



**Edward Timpson MP**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT  
tel: 0370 000 2288 [www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus)

Mike More  
Chief Executive  
Westminster City Council  
Westminster City Hall  
64 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1E 6QP

25 April 2013

Dear Mike,

Direction under section 7A of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970  
Extension of the trial period - flexible assessment processes

Further to the directions made on 1 March 2011, 13 July 2011, 11 September 2011, 30 November 2011, 22 March 2012, 6 July 2012 and 15 April 2013, I make this further direction, on behalf of the Secretary of State, under section 7A of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970. This direction requires Westminster City Council to operate the scheme specified in the Annex to this direction for twelve months from the date of the revised statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children* coming into force.

This direction is issued on the understanding that Westminster City Council will operate the scheme specified in the Annex and that the conditions specified in the direction letter of 1 March 2011 will continue to apply. The Secretary of State has the power to revoke this direction at any time.

I would be grateful if you would continue to work closely with officials throughout the period of this trial.

Yours ever,  
Edward

**Edward Timpson MP**  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families

## Annex

### **Scheme for undertaking assessments and determining the timing of initial child protection conferences and first core group meetings for the purposes of Chapter 1 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children***

1. This scheme applies to timing of assessments of children in need for the purposes of Chapter 1 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (Working Together). It also applies to the timing of initial child protection conferences and first core group meetings under that Chapter.

#### Lead social worker and social work manager

2. In respect of each referral which is dealt with under this scheme, Westminster will nominate a qualified and experienced social worker to act as the lead social worker for the purposes of this scheme and for the purposes of Chapter 1 of *Working Together*, and a qualified and experienced social worker to manage the lead social worker and to act as the social work manager for the purposes of this scheme.

#### Timescales for the assessment

3. Where a decision is taken under paragraph 37 of *Working Together* to undertake an assessment, the assessment should be carried out according to the guidance provided in *Working Together*, with the exception that the lead social worker should determine the timescale to which the assessment should be carried out.

#### Progress of the case

4. The lead social worker will keep the progress of the assessment under review, and expedite the assessment or move straight to action, if it becomes apparent that the child may be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

#### Timing of the initial child protection conference

5. Where a decision is taken at a strategy discussion to initiate enquiries under section 47 of Children Act 1989, the social work manager should determine the date on which the initial child protection conference is to be held.

#### Timing of the first core group meeting

6. If the child becomes the subject of a child protection plan, the social work manager should determine when the first meeting of the core group should take place.

#### Decision-making

7. The lead social worker and social work manager, in respect of paragraphs 2 -6 above, 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.

- 
8. All decisions relating to timescales and dates should be recorded, with a note made of who made the decision, and the reason for the decision. These decisions should be reviewed weekly and revised as appropriate; immediate action should be taken if necessary. All decisions will be supported by sufficient supervision and oversight as is necessary to ensure the safety and welfare of the child.
- 
-