



Tim Loughton MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 0012345 ministers@education.gsi.gov.uk

Paul Martin
Chief Executive & Director of Administration
London Borough of Wandsworth
Town Hall
Municipal Buildings
Wandsworth High Street
London
SW18 2P4

26 January 2012

Dear Paul,

Direction to extend the scope of the trial testing a more flexible assessment processes

As you are aware, London Borough of Wandsworth has been working with officials at the Department for Education to consider how to test a more flexible assessment process with the aim of delivering improved outcomes and focused interventions for children and young people. Wandsworth has now agreed to act under a trial scheme that suspends temporarily certain elements of statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children*.

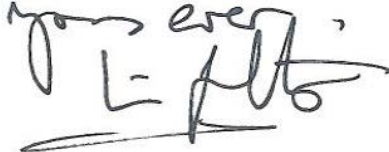
In addition to the directions given to the London Borough of Wandsworth on 11 September 2011 and 30 November 2011, I am directing Wandsworth, on behalf of the Secretary of State, under section 7A of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 to operate the scheme set out in the Annex to this letter. This direction will last until 31 March 2012, after which Wandsworth will revert to acting under the guidance set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* in its entirety. While participating in the trial, Wandsworth will continue to act under that guidance as normal except where the requirements of the scheme add to or override it. Evidence from the trial will feed into ongoing consideration of the assessment process

This direction is given on the basis that London Borough of Wandsworth continues to meet the conditions set out in Dr Jeanette Pugh's letter of 13 July 2011. This includes the requirement to provide information and evaluation reports and has confirmed local political sign-off for the scheme including the additional flexibilities included in this direction in relation to removing the timescale for the first meeting of the core group following an initial child protection conference. This direction is being given to allow Wandsworth to test a more flexible assessment process.

test a more flexible assessment process.

You will appreciate that non-compliance with the scheme or with the conditions to which London Borough of Wandsworth has agreed may result in the directions being revoked. Similarly, if any concerns arise about the safety of vulnerable children in this trial area then the directions may be revoked.

I look forward with interest to reading your evaluation report, and to learning the outcome of your trial. I would be grateful if you would continue to work closely with officials throughout the period of this trial.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Loughton', with a horizontal line underneath.

TIM LOUGHTON

Annex A

Scheme for determining the timing of the first core group meeting for the purposes of Chapter 5 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children*

1. This scheme applies to the timing of the first core group meeting when a child becomes the subject of a child protection plan under Chapter 5 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children*.

Lead social worker

2. In respect of each referral which is dealt with under this scheme, Wandsworth will nominate a qualified and experienced social worker to act as the lead social worker for the purposes of this scheme and for the purpose of Chapter 5 of *Working Together*.

Core group conferences

3. If the child becomes the subject of a child protection plan, the lead social worker will determine when the first meeting of the core group should take place.

Decision-making

4. The lead social worker should make the decisions set out above on the basis of their professional judgement, and with a view to ensuring the safety and welfare of the child, minimising delays and providing timely interventions and services that can best meet the child's needs.
5. The decisions above should be recorded, with a note made of who made the decision, and the reasons for the decision. All decisions should be reviewed weekly and revised as appropriate; immediate action should be taken if necessary.
6. All decisions will be supported by sufficient supervision and oversight as is necessary to ensure the safety and welfare of the child.