

To: Chief Executives of councils with social services responsibility

28 January 2003

Dear colleague,

PUBLICATION OF THE REPORT OF THE VICTORIA CLIMBIÉ INQUIRY

The Home Secretary and I are today publishing the report of the Inquiry into the events leading up to the death of Victoria Climbié. A copy of the report is being sent to each of you under separate cover.

Learning the lessons from what happened to Victoria must involve fundamental reform of how services are organised and delivered. That is what the Green Paper on Children at Risk we will publish in the Spring will aim to do. In the meantime, however, Lord Laming has called for prompt action in relation to many of his recommendations. Over half of the recommendations relate to improving basic good professional practice in police, health and local government services. I enclose a checklist of these recommendations for your immediate consideration. The Chief Inspector of Social Services will be in touch shortly and will send you a self-audit tool for your completion and return within three months of today's date.

The inquiry concluded that, in all agencies involved with Victoria, there was a low priority given to the task of protecting children. I am writing, therefore, to remind you of your responsibilities to children, as set out in the Children Act 1989, particularly those relating to child protection, and the need to reflect these in the decisions you take as part of your budget making processes. I will be writing separately in similar terms to PCTs, NHS Trusts and Strategic Health Authorities.

It will be important to take action to ensure that your responsibilities for children, particularly those relating to child protection, are being met.

I enclose a full copy of my Statement to the House today.



ALAN MILBURN