

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Social Services Committee, which was open to the press and public, held at Lewisham Town Hall, Catford, SE6 on Tuesday 10th December 1985 at 8 p.m.

Present

Councillor Jordan (Chair); Councillors Atkinson, Atlay, Barrett, Bartlett, Day, Elvin, Long, Moran, Rowing and Ubsdell.

Co-opted Members: Mrs Gorick, Mr Holder and Ms Millbank

Observers: Mrs Humble, Mr Levett and Miss Phillips

Also Present under Standing Orders: Councillor Hawkins

Apologies were received from Councillors Goudge and Stockbridge.

Minute No.Action1 LEEWAYS INQUIRY REPORT (page 600)

The following matters were raised during the discussion of this report:-

Recommendation 1 - "Elected Members should consider their role in the department".

The Chair advised the Committee that, as this was a matter which needed to be addressed to all members, it should be discussed by the Policy & Resources Committee.

Chair/  
Cttee.Clerk

Councillor Long stated that she was looking, in conjunction with the Chief Personnel Officer, at the training needs of councillors following the May 1986 elections, with special emphasis being placed on the needs of Social Services Committee members.

Councillor Elvin reminded the Committee that a report was awaited from the Residential Review Group on the involvement of members in rota visits.

DSS

Recommendations referred to the Policy & Resources (Personnel) Sub-Committee

In answer to a question from Councillor Elvin on whether this committee would receive reports back on the items which have been referred to the Policy & Resources Committee for consideration, the Chair advised the committee that some matters would need to be referred back to this committee for further action. The Chair agreed that this committee would receive information reports on those matters which had been dealt with by the Personnel Sub-Committee.

Minute No.

Recommendation 5 - "Progress and performance of staff should be monitored and discussed" and Recommendation 6 - "Employees Unsuitable to care for children should be dismissed".

Councillor Taylor suggested that consideration should be given to making it the usual procedure where an employee of the Social Services Department, as a citizen of this Borough, was the subject of the Social Services Department involvement in their personal life, the services of another local authority should be sought. Such action would separate the role of the Social Services Department as an employer which could be in conflict with its role as a Social Services Department.

Councillor Elvin suggested that the matter be referred to the Personnel Sub-Committee for inclusion in the discussions taking place at the Local Joint Committee and Councillor Long advised that this matter had been picked up.

Recommendations, 13, 14 and 15 - "Staff Complaints Procedure"

Mrs Humble referred to the papers circulated to all staff following the previous meeting on the procedure for lodging complaints. She stated that no assurance had been given in that document that staff would be advised of the results of investigations made. The Director agreed that this had been an omission from the interim complaints procedure and he assured the Committee that staff would be advised of the outcome of any matters reported by them.

Recommendation 16 - "Proper Reception Facilities at Eros House"

The Committee endorsed the priority attached to this work.

Recommendation 19 - "Complaints Procedure for Children in Care"

The Director advised the Committee that the procedure had been drafted but had not been circulated yet.

In reply to concern expressed by Councillor Taylor about the monitoring of children being fostered, the Director assured the committee that the procedures for vetting foster families were of a very high standard. Training programmes were carried out for staff and foster parents and, whilst there was a need to look constantly at the standard of supervision given by the Department to foster parents, there was a difficult balance to be kept to ensure that foster homes were not "institutionalised". The Committee were advised that the Child Abuse Procedures would apply to children in foster homes.

Minute No.ActionRecommendation 21 - "training programme for the Recruitment Manual to be speeded up."

Councillor Long reported that the training day held the previous Saturday had been successful. It had enabled Members and officers to look at some of the issues which it was not otherwise possible to do and a further day would be arranged. The Chair advised that it had been agreed at the training day that some work should be undertaken to see if any amendments needed to be made to the Recruitment Manual in respect of Social Services Department posts. Councillor Long advised the Committee that the Recruitment Manual was being reviewed.

RESOLVED that the action taken, or planned, following the Leeways Inquiry Report be noted.

