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Submission to the Education Select Committee Investigating Child Protection

This portfolio of nine cases is to illustrate that the issue of child protection goes further and deeper than the remit of the Committee suggests.

While our first submission addressed the “levels of threshold” that Social Services are supposed to abide by, this submission consists of nine cases that have come our way in a more or less arbitrary way.

1. **Vicky Haigh**, the first case where the mother and the Council concerned could be named, as the gag was removed by John Hemming MP
2. **The Musa Case** that is in the public domain, thanks to African publicity and involvement by the Nigerian Government
3. **The AE Child**, a 12-year-old girl who has written 35 letters to the judge asking to come back to her family
4. **The Irish Couple** who are promised to be reunited with their children, whilst they are neglected in care
5. **The Thompson Family** whose great-grandchildren were taken violently and have not been seen or heard of since
6. **The Welsh Couple R & E** whose baby is allergic to industrial milk and does not receive the quality of care he needs
7. **The Grandmother** who has paid over £25,000 in vain to help her grandson
8. **The Estranged Daughter** who was kidnapped in the US, after having been medically mis-diagnosed in South Wales
9. **My Ex is a Freemason** who engineered the residence of his son with him, while his daughters were freed for adoption.

Solutions proposed seem obvious:

- The Government’s pressure through adoption targets needs to be removed
- The incentive of OFSTED ratings for Local Authorities needs to be replaced by other goals
- **Camilla Cavendish’s 10-Point Plan** as advertised by The Times in 2009 ought to be recommended by the Committee. It is therefore reproduced on the last page of this submission.

**Vicky Haigh –
Requesting the Return of her Daughter from her Paedophile Father and “Social” Services**

1. Nature of the Case / Background

This case is significant as it was the first where a [gag was removed](#)¹ by John Hemming MP, so that the mother and Doncaster Council could be named. It can be summarised into

- An appeal for help from Social Services by the school turned into a high profile perversion of justice
- The failure of Social Services to acknowledge and respond to the abused daughter’s needs
- A perversion of criminality, where innocence is punished, while the guilty father gets child residency.

2. Submissions of Fact

The mother suspected abuse of the girl by the father since she was aged 3 (DOB 13.11.03). Two police interviews with the daughter are the hardest [evidence](#)² demonstrating the abuse that the girl has had to endure. Other evidence is provided by school teachers and doctors.

The fact that the mother approached Social Services for help turned out to be the beginning of a series of manipulation of facts resulting in

- The mother having to flee to Ireland to have another baby by her subsequent partner there
- The mother being imprisoned 3 years for breaching a supposed non-molestation order
- This non-molestation order is a farce, given that it resulted from saying ‘hello’ when the mother saw her daughter incidentally at a petrol station. See <http://bit.ly/xweOMg>³
- An anonymised 30-page chronology is available on the [website in support of Vicky Haigh](#)⁴ that is currently set to ‘private’, i.e. requires the acceptance as a user.

3. Points of Law and Procedure

The case is characterised by

- The falsification of court documents created by Social Services and sanctioned by judges
 - Hearings are supposed to have taken place that are not recorded in courts
 - Documents requiring stamp and signature are used without them
- The abuse of power by Social Services
 - Their agenda is clearly the abduction of the child rather than its best interest
 - Social Services
- The collusion between Social Services, Police, court staff and judges for the benefit of the father whose brother is in the Police
- The manipulation of the mainstream media by Sir Nicholas Wall
 - He issued a press statement before publishing his judgement in August 2011
 - This resulted in a witch hunt of the mother and glorification of the father.

4. Summary

[Behind a wall of secrecy, parents who lost their children are now in jail](#)⁵ – Lord Justice Wall has personally taken over two curious and troubling cases.

