

To all Local Authorities and
County Councils.

SMW
Circular 2178

MINISTRY OF HEALTH,
WHITEHALL, S.W.1.

26 NOV 1940

18th October, 1940.

SIR,

1. I am directed by the Minister of Health to state that he has had under consideration problems arising from the evacuation of mothers and children from London both under the organised arrangements described in Circulars 2140 and 2155 and under private arrangements.

2. Under present conditions the Government are anxious to encourage the removal of women and children from London and they remain convinced that the policy of dispersal on which their evacuation plans were based is sound. The experience of last year showed that it is very difficult to persuade mothers to settle down in strange surroundings in the country owing to the break-up of their normal life and interests. It is, therefore, of the first importance to do everything possible to help these women to settle down in strange surroundings and at the same time to minimise as far as may be the inconvenience to householders. It is believed that attention to the following matters will assist.

3. The fullest possible information and advice should be available both for the evacuated women and for the householders who receive them. The leaflet (Appendix A) attached indicates a number of points to which attention may usefully be drawn. Local directions should be made as specific as possible. It is suggested that local authorities in whose districts considerable numbers of mothers and children have already arrived or may be expected should distribute such a leaflet, amplified as local conditions require, to both mothers and householders, the layout and appearance of the leaflet are matters for local initiative and judgment. The Minister understands that Women's Voluntary Services have prepared a leaflet for this purpose, and local authorities will be able to obtain supplies of such leaflets from their headquarters at 41, Tothill Street, London, S.W.1. If possible there should be a single address in each district or parish where enquiries may be made and information obtained.

4. The initial responsibility for finding accommodation for persons who arrive in the district and are unable to find accommodation for themselves rests with the public assistance authority. The public assistance authority should request the billeting authority to provide accommodation for such persons as mothers and children who come within the scope of the Government evacuation scheme in order that halls and temporary accommodation may be cleared as soon as possible. The billeting authority should, when requested by the public assistance authority, undertake the provision of accommodation for mothers and children, even if they have arrived in the area without certificates from the evacuating authority.

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5. The Ministry does not intend to limit the discretion of local authorities to deal with any emergency which may arise but he is of opinion that the following procedure would be generally appropriate:—

(i) Women arriving with children should be billeted.

(ii) Other women who are not normally in employment should also be billeted, but they should be warned that if need arose as a result of the need for making provision for members of the priority groups they might have to give up their accommodation.

(iii) Women without children who are normally in employment should be urged to return to their work but if persuasion fails, they should in the last resort be temporarily billeted and instructed to apply for new work at the Employment Exchange. Persons who are billeted should at the same time be given Form A.G.D. (Bi) (3) to enable them to obtain financial assistance from the Exchange if they are in need.

(iv) Men arriving in the district should not be billeted but should be instructed to return to their work, or if they have not been in work or their work is no longer available, to go to the Employment Exchange.

As stated above, the initial responsibility for those who are unable to find accommodation for themselves rests with the public assistance authority, and men should be accommodated by that authority in halls, schools, etc., which they have at their disposal or can obtain for this purpose. If there is no accommodation of this kind available on the spot, the public assistance authority should consider transferring the men to similar accommodation elsewhere within their own area or in that of a neighbouring authority and should consult the Department's Senior Regional Officer on the most suitable district.

Public assistance authorities should bring cases of persons, both men and women, normally in employment to the notice of the Exchanges and should, where necessary, issue travel vouchers for return to work. The Ministry of Labour have undertaken to give special attention to finding employment for them.

6. The action taken by the public assistance authority and the billeting authority must aim primarily at ensuring that all those who arrive in the district whether under the Government evacuation scheme or otherwise are received and accommodated in such a way as to conduce to reasonable comfort and avoid danger to health. In certain parts of the country where large numbers of people have arrived from London it will be necessary to make a more intensive use of billeting than in the past. Voluntary offers should be accepted wherever possible but overcrowding must be avoided and authorities should not hesitate when necessary to use compulsory powers without fear or favour in order to secure a reasonable and equitable spread.

It has been reported to the Minister that in a number of districts the smaller houses have been billeted to their full capacity, but that no billeting has taken place in a number of the larger houses. The Minister does not think that such differentiation is at all common but in any case the billeting officers of local authorities should take any action which is necessary to secure an equitable distribution between the householders of their district.