DSS

2. THE RESIDENTIAL CARE REVIEW (page 606)

Councillor Taylor suggested that a deadline should be set for the completion of work on 33 Wickham Road and that contractors should be engaged to complete the work if Lewisham Young Builders failed to achieve that deadline. It was

RESOLVED that

- (i) the report be noted, and
- (ii) the Chair of this Committee should discuss the work being carried out at 33 Wickham Road with the Chair of the Direct Labour Committee and the Borough Architect and report back to this committee if necessary.

BA/Cttee Clerk

3. SUPERVISION (page 607)

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

4. JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS (page 607)

It was noted that the word "printed" in the penultimate line of paragraph 3 should read "prepare".

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

5. FURTHER MATTERS TO BE ADDRESSED AS A CONSEQUENCE OF LEEWAYS (page 609 and Appendix attached at page 614)

It was felt that the words "firm, fair and decisive" were not the only adjectives which could be used to describe the approach outlined in paragraph 3.4 of the report and that such words as "efficient" "effective", "give clear support and help" could also be used.

Minute No.Action

It was suggested that the seminar should be postponed until after the new Council came into office in May 1986 but, whilst this view was appreciated, it was felt that the matter should not be delayed. It was suggested that the Seminar should be open to members of both parties who were interested in social services matters. It was

RESOLVED that

(i) the need for the management style within the Social Services to continue to change and in particular that staff will now be expected to adopt the approach outlined in paragraph 3.4 of the report, be noted;

(ii) the importance of Departmental Reorganisation in bringing about a positive change following Leeways, and the fact that senior management initiatives are seriously restricted until Directorate is operating at full strength, be noted;

(iii) that approval be given, subject to appropriate finance being identified, to a temporary post of Residential Manager to assist the Assistant Director Residential Services to process key matters following the Leeways Inquiry, and that the officer should be in post as soon as possible;

DSS

(iv) it be noted that Residential Management may need to be further strengthened when the supervisory and monitoring implications of the Inquiry's recommendations become fully apparent;

DSS

(v) the views expressed by the Committee, as set out above, and the possibility of holding a seminar on residential care issues outlined in paragraph 3.6.5 of the report be noted;

DSS

(vi) complex issues of child protection raised by the Leeways report and others briefly described in para 3.7.2 be noted;

(vii) the Child Care Policy Group be requested to report on these matters in its "Policy Statement" report to this Committee; and

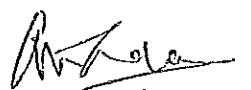
(viii) the need for additional resources highlighted by the Inquiry report and mentioned in paragraphs 3.5, 3.6 and 3.8, and that the Director will be producing a package of uncommitted growth to be considered in the 1986/87 budget cycle, be noted;

DSS

Minute No.Action6. LEEWAYS INVESTIGATION - PROGRESS (page 616)

RESOLVED that the report be received.

The meeting ended at 9.58 p.m.



Chair

18th March 1986

SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

10TH DECEMBER 1985

Item  
No. 1LEEWAYS INQUIRY REPORT  
(Contributors: DSS, CE, CPO)1. Purpose of the Report

This report comments on each of the recommendations of the Inquiry, identifying where action has been taken and what that action is. It also comments on other recommendations which have not yet been achieved, identifying the constraints involved, including resources required and establishing time scales for achieving them.

2. Recommendations

To note the action taken, or planned following the Leeways Inquiry Report.

3. Comments on Recommendations in Leeways Inquiry Report

The remainder of this report comments on each recommendation in the Leeways Report. The numbers used are those of the recommendations on pages 114 to 120 of the Leeways Report. To avoid the need for continual cross referencing with the Inquiry Report a relevant summary of the substance of each recommendation is given.

1. "Elected members should consider their role in the department"

The Committee has already agreed a policy statement approved by Council, within which officers of the department have to judge their service delivery.

The Chair and Vice-Chair will be writing a separate report on this issue.

2. "There should be clearly defined responsibilities with managers held accountable"

New job descriptions in Residential Management do clearly describe staff responsibilities. Many of these are dependent on those below them in the structure being able to carry these things through.

As the report highlights further on, key staff in management, i.e. heads of homes do not have any job descriptions to which to refer. Their role is two-fold - managing a team of workers concentrating on standards of care, and all the controlling of budgets covering food, cleaning materials, furniture, clothing, holidays, etc. However, the main expenditure in a home is staffing over which Heads of Homes have little direct control and at present no financial information. A new financial information system will clearly help to improve accountability in financial matters.