¹ <http://johnhemming.blogspot.com/2011/04/gag-removed-job-done.html>

² <http://vickyhaigh.wordpress.com/evidence/>

³ <http://bit.ly/xweOMg>

⁴ <http://victimsunite.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/11-04-24-my-daddy-is-a-paedophile.pdf>

⁵ <http://tgr.ph/smx2YV>

The Musa - Case – A Nigerian Couple whose Six Children were Kidnapped by Haringey Council

1. Nature of the Case / Background

This case has been called the most evil and corrupt of all child snatching cases by every expert. It started with eight police officers removing five children by force in April 2010 – without any legal justification or paper work. Since then, one false allegation has been fabricated after another, resulting in some 30 hearings in family courts. The sixth child was taken right after birth in June 2010 by nine police officers, was returned by Order and taken again after a major fabricated event. Outstanding characteristics are:

- The parents are foreign nationals whose embassy was refused consular visits of the children which is in breach of the [Vienna Convention on Consular Relations](#)⁶
- [Public support](#)⁷ includes publicity [online](#)⁸, in [Africa](#)⁹, [America](#)¹⁰ and [the UK](#)¹¹
- A major campaign ensued in Nigeria where [Parliament investigated](#)¹² the problem
- The perversion of justice resulted in the parents being imprisoned and charged in a criminal court where the proceedings are current.

2. Submissions of Fact

Besides suffering the loss of her five children while pregnant with her sixth, the mother has had to endure the most horrible defamation and character assassination by social workers and the Council's legal team. Furthermore, the manhandling when the baby was taken at birth, left her unconscious, after her arms and legs were pulled such that she has been limping ever since. Furthermore, on the occasion of a false arrest, more manhandling worsened the injury which continues to require medical attention. But due to so much harassment and bullying, the mother has become so afraid and suspicious that she'd rather suffer than risk being maltreated. Harassment and bullying consisted in

- a list of 27 allegations that can only be called farcical and hilarious by any rational person
- police bail since June 2011 which meant reporting three times a week
- hearings in the family courts, with legal representation that must also be called farcical
- gagging orders that threatened with prison
- serious intimidation of supporters which included imprisonment and taking children from six befriended women.

3. Points of Law and Procedure

The case is characterised by

- Changes in court bundles and non-observation of rules of procedure
- The abuse of power by Police, Social Services, lawyers, foster agents and contact centres
- The molestation of the eldest daughter by the son of the foster carers in August 2010, since when she has not been seen any more.

⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vienna_Convention_on_Consular_Relations

⁷ <http://gloriamusa.wordpress.com/public-support/>

⁸ <http://gloriamusa.wordpress.com/public-support/online-publicity/>

⁹ <http://gloriamusa.wordpress.com/public-support/african-publicity/>

¹⁰ <http://gloriamusa.wordpress.com/public-support/american-publicity/>

¹¹ <http://gloriamusa.wordpress.com/public-support/booker-articles/>

¹² <http://gloriamusa.wordpress.com/public-support/nigerian-government/>

A.E.: a 12-Year-Old Daughter Taken in her Sleep - at 10.30pm in May 2011

How Social Workers changed their Minds from Praising her Family to Abusing the Child

1. Nature of the Case / Background

This case appears to be the worst in terms of abusiveness vis-à-vis a child - by Social Workers and the Court:

- Whilst the mother was found to be unfit and even a danger to raise a child, her father and two half-brothers have been her family since birth
- “The system” of Police, Social Services and the Family Court has not only colluded to kidnap the child with violence and without proper justification, but is also abusing her and does anything but act in the child’s interest.

2. Submissions of Fact

The girl has written 35 heart wrenching letters, many of them to the judge who has ignored them. Amongst campaigners and supporters of [victims of white collar crimes](#)¹³, it is well known that the UK fares poorly with respect to Human Rights. But the Children’s Human Rights Act says clearly that a child should be placed with a family member, if possible:

- While the mother was deemed to be unfit, her paternal family was praised by Social Services
- Despite glowing reports, a change of mind resulted in the girl being taken while asleep
- Whilst in foster care, she is not only being isolated from friends and family, but also prevented from writing further to the judge, social workers or her family
- She is driven to school by taxi – a 50 miles round trip – where she is strip searched for letters
- Whilst not being allowed a mobile phone or access to a computer which she was used to when excelling in school, she is being given ‘pink pills’ that have resulted in her gaining weight abnormally and falling to the lowest levels in school.