7. The widest possible use should be made of empty houses in order to reduce to a minimum the calls upon individual householders in the district and to provide a form of accommodation in which the evacuated mothers can be made responsible for the management of their households and families. It is, of course, important in the case of such empty houses, especially if they have been unoccupied for a long period, to make sure that the water supply and sanitary arrangements are satisfactory, that proper facilities, however simple, are available for the cooking and storage of food, and that the essential articles of furniture and adequate blackout are provided. Where several families are to be housed together in a larger house, some supervision on behalf of the receiving authority will be necessary and Women's Voluntary Services will be ready to help. In general it will be the policy of the reception authority to place in large houses families which for one reason or another are not easy to billet; and it may be necessary to engage a paid social worker to take charge of the house. Effort should be made in that event to find a worker who is accustomed to dealing with such families and who understands their outlook. The evacuating authority or the Evacuation Department, Women's Voluntary Services, 41, Tothill Street, London, S.W.1, may be able to assist. A careful review of the possibilities of this form of accommodation, some of which appears to be still in the estate market, should be made and the local authority will bear in mind the suggestions made on this point in the Circular of the 29th September (Circular 2163). The authority should keep under observation advertisements of properties appearing in the local Press and should not hesitate to requisition such properties as may be required.

8. When accommodation has been provided, what is required is the creation of a new life to replace that left behind. Full use should be made of existing services and organisations, both official and voluntary, both county and district, to provide for the needs of evacuated persons and to absorb them as rapidly and as fully as possible into the life of the community. A list of organisations which may be able to assist in some of these problems which may arise is given in Appendix B.

9. The problem of dealing with individuals who are found difficult to billet or house may often be assisted by the advice of persons experienced in dealing with such cases. The employment

of such an adviser whole-time may not be justified but the problem may appropriately be dealt with by a temporary arrangement for the services of an officer of an appropriate voluntary organisation, by a combined appointment or on a county basis.

10. Every effort should be made to help mothers and children in the reception areas, particularly with a view to encouraging them to remain there under present conditions. It may, however, become necessary for some mothers to return to London for family reasons. In such cases arrangements should be made for billeting the children as unaccompanied children and all possible persuasion used to help in the retention of the children in the reception area.

11. Regular employment or occupation will do more than anything else to help the evacuated women to settle down in their new life, and to encourage their independence. So far as there are opportunities for women to enter local wage-earning employment, they should be encouraged to take advantage of them, provided that they do not displace local labour, which should always have a preference. Full use should be made of the facilities provided by the Ministry of Labour's local offices, and women who are in a position to take local employment should be encouraged to register there. In some cases it may be possible to arrange part-time employment where women may not be in a position to take ordinary full-time employment. The advice of the local office of the Ministry of Labour should be obtained about employers who might be approached and on questions of wages and employment conditions generally.

12. The release of some at any rate of the mothers for employment will be facilitated by the making of arrangements for the care of the children during the day, by the establishment of nursery centres and by the provision of communal meals. The mothers themselves should be encouraged to take an active part in the work of such local services, e.g., by helping in the preparation and serving of the meals. In some places there may be room for a feeding centre on club premises, but even where no place is available for serving communal meals, a communal kitchen from which food can be taken away may be practicable. It will be of great advantage to the householders and the mothers if clubs can be started for the mothers, particularly if premises can be found in which they can spend a portion of each day. Such clubs should be carefully organised so that the mothers are kept busy with different occupations and recreations and they should be encouraged to take part in the management of the clubs themselves. It will be particularly helpful to the householders if arrangements can be made for the mothers to wash and iron clothes on the club premises. Where mothers' clubs are established there should be a nursery for the children and a regular routine for them should be established.

13. Other occupations can be developed and one which can most usefully be taken up by the women is the making and mending of clothes for themselves and their children. The women concerned are not generally accustomed to making garments, their habit being to purchase cheap ready-made clothing when required. Instructions in this and other occupations will therefore be necessary. It is understood that the London County Council are ready to second to local education authorities in counties where the problem is likely to be large, officers familiar with the type of women concerned, who would co-operate with officers of the local education authority in promoting any necessary instruction. The London County Council will also be able to provide a number of teachers experienced in instruction over a wide range of occupations and crafts, including more recreational activities which may assist to provide a measure of entertainment. The help of Women's Voluntary Services and local Women's Institutes will, no doubt, also be available, both in the provision of helpers and possibly in the lending of premises. Women's Voluntary Services may be in a position to supply free material for such purposes and should be approached if this is required.

14. The Board of Education are communicating with local education authorities on these matters (a copy of the circular which they have issued is enclosed) and receiving authorities should lend their willing co-operation. It is important that there should be some organisation or individual to act on behalf of the receiving authority and to co-operate with the education authority and the appropriate voluntary organisation.

15. The expenditure incurred by the local authority in connection with the various matters specified above will be a charge on the evacuation account.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

The Town Clerk.
The Clerk of the Local Authority.

APPENDIX A.

TO BOTH HOUSEHOLDERS AND MOTHERS.