The preparation of job descriptions will solve some of the problems defined in the report but without the necessary information to carry through their duties, they cannot be held accountable in this respect.

A programme is being formulated for producing job descriptions for all residential staff, from heads of homes to care assistants. Priority will be given to those for heads, with a target date of August 1986 provided the necessary staffing resources can be made available to undertake this task.

3. "Residential Care Review and reorganisation of management directive should be implemented"

This is the subject of a separate report on the agenda.

4. "All employees should be given a specific set of documents on joining the Division as part of their contract of employment"

This is the subject of a separate report on the agenda.

5. "Progress and performance of staff should be monitored and discussed"

Monitoring of staff performance is an essential part of professional supervision, and is a regular expectation of the Social Services Department. Supervisors will be encouraged to be more open and honest with staff.

The principle of the creation of a formal monitoring system will be the subject of a separate report by the Chief Personnel Officer to Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub-Committee.

6. "Employees unsuitable to care for children should be dismissed"

The Committee made no decision on the recommendation other than to ask officers to consider it further. This is being considered by the Chief Personnel Officer in conjunction with the Solicitor to the Council and a report to Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub-Committee will follow.

7. "Verbal warnings and allegations of bad practice should be recorded on employees' personal files"

The Committee made no decision on this recommendation. It will be the subject of a report to Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub-Committee by the Chief Personnel Officer.

8. "Integration of training sections in Social Services"

The two Social Services posts in Central Training have now been transferred to the Social Services Department.

Discussions are taking place in the Department to provide an integrated training unit incorporating these two posts with the existing staff development team to provide a unified section. The target date for implementation of the revised training section is the end of March 1986.

9. "Proper provision of training opportunities"

Management do accept their responsibility for staff training and development. Part of the rationale for increasing the number of staff in children's homes was to allow time for training and more staff are now able to attend training courses.

However this does not tackle the vast problem of the need for regular and on-going training for residential staff. Whilst social work teams, and even whole offices and day centres can close down for a day or half a day for training, residential homes only have one third of their staff on duty at any one time (14 shifts in the week - staff work 5 shifts) and cannot close. In order even to get all staff in for staff meetings requires them to work longer shifts (to allow overlap time for a staff meeting) or even come in on their day off. To expand this to include much needed training will further increase the demands made on residential workers - either those undertaking training, or those covering their shift in their absence. The average cost of an additional shift on overtime is £46.56. This area will be the subject of a bid for uncommitted growth in the 1986/87 budget. (See also item 5 on this agenda)

10. "Training and development of staff to be the responsibility of managers"

The Department accepts the principles outlined in the recommendation.

Heads of homes are the managers for staff in the residential homes, and are beginning to initiate training for their own staff. Staff meetings are also used as a forum for staff development. However heads of homes themselves vary greatly in their experience and training and therefore their ability to undertake the task is varied.

Residential Managers assist heads of homes in organising training, but have little time to be involved in the actual training themselves.

Proposals for extensive training for senior staff in homes appears elsewhere on the report (under recommendation 27 and item 5 on this agenda).

11. "The present pattern of (professional) supervision in residential homes be improved"

This is the subject of a separate report on the agenda.

12. "Induction training initiated"

Induction training for residential staff used to be run when sufficient new staff had joined the service to make a course viable. It lasted three days, and staff visited other establishments and spent a day in a district office.

The system meant that staff may have been in post several months before attending, couldn't see much value in the idea of course, and might not feel that the home could release them.

Discussions have started with Staff Development Section on the possibility of producing more detailed handouts and a video recording which could be used as part of a new staff's introduction on their first day.

13, 14 "Staff complaints procedure"  
 & 15

An interim complaints procedure for staff in Social Services Department has been produced and distributed to all staff.

The management time involved in handling complaints could be significant but at this time cannot be quantified. Experience following the publication of the Leeways Inquiry Report cannot be used as a guide to the amount of time needed, as currently the time demand is excessive.

A comprehensive report on complaints is currently being prepared by the Chief Executive and Chief Personnel Officer.