3. Points of Law and Procedure

[John Hemming MP](#)¹⁴ is the most vociferous MP regarding children in foster care and child snatching in particular. In his [interview on Edge Media TV](#)¹⁵, he states that “social workers don’t care about the Law.” In this case, it is even more concerning that a family court judge does not care about the cries of a child.

It is conceivable that civil servants and employees of public authorities know that they are beyond the Law, as they may be immune from prosecution thanks to [Royal Charters](#)¹⁶. Hence this is a legal area that may have to be re-visited in the light of child snatching cases, that appear to be legalised by family courts and sanctioned by family court judges.

4. Summary

The 12-year old girl has been separated from her family for nearly a year by now. She has been imposed living conditions that are blatantly abusive. She is thus living proof that

- the system is “evil” as John Hemming MP states in his interview
- the system does not practice what it preaches
- “levels of threshold” – however appropriate they may be – are not being adhered to.

Instead of being ‘gagged’, children, parents, grandparents and anybody who cares need to be heard!

¹³ <http://victims-unite.net>

¹⁴ <http://insupportofjohnhemming.wordpress.com>

¹⁵ <http://bit.ly/zo6NyC>

¹⁶ <http://bit.ly/cD1LMQ>

C & P: an Irish Couple whose Three Children were taken for having been left unsupervised for 10 minutes

1. Nature of the Case / Background

This case is an example of “levels of threshold” being applied wholly inappropriately:

- Since the mother has had three miscarriages during which she passed out for over 20 minutes, she didn't want to do that to her children, when she feared another miscarriage. Having gone to get her husband, Social Services and Police took their three children, aged 5, 2 and 1, on 26th October 2011.
- Since then, Social Services are looking for allegations against the father C to build a case for foster care. They are following the Government's pressures for adoption, whilst the children are held in 'temporary foster care'.
- Whilst in care, the parents see the children three times a week and have observed gross negligence that the mother is compensating for with the love and care only birth mothers provide.

2. Submissions of Fact

The behaviour of Social Services Carmarthenshire does not differ from other councils where victims of child snatching have suffered cruelty and injustice for the sake of cashing in on foster money (on average £400 / week per child). Social Services do NOT have the interest of children at heart and are wholly ineffective when dealing with complaints of negligence that are voiced during supervised contact sessions:

- The carers' dog is sleeping in the bed of one child
 - It is evident that the child has been coached to lie about this since it came out
- Head lice were not treated
 - instead the child has a bleeding skull from scratching her head
- The children are kept unkempt, with dirty finger and toe-nails and trousers hanging over the shoes
 - The sagging trousers resulted in a fall so that the child had to be taken to hospital
- The children are not dressed according to the temperature of the season and thus were ill.
- The children were taken for an day long excursion without the consent of the parents.
- False excuses are offered, such as a “rush is due to contact with grass”, whereas there is ample photographic evidence for the child to have been in touch with grass.

3. Points of Law and Procedure

Based on his experience of over 1,500 cases, [John Hemming MP](http://insupportofjohnhemming.wordpress.com)¹⁷ advises that complaint procedures are usually not effective, only judiciary ones. This would suggest that the couple should take Social Services to court, before the Local Council initiates secret Family Court procedures.

4. Summary

The “levels of threshold” that Social Services are observing vary between the farcical and the ridiculous, suggesting that staff have never raised children themselves. Just as in Case 002, where false allegations were fabricated and manipulated, after the children had been taken, the money making wheels are churning – at the expense of the children, for whom every day away from their parents is a day of trauma and disaster:

- Mother P uses contact sessions to compensate for the negligence of the carers
- Many mothers say that no contact is better than supervised contact sessions
- Children suffer more from the separation of their parents than any 'levels of threshold' might justify.

