

Marriage & Family in the United Kingdom



AN OVERVIEW

October 2006

This document has been drawn up by a team of Christian professional and voluntary workers with considerable experience of counselling and social work amongst families in need.

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This document has been produced to provide basic factual information to help people to come to an understanding of what is happening to the family and marriage in the United Kingdom today.

It has been drawn up by people who have a profound respect and love for their fellow men and women. It is not judgemental, but it does present the extreme seriousness of the situation now facing our nation.

The authors are very conscious of the great blessings enjoyed by most people who are in secure and happy marriages and loving family relationships. They are equally aware of the pain and the sense of injustice borne by many because of their experience of dysfunctional marriages and families.

The authors of this document are all personally involved in responding to problems of human relationships in both professional and voluntary capacities. They are deeply aware of the extreme urgency of the present situation.

October 2006

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I. The Basic Unit

Values and our civilisation

1.1 The marriage-based family is the fundamental building block of a civilised society.

For generations it has been acknowledged as the model for right relationships. Marriage has key characteristics, which differentiate it from other relationship structures. It is permanent, involving an enduring status that requires a definite event, or act to terminate it. It is exclusive, requiring a faithful commitment between two people, particularly in respect of sexual activity. It is stable, involving the public recognition of an essentially personal arrangement, for the benefit of society as a whole.

1.2 Such characteristics distinguish life-long marriage as unique in its provision of a stable and secure framework for the family to operate within, for children to grow up in a loving and caring environment, and for helping to create confidence and self-respect

1.3 Whilst not all marriages are perfect, if we were to dispense with this institution in the United Kingdom we would be in danger of destroying the fabric of our society and causing great harm to our children.

- *"Marriage is the surest foundation for raising children and remains the choice of the majority of people in Britain" ('Supporting Families' Government Green Paper 1998)*
- *"Today the family is in serious crisis. If we fail to find a solution we will be plunged into a new dark age of lawlessness and chaos, which could destroy our civilisation". (Michael Harper)*
- *Most marriages last a lifetime - 66% of first marriages and 60% of all marriages last until one partner dies. (Social Trends 2004 ONS)*
- *In 2002, 54% of men and 50% of women aged 16 and over were married, and just 10% of men and 9% of women were cohabiting. (ONS General Household Survey 2002)*
- *"In 2005, there were 17.1 million families in the United Kingdom and around seven in ten were headed by a married couple" (Social Trends 36, ONS, 2006, p.25)*
- *Most young people aspire to marriage; 92% of 15 year olds want to settle down and marry one day. (Sex Under Sixteen, Family Education Trust research report 2000, and Bliss Magazine 2004)*

1.4 In the vast majority of societies and faiths marriage is a mutually agreed, publicly acknowledged and life-long commitment and contract. Clear and binding promises are made and recorded. Those who cohabit without this public contract often do not accept a permanent and life-long responsibility for the continual care of their partner or their children. In many circumstances such liaisons are fragile and even exploitative. Marriage, therefore, cannot be considered as analogous to a 'civil partnership'.

1.5 Because marriage affects the community, it has a special status in law. It is recognised as the ideal environment for the procreation and nurture of children. Marriage defines basic rights and responsibilities and is the normal reference point for matters such as inheritance. Stable marriages directly contribute to a stable society.

- *Lord Mackay, when Lord Chancellor, stated in an interview, "marriage is a relationship in which the state has an interest". He spoke of the "need for stability as a background to the development of children". He declared, "It is a human relationship in which children look for stability. If they've got two people today - Mummy and Daddy, and tomorrow Daddy, and another person, this introduces an insecurity, a confusion in the children's understanding. Research shows this to impede very seriously their development". (Children in Focus, Summer 1994)*

2. Changing Patterns

Marriage, family, parenting and the role of women

- 2.1 A major social change has taken place during the past 40 years with increasing levels of family instability and breakdown. This has been associated with a decline in the number of marriages and a rise in the level of cohabitation and single parenthood.
- 2.2 The factors driving these changes are complex, and include increased life expectancy, the growing economic independence of women, the disassociation of sexual activity from pro-creation through contraception and abortion, and changing societal attitudes and values with respect to relationships and marriage.
- 2.3 Alarmingly, they also include the active, and systematic undermining of the marriage-based family. New forms of relationship have been advocated. The past ten years has seen government policy increasingly present marriage as merely one of a number of equally valid options, rather than the ideal.
- 2.4 The social consequences of the trend away from marriage are alarming. The public marriage vows are fundamental to the husband/wife relationship. This is in stark contrast to the cohabitation relationship in which either partner may move away, often causing immense emotional damage to the other party and to any children involved.
- 2.5 The decline of marriage and the encouragement of cohabitation inflict harm on society and it is a matter of great urgency that the long-term implications of these trends should be recognised by our political leaders.

- *The number of divorces taking place each year in Great Britain more than doubled between 1958 and 1969. By 1972 the number of divorces in the United Kingdom had doubled again to 80,000. By 2004 the number of divorces in the United Kingdom had doubled again to 167,116. (Social Trends 36, ONS, 2006; Social Trends 34, ONS, 2004).*
- *The number of children aged under 16 in England and Wales who experienced the divorce of their parents peaked at 176,000 in 1993, and in 2004 stood at 149,300, up from 142,500 in 2000. A fifth of children affected by divorce in 2004 were under five years old and just under two thirds were aged ten or under. (Social Trends 36, ONS, 2006)*
- *More than four in ten marriages are now likely to break up, and couples are splitting up earlier. Divorce within ten years of marriage was 3% in 1951, 7% in 1961, 17% in 1971, 23% in 1981 and 41% now. A total of 147,735 divorces were granted in England and Wales in 2002, a rise of 4,000 on 2001. A growing number of children are affected by family breakdown – 149,335 children under 16 experienced their parents divorcing in 2002. Two-thirds of fathers never see their children within two years of divorce. (ONS Press Release, 29/8/2003)*
- *25% of divorces in 2001 occurred within five years. (Series FM2 No:29 Marriage, Divorce & Adoption Statistics, ONS 2003)*
- *Unmarried parents are 4-5 times more likely to break up. (Boheim & Ermisch, 1999, 'Breaking up – financial surprises and partnership dissolution'. Paper presented at the Royal Economic Society Conference, Nottingham.; Lindgren, 1997, Research centre on population, Helsinki. In J.Ditch, H.barnes, J.Bradshaw (eds) 'Developments in national family policies in 1996' EC: University of York)*
- *A major UK study found that parental divorce before age 10 was a major predictor of later adolescent delinquency and adult criminality (Farrington, 1990, Implications of Criminal Career Research for the Prevention of Offending. Journal of Adolescence, 13.)*

2.6 The proportion of children born outside marriage was consistently low for centuries. It was socially unacceptable and a stigma was attached to illegitimacy. Changing standards in society have reversed this situation, with immense social consequences.

