

## NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

## SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT

<b>Social Work Committee :</b> <b>25th August 1997</b>	<b>Subject : DEATH OF A CHILD IN CARE</b>
<b>From :</b> <b>Jim Dickie, Director of Social Work</b> <b>Prepared by :</b> <b>Sandra Paterson, Principal Officer,</b> <b>Child Care</b>	

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To advise committee of the death of a child in care.

**2. BACKGROUND**

John was initially made subject to voluntary measures of care under Section 39(2) of the Social Work Scotland Act 1968 on 30th November 1995. He was re-referred to the Reporter for the Children's Panel for failure to attend school regularly and two offences of theft. He was subsequently made subject to compulsory measures of care under Section 44(1)(a) of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 on 7th August 1996.

Social Work intervention by the authority continued as a result of this requirement and the Home Supervision Order was similarly continued at a Children's Hearing on 9th July 1997. The order was renewed in terms of Section 70(3) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and a further annual review of this legal requirement took place on Tuesday 16th June 1995. In light of the child's diagnosis of leukaemia and thus the need for continued support, the supervision requirement was continued. Consequently, at the time of death, John was subject to Section 70(3) of the Children's (Scotland) Act 1995.

Throughout the period of the compulsory measure of care, John resided at home in Cumbernauld with his parents.

John was the eldest of a family of 5 children.

**3. CAUSE AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF DEATH**

John was diagnosed on 8th May 1998 at Yorkhill Hospital with Acute Lymphosystic Leukaemia. He was given a treatment regime of aggressive curative chemotherapy and remained in a protective environment due to his lowered immune system. His condition rapidly deteriorated on Saturday 13th June 1998 with secondary complications. He underwent surgery for the removal of his bowel, due to widespread infection on Thursday 18th June 1998. John's condition continued to deteriorate and he died on Saturday 20th June at 6.15 am. The reported cause of death on his death certificate is Acute Lymphosystic Leukaemia and multiple organ failure.

The parents had been with the child in hospital since Tuesday 16th June 1998 and his father was with him at the time of death.

**4. CURRENT SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS**

Arrangements were made to ensure that the parents suffered no financial hardship regarding funeral expenses.

Counselling has been provided by the medical staff, social workers, a worker from Sargent Cancer Care for children and the local parish priest.

The local authority social workers will continue to provide a sensitive response in relation to support for the family.

**5. REPORT TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

The matter has been referred as appropriate to the Secretary of State.

**6. RECOMMENDATION**

Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the contents of this report.



Jim Dickie  
Director of Social Work

17th July 1998

*For further information contact Sandra Paterson, Principal Officer, Child Care (01698 332032)*