¹⁷ <http://insupportofjohnhemming.wordpress.com>

The Thompson Family: Grandparents whose three Great-grandchildren were taken by Walsall Council for they were supposedly at “risk of significant harm”

1. Nature of the Case / Background

[The Thompson Family](#)¹⁸ is an example of “threshold criteria” being used wholly inappropriately – to abduct three children. Without any substantiation or evidence, the Council’s claims that this ‘risk of significant harm’ is due to

- failing to attend school regularly
- failing to have attended health appointments
- their father has failed to co-operate with Social Services
- the children have been seen to be dirty and unkempt.
- The behaviour of Walsall Social Services does not differ from other councils where victims of child snatching have suffered cruelty and injustice for the sake of cashing in on foster money (on average £400 / week per child). Social Services do NOT have the interest of children at heart and are wholly ineffective when dealing with complaints of negligence that are voiced during supervised contact sessions:

2. Submissions of Fact

When his wife stopped medication from a condition prior to the marriage, the grandson left his home to live with his mother nearby. Due to the mother’s condition, Social Services brought the children to that home of father and grandmother, where they thrived for eighteen months. When the eldest child was eligible for school, the father was prosecuted by Aldridge Magistrates Court and fined for his daughter not attending school regularly. Within the same month, Social Worker Garnet Gray instigated another charge against the father and told him to attend Dudley Court. However, at Dudley Court, he was told that he was in the wrong court. At the other court in Dudley, he was told there was no case in his name.

It appears as if the court made decisions in the father’s absence, without any legal representation. Meanwhile, the court files have “gone missing”. When wanting to pick up his daughter from the Principal’s office, his daughter was screaming behind closed doors for two hours, before she was handed back. Together with his other children they go to play in the park opposite the home. Later that evening, Garner Grey and two women snatched the children from their father’s arms and nothing has been heard from them since.

3. Points of Law and Procedure

The grandfather and great-grandfather Phil Thompson keep challenging Walsall Council to take him to court for this accumulation of abuse of process and power - to hit adoption targets and raise OFSTED ratings? In the children’s best interest??? Applying the right “levels of threshold”? Because one child was supposedly not regularly at school, all three are adopted???

4. Summary

As John Hemming MP says in his 2-hour interview with Edge Media TV: there are no checks and balances on what Social Services are doing. Furthermore,

- Schools, court staff and lawyers are colluding with Social Services
- Judges sanction what Social Services are doing
- Prisons enforce even more Draconian conditions, e.g. by treating parents on remand as if they were criminals.

¹⁸ <http://victims-unite.net/our-cases-as-stories/social-services-stealing-children-all-over-the-country/the-thompson-family/>

The Welsh Couple R & E whose Baby Harley (not the real name) doesn't get the Care he Needs

1. Nature of the Case / Background

This case was cause for my first gagging order: Swansea Council prevented me from publishing photos of the results and evidence of abuse, whilst in car, and the stored bottles of mother's milk that Social Services failed to pick up. For it was discovered that the 13-week baby, ripped from its mother's feeding breast by police at 4am, in the morning was allergic to formula milk. The judge ordered the immediate removal of the abused child from its carer. The mother was so concerned of the abuse that she called for paramedics to attend to her child who took him to hospital. The child since being in care has been diagnosed with some form of allergy and certified as suffering from stress. The now 13 month old child relies on antibiotics and a nebulizer. The original reason given was 'risk of emotional harm' – an excuse that is used as arbitrarily as any other allegation is a pretext for snatching.

- Since then, the baby has been with two different foster carers and at four respite carers.
- Medical treatment is far from satisfactory.
- Instead of being reunited with his birth parents, contact has been reduced in highly arbitrary fashions and the child is now supposed to be adopted.

