

Children's Homes
in Lambeth
Enquiry
1998 - 2003
Summary

Helen Kenward



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Introduction

The terms of reference for the CHILE team were to work with Operation Middleton in investigating the care of children in Lambeth children's homes between 1974 and 1994.

The reality became broader since witnesses from 1953 to 2003 were both referred and referred themselves.

The work of the team focused on four areas:

- The criminal investigation
- Witness support
- Human Resources
- Commissioned pieces of work

The financial constraints imposed by Lambeth brought the enquiry to a premature end.

This summary document gives the statistics and breadth of the investigation. It does not analyse the practice issues examined during the period of the instruction 1998 – 2003.

Helen Kenward

Helen Kenward
Independent Investigation Co-ordinator
31st July 2003

**Social Work with Operation Middleton
27th November 1998 – 31st July 2003**

Nature of work	Number of children*
Overall involvement	426
Contact (by phone, letter or in person)	154
Incident report for individual pieces of work	161
Creation of CHILE file for on- going work	231
Reading case files relating to the individual	321
Production of a vulnerability check to assess need for joint interview with Operation Middleton	103
Production of chronology for use by Operation Middleton, Courts, Solicitors and Insurers.	132
Longer term support and counselling	49
Liaison with Insurers to provide documents and information in response to compensation claims	38

- Witnesses who had been placed in Lambeth's care between 1953 and 2003

Composition and nature of the team

The team has from the outset been multi-disciplinary. In order to meet the needs of the enquiry a range of professionals have been involved. The previous backgrounds of team members includes:

- Social work
- Police service
- Psychology
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Research
- Administration
- Teaching
- Training

The CHILE team, based at the Town Hall employed thirty staff during the enquiry. The majority of these staff were freelance consultants working on a part time basis as required. In addition agency staff were utilised, particularly for administration. Three staff, a Child Protection Officer, a Senior Practitioner and an administrator were directly employed by Lambeth. The length of service for staff in the team has varied according to the needs of the enquiry and availability of staff and has ranged from one month to four years six months.

In addition a team was recruited specifically to create an Archive for Social Services. Apart from the manager, a consultant, the other staff were recruited from agencies and were subsequently employed by Lambeth on short-term temporary contracts. Due to the temporary nature of the work it was not

possible to retain staff long term. In total thirteen staff worked in Archives, although not all at the same time. Once the Archive was complete it was handed over to Social Services and has been renamed the Records Management Unit. Three of the staff were retained by Social Services. The remainder left for other posts.

Current points of contact with CHILE

Telephone

The CHILE team is currently contacted on [REDACTED]. As the team is no longer based in the Town Hall the number is diverted to Helen Kenward to ensure a response is provided. Callers range from witnesses/victims to Council's Insurers and solicitors.

Post

The post is collected on a regular basis from the Post Room at the Town Hall. The volume of post has declined and comprises mainly of correspondence from solicitors acting on behalf of victims.

Personal callers

Personal callers are now infrequent. Reception at the Town Hall usually refers callers to the office telephone number for further assistance.

E mail

The team is not connected to the Lambeth Intranet. E-mail communication is used, mainly by Lambeth staff (Insurers, Finance etc) usually to Helen Kenward [REDACTED] or Carmel Howard
[REDACTED]

Summary of CHILE involvement with individual children

During the course of the enquiry the CHILE team have undertaken work relating to 426 children.

Some cases were generated in response to requests from Operation Middleton, others following referrals from individuals, Social Services Departments and other agencies.

The nature of the work undertaken in each case has varied from research of child-care files to individual counselling and witness support. For some individuals contact was minimal whilst for others there was a requirement to provide intensive and prolonged support, particularly when court proceedings were pending.

The time spent on for each case has been dependant on needs of the individual, the nature of information requests (e.g. from solicitors, courts and insurers) and the complexity of case files. An example of this is the production of a chronology. This task can vary from reading and analysing one file to a case with thirty-six files

In cases where specific tasks were undertaken incident reports were produced. For more detailed work a CHILE file was created for each individual to ensure a record of work and correspondence.

Vulnerability checks were created in response to requests from Operation Middleton. The agreed interview protocol required joint interviews to be undertaken in cases where the individual was under 18, had a disability or had a history of mental health difficulties. The vulnerability check provided the format and information for decisions to be reached regarding joint interviews.

