

Rt Hon. Ed Balls, MP  
Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT

29 March 2010

Dear *Ed,*

Further to our meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> March I am writing to set out Haringey's proposals for the second year of our programme to build excellent children's services in the borough with specific focus on ensuring safeguarding continues to improve and perform at a much higher level.

As discussed with you, the Minister, and your DCSF officials we are pleased to have received the positive report from Ofsted based on their visit in February. We certainly feel that progress is now becoming embedded and we are heading in the right direction. However now is not a time for us to be complacent as there are still key issues to address including securing a permanent management presence at different levels within the service, and the more important job of ensuring progress is sustained. To this end we are proposing a revision of our Children's Safeguarding Plan and Peter Lewis has already started work on this process. This plan will establish the key tasks and performance milestones for the second year of the improvement programme.

We think that it is important that this plan and work is informed by support and challenge from the local government family and to this end I am establishing a monthly performance board which I will chair. The membership of the board is included in the annex to this letter but it is basically designed to ensure that I have the advice of the IDEA and another external DCS which I believe when combined with that of the new Chief Executive, Kevin Crompton, and Peter Lewis, will assure me that progress is well planned, appropriately targeted and delivered at reasonable pace.

I recognise also the importance of maintaining contact and accountability with you and your officials at DCSF, and others. To this end I am proposing the establishment of a quarterly 'towards excellence in children's services board' with membership and terms of reference as set out in the annex to this letter. I am suggesting that this board be independently chaired by a knowledgeable individual whom we will jointly appoint. The independent Chair would be asked to provide a written report to you and I every 6 months

I also wish to note that we are grateful for the continued financial and other support from the DCSF which is so important for our continued improvement. I believe that the progress we have made confirms that we are on the road to improvement and that the partnership approach I have outlined to you above is acceptable as the basis for the next steps.

I envisage, subject to your agreement that the first 'Excellence Board' will meet and sign of the improvement plan by 31<sup>st</sup> May. If by then we have not yet identified a suitable Chair I propose to Chair the first meeting to enable our speed of progress to be maintained

Yours sincerely

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

Councillor Claire Kober  
Leader

Encs

## **HARINGEY TOWARDS EXCELLENCE IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE**

March 2010

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 In November 2008, following the tragic case of Peter Connelly (Baby Peter), the Secretary of State for Children Schools and Families commissioned a Joint Area Review of Haringey's Services for Children and Young People, with particular reference to safeguarding. This was carried out by Ofsted, the Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection and HMIC and the report was published on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008. The report found safeguarding services overall to be "inadequate" and identified significant multi agency failings leading to that judgement. As a result the Secretary of State issued two directions to the Council in December 2008, which included requiring the Council to appoint Graham Badman as independent Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and Peter Lewis as Director of Children's Services.
- 1.2 The Council and its partners (principally Haringey NHS and the Metropolitan Police) developed a safeguarding action plan setting out a three year improvement plan to ensure children in the borough were safe and that safeguarding would become a service characterised by excellent standards. In order to monitor progress, provide support and challenge, two principal boards were established.
  - 1.2.1. Monthly "performance challenge" meetings were held between the DCS, Haringey PCT, the Metropolitan Police and officials from GOL and DCSF, chaired by the Government Office for London and with peer DCS challenge
  - 1.2.2. Haringey Council established a Quality Outcomes Board with the support of Capital ambition and the Idea to provide peer support and challenge specifically in respect of the safeguarding action plan but also in other areas of concern in the borough for example Housing.
- 1.3 Both boards have received regular progress reports from the DCS containing performance information and updates on all aspects of the safeguarding action plan.
- 1.4 In addition regular 1:1s were held between the DCS and the Chief Executive and other smaller groups were established to support the improvement journey.
- 1.5 A progress inspection by Ofsted in June 2009 concluded that despite changes in staff, political leadership, and the efforts of partners, that progress was still "limited". Further recommendations were made and action undertaken across the partnership. In February 2010 Ofsted made a further progress inspection

which concluded that “good progress” had been made and that there were good prospects for further improvement.

- 1.6 In the light of these welcome conclusions from Ofsted, and in order to drive forward most effectively, the next phase of the improvement journey, it is proposed to establish new arrangements for supporting, monitoring and accounting for progress and performance. Whilst across all five Every Child Matters outcomes, the principal vehicle for monitoring will be the normal arrangements that are in place in respect of Haringey’s Children’s trust. It is recognised that Haringey’s safeguarding services continue to require however, specific and separate arrangements in the light of the particular improvement journey involved and of the DCSF intervention.
- 1.7 It is proposed therefore to establish the Haringey Towards Excellence in Children’s Services Board, specifically to ensure that safeguarding in particular becomes an excellent service.
- 1.8 The proposed arrangements will not duplicate the work of the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board but complement it by providing both direct accountability to the Leader of the council and the Secretary of State and in addition provide peer and other expert advice on the improvement journey.

