



Jewish Unity for Multiple Parenting

Campaigning for Improved Relationships Between Divorced Parents & Children in the Jewish Community

Press Release

11 January 2005

Continuing Successes for JUMP:

Constitutional Affairs Committee Reviewing UK Family Justice System Accepts Written Evidence from JUMP

Chief Rabbi Also Supports JUMP Initiatives with Agreement to Submit Statement to Constitutional Affairs Committee

Jewish Unity for Multiple Parenting (JUMP) have continued their successful lobbying to become the only ethnic minority parent support group to have written evidence accepted by the Government's Constitutional Affairs Committee (CAC) ahead of its oral evidence session on 11 January 2005 in Westminster (see Appendix 1). Oral evidence will be presented at this session by two national parent support groups – Equal Parenting Council (EPC) and Families Need Fathers (FNF), together with a highly experienced family law solicitor, Celia Conrad. Both the EPC and FNF will be aiming to highlight the current inadequacies within the family law system in this country and proposing the need for fundamental changes to achieve a legal presumption of parenting time for



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both parents and the need to establish rapid, reasonable and enforceable quality parenting time for both parents which will be in the children's best interests.

JUMP has been working closely with EPC and FNF and a JUMP representative will also be attending this oral evidence session.

In addition, JUMP will also be represented at ongoing meetings on 11 January in Parliament organised by the Coalition for Equal Parenting (CEP) with key Members of Parliament with responsibility for The Family. At these meetings further discussion of key parenting issues will take place with Theresa May MP (Conservatives) and Annette Brooke MP and David Heath MP (Liberal Democrats).

JUMP has also recently met with the Chief Rabbi who has pledged his support for their initiatives by agreeing to submit a statement to the CAC on this parenting issue.

A JUMP spokesperson said: "Many of our members, mostly fathers but mothers also, have been left with no choice than to painfully battle through the UK Courts for years to try and secure their ongoing relationship with their children whom both their children and they deserve. They are decent parents who despair with the current legal system that has in reality failed them in helping them maintain



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this loving and nurturing relationship. Why should our children lose out on a relationship with this so called “non-resident” parent if barriers are put in the way of this relationship by the other “resident” parent? If the starting position for both parents was a legal presumption of parenting rights and time then the “winner takes all” attitude would be forced to change. Everyone in the legal, medical and therapeutic communities is in total agreement that for children two fit parents are better than one. All that is needed now is for the Government to give wider powers to the Courts so that they can effectively stop the emotional abuse of children caused by selfish, intransigent “resident” parents.

We are truly grateful to the Chief Rabbi and his team for understanding the problems parents and children can face following relationship breakdown and for not allowing this problem to be “swept under the carpet”, either within the Jewish Community which is so family orientated, or nationally, by agreeing to submit a statement to the Constitutional Affairs Committee. We look forward to reviewing this statement as soon as it is available.”

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Background Information on Jewish Unity for Multiple Parenting (JUMP)

JUMP (www.jump-parenting.co.uk) was formed in December 2001 to raise awareness of contact problems children and parents face following marital separation and divorce in the Jewish community, and to try and effect a real change in perceptions and attitudes within a religion which is so family orientated but is not really reacting to the increasing rate of divorce and these associated problems. A JUMP spokesperson said, "We hope to achieve essentially the opportunity to be an equal parent that would be fully supported throughout all areas of the Jewish community."

JUMP has already met with a number of Rabbis and Jewish social, medical and legal representatives. The group ran a successful Professionals Forum Meeting in December 2002 and is planning a number of initiatives in 2005 to increase awareness of these issues more widely within the Jewish Community. JUMP's latest efforts include the development of a Jewish Parenting Plan based on the Lord Chancellor's Department document, which addresses specific Jewish contact issues over religious holidays and the Sabbath. The group have also recently met and are developing initiatives with the Chief Rabbi and his Office and Henry Grunwald QC, President of the Board Deputies. The Chief Rabbi in his March 2004 BBC Radio 4 broadcast stated that "We need to support both



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parents, even when they split apart. Children need time with both; and it's their needs that really count."

Although JUMP's focus is clearly to support Jewish parents who experience these post-divorce parenting difficulties, the group have also made positive links with other national groups including the Coalition for Equal Parenting (**CEP**), the Equal Parenting Council (**EPC** - <http://www.equalparenting.org/>), Families Need Fathers (**FNF** - <http://www.fnf.org.uk/>), Mothers Apart From Their Children (**MATCH** - <http://www.matchmothers.org/>), **ManKind** (<http://mankind.org.uk>) the **Grandparents Action Group** and Parent and Abducted Children Together (**PACT** - <http://www.pact-online.org/>).

Important Note

As many members of JUMP are still involved in legal proceedings involving contact arrangements with their children post-separation/divorce it is important for their children's sake that their identity is protected.

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APPENDIX 1

JUMP Written Evidence Accepted by the Constitutional Affairs Committee

JUMP is a voluntary Jewish support and lobby group that aims to try and improve contact arrangements for the non-residential parent to see their children following separation and divorce and to attempt to improve things in the future from a religious, social and legal perspective for other parents who find themselves in this heartbreaking situation. Essentially our aim is to be recognised as equal parents which is fully supported throughout all areas of the Jewish community. We have already met with a number of Rabbis and social, medical and legal representatives to obtain as much support and guidance for our initiatives. We have also established contact with the Chief Rabbi's office and have a planned meeting with him in December. The Chief Rabbi is supportive of both parents maintaining a very positive role in their children's lives following separation/divorce as confirmed by his recent BBC Radio 4 broadcast in March this year, which is attached for information.

JUMP has also built very positive links with all the major national parent and grandparent organisations in this arena (including CEP (member), EPC, FNF and MATCH) and will continue to work with them to lobby for change to the current law as it imperative that we finally achieve a legal presumption of parenting rights for all fit parents from the outset. If the "winner takes all" perspective was removed from the beginning the onus would force parents to find a positive and workable solution together for the benefit of their children and ensure as much as possible that children from separated and divorced families maintain a loving and enriching relationship with both parents, grandparents and their extended families.

In this important respect, we strongly feel this Green Paper will fail to bring about the fundamental changes that are needed in the UK Family Law system to reflect the socioeconomic and cultural changes to our family in the 21st century. These changes must happen without delay if the best interests of all of our children are to be upheld now and in the future.

As an example of how the Family Law system in this country has failed me, as a non-resident mother, I have enclosed a document summarising my personal story. It is not just fathers who suffer. More fundamentally it is our children that suffer when good, decent and loving parents, both fathers and mothers, are excluded from their children's lives for no proven or justifiable reasons.

This simply cannot be allowed to continue.

29 October 2004