- *Births outside marriage have increased from 8.4% to 41.8% between 1971 and 2005, to 276,000 each year. (Population Trends 124, ONS, 2006)*
- *The percentage of dependent children living in lone parent households increased from 7% in 1972 to 24% in 2005. (Social Trends 36, ONS, 2006)*
- *Records of children born to unmarried women going back to 1540 reveal a pattern of children born outside marriage as about 5% of the total. In 1970 this leapt to 8% and by 1980 it reached 10%. By 1994 births outside marriage had gone up to 32%. More than half of all conceptions by women under 20 now take place outside marriage and more than 40% of these are terminated by abortion. (The Necessary Family and How to Support It - Family and Youth Concern 1996)*
- *The percentage of children brought up by single mothers in the 24 years to 2005 more than tripled, from 7% to 24% while the number raised by married couples fell by 16 percentage points, from 93% to 76%. (Social trends 36, ONS, 2006)*
- *92% of births to teenage mothers are outside marriage. (Populations Trends 124, ONS, 2006)*
- *The UK has the highest teenage pregnancy rate in Europe, 12% higher than Latvia which has the second highest. 92% of conceptions to women under 20 take place outside marriage, 40% of which end in abortion. Of conceptions to under 18 year olds, 46% end in abortion. (Social Trends 36, ONS 2006; Populations Trends 124, ONS, 2006)*

2.7 The growing rejection of marriage as the basis of family formation and the inherent instability of alternative family forms has inevitably led to an increasing degree of separation of parents and their children. Although it is universally accepted that children need both mother and father figures, they are increasingly being deprived of these essential maternal and paternal influences in their formative years.

- *The Social Security Minister, stated in 1994 that 1,300,000 lone parents were bringing up children in Britain. (Daily Mail 14.9.94) This figure increased to 1.7 million by 1997 and stood at 1.9 million in 2004. (Labour Force Survey, ONS, Spring 2004)*
- *1 in 4 dependent children lived in a lone-parent family in 2004, an increase from 1 in 14 in 1972. ('Focus on Families' Report, ONS, 7th July, 2005)*
- *In 2003, 153,500 dependent children were affected by divorce. ('Focus on Families' Report, ONS, 7th July, 2005)*
- *3.1 million children are being raised in single parent families. (Labour Force Survey, ONS Spring 2004)*
- *1 in 4 children affected by divorce are under 5, two thirds are under 10. (Social Trends 34, 2004, ONS)*
- *The number of single parent families increased from 8% in 1971 to 23% in 2003. (Social Trends 34, ONS)*
- *At least one in three children will experience parental separation before the age of 16. Most of these children go through a period of unhappiness; many experience low self-esteem, behaviour problems, and loss of contact with part of the extended family. ('Foundations', 2004, Jospeh Rowntree Foundation, ref 314).*
- *According to the ESRC's report, 'The Seven Ages of Man & Woman', 15% of a 19,000 baby sample born in 2001-02 were living with just their mothers at 9 months, and 40% of those had no contact with their biological fathers at all. ('The Seven Ages of Man & Woman', ESRC, June 2004)*

- According to research by Professor C Lewis & Dr J. Warin, Fathers are just as important as mothers in a child's upbringing. The involvement of a father with their children aged 7-11 predicts exam success in exams at 16. Where fathers are involved before the age of 11, children are less likely to have a criminal record by the age of 21. (Lewis & Warin, 2001, 'What good are Dads?' Fathers Direct Factsheet).

2.8 During the past 25 years there has been a radical change in the status of women in society. Many obvious injustices have been dealt with as a consequence of campaigning for women's rights. Simultaneously, more women now work, whether on a full-time, part-time or short term basis, constituting virtually half the country's working population. There is a greater readiness on the part of many fathers to share in the upbringing of their children. In spite of this, most women find that they are carrying the main burden of caring for the household and have the strain of sustaining both home and work. There is increasing pressure upon women to conform to the image of 'career style superwomen' and also to contribute to often overstretched household finances. This is frequently at the expense of good family relationships. The bonds between many working mothers and their children are being weakened.

- From 1971 to 2005 the employment rate for men fell from 92% to 79% while the rate for women rose from 56% to 70%. (Social Trends, 36 ONS 2006)
- A study by Professors John Ermisch and Marco Francesconi of Essex University suggests that the short term effects of early maternal employment leads to slower emotional development and weaker cognitive outcomes, measured when children are between 4 and 12. In the longer term it manifests in lower educational attainments for children in their late teens and twenties. There is also evidence of worse performance in the labour market, higher unemployment and a greater risk of early child bearing. (Ermisch, J., & Francesconi, M., 2003, 'Parental Employment and Children's Welfare' in Labour Market Participation of Women and Fertility: The effect of social policy.' OUP)
- Dr. Mary Carlson of Harvard Medical School points to evidence that confirms that lack of maternal care and affection causes the release of high levels of stress hormones in babies, which can retard development. (Daily Telegraph 29. 10. 97)
- A study being carried out by the National Children's Bureau has raised serious concerns about the influence of nursery day-care on some young children. It was reported that some of the children were "frequently bewildered and frightened" by their experience. One researcher, Peter Elfer, found that 75% of the interaction between staff and these very young children was "fleeting". Some babies were held for less than a minute at a time and, often, six different members of staff dealt with one child in a day, militating against the development of intimate relationships. Many children became "passively accepting" and silent. Another study quoted by Diana Appleyard, of the Thomas Coram research unit, attached to the University of London, found that children in private day nurseries had less advanced language skills at 18 months and scored lower on vocabulary tests at 36 & 72 months than those who were cared for by their mother, a nanny or a child-minder. The report states, "children suffer from a climate of impersonal care". (Daily Telegraph 10.3.98 & 19.3.98)

3. The Consequences

The outcome of dysfunctional families, cohabitation & divorce

- 3.1 Children who are denied a loving family relationship frequently suffer stress and other adverse effects which have long-term personal and social consequences. Ever-changing and confused domestic circumstances, are a direct cause of very serious emotional distress and disorder in children.**

It is beyond dispute that a considerable proportion of all crime and violence is directly rooted in family breakdown and a high proportion of children from troubled home backgrounds experience difficulty in school. Broken marriages and dysfunctional families are leading to thousands of children not being cared for by their biological parents, and the number of children considered to be in urgent need or 'at risk' is intolerably high.

There is a wealth of evidence linking family breakdown with many adverse consequences outcomes for children, such as ill health (including higher mortality), emotional problems, poor performance at school and poverty. Children from broken families are also more likely to have problems with substance misuse and poor sexual health including teenage pregnancy. Furthermore, they are more likely to engage in criminal activity, and are disproportionately over-represented in the prison population. Finally, family breakdown is associated with an increased risk of being physically or sexually abused.

At the root of many of the problems we see in children and young adults - such as emotional and behavioural difficulties, poor school performance, substance misuse, precocious teenage sexuality including teenage pregnancy and juvenile delinquency - is the dramatic increase in marriage and family break-up and 'relationship turnover' of parents, adversely affecting their children.

- 3.2 The evidence of the damage inflicted upon children by dysfunctional families is now incontrovertible and it would be irresponsible to ignore it.**

3.2.1 Children from broken families are poorer and more likely to be homeless

- *Children living in lone-parent households are twice as likely to be in the bottom 40% of household income distribution compared with children living in two-parent households (75% versus 40%). (Households Below Average Income 1994/95-2000/01, Department for Work and Pensions (2002), p. 50.)*
- *Young adults from disrupted families are 1.7 times more likely to have experienced homelessness (6.2% compared with 3.6%). (Kiernan, 1997, 'The legacy of parental divorce: social, economic and family experiences in adulthood', London: Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, London School of Economics p. 21.)*
- *Over 60,000 children live in care; 98% are admitted due to family breakdown. (Department of Health, 2002 Ref: 2002/0193)*

3.2.2 Children from broken families have more ill health and higher mortality

- *'Sudden Infant Death Syndrome' is 3 times more common amongst unmarried mothers and 7 times more common amongst single mothers, compared to married mothers (Mortality Statistics Series DH3 33, ONS, 2002)*
- *It has been estimated that parental divorce increases children's risk of developing health problems by 50%. (Mauldon, J. (1990), 'The effects of marital disruption on children's health', Demography 27, pp. 431-46.)*

- Children living in lone-parent households were 1.8 times as likely to have psychosomatic health symptoms and illness such as pains, headaches, stomach aches, and feeling sick. (Cockett and Tripp (1994), *The Exeter Family Study: Family Breakdown and Its Impact on Children*, p. 21.)
- A Swedish study found that children of single parent families were 30% more likely to die over the 16-year study period. After controlling for poverty, children from single-parent families were: 56% more likely to show signs of mental illness, and 26% more likely to rate their health as poor. (Lundbert, O. (1993), 'The impact of childhood living conditions on illness and mortality in adulthood', *Social Science and Medicine* 36, pp. 1047–52.)

