

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE: Monday April 9th 17:00

“HOME EDUCATION SHOULD NOT BE USED AS A SMOKE SCREEN”

Education Otherwise Points Out That Sufficient Laws And Safeguards Are Already In Place
To Regulate Home Education And To Protect Vulnerable Children

11m Monday 9th April 2007: Education Otherwise issued the following statement to coincide with the sentencing of Eunice Spry.

Parents throughout the country were horrified to learn of the catalogue of abuse suffered by these children revealed at Bristol Crown Court last month.

At the conclusion of the trial Gloucestershire Safeguarding Board ¹ conceded that the children had been seen regularly by many different people, none of whom had an overview of the case.

Education Otherwise spokeswoman, Ann Newstead, said: "This is a tragic case. These events occurred before ² the 2004 Children Act ³ took effect. This legislation followed the Climbié ⁴ case and put in place new safeguarding procedures."

We are dismayed that in the immediate aftermath of the trial Darren Shaw, Gloucestershire Director of Services for Children and Young People called for more regulation of home education.

Home education is not the issue here.

more

Spry/Page 2

The children were seen by many health and education professionals. Under the new arrangements following the 2004 Act information now has to be shared in order to protect vulnerable children.⁵

There are already sufficient laws and safeguards in place regulating home education.

Representatives of local home education groups are writing to the authorities seeking an urgent meeting following the case.

Home education should not be used as a smokescreen to hide the historic failings of the Gloucestershire Authorities.

####

References:

¹ Gloucester Safeguarding Children Department Statement

<http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=15180>

² Timeline of abuse 1986-2004. The last adopted child escaped from Eunice Spry end 2004

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/gloucestershire/6449313.stm>

³ 2004 Children's Act

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/20040031.htm2004>

⁴ Lord Lamming recommendations following Climbié

<http://www.victoria-climbié-inquiry.org.uk/finreport/6recommend.htm>

⁵ Information Sharing Index

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/40031--c.htm#12>

Contact:

Ann Newstead

EO National Media Contact

01689 826504, 07870 115231, thenewstead5@yahoo.co.uk