## 2. **Overall purpose**

- 2.1 The Board will provide support and challenge to the Haringey partnership in its ambition to secure excellent safeguarding services in Haringey, ensuring that current progress is sustained, further improvements are delivered, and a rapid pace of change is maintained. .
- 2.2 The Board will be chaired by an independent Chair jointly appointed by the Secretary of State and the Leader of Haringey Borough council. The Chair will provide a written report jointly to the Leader of Haringey Borough Council and the Secretary of State every 6 months.

## 3. **Role and responsibilities**

The Board will:

- 3.1 Agree at its first meeting (to be held no later than May 31<sup>st</sup> 2010), the actions set out in the Haringey Safeguarding Plan which is to be revised by the Director Children and Young Peoples Services by that date to include:
  - A detailed response to recommendations of the Ofsted monitoring report;
  - Updated performance targets designed to reflect current progress and to set ‘smart’ targets for the next two years;
  - Updated timescale for the delivery of all actions;
  - A clear outline of what ‘excellence’ will look like and the milestones to be reached to ensure that this will be achieved by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012;

- 3.2 Advise on implementation of the Plan, assessing risk and considering issues that arise and advising on capacity to deliver the plan – including egg the number and quality of front line practitioners, supervisors and managers;
- 3.3 Oversee delivery of the Plan and its impact on overall performance of Haringey's safeguarding services – including monitoring targets, timeliness, quality and engagement of front line practitioners and families;
- 3.4 Assess the performance of the Children's Trust partnership in leading the performance improvement needed.
- 3.5 Receive reports from any sub-groups of the Board interrogating monthly and other performance data and, as appropriate from individual partners or from the LSCB;
- 3.6 Support the Chair in agreeing the key issues to be reported to the Secretary of State and the leader of the Council on progress made and in doing so consider when proposals should be made for exiting intervention;
- 3.7 Consider reports from the Council and its partners, as may be required, on the wider children's services agenda.

#### 4. **Administration**

- 4.1 The Board will meet quarterly starting in May 2010 and more frequently if the Board agrees that is appropriate. The Board will remain in place pending a review of the effectiveness of these arrangements following further Ofsted reports in 2011. The board will be administered by Haringey Council who will, in consultation with the Chair, be responsible for the preparation of the agenda and papers for the meetings of the Board, which are to be received by Board Members at least three working days in advance of the meeting. LBH will also be responsible for the administration, clerking and hosting of the Board meetings and will ensure that minutes are taken and distributed to Board members, attendees and any others agreed by the Board, within one week of a Board meeting. The Chair should agree minutes before circulation.

#### 5. **Membership**

- 5.1 The Board's membership shall be as follows:

##### **Chair:**

The Board will be independently chaired by an individual with professional knowledge of the issues involved. The Chair will be appointed jointly by Haringey Borough Council and the DCSF

##### **Board Membership:**

Representing Haringey Borough Council

- Leader of Council
- Chief Executive

- Lead Member for Children's Services
- Director Children's and Young People's Services

Representing Haringey NHS

- Chief Executive or Deputy Chief Executive

Representing Metropolitan Police

- Borough Commander or his Deputy

**Others in Attendance:**

Department for Children, Schools and Families

- To be nominated

Government Office for London

- To be nominated

Audit Commission

- CAA Lead or nominee

5.2 Other colleagues from Haringey Council, NHS Haringey and the Metropolitan Police will attend as necessary for key items. External consultants will attend for reporting purposes and others may be invited to attend as necessary.

6. **Quorum:**

6.1 The Board has no quorum. Each meeting will need to consider progress and make necessary decisions; the work cannot be held up due to the absence of any member. For this reason, it is essential that if a member of the Board cannot attend, a deputy or alternative representative who has decision-making power attends in their absence. Such alternatives/deputies should be agreed at the first meeting of the Board.

7. **Membership and role of Haringey Council performance group**

7.1 The political and professional leadership of Haringey borough council is committed to providing strong support and challenge within the council in the interests of ensuring success. To this end the Council will establish a performance group to exercise this function and to ensure that our plans can benefit from peer support from the local government family.

7.2 The group will focus on ensuring that the our plans and approach benefit from the best practice available, that appropriate support is in place for the DCS to ensure that plans are properly resourced, that performance data is robust, that performance issues are identified, and dealt with, and that progress with the safeguarding plan is on track.

7.3 The group will meet monthly and will be administered by the Council.

Membership.

Leader of Council

Chief Executive

Lead Member

Director Children and YP

Idea lead for safeguarding

Practising or recently retired DCS

7.4 It is also envisaged that the DCS will continue to establish such meetings with Haringey Partners as are necessary to ensure progress against the plan.