3.2.3 Huge numbers of children are being referred to social services and are categorised as 'in need'.

- 572,000 referrals of children, or which 127,400 were repeat referrals within the previous 12 months, were made to social services departments in the year ending 31st March 2004. (Statistics of Education: Referrals, Assessment and Children & Young People, 2005, DfES)
- 26,300 children and young people were on child protection registers for the year ending March 2004. (Statistics of Education: Referrals, Assessment and Children & Young People, 2005, DfES)
- There are 384,200 children in England alone categorized as 'in need'. (Ibid)

3.2.4 Children from broken families are more likely to have emotional or mental problems

- Among children aged five to fifteen years in Great Britain, those from lone-parent families were twice as likely to have a mental health problem as those from intact two-parent families (16% versus 8%). (Meltzer, H., et al. (2000), *Mental Health of Children and Adolescents in Great Britain*, London: The Stationery Office.)
- A major longitudinal study of 1,400 American families found that 20%–25% of children of divorce showed lasting signs of depression, impulsivity (risk-taking), irresponsibility, or antisocial behaviour compared with 10% of children in intact two-parent families. (Hetherington, M. (2002), *For Better or Worse: Divorce Reconsidered*, New York: W. W. Norton.)
- One study, which followed 100 children of divorce through 25 years, found that, while the divorced parents may have felt liberated, many of their children suffered emotionally. (Wallerstein, J. et al (2002), *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce: A 25 Year Landmark Study*, London: Fusion Press)
- After controlling for other demographic factors, children in lone-parent households are 2.5 times as likely to be sometimes or often unhappy. (Cockett and Tripp (1994), *The Exeter Family Study: Family Breakdown and Its Impact on Children*, p. 19.)

3.2.5 Children from broken families have more problems at school, including increased risk of truancy, being excluded from school and are more likely to leave school with no qualifications.

- Children from lone-parent families are more likely to score poorly on tests of reading, mathematics, and thinking skills. (Elliott, J. and Richards, M. (1985), 'Parental divorce and the life chances of children', *Family Law*, 1991, pp. 481–484; and Wadsworth, J., Burnell, I., Taylor, B., and Butler, N. (1985), 'The influence of family type on children's behaviour and development at five years', *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 26, pp. 245–254.)
- After controlling for social class, level of parental supervision, attachment to family, whether peers and siblings were in trouble with the police and standard of work at school, boys in lone-parent households were still 2.7 times more likely to truant than those from two-natural-parent households. (Graham, J. and Bowling, B. (1995), *Young People and Crime*, London: Home Office, p. 120.)

- *Children living with a lone mother are three times more likely than those in two-parent families to be excluded from school (15.6% versus 4.8%). (Youth Survey 2001: Research Study Conducted for the Youth Justice Board (January–March 2001))*
- *Sixteen-year-olds from lone-parent households are twice as likely to leave school with no qualifications as those from intact families. Most studies have found that most or all of this increased risk occurs because lone-parent families generally are poorer, which in itself has a strong association with poor educational outcomes. (Ely, West, Sweeting and Richards (2000), 'Teenage Family Life, Life chances, lifestyles and health', pp. 1–30.)*

3.2.6 Children from broken families are at greater risk of suffering physical, emotional, or sexual abuse and to run away from home.

- *Data from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) show that young people are five times more likely to have experienced physical abuse and emotional maltreatment if they grew up in a lone-parent family, compared with children in two-birth-parent families. (Cawson, P. (2002), *Child Maltreatment in the Family*, London: NSPCC.)*
- *All studies of child-abuse victims which look at family type identify the step-family as representing the highest risk to children – with the risk of fatal abuse being 100 times higher than in two biological-parent families according to international experts Daly and Wilson, drawing on US data from 1976. (Daly, M. and Wilson, M. (1988), *Homicide*, New York: Aldine de Gruyter.)*
- *Analysis of 35 cases of fatal abuse which were the subject of public inquiries between 1968 and 1987 showed a risk for children living with their mother and an unrelated man which was over 70 times higher than it would have been for a child with two married biological parents. (Whelan, R. (1994), *Broken Homes and Battered Children*, Oxford: Family Education Trust.)*
- *Children from lone-parent families are twice as likely to run away from home as those from two-birth-parent families (14% compared to 7%). (Rees, G. and Rutherford, C. (2001), *Home Run: Families and Young Runaways*, London: The Children's Society.)*
- *100,000 children run away from home every year. (Children's Society 2001)*

3.2.7 Children from broken families have more problems with sexual health, including earlier intercourse, increased risk of contracting STIs, and increased chances of becoming teenage parents.

- *Children from lone-parent households were more likely to have had intercourse before the age of 16 when compared with children from two-natural-parent households. Boys were 1.8 times as likely and girls were 1.5 times as likely. After controlling for socio-economic status, level of communication with parents, educational levels and age at menarche for girls, the comparative odds of underage sex actually increased to 2.29 for boys and 1.65 for girls. Girls from lone-parent households were 1.6 times as likely to become mothers before the age of 18. (Wellings, K., Nanchahal, K., MacDowall, W., et al. (2001), 'Sexual behaviour in Britain: Early heterosexual experience', *The Lancet* 358, pp. 1843–50.)*
- *In a sample of young women who had had intercourse before age 18, those from lone-parent households were 1.4 times as likely to have had a sexually transmitted infection by age 24 (14.3% versus 10.2%). Controlling for other factors slightly increased the comparative odds to 1.53. (Wellings, K., et al. (2001), 'Sexual behaviour in Britain: Early heterosexual experience', pp. 1843–50.)*
- *Analysis of data from the National Child Development Study (NCDS) indicated that women whose parents had divorced were twice as likely to become teenage mothers as those from intact families (25% versus 14%). After controlling for childhood poverty and behavioural and educational problems, the odds for teenage motherhood and early fatherhood were reduced to 1.4. This means that children of divorce were still 40% more likely to become parents early, even after considering other family background factors. (Kiernan, K. (September 1997), 'The legacy of parental divorce: Social,*

economic and family experiences in adulthood, London: Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, London School of Economics, pp 26–27.)

- 17% of 15 year olds and 6% of 13-14 year olds in England attended NHS Family Planning Clinics in 2003/4. (NHS Contraceptive Services, Statistical Bulletin, 29/9/2004)

3.2.8 Children from broken families are more likely to smoke, to drink and to take drugs.

- *In a sample of teenagers living in the West of Scotland, 15-year-olds from lone-parent households were twice as likely to be smokers as those from two-birth-parent homes (29% compared to 15%). After controlling for poverty, they were still 50% more likely to smoke. (Sweeting, H., et al. (1998), 'Teenage family life, lifestyles and life chances. International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family 12, pp. 15–46.)*
- *In the West of Scotland, 18-year-old girls from lone-parent households were twice as likely to drink heavily as those from intact two-birthparent homes (17.6% compared to 9.2%). (Sweeting, et al (1998), 'Teenage Family life, lifestyles and life chances', pp. 15–46.)*
- *Parental divorce during childhood increased the odds of young adults engaging in heavy and/or problem drinking. The link was weak when measured at age 23, but was strong by age 33. (Hope, S., et al. (1998), 'The relationship between parental separation in childhood and problem drinking in adulthood', Addiction; 93: pp. 505–514.)*
- *At age 15, boys from lone-parent households were twice as likely as those from intact two-birthparent households to have taken any drugs (22.4% compared with 10.8%). Girls from lone-parent homes were 25% more likely to have taken drugs by the age of 15 (8.2% compared with 6.5%) and 70% more likely to have taken drugs by age 18 (33.3% compared with 19.6%). After controlling for poverty, teenagers from lone-parent homes were still 50% more likely to take drugs. (Sweeting, et al (1998), 'Teenage Family life, lifestyles and life chances', pp. 15–46.)*
- *Approximately 800,000 children now have parents with alcohol addiction problems; 500,000 have parents with drug addiction problems. (Institute for Alcohol Studies, 2004; ACMD, 2003)*
- *Research suggests that 60% of drug-addicted mothers and 85% of fathers no longer look after their children. (Drug Misuse Research Project, Glasgow University 2004)*

3.2.9 Children from broken families are more likely to be involved in criminal activity and more likely to be incarcerated.