16. "Proper reception facilities at Eros House"

Residential Management re-organisation with its additional staffing, at Eros House requires additional accommodation. Proposals for adaptations to the 5th floor, including the creation of a reception area were submitted to the Borough Architect on 2nd December 1985, and the target date for completion of this work is the end of March 1986.

The Committee are asked to endorse the priority attached to this work.

17. "Domestic staff to attend staff meetings"

There are fewer domestic staff now working in residential child care.

Arrangements are being made for them to be included in staff meetings, but not necessarily every meeting, or for the whole time. This already happens in adult homes.

However, the Committee should note that time spent in staff meetings has financial implications.

18. "Parents complaints procedure"

An interim procedure has been drafted and circulated. In future it will be handed to parents at the point of reception of their child into care.

Arrangements will be made to send it to parents whose children are already in the care of the Council. The method for carrying out this task has not yet been formulated and therefore a time scale cannot yet be given.

19. "Complaints procedure for children in care"

An interim procedure has been drafted and circulated to staff. It will be handed to children who are received into care by the Social Worker. Arrangements will be made to hand it to children already in the Care of the Council by the end of January 1986.

A complete guide for children in Care is currently being produced and when completed will contain a complaints procedure. The target date for completion of this guide is Summer 1986.

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20. "Development of uniform policy of record keeping"

The context in which this recommendation was written makes it clear that it was referring to both the client and staff records.

Client records

The departmental report on access to records formulates a new procedure for recording. The full recording procedures will be implemented on 1st April 1986 and work is currently planned on establishing training courses to enable this to happen.

Staff records

There will be a proposal in the Department's uncommitted growth proposals for 1986/87 to enable the computerisation of staff records.

The revision of Residential Division filing systems which are another aspect on which this recommendation was based, will be a primary task for the new Principal Administrative Officer. It is hoped that this post will be filled by end of March 1986.

The issue of content of personal files has been referred to the Chief Personnel Officer for development of a Council wide procedure.

21. "Training programme for recruitment manual to be speeded up"

The training programme which lasts three days has been attended by key staff in the Head Office Team. Only a small number of heads of homes have so far attended. Officers are discussing ways of speeding up this programme.

There have been discussions in Residential Division as to how the agreed procedures could be interpreted or modified to continue to meet the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy, yet improve the standards and depth of interviews.

Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub-Committee are to review the recruitment needs of the whole Council.

22. "Modification of Recruitment Manual to reduce chances of unsuitable people being employed"

Discussions are taking place with Chief Personnel Officer to identify those modifications required in the recruitment manual to ensure that unsuitable people are not employed which will then be subject to a report to Personnel Sub-Committee.

23. "The right to ask questions about suitability as well as 'ability'"

Ways of combining the recommendation with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy are currently being discussed by members of this Committee and Senior Officers of the Department and other departments.

Conclusions and areas for further work will be reported orally.

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24. "Enquiries on spent convictions"

Requests for references are now asking about convictions including spent convictions.

Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub-Committee are to be asked to consider a question on application forms.

25. "Press DHSS for relevant information"

Discussions have started with DHSS Social Work Inspectorate. It is understood that there are changes in procedure already planned which will give Local Authorities access to information on candidates' convictions.

The Department will need to set criteria for the assessment of this information.

26. "Members training on recruitment"

Any changes in procedure for Social Services as a result of discussions currently taking place will require revised training for both members and officers.

The issue of training for members will be the subject of a report to Personnel Sub-Committee.

27. "Programme of child abuse training for residential workers"

Discussions have already started with Staff Development regarding a training course on the topic.

It has to be said that whilst there is an important topic for training there are other important issues which carry at least as high priority and critical decisions have to be made as to where the emphasis should be. Team building, to develop staff groups together in the new or revised homes, management and supervision training, child development including self-awareness, dealing with violence, (including prevention) are all crucial to the running of the new service and only so much can be provided at any one time and continue to run a service.

The resource implications for the whole training programme are included in the comments on recommendations 9 and 11. (See also report in item 5 on this agenda)

28. "Residential staff mobility"

Whilst management has always considered requests from residential staff to move to another home in a favourable light, they have only tended to suggest such an option when there were problems, rather than in the positive way recommended here. As all staff now have a flexible contract which enables them to work in any home without having to go through the process of applying for a vacancy, this recommendation could be easily achieved, with staff co-operation.

