



Fair Play for Children

1st October 2008

David Cameron Speech: CRB Gibe Slammed

The National Secretary of a Charity formed in 1972 after two children died has slammed the comment of Conservative Leader DAVID CAMERON about CRB checks which he made in his Party Conference Speech today.

Mr Cameron, in a clip widely shown on national television, criticised requirements of parents hosting children and young people on Exchange Visits that they should have Enhanced CRB checks carried out.

Jan Cosgrove, National Secretary of Fair Play for Children, has condemned the Conservative Leader for what appears a populist misuse of his position. "The CRB checks are there where people are going to be in situations of substantial access to children and young people. This issue was highlighted some years ago in a Conference I attended hosted by one of the most pro-active Police Forces in the UK in terms of child protection. It was seen as a major, unprotected area, where many operators of such schemes were concerned to have people they use in these" schemes checked for previous convictions and police intelligence."

Mr Cosgrove deplored any politician, however eminent, climbing on board a sensitive issue involving children's safety in such an irresponsible manner. "I know it is becoming fashionable in some ideologically-motivated quarters to try to equate criminal records checks with some form of alleged 'politically-correct' philosophy. If the Leader of the Conservative Party actually believes this, he is far off the mark. The CRB and now the new Vetting and Barring Scheme, arose from actual tragedies, involving the deaths of children. His Party has given support to this progress. He needs to correct the appalling endorsement he gave today to the attacks on the CRB mounted in some media and ideological quarters."

Mr Cosgrove said Mr Cameron and others should bear in mind the MMR controversy - now shown to be harmful to children because many parents failed to ensure their children were protected when they believed the claims made against MMR. "The consequence was not just a rise in measles statistics, it involved trauma and suffering for real live children."

ENDS

1st October 2008 - 22.30 GMT.

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Notes:

1. Fair Play for Children is a national organisation formed in 1972 to promote The Child's Right to Play (Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).
2. It was founded by Trevor Huddleston CR (famed for his leadership of Anti-Apartheid and mentoring of e.g. Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, and Hugh Masekela) after a drowning tragedy where two eight-year olds drowned for lack of safe playspace.
3. In the 1970s Fair Play pioneered action for safer playgrounds and the opening up of schools for community use, as well as using unused community space for play, in the 1980s it emerged as an independent and national voice for children's play and in the 1990's helped pioneer the scheme on which CRB was later founded.
4. Jan Cosgrove (63) has been National Secretary of the organisation since 1991 and has been active in children's play and youth work for 39 years.

www.fairplayforchildren.org