- *Children from broken homes are 9 times more likely to become young offenders, accounting for 70% of all young offenders (Youth Justice Board, 2002, Review 2001/02: Building on success. London: HMSO)*
- *39% of all male prisoners under 21 years old were in care. 70% of all prostitutes were in care (Project Caleb Report, 2004)*
- *Those in care are 50 times more likely to be imprisoned, and 60 times more likely to be homeless. 75% have no educational qualification, and are 66 times more likely to have a child which will be institutionalized. (Project Caleb Report, 2004)*
- *Children aged 11 to 16 years were 25% more likely to have offended in the last year if they lived in lone-parent families. (Youth Survey 2001: Research Study Conducted for the Youth Justice Board (January–March 2001)*
- *Although 20% of all dependent children live in lone-parent families, 70% of young offenders identified by Youth Offending Teams come from lone-parent families. (Review 2001/2002: Building on Success, Youth Justice Board, London: The Stationery Office (July 2002).*
- *American studies have shown that boys from one-parent homes were twice as likely as those from two-birth-parent families to be incarcerated by the time they reached their early 30s. (Harper, C. and McLanahan, S. (August 1998), 'Father absence and youth*

incarceration', San Francisco: paper presented at the annual meetings of the American Sociological Association.)

3.2.10 The years of decline in marriage and healthy family life have coincided with a substantial growth in suffering and unhappiness amongst adults and children.

- *According to the BMA's report, 'Child and Adolescent Mental Health', reveals that 9.6% of children aged between 5 and 16 experience some kind of mental health disorder. In the 11-16 age group, 12.6% of boys and 10% of girls suffer from a mental disorder. Professor Skuse, professor of behavioural and brain science at the Institute of Child Health, Great Ormond Street, London, said at the launch of the report: "There does appear to have been a real increase over time which isn't due to increased recognition. There was around a 50% increase between the early 70s and mid 80s, and another 50% since the mid-80s in conduct disorders in boys." The BMA board called for adequate backing for child and adolescent mental health teams and improved services for children in care. Sir Charles George, chair of the board, said that only about a third of children excluded from school were referred to mental health specialists. (BMA, June 2006, 'Child & Adolescent Mental Health'; Guardian, 21/6/2006)*
- *Unmarried men & women occupy an astonishing 90% of all beds in hospital & care homes – up from an average of 70% during 1921-1971. That's 7 & 16 times respectively more than married men & women. (Prior & Hayes, 2003).*
- *According to a spokeswoman from the Department of Health, the number of child mental health cases seen increased by more than 40% between 2002 and 2005 (Guardian, 21/6/2006)*
- *Divorced fathers are far more likely to engage in risky behaviour, including drugs, alcohol and unsafe sex (Umberson, 1987; Wellings & al, 1994) Divorce makes young men & women twice as likely to increase their drinking. (Power & al, 1999)*
- *A psychological study by Dr. Richard Williams states that 40% of the nation's children now have mental health disorders, including psychosis, eating problems and suicidal tendencies. Leading psychologists say that the breakdown of the family has created a new generation of 'latchkey kids', many of whom suffer neglect and abuse. The British Psychological Society says one child in four suffered mental disorders, especially those who live in inner cities. (Sunday Telegraph 1.12.96)*
- *In the UK, divorced men aged 20-60 have 70%-100% higher mortality rates. Divorced women over the age of 25 have 35%-58% higher mortality rates (ONS, 2001 - Mortality). Mortality rates amongst cohabitantes is no different that that of singles. (Lillard & Waite, 1995)*

3.2.11 Clinical experience leaves us in no doubt that children need to be nurtured within a loving, stable and moral family environment in which their mother and father play their rightful roles, within a happy, married relationship.

3.2.12 A child constantly living under the shadow of the possibility of mother or father leaving the family home invariably suffers emotional stress, feelings of insecurity and often guilt. The collapse of their parents' relationship causes long-lasting emotional damage to the majority of the children involved.

3.2.13 Children of broken families experience rejection, confusion and fear. Many believe that they are to blame and such feelings of guilt are often carried into adulthood. Even when an arrangement is made by separated or divorced parents for access to the children, there is often a problem of divided loyalty and interrupted relationships which cause extreme confusion and instability to many children. They are left with no model of family for their future lives.

3.2.14 Children who do not have the security of living with a married mother and father face many obstacles in life.

3.2.15 The institution of marriage is designed to be a real safeguard for children, ensuring a natural continuity of affection, care, support and guidance.

- 3.3 For centuries the concept of marriage has been a publicly-affirmed permanent and life-long union between one man and one woman. Those who seek to cohabit outside marriage decide to enter into a sexual relationship without necessarily accepting mutual responsibility and long-term duties. Whereas some cohabit for many years, cohabitation is increasingly a temporary relationship without commitment. When one of the partners tires of the relationship they are free to walk out and establish further relationships. This often causes immense emotional and financial distress. Although some cohabitation situations continue for many years, sexual faithfulness is not generally a characteristic of cohabitation.**
- 3.3.1 Children of cohabitees as opposed to children of married couples undoubtedly are disadvantaged.**
- *Children of cohabiting parents are 20 times more likely to be abused than children living with their married natural parents. Children living with a mother and a cohabitee who is not the child's father are 40 times more likely to be abused and the risk of fatal child abuse is 15 times more likely among cohabiting parents than among married natural parents. (Family Court Reporters Survey cited from 'Broken Homes and Battered Children, Family Education Trust 1994)*
- 3.3.2 Cohabiting women are disadvantaged as opposed to married women in terms of sexual disease.**
- *Women who are cohabiting are six times more likely to attend a clinic for sexually transmitted disease than married women. Cohabiting women are four times more likely to have an abortion than married women. (Jonson A.M, Wadsworth J. Wellings K & Field J, 'Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles', Blackwell Scientific publications London 1994)*
- 3.3.3 Cohabitation is inevitably linked to unstable relationships.**
- *A major Home Office study found that unmarried men & women – single, cohabiting, separated or divorced – were more than twice as likely to experience domestic violence compared to married people (Mirrlees-Black, 1999, Domestic violence: Findings from a new British crime survey self-completion questionnaire. London: Home Office)*
 - *There are a number of differences between marriages and non-married partnerships. The level of commitment may be different. Cohabitors seem more likely to have lower quality and unstable relationships, and are more likely to have lower socio-economic status (Brown SL "The Effect of Union Type on Psychological Wellbeing: Depression Cohabitors Versus Marrieds" Journal of Health and Social Behaviour. 2000; p.241-255).*
- 3.3.4 Cohabitors are more likely to have drink problems.**
- *Cohabitors are shown to be the group with the highest alcohol abuse. Compared to married people, cohabitors reported 25% more alcohol problems, which was in turn insignificantly different from the figure for the unmarried. This was especially strong for males. Cohabiting men had significantly the highest levels of alcohol problems. Cohabiting provided no benefits in terms of depression or alcohol abuse, which suggests that the benefits from marriage do not originate solely from having someone with whom to live. (Chris M. Wilson and Andrew J. Oswald: How Does Marriage Affect Physical and Psychological Health? A Survey of the Longitudinal Evidence. January 2002)*
- 3.4 If marriage is abandoned to other forms of living together such as cohabitation and same-sex partnerships, our entire society and especially our children will suffer. The adverse effects of family breakdown are devastating for the individuals concerned, especially children and society as a whole.**
- 3.5 It has been argued that children do not suffer when their parents split up. However, the experience of vast numbers disproves this.**