2. Submissions of Fact

The parents have not been offered any support in the respect of the distress caused by the kidnapping of their child. The behaviour of Swansea Social Services does not differ from other councils. They follow orders to succumb to Government pressures and OFSTED ratings. See [John Hemming MPs interview with Edge Media TV¹⁹](#).

- The snatching was cruel and unjustified
- The mother was not only abused herself between 5 and 12, but this is the eighth child that has been taken from her – while she maintains the best of relationships with her children, whenever possible
- The documentation used is visibly falsified when paper with a court stamp is photocopied to appear to present 'official' court orders.

3. Points of Law and Procedure

Among such falsified documents is a gagging order that may be worth appealing. But priority needs to be the appeal of the Council's decision to adopt baby Harley as he has become known by his pseudonym. As long as the child is not back with its birth parents, it seems a waste of effort to appeal against any of the Council's wrong-doings other than to get the child back.

4. Summary

900 children are currently being removed from their birth parents every month by 152 local authorities. That makes an average of 60 per council at an astronomical drain on the public purse. The "levels of threshold" that Social Services have observed would have been failed by the foster carers:

- Mother bore her child, brought her child home to a loving home until a self appointed CAFCASS Officer acting in her capacity as self appointed Guardian with multiple interests decided that she was an unsuitable mother.
- Child is currently placed with carers charged with criminal damage.
- The child runs a high risk of Anaphylactic Shock as a result of his abuse - hence the concern of paramedics. Social Workers turned a blind eye to child abuse in care. They continue to foster vulnerable children.
- Social Services place vulnerable children with carers that have no parental skills.

¹⁹ <http://bit.ly/zo6NyC>

The Grandmother who Paid £25,000 in Vain to Free her Grandson from Abuse

1. Nature of the Case / Background

Like many other grandparents, this grandmother has the interest of her grandson at heart, ever since he went to Social Services, to alert them of his mother abusing him. But, instead of the obvious move of letting the boy live with his grandmother, she was fooled by Social Services, when she was told that she can apply for a residence order or guardianship. She had to undergo a psychiatric test, along with many other assessments, including fire precautions in her home. After this intrusion into all aspects of personal life, she had to employ a legal team to represent her in secret family court hearings.

2. Submissions of Fact

The grandmother has had a bond with the child since birth and he lived with her for many months, while going through hell due to Social Services, CAFCASS and an army of professionals. He was given books on foster or adoption, was interviewed alone at least three times a week and was telephoned at school or Social Services offices. This child still is afraid of the abuser and continues to say no to contact with her. Yet the system says that this child is mentally disturbed for not wanting contact with his mother. Hence a top psychiatrist was brought in at great expense to give weekly therapy until such time the child agrees to have contact, as if he had never asked for help.

When the grandmother tried to protect the grandchild, he was torn away in front of witnesses with no warnings, along with lies and deceit, and contact with the child was stopped with more lies, leaving the boy alone with strangers, being moved from foster carer to foster carer, without family or friends, telephones, letters or any other child's right.

The grandmother was gagged by the court and not allowed to see any piece of paper relating to the case outside the lawyer's office. To receive a letter from Social Services, she has to pay the lawyer's fee to read it in his office. By now, the grandmother has paid in excess of £25,000 to be told: NO, the grandchild will remain with a foster carer.

3. Points of Law and Procedure

In court, the grandmother never got to tell her side of the story, produce her evidence or was called to the witness box. For 8 days she listened to how bad a grandparent the child had. When she tried to speak out, she was thrown out of court, with the judge stating "this is my court and you will abide by my rules." The child was allowed to write one letter to his grandmother and in the few lines told her to stay strong.

4. Summary

Given these experiences, the grandmother is supportive of a newly created charity [Children Screaming to be Heard](http://childrenscreamingtobeheard.com/)²⁰, so that children will have a voice and the charity will work to give children their human rights back.

