

"A Second MSBP Case in the London Borough of Barnet"

from "BARNET PRESS" 26 February 2004.

By Linda Geddes

A SECOND mother has spoken out over Barnet social services' failure to recognise her son's autism accusing her of child abuse instead. Caroline Jones, 43, of Brunswick Park Road, New Southgate, was investigated for four years before social workers admitted there were no child protection issues.

Chadley Jones, 17, had been attending a special school with an autism department, but teachers failed to pick up on the fact he was autistic. Mrs Jones said: "Chadley made a couple of remarks at school - it was innocent stuff like 'are you going to give me one?' but when Chadley said it it was always in an inappropriate way.

"The headmaster reported it to social services and the next thing we were in child protection proceedings.

"They wasted four years of Chadley's life on a sexual abuse case that wasn't there and went straight to the family to point the finger." Last month The Press revealed how Finchley mother Jan Loxley-Blount almost lost her children when she was wrongly accused of abuse.

Children's minister Margaret Hodge announced a review of similar cases on Monday.

Mrs Loxley-Blount said: "Barnet could save itself huge amounts of money if it used common sense."

"Many of these cases are matters of family difficulty needing inexpensive social services support rather than expensive child protection inquiries and prosecutions."

A council spokesman said: "We take our statutory duty to protect children from abuse and neglect very seriously indeed. This duty requires us to follow up quickly and thoroughly each and every report we receive about children who may be at risk, whatever the source of that report. Sometimes our enquiries reveal that the child is at risk, sometimes not. These enquiries are always conducted on a multi-agency basis. The outcome is never contingent on the opinion of a single individual - however expert."

"Barnet Press" is a member of the Trinity Mirror group of companies. Trinity Mirror PLC is the parent company of the Trinity Mirror group of companies and is registered in England No 82548, with its address at One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5AP.