

7 November 2011

**Press Release**

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**Norgrove Report a missed opportunity says CARE**

Christian social policy charity CARE has expressed disappointment with the final report from The Family Justice Review, otherwise known as the Norgrove Report, published on 3 November.

Nola Leach, CARE's Chief Executive said, 'While some recommendations outlined in the report are welcome (for example proposals to reduce delays in court cases for couples separating, to encourage more mediation and introduce parenting agreements post-separation), we are very disappointed that there are no recommendations to incorporate into legislation the principle that it is in a child's best interests to have a "continued meaningful relationship with both parents following separation, where this is safe".'

Philippa Taylor, CARE's Family Policy Consultant continued, 'Over the past years there has been pressure for legislative reform, reflecting greater involvement by fathers in the lives of their children. Two years ago an influential report by The Centre for Social Justice, which CARE was involved in, recommended introducing legislation that explicitly acknowledges that children benefit from the 'substantial involvement' of both parents in their lives (which is not the same as saying a child should spend exactly 50% of their time with each parent). Until there is such legislation, our concern is that bias will remain in the family justice system against fathers. Norgrove has missed an important opportunity to recommend a very much needed change in our law.'

Dan Boucher, Director of Parliamentary Affairs for CARE, concluded, 'The Norgrove report also failed to recommend any simplification of the court process by which grandparents can gain access to their grandchildren. Grandparents are often extremely important to children, and continue to be important if parents separate. The existing rules mean they have to go to court twice to gain access, which is a long and expensive process that puts many off.'

While influential, this report is not Government policy, so Government is not duty-bound to implement it all. Policy makers would do well to consider instead the recommendations of the Centre for Social Justice report, as they are better directed to support marriage, children, grandparents and family life, both pre and post-separation.

CARE will be campaigning for any new legislation to explicitly acknowledge that children benefit from the 'substantial involvement' of both parents in their lives, post-separation.

Notes:

1. Norgrove Report: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/policy/moj/family-justi...>

2. Philippa Taylor, Consultant to CARE, is a member of the Family Law Review, and helped to produce their Report 'Every Family Matters' in 2009: <http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/client/downloads/CSJ%20Every%20...>