There are hundreds of grandparents and families who have gagging order's placed on them by the courts. It appears that the courts do as the Social Services say, and that the word of Social Services counts more than that of the families who cannot protect their children/grandchildren. There are also many families serving long prison sentences as they had a gagging order but spoke out.

The British governments knows that our children are being stolen and sold, because stolen children are the 'consumer product' for foster carers, social workers, expert witnesses, contact centres, legal teams and court staff to support an industry well supported by the government with adoption targets and OFSTED ratings.

²⁰ <http://childrenscreamingtobeheard.com/>

The 24-Year-Old Estranged Daughter who Can't Speak to her Mother Linda Lewis after having been kidnapped twelve years ago

1. Nature of the Case / Background

This case has also been called the worst of all child snatching cases by experts – mainly due to the medical cover-up. Councillor Kevin Edwards reports on this story on his blog [Justice for Linda Lewis](#)²¹. It started with Linda's daughter being medically mis-diagnosed. She did suffer from perforation of the gut, while doctors stated her pain was 'imaginary'. Hence her mother took her privately to Florida. There, American Police assisted in letting UK Social Services kidnap her from her mother and grandfather at gunpoint, from her hospital bed, using a false and illegal passport. She was put into a psychiatric unit and has never seen her mother since, but has a Social Service contact close to her.

2. Submissions of Fact

Her story is being told by Brian Gerrish, publisher of [UK Column](#)²², on [this video](#)²³. When travelling to America, she was on her mother's passport. But the passport used for the girl to be taken back was false. At the time the girl wrote letters about her misery, whereas Social Services told her not to say that she is in pain or that she loves her mother. Eventually she did get treated for the illness that was only diagnosed thanks to the private efforts of her mother. Social Services placed an advert claiming the girl was missing. In court, where the mother challenged Social Services, she was not allowed to call four local councillors as witnesses. But the judge allowed witnesses to the Local Authority.

3. Points of Law and Procedure

The case is unique because

- a lifelong injunction has been placed on this case to prevent the evidence from coming out.
- an innocent mother has been threatened with immediate arrest and jail, if any of her evidence is ever made public
- lawyers, judges, politicians, doctors and social workers have conspired to prevent this case from entering a criminal court where the evidence would be scrutinised 'beyond all reasonable doubt'.

[The injunction would be breached](#)²⁴ by

- any letter from a Welsh Assembly Member to the Health and Social Services Minister, a Member of Parliament, Government Minister or the NHS Trust
- tabling questions or motions in the Assembly or in Parliament would also breach the injunction.

The only way to take this matter forward is to challenge it in the courts...

4. Summary

I cannot see any case in isolation. What they all have in common is:

- The apparent inability of authorities to admit to mistakes
- The preference of collusion for cover-ups to apologies and acknowledgement of errors
- The complete disregard of the people concerned
- A remarkable ability for lies and a seeming absence of a conscience.

²¹ http://www.justice4lindalewis.blogspot.com/2010_06_01_archive.html

²² <http://bit.ly/x668OY>

²³ <http://www.justice4lindalewis.blogspot.com/2010/09/blog-post.html>

²⁴ <http://cllrkevinedwards.blogspot.com/search?q=linda+lewis>

I lost my Three Children, because my Ex is a Freemason

1. Nature of the Case / Background

Custody battles after a divorce are the start of dramas for the children. In Maureen Spalek's case it was the beginning of a series of crimes. [The Persecutors of Maureen Spalek video](#)²⁵ simply names everybody involved, starting from a motorcyclist who ran over the 4-year-old boy to the murder of a nurse and her killer, to the father having residence of his son, while the other two children have been freed for adoption. With the exception of this motorcyclist, all other crimes wait for being brought to justice.

Another website tells her story as [Maureen Spalek: Freemasonry, Kidnapping & Murder](#)²⁶. Ironically, this page parallels her experience with [Hollie Greig](#)²⁷, the Scottish woman with Down Syndrome whose case is expected to be on trial until January 25th 2012 – for the abuse by 22 paedophiles who include judges, police, social workers, doctors and lawyers.

