

Press Release Thursday 25th February 2010

HOME EDUCATION CHARITY SLAMS BIRMINGHAM'S 'LAMENTABLE'

CHILD PROTECTION FAILURE

A leading home education charity has criticised the actions of Birmingham Children's Services that led to the death of Khyra Ishaq. They are also outraged at suggestions that home education had any bearing on her death.

Fiona Nicholson, Trustee of Education Otherwise (EO) said "Ofsted has already found that Birmingham is failing to protect children and questions have been raised over the high number of child deaths in the last few years. Fears for the safety of Khyra and other family members were made known to social services by the deputy head of her school both before and after she was de-registered. However it appears that Birmingham Social did not see sufficient cause to act on concerns."

"The millions of pounds that Birmingham has spent on its ambitious 'Brighter Futures' information sharing system appears to have been at the expense of protecting children from abuse and neglect. For anyone to blame home education is a red herring designed to distract attention from Birmingham's lamentable child protection record."

Ann Newstead, spokesperson for EO said "It is ludicrous to suggest extra legislation such as proposed by this Government would have made a difference in this case. Once again it appears that staff were not trained in the detail of the powers already available to them and did not have sufficient expertise to correctly assess the risk. The only reason I can see for this case to be linked with home education is for pure political gain with no regard for the facts."

Notes for editors:

Birmingham child-protection services described as 'not fit for purpose':
http://www.publicservice.co.uk/news_story.asp?id=10821

Birmingham's 'early intervention' project
<http://www.preventionaction.org/prevention-news/future-s-bright-future-s-birmingham/690>)

Education Otherwise page on the Children Schools & Families Bill
<http://www.freedomforchildrentogrow.org/csfbill.htm>

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