The family life of both hostess and guest has been disturbed by the necessities of war. The hostess has been called on to share her home with others and the guest has had to leave her home, often after very distressing experiences. It is the duty of both to make the best of this situation, on grounds of safety and health, and by give and take to show that they can play their part in the war effort without grumbling. Remember that if it takes two to make a quarrel, one must begin it. Don't be that one.

You should settle between you the most convenient arrangements for meals. If it is agreed that the householder should provide the meals the amount to be charged for board should be agreed in advance and the mother should keep out of the kitchen unless she is asked to help. If it is agreed that the mother should provide meals for herself and her children the householder should allow her the use of cooking facilities. In a small house it is a help if times are fixed for washing and bathing and washing clothes.

TO THE MOTHER.

You should take special care to keep your own room perfectly clean and should be ready to share in the rest of the housework and specially in cleaning the lavatory, bathroom and any other rooms used in common and in washing-up.

You should remember that in many country districts the water supply is limited and water must not be wasted. If lighting is by lamps, you must use them carefully and see that your children understand the danger of upsetting them.

Keep a careful eye on your children until they settle down and help them to fit into the life of the householder. If you have a young child who suffers occasionally from bedwetting you should mention this at the first opportunity so that proper precautions may be taken.

Ask your hostess how to find any of the services at the foot of the leaflet which you may want.

There are no air raid shelters in most country districts but you should remember that they are not needed there as they are in crowded towns.

TO THE HOUSEHOLDER.

Remember that your visitor has had a very trying experience: she may have lost all her possessions and she is separated from her friends and relatives. She will forget her troubles best if she has plenty to do. In some cases it may be possible for her to take up employment either whole-time or part-time and you may be able to help her to obtain it and to arrange for the care of her children while she is at work. You may also be able to help by introducing her to the local church or other place of worship and to any clubs or societies or to the Women's Institute which may help her to feel less of a stranger in her new home. Make special allowances for the children during the first few days: their behaviour may be affected by shock or by strange surroundings. Remember your guest is probably unused to country life. Tell her about local arrangements and how best to do her shopping. Be able also to tell her how to find the following:—

- (1) The nearest Employment Exchange—for a maintenance allowance if needed.
- (2) The doctor or district nurse and any child welfare centre in the neighbourhood.
- (3) The nearest school for her children.
- (4) The billeting officer and Women's Voluntary Services for general help and advice.

APPENDIX B.

ORGANISATIONS WHICH MAY BE ABLE TO ASSIST IN PROBLEMS ARISING IN CONNECTION WITH EVACUATION.

Board of Deputies of British Jews.

D. Israel, Esq., Woburn House,
Upper Woburn Place, London,
W.C.1.

Boys' Brigade.

G. Stanley Smith, Esq., M.C.,
Boys' Brigade, Abbey House,
London, S.W.1.

Boy Scouts' Association.

The Secretary, Buckingham
Palace Road, London, S.W.1.

P. B. Nevill, Esq., Boy Scouts'
Association, Buckingham
Palace Road, London, S.W.1.

British Drama League.

G. Whitworth, Esq., 9, Fitzroy
Square, London, W.1.

British Federation of Social Workers.

H. E. Norman, Esq., 47, White-
hall, London, S.W.1.

(Deputy receives all notices.)

Mrs. Crosthwaite, 18, North
Side, London, S.W.4.

British Federation of Music Festivals.

H. Fairfax Jones, Esq., 106,
Gloucester Place, London, W.1.

British Institute of Adult Education.

W. E. Williams, Esq., 29,
Tavistock Square, London,
W.C.1.

British Social Hygiene Council.

Mrs. Neville Rolfe, Tavistock
House South, Tavistock
Square, London, W.C.1.

Central Council for the Care of Cripples.

Miss N. Hill, 34, Eccleston
Square, London, S.W.1.

Miss N. Simpson, 18, Chepstow
Crescent, London, W.11.

Central Council for Health Education.

The Secretary, "The Old Kiln,"
Hazlemere, nr. High Wycombe,
Bucks.

Central Council for Recreative Physical Training.

Miss P. C. Colson, O.B.E., 58,
Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.

Charity Organisation Society.

B. E. Astbury, Esq., Denison
House, 296, Vauxhall Bridge
Road, S.W.1.

Church of England Moral Welfare Council.

Miss L. Retallack, M.A., 36,
Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.

Church Lads' Brigade.

Rev. H. F. Peerless, Church
Lads' Brigade, Northolt Road,
South Harrow, Middx.

Educational Settlements Association.

W. Hazelton, Esq., 8, Ends-
leigh Gardens, London, W.C.1.

English Folk Dance and Song Society.

Mrs. F. C. Jenkins, Cecil Sharp
House, 2, Regents Park Road,
London, N.W.1.

Girls' Friendly Society.

Miss E. M. Langley, Townsend
House, Greycoat Place,
London, S.W.1.

Girl Guides Association.

