



Another copy sent to

[REDACTED], Executive Director

Children's and Adults' Services
Civic Centre, Lampton Road
Hounslow TW3 4DN

misplaced theirs

Penelope A Schofield
Senior Coroner
Coroner's Office
West Sussex Record Office
Orchard Street
Chichester
West Sussex PO19 1DD

Date:

24/11/2016

16/1/17

Dear Senior Coroner Schofield,

I write to respond on behalf of the Chief Executive, Mary Harpley, to whom you wrote on 05/10/2016.

On 03/10/2016, and following the Inquest hearing touching upon the death of Amy Rose El-Keria, you issued a Preventing Future Death Report request from the London Borough of Hounslow, to deal with three particular issues, as follows:

- 1) The evidence given at the Inquest showed that there was a clear misapprehension by Hounslow Social Services as to their role in supporting Amy whilst at Ticehurst. It appears that Social Services did not appreciate their important ongoing role to ensure Amy's welfare whilst placed at Ticehurst. [REDACTED], the Court expert, gave evidence that Hounslow may have seen this health funded placement as a stand-alone intervention that did not require their input.
- 2) Social Services clearly have a vital role to play in ensuring family contact where a child is placed far from their family home where difficulties arise. There was no assessment carried out to assess whether there was any need to provide support to a child in need under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, even when Amy's mother had specifically raised the difficulties she was having with contact with Amy, including the cost of travel, with her support worker.
- 3) The family gave evidence to the extent that having better contact with Amy and more input into her care may have brought about a different outcome particularly when she was distressed.

The London Borough of Hounslow has re-drafted and updated its Thresholds Guidance & Assessment Protocols to ensure specific reference is made to these matters. Advice was sought from Mental Health professionals as part of this process. The London Borough of Hounslow will ensure that this information is disseminated across Children's Social Care, and that refresher and update briefings will be delivered to all relevant social workers and staff. The information will be disseminated across Children's Social Care teams the week of 28/11/2016 and Heads of Service and Team Managers will ensure that all managers and practitioners are fully briefed. Information will be shared by Heads of Service at their next Management Meetings and with social work staff at their next Team Meetings. An additional development session for refreshing knowledge will be delivered to Managers, Independent Reviewing Officers, and Advanced Practitioners at the next Managers' Forum in the New Year.

These staff briefings and development sessions will specifically cover the local authority's duties to children placed in hospital and other settings away from home under S85 and S86 of the Children Act 1989 and assistance in those circumstances under S17 Children Act 1989. They will additionally highlight to all social care staff that when notified of a Tier 4 mental health inpatient, the expectation is that the local authority shall undertake a S17 or S47 assessment as commensurate with its duties under the Children Act 1989. In both instances, the social worker assessment should consider issues of contact, including promotion and support of contact between those children and their families as appropriate.

The threshold document is available to the public on the council's website and specifically on its Local Safeguarding Children's Board site. The document is public facing but is primarily aimed at assisting those professionals working with children to understand how thresholds are applied and how child protection professionals make decisions in respect of appropriate action. Assistance to children in need under S17 of the Children Act 1989 for children placed in a hospital or other setting is referenced at section 3.9 (pages 12-14) under the headings 'Children Receiving Tier 4 Inpatient Provision' and 'Children Act 1989 Section 85 & 86 Duties'.

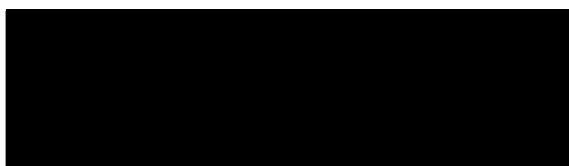
The threshold document assists professionals to take appropriate action in relation to children in need and now has a specific section on children with mental health disorders to ensure that the specific needs of the vulnerable are highlighted and referrals are made to children's social care as required. The threshold document is also published on Hounslow's internet, which is publicly accessible and contained within the Children's Social Care's procedure manual.

Specific reference is made to promotion and maintenance of contact between children and their families, following an assessment of needs. The awareness of social workers of their duties to children placed in health settings away from their homes and the importance to those children of regular contact with their families will be reinforced by the staff briefing sessions referenced above, as well as the express references in the threshold document.

The London Borough of Hounslow is confident that the concerns expressed by you are and will be addressed by these actions, and will ensure that there is clarity and consistency in social work practice where children are placed in health and other settings away from home.

Please don't hesitate to contact me should you require further clarification or information.

Yours sincerely,


Director of Children's Safeguarding & Specialist Services
London Borough of Hounslow

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28 NOV 2016