

UK Women's Aid

UK Women's Aid welcomes recommendations for training of judges after investigation into children killed in cases of domestic violence

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Today (24th March 2006), national domestic violence charity Women's Aid welcomes recommendations by Lord Justice Wall, following his detailed investigation into the cases of 29 children killed by their fathers, first highlighted in a report from Women's Aid 29 Child Homicides (2004).

Lord Justice Walls' report makes three key recommendations to ensure the safety of child contact arrangements: that the Family Justice Council should look into the process by which victims in domestic violence cases give 'consent' to child contact orders; to take a more rigorous approach to safety of the child where the mother is the victim of violence; and that no judge should sit in family proceedings without undergoing multi-disciplinary training on domestic violence.

Women's Aid Chief Executive Nicola Harwin CBE said:

"Women's Aid is delighted with the recommendations in Lord Justice Wall's report. It is vital that all judges sitting in private family law proceedings have domestic violence training and we welcome the recommendation that no judge should sit in family proceedings without first being trained, and that all refresher courses should involve domestic violence training. Evidence from research shows clearly that and separation and child contact in cases of family break-up and domestic violence are significant risk factors in domestic homicides, and Women's Aid has been campaigning for over 15 years to improve the management of child contact arrangements in the family courts. We are also currently lobbying with a coalition of charities to improve the safety of child contact provisions within the Children and Adoptions Bill. We welcome these recommendations and look forward to these being actioned as soon as possible by the President of the Family Division and the Family Justice Council."

For more information about child contact and domestic violence, or to order a copy of 29 Child Homicides, please visit

www.womensaid.org.uk