Chronologies have been produced where possible. Priority has been given to cases where criminal proceedings have taken place or compensation claims have been lodged and in cases where the team has had significant involvement with the individual.

On going support and counselling and referral to appropriate agencies for long term support has been available for all individuals who have approached the CHILE team. A number of individuals have chosen not to avail of this service, in some instances because they are already receiving support through GPs or other means. Others have had on going contact with the team with work ranging from assistance with housing requests to life story work.

An aspect of the team's work, which has increased towards the latter part of the enquiry, is responding to requests from Council Insurers and Solicitors for chronologies, documents, analysis of log books and other background information for compensation claims.

Summary of CHILE involvement with employees /ex-employees.

During the course of the enquiry the CHILE team have conducted interviews with 92 employees and ex employees of Lambeth. In some cases the individuals were interviewed on a number of occasions.

The interviews were conducted for a range of reasons. Many staff approached the CHILE team voluntarily at the commencement of the enquiry in order to share information and concerns. Other staff were interviewed in relation to specific disciplinary investigations.

As a separate exercise, in order to obtain a historic overview of Lambeth Social Services, a number of key staff were identified who might have useful information/recollections from their employment in Lambeth. These individuals were traced and approached in writing to request their assistance. Many of the participants had relocated, so interviews were conducted in a range of locations in England, Scotland and Wales. Overall this was a successful exercise, although two ex senior staff declined to participate.

Provision of information by the CHILE team

During the course of the enquiry the CHILE team has provided an information and research service, chiefly to Operation Middleton but also to other Operations as required, in accordance with the Protocol on sharing information agreed at the commencement of the enquiry.

The team has responded to 1130 requests for information made by Operation Middleton. These requests have ranged from queries regarding employment or placement history to complex research in relation to diaries and logbooks.

The team has also been the chief source of information for the Council's Insurers and solicitors in relation to compensation claims and to the Legal Department in relation to criminal proceedings.

Chronologies produced by the team have been utilised by a variety of sources including a Judge at a recent criminal case at the Old Bailey.

In light of the confidential nature of the enquiry and the requirement on Lambeth to provide accurate references for employees/ex employees a system was designed by the team whereby Human Resources have provided lists of all reference requests to the CHILE team. Each name has been checked to ensure that there is no cause for concern based on information held by the team.

Systems/information generated and/or held by CHILE

Title	Description	Issues for consideration
Children Looked After database (historical)	Database created from Lambeth records to assist enquiry. Holds personal and placement details for 14771 children in care.	Identified officer required in order to handover.
Staff database	Database created from a variety of sources to provide personal data, background information and employment history, both individual and by establishment for approx. 2000 Lambeth employees. This database is held on one computer and access has been restricted to one member of the CHILE team	This system was created by CHILE to assist Operation Middleton. Once the enquiry has closed issues of data protection will need to be addressed. Once this has been undertaken decisions will need to be reached regarding potential use, security and location. Training will be required to obtain optimum benefit from the system
Staff files	All files for staff associated with Children's homes were isolated from the general system at the commencement of the enquiry. They are currently held in separate storage at the Records management Unit	Consideration will be required to determine whether it is necessary to retain the files separately from the general system. If not files will need to be re-integrated.
Disciplinary records	At the commencement of the enquiry all relevant disciplinary papers held in Human Resources, Mary Seacole House were removed and retained by the CHILE team	A decision will be required regarding storage and access to these files

CHILE files	Working files were created for longer term work with victims/witnesses	A decision will be required regarding storage and access to these files
Box catalogue	At the commencement of the enquiry all documentation, which appeared to be relevant, was identified and placed in secure storage. CHILE staff indexed each archive box and a database was created. 203 boxes are currently held in secure storage at Mary Seacole House	Storage space is limited and the Records Management Unit manager has requested advice from CHILE on the requirement to retain this information. Contents of boxes vary. In order to provide advice to assist with this an audit would be required of the database.
Incident reports/ vulnerability checks	Reports regarding individual pieces of work	A decision will be required regarding storage and access to these records
Reports in connections with disciplinaries and investigations	Investigations commissioned by Lambeth Social Services during the course of the enquiry.	A decision will be required regarding storage and access to these reports
Computer discs	Holding correspondence and reports produced during the enquiry	A decision will be required regarding storage and access to these reports
Computer equipment	Hard drives/lap tops	Information will need to be deleted from hard drives before equipment is handed back to Lambeth.