Management have not yet had the opportunity to consider all the implications, but can see no obvious problems.

4. Implications for Race Equality, Women's Equality and for those with Disabilities and Policy Statement

The whole document has implications not just for children in our homes, but for all the users of the service the Department provides.

People who live in or work in residential care, are most in need of skilled care and management and a voice in the organisation.

Many of the recommendations and proposed action should have wide-reaching benefit for all those involved in the Service.

Item  
No.2

THE RESIDENTIAL CARE REVIEW  
(Contributors: A - DSS Residential)

1. Purpose of the Report

To report in detail on recommendation 3 of the Leeways Inquiry Report.  
(See also item 5 on this Agenda)

2. Recommendation

That the report be noted.

3. Background

The Childrens Residential Review has been fully implemented as far as the children's homes aspect is concerned. The last of the 'new' homes opened at the beginning of the month. The non-residential Assessment Resource Centre staffing has all been approved and is ready for advertising. The person responsible for undertaking the work has recently left the department and a senior member of Social Casework Division who was a member of the working party has agreed to handle the recruitment process under the direction of the Assistant Director, Residential Services. The building to be used for the service is currently part-occupied by the Amersham Family Centre pending the completion of the work at 33 Wickham Road, and therefore only part of the Assessment Centre Team will be appointed immediately. There will be only use of part of the building for part of the week until Amersham Family Centre vacate. When the proposal was first agreed it was anticipated that 33 Wickham Road would be available much sooner than now seems likely.

4. Some aspects of the pump-priming posts in Social Casework have now been filled, others are in the pipeline, and others are still involved in Trade Union negotiations.

5. The Re-organisation of Residential Management Structure has been agreed by the Trades Unions and the Chair and Vice-Chair of Social Service Committee and Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub-Committee. The complete package is with Job Evaluation who are working to a target date of 31st December 1985. They are on target for that date.

6. The Leeways Inquiry Report highlights other areas of work for the management team which indicate the need for at least one more Residential Manager on the Children's side.

7. The Adult Residential Review which is the third part of the Residential Care Review is currently being worked on by a joint member/officer group. This section of the Residential Review will not be self-funding and alternative sources of money are currently being pursued.

Item  
No.3

SUPERVISION

(Contributor: A - DSS Residential)

1. Purpose of the Report

To report in detail the position on recommendation 11 of the Leeways Inquiry Report.

2. Recommendation

That the report be noted.

3. Background

Professional supervision is an essential part of the work of the Social Services Department. It should take place regularly, for a set period of time in an uninterrupted and comfortable setting. Supervision is very much a two-way process, with both staff and supervisor bringing forward problems regarding the work and identifying ways of dealing with them. It is also a medium for identifying good work, and helping people to develop their skills further.

4. In Social Casework Division, Team Leaders, and Senior Social Workers provide supervision for Social Work and other staff in their teams. In residential work the residential managers should provide this for heads of homes and where appropriate, their deputies. This can be done individually or as a group. Sometimes it is important to see the whole senior staff group in the home on a regular basis.

5. Responsibility for supervision of the rest of the staff group in the home lies with the head of home who may delegate some of this to other senior staff. In practice, many senior staff have had no training in the skills of supervision, and are unable to offer this to junior staff.

6. Residential managers are finding themselves overstretched in providing this, and the system often breaks down. The difficulties of providing supervision in a home where only two staff may be on shift, and young people are in the building, does cause a great deal of frustration for everyone. It may be that coupled with training for senior staff, some outside supervision may need to be provided.

Item  
No.4

JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

(Contributor A - DSS Residential)

1. Purpose of the Report

To report in greater detail on Recommendation 4 of the Leeways Inquiry Report.

2. Recommendation

That the report be noted.

3. Background

The actual text of the report which refers to the recommendation details a number of documents which should be incorporated into contracts of employment.