Miss McIntyre, Girl Guides
Association, Buckingham
Palace Road, London, S.W.1.

Girls Guildry.

Miss M. J. McKinlay, 212, Bath
Street, Glasgow, C.2.

Girls' Life Brigade.

Miss E. M. Gray, "Holcot," 4,
Spile Bank, Hilders Lane,
Edenbridge, Kent.

Industrial Welfare Society.

Rev. R. R. Hyde, 14, Hobart
Place, London, S.W.1.

Invalid Children's Aid Association.

Miss N. R. Manson, 19, Kensing-
ton Gate, Gloucester Road,
London, S.W.7.

Ivory Cross National Dental Aid Fund.

W. F. Mellersh, L.D.S.,
R.C.S.Eng., 67, Welbeck
Street, London, W.1.

Jewish Board of Guardians.

M. Benjamin, Esq., 127, Middle-
sex Street, London, E.1.

Library Association.

Seymour Smith, Esq., Public
Library, Avenue House,
Finchley, N.3.

Mental Health Emergency Committee.

Miss E. Fox, C.B.E., 24,
Buckingham Palace Road,
London, S.W.1.

- National Association of Boys' Clubs.*
E. F. Piercy, Esq., O.B.E., 17, Bedford Square, London, W.C.1.
- National Association of Maternity and Child Welfare Centres.*
Miss M. R. Lovelock, 117, Piccadilly, London, W.1.
Miss Bowden-Smith, 15, Nevern Road, London, S.W.5.
- National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis.*
Dr. Harley Williams, Tavistock House (North), Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1.
- National Council of Girls' Clubs.*
Miss H. Harford, Hamilton House, Bidborough Street, London, W.C.1.
- National Council for Maternity and Child Welfare.*
Miss O. Moffatt, 121, Warwick Avenue, London, W.1.
- National Council of Women of Great Britain.*
Mrs. Patrick Ness, 34, Eaton Square, London, S.W.1.
- National Federation of Women's Institutes.*
Hon. Frances Farrer, 39, Eccleston Street, London, S.W.1.
- National Institute for the Blind.*
W. McG. Eager, Esq., 224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.
Mrs. John Knapp, J.P., Little Orchard, Denham, Bucks.
- National Playing Fields Association.*
Sir Lawrence Chubb, Southstoke Hall, Bath.
- National Society for Epileptics.*
G. A. C. Preston, Esq., 59, Denison House, Vauxhall Bridge Road, London, S.W.1.
- National Union of Townswomen's Guilds.*
Mrs. H. V. Horton, 2, Cromwell Place, London, S.W.7.
- Nursery School Association of Gt. Britain.*
Miss Freda Hawtry, 18, Elm Park Gardens, London, S.W.3.
- Personal Service League.*
Hon. Mrs. Sydney Marsham, O.B.E., 41, Lowndes Square, London, S.W.1.
- P.O.I.P.H. (Soc. for Provision of Occupational Industries for the Physically Handicapped).*
Mrs. E. Shields, 20, Beauchamp Place, Brompton Road, London, S.W.3.
- Professional Classes Aid Council.*
Miss G. M. Walters, 27, West Hill, London, N.6.
- Royal Association in Aid of the Deaf and Dumb.*
Rev. Albert Smith, 27, Old Oak Road, London, S.W.3.
G. E. Simes, Esq., Royal Assn. in Aid of the Deaf and Dumb, 413, Oxford Street, London, W.1.
- Rotary International.*
F. C. Hickson, Esq., Tavistock House (South), Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1.
- Salvation Army.*
Col. G. Bremner, Wm. Booth Memorial Training College, Denmark Hill, London, S.E.5.
- Save the Children Fund.*
Capt. G. F. Gracey, D.S.O., 20, Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.
- Society of Friends of Foreigners in Distress.*
W. J. Cable, Esq., 3, Suffolk Lane, Cannon Street, London, E.C.4.
- Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen's Families Association.*
Capt. A. A. Andrews, 23, Queen Anne's Gate, London, S.W.1.
- Standing Conference of National Juvenile Organisations.*
Mrs. Walter Elliot, 60, Eaton Square, London, S.W.1.
A. W. Oyler, O.B.E., Esq., 62, New Cavendish Street, London, W.1.
- Women's Voluntary Services for Civil Defence.*
Mrs. Montagu Norman, Queen Anne's Chambers, 41, Tothill Street, London, S.W.1.
- Workers Educational Association.*
Ernest Green, Esq., 38A, St. Georges Drive, London, S.W.1.
- Y.M.C.A.*
Z. F. Willis, Esq., Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1.
- Y.W.C.A.*
Miss M. Curwen, O.B.E., Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1.
- Youth Hostels Association.*
E. St. John Catchpool, Esq., Trevelyan House, Welwyn Garden City, Herts.