Work undertaken in addition to the original CHILE remit.

	Description of task	Origin of work
Foster carers in Lambeth Assessment (FILA)	This exercise involved 135 carers and 153 children. It generated 151 incident sheets following visits to fostercarers (many outside London). Comprehensive report produced and presented to Social Services	Requested by Family Finders following CAFT exercise
Cumberlow Lodge files	Exercise to identify originating authority and return files to originating authorities. Exercise included auditing a sample of files. Report produced and provided to Social Services	EDSS – Lisa Christensen
Florizel	Investigation into placements of 22 Lambeth children at private home following disclosure from ex resident. Report produced and provided to Social Services	At request of Social Services senior management
Direct social work for [REDACTED]	As case was high profile and unallocated CHILE provided a Social Worker to take this case for a period of eighteen months	At request of South office

	Description of task	Origin of work
Disciplinary investigations	14 investigations 5 disciplinary hearings 3 dismissals Subsequent involvement at 2 Industrial tribunals	At request of Social Services senior management
Investigation of complaint by [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	At request of Social Services senior management
Investigation of complaint by [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	At request of Social Services senior management
Joint investigation with NSPCC re Lambeth children placed at Frant Court	Tracing 18 ex-residents and interviewing re experiences at Frant Court Report produced and provided to Social Services	Agreed by strategy group
Joint investigation with Croydon Social Services re The Den	Investigation re the registration of units owned by [REDACTED], staffing and complaints	At request of Social Services senior management

	Description of task	Origin of work
Archive database for ex employees	Database cataloguing files held for all ex-employees of Social Services. Completed and held by Records Management Unit, Mary Seacole House	At request of Human Resources manager, Social Services
Audit of lap top computer	Lap top from South Area Office. Report produced of contents	At request of Social Services senior management
Audit of computer	Computer from South Area office where misuse suspected.	At request of Social Services senior management
Whistleblowing	The team were asked to consider complaints from whistleblowers	At request of senior management

Involvement with other agencies during the enquiry

- ❑ Operation Care - Merseyside Police
- ❑ Operation Chaffinch - Newham
- ❑ Operation Goldfinch - Essex Police
- ❑ Operation Mapperton – N.E.London Social Services/NSPCC
- ❑ Operation Photostat – Staffordshire Police
- ❑ Operation Forrest – Southwark

- ❑ Metropolitan Police Vice and Paedophile Unit
- ❑ Devon and Cornwall Police – Falmouth
- ❑ Kent Police/ Maidstone NSPCC
- ❑ North Wales Police
- ❑ Canadian Police
- ❑ NCIS
- ❑ PAN London Working group on Complex abuse

- ❑ Court Services – Old Bailey
Kingston Crown Court
- ❑ Witness Support
- ❑ Range of barristers and solicitors

- ❑ Prison Service – Wandsworth
Durham
Isle of Wight
Gloucester

- Probation and After care service

- Department of Health
- Social Services Inspectorate – London
 - South East
 - North

- Berkshire Social Services
- Croydon Social Services
- Southwark Social Services
- Tower Hamlets Social Services
- Westminster Social Services
- Lewisham Social Services
- Nottingham Education Authority
- Islington Social Services
- Gwent Social Services

- NSPCC
- London Metropolitan Archives
- Public Records Office

- Lambeth Area Child Protection Committee

- Lambeth Southwark and Lewisham Health Authority
- Health services in Arundel and Wales
- Kings College Hospital
- South Western Hospital
- Maudsley Hospital
- Cygnet Hospital, Ealing

- **Lambeth: Young Adults Service**
 - Youth Justice**
 - Children and Families**
 - Press Office**
 - Superannuation**
 - Human Resources**
 - Minet Library**
 - Insurers**
 - Legal**
 - Education**
 - Housing**

- **Peabody Trust – Housing Association**

- **Guinness Trust**

- **ICAS – counselling**
- **NCH - counselling**
- **CONTACT counselling support group**
- **Baker and Duncan consultancy counselling support**
- **Family Matters Counselling Service Kent**
- **BOPAN Professional Staff Support and Counselling**
- **CHILDLINK**
- **The Priory Clinic, Hove**
- **Tavistock centre**
- **Ray Wyre Associates**