These are:-

- (a) Clear job descriptions.
- (b) Statement of responsibilities.
- (c) Statement of duty to safeguard the child and put their interest first.
- (d) Statement that the employee is likely to be dismissed if their personal life makes them unsuitable for the work.
- (e) Description of organisation structure and the employees role within it.
- (f) Statement that employees are required to undertake appropriate training expectations.

(a), (b) and (e) are documents which have to be printed by the Social Services Department.

- 4. Job descriptions in this Authority relate very closely to job evaluation. Residential staff, both officers and manual workers are not subject to job evaluation, and therefore do not have job descriptions. In order to produce these, particularly with the emphasis on responsibilities and attitudes will require a great deal of work from people experienced in residential work and with knowledge of the client group. The available staff resources whilst having the appropriate skills and knowledge, do not have the time to carry out the recommendation. It will, therefore, be essential to strengthen the senior management team of the residential division to enable this work to be undertaken. Proposals are currently being drafted to identify the resources needed to undertake these tasks.
- 5. The statement of the employees duty to safeguard the child ((c) above) has already been produced and circulated to all staff in the department. A copy is attached to this report and was agreed at the Special Social Services Committee meeting.
- 6. Statements (d) and (f) above are matters for the whole Authority to consider. This recommendation from the report is being referred to the Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub-Committee.

Item  
No. 5

FURTHER MATTERS TO BE ADDRESSED AS A CONSEQUENCE OF LEEWAYS  
(Contributor: DSS)

1. Purpose of the Report

This report considers some of the important issues which are behind the specific recommendations of the Leeways Inquiry report and indicates how the Committee and Social Services Department might begin to tackle these.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the need for the Management style within Social Services to continue change and in particular that staff will now be expected to adopt the "firm, fair and decisive" approach outlined in paras 3.4.
- 2.2 To note the importance of Departmental Re-organisation in bringing about positive change following Leeways, and the fact that senior management initiatives are seriously restricted until Directorate is operating at full strength.
- 2.3 To approve subject to appropriate finance being identified, a temporary post of residential manager to assist the Assistant Director Residential Services to process key matters following the Leeways Inquiry.
- 2.4 To note that residential Management may need to be further strengthened the supervisory and monitoring implications of the Inquiry's recommendations become fully apparent.
- 2.5 That members should give their views regarding the possible day seminar on residential care issues outlined in para 3.6:5
- 2.6 To note the complex issues of child protection raised by the Leeways report and others and briefly described in para 3.7.2
- 2.7 To request The Child Care Policy Group to report on these matters in its "Policy Statement" report to this committee
- 2.8 To note the need for additional resources highlighted by the Inquiry report and mentioned in para 3.5., 3.6 and 3.8, and that the Director will be producing a package of uncommitted growth to be considered in 1986/87 budget cycle.

3. Background

- 3.1 The central recommendation of the Inquiry Report, that the welfare of the child should be our first consideration in all circumstances, will not be fully achieved by improving systems and procedures, although such improvements will help immensely.
- 3.2 Of equal, if not greater importance, is the need to continue the change in approach and values in Residential Services Division and the Department as a whole, which has been occurring in recent years. These changes now need to be strengthened and accelerated following Leeways.

3.3 Improvements in morale, and effectiveness in the Residential Division are tied to improvements in management staffing and performance. Managers and their colleagues must bring about a change from the inward looking bureaucratic and protective style described in the Leeways Report to one which is open, trusting and above all service-user oriented. The department must now be prepared to listen to comments and criticisms from all quarters and to act on these.

3.4 Management Style and Approach

3.4.1 The Director has indicated in the interim complaints procedure that staff can talk directly to him if they have major concerns or criticisms. This facility to "loop over" steps in the hierarchy (although not always to Director level) where it is in consumer's interest must now be encouraged by all managers.

3.4.2 All staff in authority must recognise the primacy of their duty to the child above other issues. They must also recognise the requirement to place the views and needs of junior staff on a par with those of management when complaints are made. Any remnants of a protective "avoiding the issue" style of management must now be eradicated. Staff in authority must be seen to face issues squarely and immediately, to take unpleasant decisions and to encourage colleagues to be open and trusting about all aspects of their work. There must be clear agreement that staff who put people in their care at risk will be confronted and if necessary removed from posts where this is possible. It is of great importance that a decisive management style is matched by concern and support for these staff and that they are treated fairly and given every assistance to sort out their problems, but not at service-users risk.