- *In the United States, over 1 million children experience parental divorce annually. Approximately 20% to 25% develop mental health or adjustment problems twice the rate experienced by children from continuously married families. Meta-analyses of studies conducted between 1950 and 1999 indicated that children from divorced homes function more poorly than children from continuously married parents across a variety of domains, including academic achievement, social relations and conduct problems. They continue to be at risk for clinically significant mental health difficulties into adulthood, are more likely to receive mental health services, and have a shorter life expectancy, than those who grew up in two-parent families. (Winslow, E., B., Wolchik, S., A., & Sander, I., 2004, 'Preventative Interventions for Children of Divorce', *Psychiatric Times*, Vol. XXI Issue 2)*
- *A report entitled 'Friction within Families' from the Family Policy Studies Centre, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, discovered that two-thirds of the homeless teenagers they encountered were from broken homes. The report states "one of the major causes of youth homelessness is the change in family circumstances many young people experience because of the re-marriage or re-partnering of their own parents". (Daily Mail 16.3.98)*
- *Children of divorced parents frequently experience crisis in future relationships. A report by Kathleen Kiernan of the London School of Economics based on the lives of 11,400 children born in 1958 states, "by the age of 33, more than four out of ten children of divorced parents had seen their own live-in relationship or marriage break up". "Parental divorce may be directly implicated in that children of these unions carry a legacy of doubt and vulnerability... Undoubtedly children benefit from being raised in an emotionally and economically secure two-parent family". (Daily Mail 30.9.97)*
- *A psychological study by Dr. Richard Williams states that 40% of the nation's children now have mental health disorders, including psychosis, eating problems and suicidal tendencies. Leading psychologists say that the breakdown of the family has created a new generation of 'latchkey kids', many of whom suffer neglect and abuse. The British Psychological Society says one child in four suffered mental disorders, especially those who live in inner cities. (Sunday Telegraph 1.12.96)*

4. An Assault

The destruction of the institution of marriage and family

- 4.1 In recent years there has been a sustained attack upon the concept of marriage and the family. Divorce has been made easier. Disincentives to marriage have accumulated. The legal and tax systems now operate as a disincentive to marriage. Husbands and wives are increasingly referred to as 'partners', in the same way as cohabitantes.

Understandably some have turned away from marriage because they do not wish to repeat the failures of their parents' marriages. Equally, some young parents whose marriages have failed are very anxious for their own children to be taught about the advantage of marriage.

- 4.2 Following the 'swinging sixties' and the popularising of a so-called permissive society, anti-family and anti-marriage propaganda began to permeate the media. Modesty was mocked. Faithfulness to one party for life was ridiculed. The emotionally and physically damaging practice of multi-partnering was presented as acceptable and normal, with disastrous consequences. Forty years later it can be seen from the evidence that this secular humanist experiment has failed miserably and brought with it immense human suffering.

- 4.3 It should not be overlooked that the overwhelming majority of people living together are married and the overwhelming majority of young people wish to be married. This is in marked contrast to the message of the media which gives great emphasis to broken relationships, promiscuity and 'alternative lifestyles'. It also contrasts dramatically with the image of sexual relationships remorselessly presented to children and young people in teenage magazines which, like sex education lessons in schools, make scanty reference to marriage, whilst portraying a sexual relationship as without responsibility, commitment free and extemporaneously.

- 4.4 It is beyond dispute that moral values are learnt primarily within the family. When parental influence is undermined and the educational system is used as a means of social engineering, the influence of the family unit is seriously eroded. The increasing rejection of private and public morality has led to a dangerous situation in which children do not see issues in terms of right and wrong, but rather in terms of preference. Reference to absolute truth is rejected. Those with strong convictions are automatically labelled as intolerant. Agnosticism is always seen as superior to belief. Many of those concerned with movements for social change rooted in secular humanism have been staunch in their rejection of marriage and often family and do not believe that children should have the advantage of learning from the experience of previous generations, notably through their family.

- *Dr. Brock-Chisholm was the first director of the World Health Organisation. As early as 1946 Chisholm said, "the concept of right and wrong is a barrier to developing a civilised way of life. This concept of right and wrong should be eradicated. Children have to be freed from....prejudices forced upon them by religious authorities...Parents are dictators and suppressors of the child's best nature.....Sex education should be introduced....eliminating 'the ways of the elders', by force if necessary." (Psychiatry of Enduring Peace and Social Progress'-Psychiatry Volume 9 1946)*

- *"The family based on marriage has always been recognised as the mechanism for socialising the next generation...with the decline of marriage the social network which sets and maintains standards of acceptable behaviour within a community fragments." (Patricia Morgan, author of Farewell to the Family?)*

5. Public Policy and Formative Influences

The development of family relationships & the care of children

- 5.1 The Government cannot be neutral in matters concerning the marriage-based family. Neither should it do anything to damage this precious institution. Clearly, the tax and benefit system should work for the family.
- 5.2 In the past, the tax system was used to strengthen and protect the institution of marriage. Changes over the past twenty years have now created a substantial benefit to single parenthood which acts as a deterrent to couple stability and marriage. It is not known how far our legislators have fully recognised the implications of what has been done to discourage marriage in fiscal terms.
- 5.3 It is beyond dispute that other groups have been given preferential treatment over married couples. Many on benefits are positively encouraged not to marry and thus be penalised in taxation. We have reached the stage where the economic advantages of forming a conjugal household are disappearing.
- 5.4 Although we have the clear responsibility to care for the single parent family, our welfare and taxation system has reached the point where it could be argued that there is positive discrimination against marriage.
- *According to research by Professor Bob Rowthorn, published by the Centre for Policy Studies, the average two-parent household is taxed £7.600 a year, net of benefits. The same parents, living apart, receive £300 in benefits, net of tax. This amounts to an £8,000 incentive to separate. (Kirby, 2005, The Price of Parenthood, CPS)*
 - *The cost of 'child-contingent support' has risen by 52% since the Labour Government came to power, and now exceeds £20 billion a year. Lone-parent households are five times more likely than couples to be receiving welfare payments and more than twice as likely to be receiving tax credits. Lone parents receive average tax credit and benefit payments five times larger than couple households. A two-parent, one-earner family on average income (£24,000), with a mortgage and two young children is now just over a pound a week per head better off than a lone-parent household entirely dependent on the state. (Kirby, 2005, The Price of Parenthood, CPS)*
- 5.5 There is a widespread failure to prepare young people for responsible parenthood, and there is a tendency to minimise the long term implications of family fragmentation.
- 5.6 There is a heavy responsibility on the shoulders of our legislators to protect millions of children from the avoidable harm caused by family breakdown.
- *The Government has contributed to the downgrading of marriage and done nothing practical to support married couples, according to the former president of the Family Division, Dame Elizabeth Butler-Sloss.. She noted that the Government had proclaimed its support for the family. "It is however, a sad fact that a Government which has published excellent proposals on helping parents and children after breakdown of relationships has done nothing practical to support married couples," she said, "There is now no financial incentive to marry or remain married and a financial incentive to cohabit and not to marry. This outcome, which contributes to the downgrading of the status of marriage, is particularly sad, since the statistics show that marriage remains the most stable of all relationships between men and women." She added, "There can be little doubt that to support and encourage marriage has financial, as well as other, long lasting benefits for the wider community." (Daily Telegraph 06/12/2005)*
- 5.7 There is a need for society to challenge the many corrupting formative influences which are damaging children and families today.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 As a matter of urgency there needs to be a public admission that we are facing a national crisis of enormous magnitude, as shown in this document, as a direct result of the neglect and systematic undermining of marriage and the family, leading to increases in family breakdown.**
- 6.2 Although Governments and politicians cannot dictate behaviour they can ensure that everything possible is done to defend and promote the well-being of the community through the marriage-based family.**
- 6.3 We need to recognise that essentially most societal ills including juvenile delinquency, teenage pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, anti-social behaviour and emotional problems in children are related to family breakdown.**
- 6.4 There needs to be a thorough and coordinated review of all legislation and tax measures which have had a direct or indirect influence on the institution of marriage in the United Kingdom.**
- 6.5 The marriage-based family should be firmly placed on the curriculum of every school and at the centre of all sex and relationship education programmes.**
- 6.6 The availability and accessibility of relationship education to promote family stability should be increased by appropriate government funding and support.**
- 6.7 The focus of relationship support services to help families in crisis should be shifted to one of family restoration.**
- 6.8 There needs to be a commitment by political leaders to drive the marriage-based family to the top of the political agenda.**

