



Forced adoption: call for apology

A Manchester MP wants his parliamentary colleagues' support for a government apology to unmarried mothers forced to offer their children for adoption from the 1950s to the 1970s.

Liberal Democrat John Leech has acted after being contacted by one of his Withington constituents, Phil Frampton, whose BBC radio programme *The Crying Shame* saw him revisit, for the first time, the unmarried mothers home in St Agnes, Cornwall where he was born in 1953.

Is stack up?

Patterson acknowledged that the paper had a good record of reporting positively on homelessness issues.

The 6 June edition also carried accounts from people genuinely forced into rough sleeping and receiving help from St George's Crypt.

A YEP news executive said the figure of £400-£600 had been endorsed by the police.

KEVIN GOPAL

"My mother was a Birmingham teacher. Not being married she bore me in secret to avoid bringing shame down on her head and losing her job," said Frampton, who remained in care until he was 18.

Cruel acts

Frampton was shocked to discover the "extent to which mothers were systematically humiliated, including being forced to watch from a locked room as the adopters put their baby into a car and drive away". In some cases children and parents were denied any contact following childbirth. Many of the institutions behind these acts were funded by the Church of England and local authorities.

Leech's early day motion submitted for debate in the House of Commons "notes the women were not given information about welfare services including housing and financial help and there was no questioning whether women putting their children up for adoption had given informed consent".

The MP has won support from the Movement for an Adoption Apology, established last year.

Emily Watson in Oranges and Sunshine, about children forced into care in Australia

One of its members, Jean Robertson-Molloy, gave up her newly born daughter in Australia 49 years ago, believing "every child needs a mother and a father".

Robertson-Molloy praises Australia's registry programme, which she claims "puts Britain to shame, making it easier for birth parents to find their children". Nevertheless her daughter was 28 years old when they re-met, and the relationship remains strained.

Formal apology

Many children were also forcibly deported to Australia to populate the country, and abused in the homes they were put into.

Next month South Australia's premier Jay Weatherill is to offer a formal apology to people affected by past forced adoption.

From the 1950s until 1980, it has been estimated that more

"Victims carried lifelong sense of shame".
Leech



than 17,000 children were adopted in South Australia, many through forced removal by agencies or churches.

'Personal hurt'

Leech would now like to see the UK follow suit. "Women subjected to forced child adoptions have carried a lifelong sense of shame. The same is true for child victims of such adoptions.

An acknowledgement from the establishment that they did not take enough action to prevent forced child adoptions may help ease the personal hurt that the women and children who went through such adoptions experienced."

MARK METCALF

GOT A STORY? CONTACT 0161 831 5563 OR EMAIL NEWS@BIGISSUENORTH.CO.UK



NEWS IN BRIEF

FRAUD INVESTIGATION

The Department for Work and Pensions has been criticised for withholding information of more than 100 cases of potential fraud related to the welfare-to-work industry. Margaret Hodge, chair of the Public Accounts Committee, accused the DWP of "hiding" critical information about the cases from the taxpayer. A further 11 cases relate to A4e, with which the government ended a contract in May.

RUGBY LEAGUE ROOTS

A £100,000 grant has been awarded to archive the history of rugby league in Huddersfield. *Huddersfield Rugby League: A Lasting Legacy* will collate oral histories and artefacts of the game's roots in the town. The project will run until 2014, marking the centenary of Huddersfield's four-cup triumph in the 1914/15 season and the club's 150th anniversary (www.hlf.org.uk).

SERVICES REVIEW

A five-star rating has been awarded by Visit England, the national tourist board, to a service station for the first time. The board assessed 107 service stations and found the south station off the M6 at independently owned Tebay Services, Cumbria, to be the only one worthy of the top award. The stations were assessed in areas such as cleanliness, signage and staff responses to questions such as: "Cottage pie - is that lamb or beef?"

ENLIGHTENED MANCHESTER

The Dalai Lama is to address crowds over a three-day period at the Manchester Arena on 16-18 June. It will be the 76-year-old Nobel Peace Prize winner's first visit to the city since 1996 and is motivated by spreading a "message of non-violence, dialogue and universal responsibility" after the UK riots of 2011. He is speaking as part of a nine-day UK visit (www.dalailama2012uk.org).