



Edward Timpson MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families

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Tim Shields
Chief Executive
London Borough of Hackney
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20 May 2013

Dear Tim,

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, 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 the London Borough of Hackney 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 the London Borough of Hackney 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 the 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

2. In respect of each referral which is dealt with under this scheme, Hackney 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 1 of *Working Together*.

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 lead social worker 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 lead social worker will determine when the first meeting of the core group should take place.

Decision-making

7. 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.
8. 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.

9. All decisions will be supported by sufficient supervision and oversight as is necessary to ensure the safety and welfare of the child.
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