

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE IICSA

Witness statement of Lara Wood

INTRODUCTION

1. I, Lara Wood, am the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, for the London Borough of Hounslow. I make this statement following a request from Alexandra Merity, dated 23rd May 2018, on behalf of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. This is my second statement for the Inquiry, having previously filed a statement on 12th March 2018. Prior to this my colleague Jennifer Hopper filed two statements on behalf of the council for the Inquiry, dated 19th July 2016 and 24th October 2016.

INFORMATION GATHERED

2. I have been requested to provide Hounslow's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) manual spread sheet form 1st January 2009 I have provided the LADO spreadsheet as it pertains to Feltham Youth Offending Institute, please see attached.
3. Furthermore I have been asked to confirm whether the LADO carried out quality assurance checks of child protection logs between the 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017. Hounslow LADO did not undertake quality assurance checks of the information provided to them by FYOI, we would not normally scrutinise other agencies records in this way. Practice in FYOI is overseen by HSCB and FYOI sub-group of the HSCB and there have commissioned and undertaken independent audits of FYOI. Hounslow LADO is a member of FYOI and provides key practice updates as required.
4. Hounslow LADO produces an Annual LADO report which included information of the number of referrals from FYOI, type of referral and outcome of referral and the practice of the LADO is scrutinised by HSCB through this mechanism. The volume of referrals to the LADO from FYOI have increased demonstrating improved recognition and reporting of safeguarding allegations.
5. HSCB offers training on LADO procedures to all agencies free of charge an accessible via their website, information on this training is published in there training program and promoted via HSCB and the training sub-group.
6. On the 8th February 2018, additional bespoke training to was offered to both the Education Team and Safeguarding Team at FYOI on identifying abuse the role of the role and duties of LADO and referral process. Further LADO briefings where provided to the senior management team & governors at FYOI explaining the LADO function and the process of referrals and management of allegations against professionals working in FYOI.
7. In October 2017, there was a professional network meeting with FYOI; with police (CAIT), Children Social Care and FYOI Safeguarding Team present. where we reviewed the referral process, we were due to meet again in May

2018 however that meeting had to be rescheduled and will now take place by July 2018.

8. Subsequently a bespoke FYOI referral form was devised to ensure the Hounslow Children Social LADO captures the required information to make informed decisions in a format that is suitable to the establishment's unique environment. Since its implementation in December 2017 it improved timeliness of and ease of tracking and responding to referral information, as the information is all recorded in one place.
9. A bespoke Risk Assessment tool was developed by Lauren Vallas FYOI Safeguarding Team in consultation with Hounslow LADO, this is designed for use by FYOI on cases where we have repeat allegations or where there seems to be ongoing concerns with a professional.

Signed

DPA

Lara Wood
Head of Safeguarding & Quality Assurance
London Borough of Hounslow
12th June 2018