

# Graham Jones MP

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## Norgrove report on child welfare is regretful

The Norgrove report last week led to some debate about childrens welfare. The argument by Norgrove in denying essentially fathers rights is to keep the courts free from a tsunami of legal challenges from embittered and embattled parents who put to one side their childrens welfare whilst they rough each other up.

Some fathers hopes of securing equal rights over their children have been potentially dashed with Norgroves review of family law. The Norgrove Family Justice Review has also rejected calls to enshrine in law that children should have a 'meaningful relationship' with both their father and their mother. Not exactly in tune with the PM and IDS's belief in stable relationships.

I see both sides to this but it seems that in order we put children first and avoid a children last policy in the deluge that will hit the courts, we must choose a winner and a loser in the parental stakes.

I am not sure this is putting the child first either. My case work includes mothers who use the law and their position to abuse the relationship a child has with their father. Whilst sad in some respects, sons need a good relationship with a father.

The time taken in the courts and the way the court is conducted seems to be the basis for offering parental primacy. I really struggle to accept this as a way forward based on experience.

If the child is to come first then both parents and all grandparents must take equal responsibility, share parenting and be encouraged to work within a positive framework. Where that is not applicable a reformed judicial system must be fast to respond and sanction irresponsibility or importantly the type of confrontation that I get week after week in my surgery.

The system is not working.

I received this email this week which I do not necessarily endorse but does discuss the problems.

Dear Mr Graham Jones MP,

LONDON, UK, November 3, 2011

### **UK FRM: 'Norgrove Final Report Recommendations Violate Rule of Law'**

The UK Family Rights Movement today condemned recommendations by the Norgrove Panel as unconstitutional, immoral, and beyond the remit provided by the government.

"The notion that a child has no right to a 'meaningful relationships with both parents' post-dissolution not only violates the rule of law, but is contemptuous of established EU laws and UN Declarations on the rights of a child" stated George Piskor, Forum Moderator. "The recommendation is all the more surprising as the remit was limited to' examining the processes

(but not the law)'

"The recommendations not only serve to impugn the judiciary by suggesting they lack the competence to make decisions to allow relationships with both parents, but also converts the "best interest of the child" standard to "best interests of the Treasury" in an effort to cut costs" stated Dawn Booth-Lydon, Forum member and spokesperson. "By precluding one parent from child contact the recommendations propose to institute gender bias as the rule of law."

George Piskor added: "What's more amazing is that the panel allegedly based the findings on experiences in Australia where 81% of the population support shared parenting, the divorce rate has gone down, and costs associated with divorce have gone down by establishing a level legal playing field. One has to ask what the Panel was thinking to arrive at the opposite conclusion"

The consensus by UK FRM Forum members was that the Panel recommendations would serve to institutionalise the broken family justice system and have the opposite intended effect by actually encouraging even more litigation thereby negating many of the positive procedural recommendations made. Several members noted that Whitehall was quick to distance itself from the Panel Report in its hastily released comment "As set out in the Coalition Programme for Government, this government is committed to encouraging shared parenting and is firmly of the view that children should have meaningful relationships with both parents after separation."

As the primary stakeholders in fixing the "broken" family justice system, the UK FRM looks forward to working with the government in formulating appropriate reform policies. "The clear lesson for the government to avoid embarrassments such as the Norgrove Report is to include end users in future committees and panels" stated George Piskor. "Panels limited to institutional representatives naturally leads to recommendations protecting institutional self-interests"###

UK FRM is a Forum with members from 27 Family Rights Movement (FRM) organisations representing a consensual view of mothers, fathers, children, grandparents, and second spouses in the extended divorce community. UK FRM members subscribe to the following core principles as the basis for family justice system reform:

- Presumptive shared parenting,
- Gender equality, and
- Recognition of domestic violence as a genderless dysfunction.

Views expressed by the UK FRM Forum may not necessarily agree in whole or in part with those of individual organisations depending on subject matter and prior agreements with individual organisations.

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Posted by [Graham Jones](#) at 12:12 pm 

Labels: [Norgrove report](#) , [parenting](#)

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