

UK Government Denies Compensation to Abused Children



London, July 18 (RHC)-- The British government has been accused of denying hundreds of sexually abused children the right to receive compensation.

A group of charities raised concern with Justice Secretary David Lidington in a letter, after freedom of information requests revealed that the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) was refusing to pay child abuse victims on the grounds that they had given consent to their attackers.

According to media reports, CICA, an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice, has refused payments to around 700 abused children as young as 12 years old, even if their assailants were jailed because of their crimes.

In their letter, Barnardo's, Victim Support, Liberty, Rape Crisis and the National Working Group (NWG) asked Lidington to review CICA's guidelines.

The letter said the rules needed to be changed so that "no child groomed and manipulated into sexual

abuse is denied compensation because they complied with their abuse through fear, lack of understanding, or being brainwashed into believing their abuser loved them and developing feelings for them.”

In one case, according to The Guardian, a group of older men received 30 years of jail for raping and sexually assaulting a 14-year-old girl.

The victim, represented by Victim Support, was denied compensation by CICA officials, who argued “she had not been the victim of non-consensual sexual acts.”

A YouGov poll, commissioned by the charities, showed that two-thirds of people wanted the rules to be changed in a way that children could no longer be found to have “consented” to acts of sexual exploitation.

“For children to be denied compensation on the grounds that they ‘consented’ to the abuse they have suffered is nothing short of scandalous. The very rules that are supposed to protect children are actually harming them,” said Javed Khan, the chief executive of Barnardo’s.

Dawn Thomas, co-chair of Rape Crisis England & Wales, said CICA’s definition of consent was a “bizarre” and “scandalous” deviation from one provided by the law.

The UK law prohibits sexual activity with anyone younger than 16 years old. Compensation payouts by CICA to sexual assault victims range from £1,000 to £44,000.

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