Appendix A

The Family : the Christian model

The family has always played a major role in the life of Christian nations and the Christian Church.

Christians believe that marriage is both a gift and a responsibility from God, enabling men and women to build up healthy and satisfying relationships, that in turn create a stable and wholesome society in which the young may be nurtured and children and adults alike develop a proper sense of value and responsibility.

Within marriage, husband and wife find the love and security to cherish one another and to express ever more deeply their delight in sexual intimacy and their growth in relationship. Marriage provides the opportunity and commitment for husband and wife to grow together in maturity and understanding.

Christians believe that God has given us marriage and the family as the framework within which children find the love and security they need to grow to healthy maturity. Within the family they experience how to give and receive, they learn by example and by positive discipline how to relate to other people and to the world around them. They learn the meaning of fidelity and the outworking of mutual forgiveness and responsibility.

Christians believe that God has given us marriage and the family as a creative centre for wholesome community. The family enriches the locality in which it is set, reaching out in neighbourliness towards and concern for, others building up a network of caring relationships. A happy, healthy family where the members are in loving and right relationship with each other, creates a positive good which spills over beneficially into the surrounding neighbourhood.

As the place where our deepest and longest-lasting human relationships are worked out, we derive our understanding of the family from our understanding of God and at the same time family relationships are often used to express our relationship with God.

Christians see God as Father.

- *“Oh Lord you are our Father”. (Isaiah 64.8)*
- *As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him”. (Psalm 103.13)*
- *Jesus said, “when you pray say, ‘Father’ ” (Luke 11.2)*
- *“For us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live”. (1 Corinthians 8.6)*

Because God is a loving, caring Father, Christians are called to be brothers and sisters in His one family.

- *“I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty”.(2 Corinthians 6.18)*
- *“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves”. (Romans 12.10)*
- *“How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!” (Psalm 133.1)*
- *Paul speaks of ‘God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name’. (Ephesians 3.4)*

Christians are adopted into the family of God.

- *“To all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God”. (John 1: 12-13)*
- *“You received the spirit of sonship. And by Him we cry, ‘Abba’, Father”. (Romans 8.15)*

Parental love and discipline, which provides the secure framework within which children can flourish and grow is represented in the Bible to describe God’s caring love for us.

- *“As a father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him”. (Psalm 103.11)*
- *“My child do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord...the Lord disciplines those whom he loves...God is treating you as children....for what child is there whom a parent does not discipline?” (Hebrews 12.5,6,7)*

Christians believe that marriage is something to be appreciated and valued.

- *“Let marriage be held in honour by all.” (Hebrews 13.4)*

Christians believe that God delights in the joy and love of married life.

- *‘As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.’ (Isaiah 62.5)*

Marriage is a symbol of a mature love which persists through difficulties and disappointments. Biblically, God uses the example of marriage to illustrate his dependable love for us.

- *“And I will take you for my wife for ever; I will take you for my wife in righteousness and justice and in steadfast love and in mercy. I will take you for my wife in faithfulness; and you will know the Lord.” (Hosea 2.19)*

In a world where there is division and disintegration in nations, communities and families, Christians are committed to oneness in the loving Family of God. This commitment dictates the attitude of Christians towards all relationships.

The Christian Gospel is fundamentally about right relationships. This is the Biblical meaning of the word righteousness. Christians believe that when we enter into a right relationship with God, He becomes our loving Father whom we can experience in intimacy and closeness. God, the Father, thus adopts us into his own family and believers become brothers and sisters with the blessings and responsibilities which flow from right relationships with each other. Thus the worldwide Christian family, the Church, should serve as a model for human relationships. Sadly, it has often failed to do this, but this remains its calling.

Appendix B

Education – A formative influence

Schools have a profound influence on the moral standards adopted by children. It is a matter of profound concern that most children are not being given clear guidance on the value of the marriage-based family.

Today, Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) involves children as young as 7 years being taught that there is no normative family structure. They are taught that everyone is equally free to choose whatever form of permanent or impermanent relationship, with the same or opposite sex, that they wish. There is a strong implication that it is normal and acceptable to enter into sexual relationships with various people. There is little, if any, emphasis upon the enormous responsibility of procreation of life. The importance to society and to children themselves, of a committed, stable, heterosexual two-parent family structure is not being presented.

Unless children have a strong model of sound family structure and relationships from their own parents, they will grow up with no clear moral framework and no understanding of mature relationships. The strong commercial and peer pressures can easily sweep them into a lifestyle that they will later regret.

Good education consists of the imparting of knowledge and the inculcation of wisdom and self-discipline based on the distilled experience of preceding generations. Education that deviates from this principle and denies truths for which there is overwhelming evidence is immeasurably damaging to the young people themselves and to the society in which they come to play a part.

Currently, determined efforts are being made to encourage sexual curiosity and activity amongst children at an inappropriately early age.

- *It is interesting to note that parents stopped a junior school from showing a controversial sex education video (Channel 4 series Living and Growing) to 9 year olds. It featured teenagers talking explicitly about masturbation. (Kent (KM Extra) 22.3.96)*
- Teachers are instructed that 'it is important not to try to 'promote' a particular type of home life as the norm or superior' (Julian Cohen, 2001, Primary School Sex and Relationships Education Pack, Healthwise, p.22)
- *Teenage pregnancies have risen fastest in areas of the country where the government has specifically targeted resources to reduce them according to a report, 'Sex Education or Indoctrination' published by the Family Education Trust. The report says the explicit sex education leaflets and free condoms provided to under-age girls by the government schemes have simply encouraged them to have sex. Figures released last week show that teenage pregnancies in England rose year on year by more than 800 despite the £15m spent by the Government on strategies to reduce them. There has been a 62% increase in the number of cases of sexually transmitted diseases among young people aged 19 and under rising from 25,143 in 1997 to 40,821 in 2002. Teenage pregnancy rates in Britain remain the highest in Western Europe – one in every ten babies born in England is to a teenage mother. According to Government figures one target area, Cornwall, saw a 17% rise in teenage pregnancies between 2001 and 2002, Torbay rose 22%, Haringey 8%, York 34% and Solihull 17%. In some targeted areas there was a decrease e.g. Bury 3% and Rotherham 8%. One of the leaflets being distributed states clearly "There is no right age to have sex". (Sunday Telegraph - 14/03/2004)*
- *The Primary School Workbook published by the Family Planning Association is a rolling programme of sex education including labels naming vagina, testicles and pubic hair (4 year olds), name game finding alternative words for penis, vagina (7 years). Children are to be taught in detail about masturbation, menstruation, orgasms and sexually transmitted diseases. (Independent 26.10.93).*

There is a need for greater public awareness of the opportunities and dangers in dealing with human relationships in schools.