3.4.3 This approach has been discussed with staff at senior level and raised briefly with the department's principal officers at a seminar on the Leeways Inquiry held on 5th December 1985. Further work will now be done to legitimate this approach amongst all levels of management. As soon as staff resources allow, the Director and senior colleagues will be visiting homes and establishments throughout the borough and will discuss with staff there whether this aim has been achieved.

3.5 Structural and Resource Issues

3.5.1 Departmental Re-organisation

The Committee has recently received reports on progress towards re-organisation and members will be aware that the objectives of re-organisation, particularly to achieve an open, flat and responsive department, are important to the aim of avoiding future "Leeways" incidents. Further progress on matters outlined in this report are heavily dependent on appointing two new assistant directors and the Principal Officer Planning and Development in the new year, as it is these staff along with existing members of directorate, who must bring about the changes needed department-wide.

3.5.2 Residential Division Headquarters Re-organisation

The aim of this re-organisation is to strengthen management and supervision in the Residential Division and target date for achieving this is 1st April 1986. The Inquiry report acknowledges the value of these changes, but they were drawn up well before the

report was received within the department. Lessons learned from the report and subsequent developments show that further input of management time to residential services may be necessary and the Director will be considering this in relation to uncommitted growth in the 1986/87 budget. More immediately a need has been identified for direct help to the Assistant Director Residential in progressing matters relating to Leeways and consequent changes throughout the Residential Division. This would be a temporary post (1 year) at Residential Manager level. The tasks to be addressed are shown in Appendix A to this report.

3.5.3 The success of re-organisation in the Residential Division is heavily dependent on appointing the right people to the new posts. They should be committed to change and to the firm, fair and responsive style of management outlined above. They must also be first class, experienced workers, able to manage and give good quality professional support and advice.

### 3.6 Training and Development

3.6.1 The Inquiry report emphasises the responsibility of the committee and the department to provide relevant good quality training and staff development opportunities. Detailed recommendations to achieve this are given elsewhere on this agenda.

3.6.2 The Director is aware however of several major gaps in staff development opportunities provided for staff in the Residential Division. These have arisen partly because of the difficulty of "covering" staff to allow them to go on training when their presence is crucial in the home. The initiatives described below will require extra staff hours in certain establishments, and these will be included in a package of uncommitted growth proposals regarding Leeways for the 1986/87 budget.

#### 3.6.3 Management Development for Residential Advisers and Heads of Homes

The content and duration of this course will need further definition, but it will cover;

- (a) Staff supervision
- (b) Team work, building trust etc.
- (c) Industrial relations
- (d) Committee philosophy and objectives
- (e) Child (or other client group) abuse - recognition and procedures

#### 3.6.4 Training and Development for Care Staff

Training packages for care staff at all levels will be devised cover

- (a) The rights of people in our care
- (b) Committee philosophy and objectives
- (c) Rights and responsibilities of employees

- (d) Complaints procedures
- (e) Child (or other client group) abuse - recognition and procedures

### 3.6.5 Seminar for Members and Officers

It may be productive to organise a day seminar for members and officers in the new year on "Residential Services in Lewisham, following the Leeways Inquiry". Subject matter for the day might include.

- (a) Practices, procedures and Problems in Residential care work.
- (b) Consumers Rights and how Residential Workers and Members might co-operate to ensure these are met. The role of members in complaints.
- (c) Morale in Residential Care
- (d) Re-organisation in Residential Services; its effect on staff in the homes

Members views on this suggestion are requested.

### 3.7 Policy Issues

3.7.1 The Leeways Inquiry and other reports (most recently Jasmine Beckford) concerned with child abuse raise fundamental policy issue for local authorities and Social Services Committees.