2. Submissions of Fact

When in a Liverpool Park in March 2003, a youth on a scooter bike ran over the little boy such that Maureen took him to the hospital, while her other children remained with her mother. In hospital, they had to wait for treatment for over 24 hours which resulted in a nurse writing a bad report about Maureen. After three days and nights in hospital, the children were taken into care by the Local Authorities, even though there is no evidence that any of Maureen's children were harmed in any way, whilst in her care.

3. Points of Law and Procedure

In this case it is especially blatant that secret family courts are used by Social Services to legalise their wrong-doings. However, in this case there was a clear 'mastermind' who used a whole team of players to his advantage.

When old boys' networks are operating, the mélange between civil family courts and criminal courts can be used NOT to deliver justice, but to use crimes to cover up crimes, as in many other cases, while the real victims are the children.

4. Summary

Given such cruel experiences of cruelty and violence, it is hard to figure out what it takes not to go insane.

I cannot see any case in isolation. What they all have in common is:

- The apparent inability of authorities to admit to mistakes
- The preference of collusion for cover-ups to apologies and acknowledgement of errors
- The complete disregard of the people concerned
- A remarkable ability for lies and a seeming absence of a conscience.

²⁵ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5CR444vmNM>

²⁶ <http://www.moneyteachers.org/Maureen.Spalek.html>

²⁷ <http://holliedemandsjustice.org/>

Camilla Cavendish's 10-Point Plan

[Camilla Cavendish](#)²⁸ is Associate Editor and columnist at The Times. In 2009, she was campaigning journalist of the year for exposing miscarriages of justice which convinced Government to open the family courts – but not enough. Here is her 10-point plan that is waiting to be implemented:

1. Open family courts to the press in all but exceptional circumstances (as recommended by the Constitutional Affairs Select Committee)
2. Let any parent or carer accused of abuse call any witnesses they need in their defence. At the moment, they are routinely refused permission to do so.
3. Give automatic permission for parents who are refused legal aid to get a lay advisor to help them present their case. This is routinely refused.
4. Remove the restrictions that prevent families from talking about their case (as recommended by the Constitutional Affairs Select Committee).
5. Review the definition of "emotional abuse" across local authorities, to make sure that it cannot become a catch-all for overzealous officials.
6. Provide an automatic right for parents to receive copies of case conference notes and all evidence used against them in court, just as they would in a criminal trial.
7. Create an independent body to oversee the actions of social services, with proper sanctions. If that body is to be the **General Social Care Council**, make it easier for parents to go directly to that body rather than having to face delays from the local authority.
8. Let children in care waive their right to privacy, if they wish to speak out. For gagging children is surely not consistent with promoting their welfare.
9. Restructure CAFCASS, the Family Court Advisory Service, from being an organisation that reports on the parents to the courts to one that actively promotes the parenting needs of children. The primary focus should cease to be assisting the court process. It should be diverting parents away from contested hearings into the making of parenting plans.
10. Review the recent legal aid cutbacks that are deterring lawyers from taking on these complex family cases. It is quite wrong that desperate parents are unable to find a lawyer to help them in their time of need.

Among her articles are

- **Camilla Cavendish – the campaign**
- Children are safer with their natural families
- Catch-22 that condemns a child to grow up with strangers
- When the stakes are so high, parents want to be heard.

As Jeremy Bentham (1748 – 1832) wrote:

“Publicity is the very soul of justice. It is the keenest spur to exertion, and the surest of all guards against improbity. It keeps the judge himself, while trying, under trial.

In the darkness of secrecy, sinister interest and evil in every shape, have full swing. Only in proportion as publicity has place can any of the checks, applicable to judicial injustice, operate. Where there is no publicity there is no justice.”

* * * * *

²⁸ <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/public/profile/Camilla-Cavendish>