Appendix C

Celebrity culture – A destructive influence

A substantial proportion of material now broadcast on television, radio and published in the press, magazines and on Internet, promotes a “celebrity culture”. This culture is often extremely antagonistic to the concept of family, marriage and stable relationships. People who attract public attention are held up as role models for the public. The extraordinary rewards heaped upon many celebrities, sets before young people the idea that it is normal or legitimate to seek to obtain profit with a minimum of responsibility and accountability.

At the very least, the celebrity culture is likely to promote envy and a valuing of the outward attributes of ‘success’ above the achievement of service and contribution to the community. In addition, celebrities are commonly asked for their opinions on issues far removed from their field of expertise or body of experience, solely because of their celebrity status. The idols that are being raised up are often extremely poor role models and often in unstable personal relationships.

Film makers, broadcasting companies and many of those responsible for mass circulation of magazines have been increasingly and unnaturally obsessed with the physical sex act. A broad range of issues concerning human relationships have been totally ignored and at the same time sexual relationships are frequently trivialized and degraded, The profit motive has driven producers and publishers of many newspapers and journals to focus on, glorify or even promote promiscuity. Consequently, sexual behaviour and our attitudes to marriage and family now appear to be influenced more by the media than by the family, the educational system or the church.

- **Sex scenes on TV have tripled over the last 5 years.** (*Report published by BSC, ITC and BBC: MediaWatch-UK Newsbrief, Autumn, 2003*)
- **One child in five watches television after the 9pm watershed.** (*Study of Broadcasting Standards Council and Independent Television Commission 10.6.03*)
- **Violent scenes on TV have doubled in 4 years. There are more violent scenes before the 9.00pm watershed than after it.** (*‘The Depiction of Violence on Terrestrial Television’, April 2002, joint publication by the ITC, BBC and BSC*)
- **98% of the public agree that standards are slipping on terrestrial TV.** (*Poll conducted of 2,675 voters by ITV’s Teletext, 20.1.03*)

Appendix D

Pornography – A poisonous influence

Pornography in anything from mild to extreme form, is now widely and readily available in our society, and is exacting a huge price on communities.. Pornographic DVDs and videos are readily available for hire and internet pornography is so widespread that many internet users have encountered it unintentionally. Explicit magazines which formerly would have been kept under newsagents' counters are now displayed at children's eye level. Film censorship has been replaced by mere classification.

Pornography pollutes the mind of the observer. It can render the regular user incapable of maintaining ordinary social relationships and promotes a destructive level of lust in relationships. It can lead to long-lasting psychological damage, and has been proven to have a disruptive effect on marriages.

The demand for ever-more-extreme forms of pornography feeds the internet paedophilia and bestiality industry, which is linked to child-abuse and human trafficking on a widespread and growing scale. Teenage exposure to pornography disrupts healthy adolescent growth and development of maturity in relationships.

Without doubt, pornography is one of the most pervasive and poisonous influences in our society. It has gravely damaging effects upon people's ability to form healthy and stable social and family relationships, and damaging effects upon the marriages of those who use it.

- *In 2003, The Internet Watch Foundation processed 18 times as many reports on illegal websites as in 1997, from 1,291 to 23,824. (IWF Annual Report, 2003)*
- *BT is now blocking up to 35,000 attempts a day to view child pornography, up from 20,000 in 2004.. (BBC News, 7.2.2006; Piere Danon, CEO BT Retail, BBC Today Program, 20.7.04)*
- *Five million images of child abuse are in circulation on the Internet featuring 400,000 children. (Online Computer Library Centre, Annual Review, 2001)*
- *Commercial pornographic sites on the Internet have increased by 1800 percent in the last five years. Now over 260 million pages are classified as pornography. (N2H2 Press Release, 24.9.03)*
- *Researchers Zillmann and Bryant subjected people to non-violent pornography for one hour per week for six weeks. They found it reduced concern about rape as a criminal offence, and led to greater acceptance of sexual infidelity (J. Communication 1985, vol.32 p10; J. Family Values 1988, vol.9 p518).*
- *They and other researchers found that exposure to pornography, even briefly, reduces satisfaction with partners (J. Applied Social Psychology 1988, vol.18 p438; J. Weaver et al., Perceptual and Motor Skills 1984, vol.58 p929; D. Kenrick, J. Experimental Social Psychology 1980, vol.25 p159).*
- *The 1985 US Attorney General's Commission on Pornography was unanimous in finding a link between pornography and sexual violence. The Commission also found that prolonged use of pornography creates an appetite for stronger material. (Final Report of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography, Rutledge Hill Press, Nashville, 1986).*
- *Ray Wyre, who co-founded the pioneering Gracewell Clinic for treating sex offenders in Birmingham, has said, "In the course of my work [20 years of dealing with paedophiles] I have developed a model which identifies the patterns which predictably operate in the cycle of sexual abuse. I have discovered that pornography can and does function at every stage in that cycle".*
- *Michael Hames who led the Obscene Publications Branch of New Scotland Yard said in December 1990, "Wherever you find sexual crime, so you will also find pornography. The link is indisputable. It is startlingly clear in the collections of obscene and violent pictures and words hoarded by people we arrest for sexual crimes. It is an addiction and, like any other craving, it needs constant feeding. If you look at the material that we are seizing, the percentage of the bizarre and sado-masochistic is increasing all the time and pornographers are telling us those lines are their best sellers."*

Appendix E

Promiscuity and sexually transmitted infections

Promiscuity has been actively promoted in the United Kingdom in the past 30 years as never before in our history.

The process of lowering sexual moral standards coincided with the introduction of the oral contraceptive pill, and also the growing cultural influence of television and the media, the expansion of the pornography industry. Later, sex 'educational' programmes frequently presented images of promiscuity and obscenity. The commercial interests of Condom manufacturers also played a major role.

Promiscuity means that human relationships are trivialised. 'Multi-partnering' and 'sequential relationships' are increasingly accepted as normal human behaviour. Adultery is presented as acceptable and of little consequence. Important human relationships are presented as short-lived and expendable. Deviant sexual behaviours are presented as healthy and acceptable, rather than corrupting and unacceptable.

A major consequence of the promiscuity which has been promoted so energetically in recent years is the present outbreak of STIs. This is on a scale hitherto unknown. In the United Kingdom we now have an epidemic which is virtually out of control. It is causing untold physical, mental, social and spiritual harm. There are now twice as many attendances at genito-urinary clinics than there were a decade ago and many people are totally unaware of diseases which they are carrying and of the seriousness of their situation.

The true meaning of 'safe sex', apart from abstinence, is mutual monogamy with an uninfected partner. Mutual monogamy is part of the character of authentic marriage. Promiscuity denies the ideal of a committed relationship between husband and wife.

