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Date: 28 October 2003

Pauline Allen,
Artistic Director, Special Connection,
29 St Ursula Grove,
PINNER,
MIDDLEX.
HA5 1LN

Dear Pauline,

FATAL INCIDENT INVESTIGATION – PATRICK MULLINGS

Thank you for your letter dated 16 October 2002.

The national guidance on health and safety on educational visits can be found at www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/healthandsafety/visits or from DfES Publications tel.0845 6022260.

The guidance does recommend that where activities involve more than one school that an overall group leader should be appointed in order that a point of communication and decision-making as appropriate is established for resolving issues that affect the welfare of all present. The guidance presents this role as complementing, rather than conflicting with, the responsibility of each school group leader. It is clear also that the guidance suggests that the contractor/provider e.g. Special Connection should be responsible for undertaking the risk assessments for the activities that they have planned.

I trust that it will be helpful if I provide a copy of the questionnaire that Brent Council uses to pre-qualify contractors that it works with as the first stage of its process of assessment of the contractor's competence to manage health and safety risks. This may help to give you a clearer idea of the health and safety standards that the Council requires of its partners. The questionnaire that I have included is the one for organisations with less than 5 employees.

I would also like to take the opportunity to suggest that you might wish to review your choice of venue for these workshops. Whilst I understand the limitations that it places on your aims, conducting workshops within a more secure environment would be one way of both limiting risk and reducing the effort you will need to make to conduct risk assessments of premises owned and controlled by third parties such as Kenton Methodist Church.

I have been advised that I am duty bound to send a copy of the report to neighbouring Councils with whom I understand you organise similar workshops. You may feel that it would be more appropriate if from now on you take advice from your funding Councils or independent advisors.

I acknowledge that it could be difficult for you to change your activities to conform closely to national guidance. However if you choose to do so I wish you every success with the endeavour. I have no doubt of your intentions to do all that you reasonably can to reduce the risk of a reoccurrence of this type of incident.

Thank you again for your co-operation with my investigation.

Yours Sincerely

Colin Conboy
Health and Safety Manager