

Hannah Williamson  
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### **To whom it may concern**

#### Re: Reference in support of 'The Cruz' project

I have known of the work of 'Bethel – London's Riverside Church' since December 2010 through the work of a representative of this Church, namely Hannah Williamson, who became involved in the life of a vulnerable young person and was eligible for a service from the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Children's Services.

I was impressed by the professionalism portrayed by Hannah Williamson and the extent of the support offered both from the Church as an organisation and individually from its members. The young person in question required emergency accommodation, with support, which was duly provided by the Church, albeit for a time limited period of time. As the young person's Independence Reviewing Officer, I learnt of the extent of support both offered and taken up by the young person. This demonstrated a child centred service arising out of the work of a Church organisation with the aim of effective social action through the work of its youth pastors and Church Guardians. I heard directly from the young person of the high quality and enduring nature of the support given at a time of crisis, both practical assistance (accommodation) and emotional support delivered through the Church Guardian and Leader.

Further evidence of the effective social need work of the Bethel Church was in evidence at a follow-up statutory review held in March 2011. In this Hannah Williamson's professional presentation on the work undertaken with the young person in question was demonstrated. A willingness to see through some complex issues with a young person was in evidence, again valued by the young person in question. The abilities of the Bethel Church and its youth pastors to work within a multi-agency framework and with families were demonstrated to good effect. Those present at the review indicated that the work of the Bethel Church had complemented their contribution and in so doing adding significant value to the professional support network.

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I have no reservations in commending The Bethel Church and the work of its youth pastors, through their proposed 'Cruz Project' mentoring scheme. This appears to be aimed at tackling some of the most challenging areas of social concern, namely violent gang culture and the induction of children and young people in to this. I base this view on what I know of inner city gang culture and the need to meet the challenge through a structured, child and family centred approach with due regard to the need for effective communication from both within the helping organisation and across disciplines. I believe that The Bethel Church has the potential for developing such a service and wish them well in their endeavours.

Yours Sincerely



Douglas Davidson  
Child in Care & Child Protection Conference Chair  
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