

## THE EXECUTIVE

29 APRIL 2003

### REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

<b>AUDIT OF CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES: LAMING RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>FOR DECISION</b>	
<p><i>This report presents the contents of a self audit, as required following the publication of the Laming Report into the death of Victoria Climbié, prior to its submission to the Department of Health.</i></p> <p><b><u>Summary</u></b></p> <p>Following the publication of the Laming Report into the tragic death of Victoria Climbié, the Government is taking steps to ensure quick, significant and sustained improvement in child protection services. As part of that process all Local Authorities have been asked to complete a self audit of their services. Similar audits are required of other agencies such as the Police and Health Services and we are co-ordinating this with colleagues locally.</p> <p>A copy of the draft response to the Audit requirement is attached as Appendix 1. Although completed primarily by Social Services staff, it is important to understand that the Audit is one of the services provided by the Council as a whole and to links with other agencies. Standard One, relating to the referral of cases for example, includes the appropriate training of all front line staff across the Council. Standard Seven relates to the overall governance and scrutiny of policy and practice, particularly by Members and Chief Officers.</p> <p><b><u>Recommendation / Reason</u></b></p> <p>The Executive is recommended to note the content of the self audit and action plan and to approve it being submitted to the Department of Health. The Executive is also asked to note that the Chief Executive, the Executive Director for Health &amp; Social Care and the Director of Education, Arts and Libraries are planning an audit of how the children are protected during the late summer in support of the Area Child Protection Committee.</p>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b> Bob Kedward	Head of Children & Family Services	Telephone: 020 8227 2233 Fax: 020 8227 2241 E-mail: <a href="mailto:bob.Kedward@lbbd.gov.uk">bob.Kedward@lbbd.gov.uk</a>

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The paper attached in Appendix 1 has been developed by a Working Group including staff from Legal Services, Housing and Education and has been circulated to members of the Area Child Protection Committee for comment. It has involved lengthy discussions and evidence gathering, albeit within the short time period allowed. The Working Group also involved a consultant external to the Council to ensure an element of challenge to the discussion. Discussions with other Authorities has indicated that our process has been robust.

- 1.2 The paper is in the format required by the Department of Health. Although lengthy and not easy to read, its approach is the same for each area it covers. Firstly, the Laming Report's recommendation is stated. This is then given as a standard against which we are asked to assess our service. Each of these standards is then broken down into more detailed statements. For each statement, we are asked to choose a response from a "drop down menu", where '1' indicates a poor service and '4' a very good service. We are also asked to indicate when we expect to meet the standard to provide supporting text in a box below.
- 1.3 Given the deadlines set by the Government, it has not been possible to produce a final version of the text for circulation in advance to the Executive. The Appendix remains a working document and amendments are being made as further evidence and comments are being received. Any significant amendments for the final version, which needs to be with the Department of Health by the 30<sup>th</sup> April, will be indicated in the presentation to the Committee.
- 1.4 Appendix 2 is the resultant Action Plan.

## **2. Conclusion**

- 2.1 The document is likely to be closely scrutinised by Officers in the Department of Health. They are likely to pay close attention to two areas in particular. Firstly, any area of work which falls well below the standards indicated in the audit and secondly, any improvements claimed which do not accord with other information they have about the service – for example from management information submitted to them or from any recent inspections. Where such improvements are claimed, we may anticipate a requirement to evidence them. The Department of Health will also be conducting audits of Councils with Social Services responsibilities.

### **Background Papers**

'The Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report' – published January 2003