



PROTECTING CHILDREN

Six measures to strengthen the laws on Paedophiles

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Background

Conservatives today call upon the Government to introduce six new measures to protect children from sex offenders.

Following careful analysis of the current laws governing paedophiles, Conservatives want to see:

A more effective sex offenders' register

1. *A requirement for a sex offender to sign on the sex offenders' register at his local police station within 3 days of arriving at any new location, instead of within 14 days as at present.*

Many paedophiles lead an ambulant way of life, moving from one B & B to another or acquiring caravans or boats. They can thus escape registration for a time, yet have long enough at one place to meet and abuse victims. The police would welcome a change to re-registration after 72 hours at one location.

2. *A central register for paedophiles.*

At present, the "register" is really nothing more than a police station docket. Clearly, for the register to be an effective operational tool, it should be IT-based and linked to a central database.

New criminal offences

3. *A new criminal offence of internet "grooming" and a new civil injunction to stop a course of conduct by an adult towards a child for an illegal or harmful sexual purpose.*

This was recommended by the Government's own Internet Task Force on Child Protection, but has not been implemented.

Keys to encryption

4. *Increased sentences for failure to provide a key to encrypted child pornography.*

There is an increasing use of IT and the Internet to store and distribute Child Pornography. This, when found, has been used as evidence against Paedophiles. Unfortunately cheap encryption software is available that the police and the security service have not been able to break. The Government recently introduced a legal requirement for the key to be provided when requested. Our proposal is that the sentence for failure to provide the key where the encrypted information is seized under the Child Protection Act should match that which the accused would receive if the anticipated evidence were revealed.

Psychometric checks

5. *Psychometric testing for those seeking employment with children in residential homes and boarding schools.*

This form of testing is being piloted through a scheme called the STEP programme. Research teams are currently evaluating the research. Evidence is also being taken from the US and Canada. Psychometric tests are pen and paper questionnaires, which pose a series of questions, which have been standardized on non-offenders and undertaken by both treated and non-treated sex offenders. Paedophiles tend towards a typical profile and the assessment is based upon historical variables and patterns of adult relationships. Some will of course have a pattern even though they may have no previous convictions, but where children's protection is involved, it is better to be safe than sorry.

Satellite monitoring

6. *A task force to report within 12 months on the feasibility of satellite monitoring and remote tracking of paedophiles released into the community.*

The technology now exists and has been used in the US to monitor and control the movement of offenders by GPS. This takes the form of an ankle bracelet similar to that in use for tagging but with transmission of the information via satellite to a laptop computer. A complete record will be kept of the movements of an individual and access can be gained to check his whereabouts at any time. The system can be pre programmed to identify exclusion or inclusion areas on a GPS map and if the wearer of the bracelet enters or leaves the area an automatic pager message can be sent to alert the police and/or him of that fact (to warn him off). It is claimed that prisoners released on parole and required to wear a device as an alternative to continued incarceration have a very low re-offending rate whilst tagged. If the bracelet is removed, the sensitivity of the equipment will identify this and it is claimed that those who have sought to do so have been rapidly apprehended. This possibility clearly merits immediate investigation and, if the task force finds that it would be feasible and cost-effective, early implementation.

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