

## Members of public to sit on child protection boards

MAY 2009

Members of the public are to sit on child protection boards to improve children's services, says children's secretary Ed Balls.

Child protection boards will be required to appoint two lay members from the local community, and boards will also have to publish an annual report on how to effectively implement child protection across Britain.

The move comes after Lord Laming's report in the death of Baby P in which he criticised Haringey Council children's services department for its role in the child's death.

Before his death, Baby P had been visited 60 times by social workers, doctors and police over an eight month period. Lord Laming concluded that too many child protection agencies had failed to adopt reforms following the death of Victoria Climbié in 2000, after she suffered abuse at the hands of her great aunt and the boyfriend of the aunt.

He also claims that social services staff suffered from low morale, poor supervision, high caseloads, under-resourcing and inadequate training.

The children's secretary has declared that the changes to the child protection boards are also about making sure that when children go into care they get better support. He comments that the authorities must hear the children's voices rather than the excuse of the parents.

Pictons child abuse team specialises in civil claims against authorities. Where it seems a child or young person has suffered some kind of identifiable harm because of a home, a claim in damages may be brought against the local authority. This is a specialist and relatively new area of personal injury law, but such claims are often successful.

[Click here for Pictons Child Abuse Team](#)