

**STATUTORY DIRECTION TO LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY IN  
RELATION TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES UNDER SECTION 497A(4B) OF  
THE EDUCATION ACT 1996**

WHEREAS:

1. The Secretary of State for Education ("the Secretary of State") has carefully considered the report of Frankie Sulke dated 10 October 2016, in respect of the London Borough of Bromley ("the Council), following Ofsted's inspection carried out between 11 April and 5 May 2016, which found that the Council's delivery of children's social care was inadequate overall and inadequate across all key sub-judgments.
2. The Secretary of State notes the recommendation of the report to the effect that the Council should retain control of children's social services for a period of six months, pending a further review of improvement progress.
3. Nevertheless, the Secretary of State is satisfied that the Council is still failing to perform to an adequate standard, some or all of the functions to which section 497A of the Education Act 1996 ("the 1996 Act") is applied by section 50 of the Children Act 2004 ("children's social care functions"), namely:
  - a) social services functions, as defined in the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970, so far as those functions relate to children;
  - b) the functions conferred on the Council under sections 23C to 24D of the Children Act 1989 (so far as not falling within paragraph a. above); and
  - c) the functions conferred on the Council under sections 10, 12, 12C, 12D and 17A of the Children Act 2004.
4. The Secretary of State has re-appointed Frankie Sulke as Commissioner for Children's Services in Bromley ("the Children's Services Commissioner") in accordance with, and for the purposes of, the terms of reference ("the Terms of Reference") set out in the Annex to this direction.
5. The Secretary of State, having considered representations made by the Council, considers it expedient, in accordance with her powers under section 497A(4B) of the Education Act 1996, to direct the Council as set out below in order to ensure that all of the Council's children's social care functions are performed to an adequate standard.

NOW THEREFORE:

6. Pursuant to her powers under section 497A(4B) of the Education Act 1996 Act, the Secretary of State directs the Council as follows:

- a. To provide such assistance as either the Secretary of State or the Children's Services Commissioner may require;
- b. To co-operate with the Children's Services Commissioner, including on request allowing the Commissioner at all reasonable times access:
  - i. to any premises of the Council;
  - ii. to any document of, or relating to, the Council; and
  - iii. to any employee or member of the Council,

which appears to her to be necessary for achieving the purposes of, and carrying out the responsibilities set out in, the Terms of Reference.

- c. To provide the Children's Services Commissioner with such amenities, services and administrative support as she may reasonably require from time to time for the carrying out of her responsibilities in accordance with the Terms of Reference, including:
  - i. providing officers' time or support;
  - ii. providing office space, meeting rooms or computer facilities;
- d. To co-operate with a Commissioner-led review as set out in the terms of reference.
- e. To ensure that the Deputy Chief Executive of the Council's focus is directed exclusively towards improved delivery of children's social care functions until agreed otherwise by the Secretary of State.

This direction will remain in force until it is revoked by the Secretary of State.

Signed on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Suzanne Lunn', written in a cursive style.

SUZANNE LUNN

A Senior Civil Servant in the Department for Education

Dated this 28 day of November 2016

## **ANNEX**

### **Relevant Functions**

#### **Commissioner for Children's Social Care Services**

##### **Terms of Reference**

The London Borough of Bromley has systemically failed as its children's social care services have been found to be 'inadequate' across all of the key judgements in the April 2016 Ofsted inspection. In all cases where a Council has persistently or systemically failed to discharge its children's social care functions there is a presumption that service control will be removed from the council unless there are good reasons not to do so.

In line with the recommendations set out in the initial Children's Services Commissioner's report published on 10 October 2016 and the Department's intervention policy, the Children's Services Commissioner is expected to take the following steps:

- 1) To produce a project plan detailing how she will provide challenge and support and assess progress (for example, which key strategic and partnership meetings she will attend) and provide six-weekly written updates on the Council's progress to the Minister for Vulnerable Children and Families, and more frequently if the pace of progress is not sufficient or if the Minister requires it.
- 2) To support and challenge senior members, corporate senior management and senior partners to work together to create the culture and leadership necessary to sustain improvements in children's services.
- 3) To review the Council's leadership and management capacity and capability to drive forward the changes necessary to achieve the required standard.
- 4) To make a recommendation to the Secretary of State as to whether the Council has made sufficient improvement progress to continue to retain control of its children's services or whether alternative delivery arrangements are the most effective way of securing and sustaining improvement, and if so, to recommend the form those alternative delivery arrangements should take.

The Commissioner will provide her report to the Secretary of State by 26 May 2017.