. This is all the more worrying because Councillor Tapsell's letter is so sensible with no obvious motive other than to see that children are properly protected whilst in Lambeth's care. You will understand better than I do why the Social Services committee cannot apparently get to grips with this difficulty and consume its own smoke.
10. Can we write directly to David Pope, including amongst other things the points I have raised in this minute and the question raised? That would seem to me simply facilitating communication between the Director of Social Services and his committee. Is that an SSI role?
11. If colleagues agree with my analysis and we wrote to Councillor Tapsell and David Pope in this vein, that may bring some clarity whereby the Director and the local police can be explicit about what their strategy is, and thereby satisfy Lambeth members.
12. I have made a preliminary check with CS2B as to whether John Carroll's name is on the consultancy list. It does not appear to be. It seems to me that knowledge of the earlier offence, coupled with the conditions that were found in the children's home at the time of his disciplinary and dismissal and other suspicions about his activities might well constitute a termination that should have been referred to the consultancy list. It would be interesting to know what consideration was given to this by senior management in Lambeth at the time.

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