3.7.2 These issues include:-

- (a) Whether further legislation is required to give local authorities increased powers to protect and remove children from their families, and whether such legislation would infringe parental rights to an unacceptable degree - particularly parents in situations of poverty who have the least power to resist the actions of the establishment.
- (b) Whether removal of a child from his/her family necessarily provides the protection hoped for. Leeways is a good example of where the Authority failed as surely as abusing parents. Where children are removed from home in relation to events which are less serious than the torture and death typified in the Jasmine Beckford case, we must be sure that their quality of life is actually improved as a result.
- (c) Whether we take prevention seriously. Risk to children is increased by poverty and stress. Society is rightly horrified by child abuse in all forms, but pays scant attention to removing what may be some of the root causes. To separate a child from a family which has failed because of the poverty and oppressions which is common place in Inner Cities, is an act of gross abuse in its own right.

3.7.3 These are clearly complex matters. It is suggested that the committee refer discussion of them to the Child Care Policy Group with the request that the policy statement the group produces for this committee addresses these and similar issues of child protection.

3.8 Resources

3.8.1 This report refers to a number of growth requirements. These will be submitted as a package of uncommitted growth for consideration by the committee at the appropriate meeting in the budget cycle. The package will meet the following growth priority:-

Social Services: improved 'care in the community'; development of services to meet the need of children and young people at risk; increased staffing in homes to meet the needs of the growing number of frail and confused elderly people; and replacement programme for Carrington House.

4. Implications for Race and Equal Opportunities

Black people, because of the poverty and oppression they suffer are often heavy users of social services, especially in the child care field. At all stages of policy development to improve child protection, consideration should be given to the special needs and vulnerability of black people. The particular needs of black staff must also be considered when they are caught up in the complex circumstances described in the Leeways Inquiry. Black staff are likely to be less powerful than white colleagues and more at risk of abuse from unfair, repressive systems.

5. Implications for Women

Women are the main carers in society, both in the family and in residential care. They are particularly vulnerable to abuse in these roles, which can be highly stressful unless proper supports are provided. The need to put resources into prevention has a particular relevance for women carers. The department also needs to continue to work to increase the facilities for women staff to express their views.

6. Implications for People with Disabilities

Many persons cared for by Social Services Department suffer physical or mental disability. They can be particularly at risk because of inability to communicate and a lack of understanding of their needs, especially in the area of sexuality. It is important that this committee continues to encourage these groups to come forward and express their views and needs.

7. Implications for Committees Policy Statement

Freedom from poverty and oppression and freedom of choice, if achieved for service users will minimise their vulnerability. Similarly a commitment to participation by all staff in service and management issues, will promote a more open organisation, where doubts and anxieties can be expressed and support given at an early stage

8. Implications for Central Services

No specific implications at this stage.

SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

10TH DECEMBER 1985  
APPENDIX A TO ITEM 5

RESIDENTIAL MANAGER (LEEWAYS INQUIRY)- TEMPORARY POST

Immediately identifiable tasks requiring additional help at a professional level in Residential Services Division.

1. Staff Development

- 1.1 Preparation of job descriptions for all grades of officer and manual worker staff throughout Residential Services Division will need discussions/negotiations with staff and unions.
- 1.2 Statement of responsibilities as above.
- 1.3 Description of organisation and residential worker role within it.
- 1.4 Statement re training.

2. Supervision

- 2.1 Identify supervision needs of residential staff in conjunction with residential managers.
- 2.2 Make proposals as to how to achieve this.

3. Induction

With staff development produce:

- (a) an induction package
- (b) handouts
- (c) video
- (d) method for using same

4. Recruitment

- 4.1 Work on interpretation of recruitment procedures to suit requirements of Residential Services Division as agreed by members.
- 4.2 Assist Residential Managers/Heads of Homes in recruitment to pilot procedures.
- 4.3 Establish guidelines for the handling of information on convictions.
- 4.4 Consult Fostering and Adoption who have experience in this procedure.

5. Training

- 5.1 Assist Staff Development and Residential Services Division in establishing management training for senior staff in residential homes.

5.2 Assist in identifying other training needs and make recommendations.

6. General

Identify other gaps in good practice/management which although implied in the Leeways Inquiry Report, do not feature in specific recommendations.

7. Complaints

At the request of Assistant Director, investigate complaints about any aspect of care or behaviour in a residential home or sheltered housing scheme. This could lead to disciplinary action.

8. Homes Manuals

Review these documents and revise as appropriate.