

Governance Review

From: MARGARET GARDENER [margaret.gardener@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 29 January 2010 18:11
To: Governance Review
Subject: Media review
Attachments: ~\$c 1 Editors Code.doc

On looking for an-mail address for Mr Beales the Code Committee Secretary, I came across your Governance Review.

I have attached the FASO letter addressed to Mr Beale, in the hope that it will be also used for inclusion in your deliberations.

It is an extremely important topic on which everyone wants to hide from - but it is devastating to all those who suffer from false allegations and the media attention.

Please see letter copied below, as well as attached.

regards

Margaret Gardener
private telephone number 01495 273302
FASO was founded in 2000

FASO - PO Box 4, Crosskeys, Gwent, NP11 7YA

MRG Sec/ 1/2010
29.01.2010

Code Committee Secretary
PO Box 235
Stonehouse
Gloucester
GL10 3UF
Attention Mr Ian Beales

Dear Mr Beales.

Editors Code of Practice – Suggestion

As requested in your letter Daily Express Tues Dec 8th 2009 this is one item for the suggestion of the Editors code of practice. I apologise it is late but due to a bereavement I could not get it in on time.

We at the False Allegation Support Organisation would like all editors to be even handed in their reporting of cases containing sexual abuse allegations, not allow their reporters to make false allegations especially when facts are able to be checked and to not incite vigilantism by lurid headlines. Encourage fair and robust investigative reporting (getting the substantive facts – not rumours)

Now that Sarah's law is probably going to become law, ensure the facts given in the media are correct and not rumour as there are many names on the CRB records that should not be there.

background and daily occurrences as reported to our FASO helpline 0870 241 66 50

04/03/2010

The biggest problem this organisation (see attached leaflet) and those who contact us have is the naming and shaming of individuals prior to a court case as this has been proven in court (Roger Gardener's case) to be what the jury read and not just the evidence in court that they listen to on the day.

As can be seen in recent media press naming and shaming is not uniform.

a. Recently, the two young boys who damaged children their own age have a total media cut of regarding their case, and unusually they are given anonymity. The parents cannot be named because of the identification of the boys!

b. If one has money, like the soccer stars and celebrities, they are able to call on the right to privacy law – which can lead to a ban by the judges of media coverage, and coverage before a court case.

However

When an accused person who is awaiting trial has been arrested for abuse or rape – they appear to be fair game to the media, which includes feeding lies and mis-information into their reports. The fact that the accused's children, wife and extended family may suffer is of no concern to those living through it. This non factual reporting can and has encourage local vigilantism.

It is doubly troubling when the individual has been either found with no charges to answer and/or the case dropped by the police or they are found 'innocent' by a jury in court.

Legally this does not stop their names being placed with details of what they were arrested for, on the CRB data base. Their job prospects and voluntary work are affected as they can no longer work as volunteers in any area that requires an enhanced CRB check. This information is then fed into the vetting and barring board. Again people like football managers and celebrities (money'd people) can continue their work.

Because those accused have their names placed on the CRB data base, and have been investigated by the police – those with children under 16 also lose their children - as regardless of the outcome - social services will not allow them to see the children as they are deemed a risk.. Another factor in going to split the family up and making the falsely accused bankrupt..

Also having been named and shamed locally and maybe nationally they and their families are targets locally.. The stress of being falsely accused with the additional burden of the media trial' is apparent in their lives. Very few get over the allegation and even years afterward they still suffer the stress which can be likened to Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome. They receive neither help with this stress or compensation as being the victim of a false allegation, nor does the false accuser as a general rule does not get taken to court for wasting police time or being asked by the CICA for the return of the received compensation (often paid before a court hearing our callers tell us)

The police remit is to prosecute the person accused see CPSA Policy for the prosecution of rape (same appears to apply to those accused of any sexual allegation)

Statistics for arrests and prosecution of rape and abuse are 'buncum' as the government add different recorded data collection together and do not qualify how many were false allegations.

My husband was one of the unfortunates to be falsely accused – he was found guilty but maintained his factual innocence till his recent death. His appeals on all three crimes are now with the CCRC and I know, especially from the evidence, of his innocence and will continue to pursue his appeals. We went through everything, but this is not the subject of your request – for information type his name into google Roger Gardener and you will see the lurid headlines coupled with the fact I was sacked from the Citizens Advice Bureau because of the media headlines on my husband. I can provide by e-mail media copied information on the past 10 years of my husband's case if you wish.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Gardener
FASO Director
www.false-allegations.org.uk
copy expressletters@express.co.uk

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www.false-allegations.org.uk support@false-allegations.org.uk Registered under the Data Protection Act 1998 *false* is a voluntary organisation dedicated to providing support to anyone affected by a false allegation of abuse. PO Box 4, Crosskeys, Newport NP11 7YA – National help line 0870 241 66 50 (Mon to Fri 6pm to 10pm)