



6/12/2009

STATEMENT BY PACA: DR KIM HOLT SHOULD BE THANKED AND REINSTATED

For immediate release:

PACA (Professionals Against Child Abuse) wishes to express its support for Dr Kim Holt, Consultant Paediatrician, following the publication of information about concerns she and others raised in 2006 about the management of children's health services in Haringey.¹

Dr. Holt was one of four Consultant Paediatricians who wrote to their managers listing numerous concerns which they had raised for at least two years at that stage.² Many of these were the same as factors identified by the Care Quality Commission when it reviewed the death of Baby P.³ Only one of the four Consultants is currently in post.

PACA notes with concern the fact that Dr Holt has been excluded from her job for over two years, is currently on a temporary secondment, with no long term job security and that she has always been clear that she wanted to return to her original post. PACA notes that Dr. Holt stated that considerable efforts were made to have her removed.

¹ BMA News Review, front page headline, 21 November 2009; Sunday Telegraph, 6 December 2009.

² A. Gilligan, *Doctors raised alarm over 'high risk' at Baby P clinic*, Evening Standard 12th May 2009 <http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/standard/article-23689559-doctors-raised-alarm-over-high-risk-at-baby-p-clinic.do>

³ CQC, *Review of the involvement and action taken by health bodies in relation to the case of Baby P*, 2009 [Draws on previous independent investigation] http://www.cqc.org.uk/_db/_documents/Baby_P.pdf

It appears that Dr. Holt is yet another NHS whistleblower who has been badly treated by the NHS after raising legitimate concerns. This is unacceptable. Following the Stafford scandal, health ministers repeatedly stated that whistleblowers enjoy full legal protection from the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.⁴ If this were truly the case, Dr. Holt would not have suffered these detriments. We would welcome a statement from a minister on this matter now.

PACA suggests that Dr. Holt should be thanked by her employer, Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust, which should also offer her a public apology. It should reinstate her and supply the necessary resources to allow her to do her job. It should also compensate her for the unnecessary costs she has incurred, including those relating to unnecessary legal costs and maintaining her skills whilst excluded from the workplace. We do not see that any other course of action is in the interests of vulnerable children, the wider community, and the NHS.

We note that Great Ormond Street's spokesperson finds it "difficult to comment until an independent investigation is completed." We understand that the report from the investigation was supposed to have been published in September 2009. Ongoing delay appears to prevent Great Ormond Street from addressing important issues. We believe that it is in the public interest for that report to be published. When it is, PACA members will study the report to see what implications it may have for other individuals involved.



John Bridson Chair PACA

Information about PACA: Children are the most vulnerable members of society. Sometimes the very people who are expected to protect them place them at risk. It is then that professionals who work with children have a duty to protect them. PACA believes that vulnerable children need dedicated paediatricians, nurses, social workers, teachers and the law to protect them. PACA was formed in response to high profile cases against paediatricians at the General Medical Council at which it became clear that the present regulatory systems did not protect children and were open to

⁴ See, for example, Ben Bradshaw MP, Minister of State for Health, House of Commons Hansard 18 May 2009.col 1227W.

abuse by those who sought to discredit professionals who stood up publicly for children's rights. PACA advocates for children's rights by campaigning for regulatory organisations to be trained in child protection, for the interests of the child to be paramount, and for professionals who stand up for children to receive fair treatment. (See <http://paca.org.uk>)