- ***'It is no exaggeration that we now face a public health crisis in relation to sexual health. The past decade has seen a continuing and considerable deterioration in the nation's sexual health. All infections have increased alarmingly, teenage pregnancies are yet to decrease and changes in sexual behaviour can only continue to drive this situation... Sexual health is not an NHS or political priority. Until it becomes so we will witness further failure upon further failure.'*** (Professor Adler of Royal Free and University College Medical School who devised the National Strategy for Sexual Health and HIV; in an editorial of the *Journal of Sexually Transmitted Infections*, April 2003)
- ***Sexually transmitted diseases in the UK are out of control with an epidemic of Chlamydia, Gonorrhoea, Syphilis and the highest number of HIV cases ever diagnosed. There has been a massive increase of sexually transmitted diseases (STIs) in the UK over the past years. Diagnoses of gonorrhoea and chlamydia have all more than doubled between 1996 and 2002. In England, gonorrhoea cases increased from 11,888 in 1996 to 24,397 last year. Syphilis cases rose by a staggering 533% (from 261 cases in 1996 to 1651 last year). Cases of HIV and AIDS are set to rise almost 10 per cent a year and have more than doubled between 1993 and 2002. There has been a record numbers of HIV infections in 2001, with 5393 newly diagnosed cases. This was the highest number of new diagnoses recorded in a single year since the beginning of the AIDS epidemic. Quite worrying is the steep increase in STIs among young people: Between 1991 and 2001, the number of new episodes of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among those aged under 20 doubled in England, Wales and Northern Ireland from 669,291 to 1,332,910.*** (MW Adler, 'Sexual health – health of the nation'. *J. Sexually Transmitted Infections* 2003; 79: 85-87; Written answer: 'Sexual Health' by Miss Melanie Johnson: *Sexually Transmitted Disease data for England; as at 28 November 2003, Hansard; National Statistics, The health of children and young people. 30.03.2004*)
- ***300,000 do not know they have Chlamydia. In a parliamentary answer, Miss Melanie Johnson said: The latest evidence on the prevalence of chlamydia suggests that up to 300,000 sexually active 16 to 24-year-olds may have undiagnosed chlamydia, and addressing this is a priority for the Department, through the national chlamydia screening programme. The recently published Paper on public health committed additional funding of £80 million to accelerate the roll-out of this programme by 2007.*** (Hansard, 2 Dec 04)

Appendix F

Changing role of women

During the past 30 years there has been a radical change in the role of women in society. Many obvious injustices have been dealt with by campaigns for women's rights. Today more women are working - they constitute virtually half the country's working population.

There is a greater readiness on the part of many fathers to share in the upbringing of their children. In spite of this, most women find that they are carrying the main burden of caring for the household and have the strain of sustaining both home and work.

There is increasing pressure upon women to conform to the image of 'career-styled super women', and also to contribute to household finances. This is frequently at the expense of good relationships.

Many children suffer from not having quality time with their mothers during their early formative years. Changing working patterns, together with long working hours (the highest in Europe) mean that these women have less time to spend with their children, and the bonds between many working mothers and their children are being weakened.

- *On average, women spend over 2 hours 30 minutes a day doing housework, cooking, washing up, cleaning and ironing - 1 hour 30 minutes more than men. Both sexes spend similar lengths of time gardening or looking after pets. DIY and car maintenance are the only chores that men, in general, spend more time on than women. (Focus on Gender: Women do more chores than men, 8th January, 2004, ONS)*
- *Fathers are now the main carers for children when mothers are working. In 36% of dual earner families, it is now the father, more than any other individual, who cares for children when the mother is at work. (Lewis & Warin, 2001, 'What good are Dads?' Fathers Direct Factsheet).*
- **Daycare increases maternal employment but not family income.** *Research conducted by the Public Health Intervention Research Unit, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, assessed the effects of providing daycare facilities for young children on the health and welfare of disadvantaged families. The hope was that providing better access to daycare facilities might enable poor parents to take up paid work, thus increasing family income. The study was carried out on two groups of parents. The 'intervention group' were offered 'high quality daycare' for their children at the Early Years Centre in Hackney. the 'control group' used childcare provision they secured for themselves, which consisted of part time places at nursery schools, childminders, family or friends. The study concluded that while the provision of daycare increased maternal employment it did not increase family income. (Reported in the BMJ (British Medical Journal) October 2003)*

Appendix G

The implications of birth control

The advent of the contraceptive pill has been a catalyst for a profound change in people's attitudes towards sexual relationships. Whilst it has enabled many married couples to enjoy the positive relational aspects of sexual activity without fear of an unwanted pregnancy, for many it has meant freedom for sexual licence.

The recent development of the 'morning-after pill' frees women from even having to consider contraception, and so there is even less perceived value in self-restraint or in considerations of morality in relationships. If an unwanted pregnancy should occur, the abortion pill RU486 can now be prescribed. Many people increasingly expect access to 'remedies' like these for the consequences of their behaviour as a 'right'. The morning-after pill is now available in schools, and can readily be purchased in chemists' by underage girls.

The ready availability of birth control has led to human relationships being trivialised. General awareness of the sacredness of the marital relationship between men and women has been destroyed. Sexual restraint has been ridiculed and promiscuity is being promoted.

Sexual intercourse is no longer seen as an expression of an intimate and sacramental relationship between two people within the covenant of marriage. It is portrayed as a means of self-gratification which can be performed without regard for the human dignity of the other person and the profound spiritual significance of the act itself. The floodgates have opened and the marriage-based family has been put seriously at risk.

- **Contraceptive implants being given to schoolgirls:** Doctors are fitting girls as young as 14 with contraceptive implants, making them infertile for up to three years without their parents consent. Government figures show that about 400 girls under 16 have been fitted with Implanon, a one and a half inch long rod that is placed in the arm under anesthetic. The rods release synthetic hormones that prevent the teenagers producing eggs. Use of Implanon by the under 16's in England has increased over the past three years from almost none to 400. Statistics also reveal that 2500 girls under 15 have received contraception injections which make them infertile for three months, at Family Planning Clinics in the past year. This figure has risen over two and a half fold during the past 7 years. Dr. Anne Szarrewski, of the Margaret Pyke Centre in Central London said, "In a strictly religious family, parents could not contemplate that a daughter under the age of 16 might be sexually active. It is much easier for those women if they do not have the contraceptive pill lying around". (Daily Telegraph - 03/05/2004)
- **Messages aimed at promoting 'safe(r) sex' alone, by aiming to increase condom use have failed and will continue to fail if they do not reduce casual sex at the same time.** There is a strong positive correlation between increased condom use at first sexual intercourse and increased teenage pregnancy. If to encourage increased uptake of condoms were effective, an increased use of condoms would be associated with a decrease in unwanted pregnancies. However, this is not the case since condom distribution may be associated with increased sexual activity and condom use may give a false sense of security, which increases sexual risk-taking and casual sex. Finally, condom distribution does not ensure condom use: In a recent survey, $\frac{3}{4}$ of male students reported having sex without condom when they felt one should have been used to protect against pregnancy or infection. (Williams ES. Contraceptive failure may be a major factor in teenage pregnancy. British Medical Journal 1995; 311: 806-7. United States Agency for International Development: The 'ABCs' of HIV prevention. 'ABC' Expert Technical Meeting September 17, 2002. Warner L. Condom access does not ensure condom use: you've got to be putting me on. Sexually Transmitted Infections 2002; 78: 225.)
- -A 10 year old girl was given a handful of condoms and three months supply of birth control pills on a 'no questions asked' basis by the Amelia Nutt Family Planning Clinic in Bristol. It is operated under the United Bristol Healthcare Trust. Dr. Adrian Rogers, Director of the Family Institute said, "Unless right minded parents demonstrate their fury at this activity it will go on unchecked". (Sunday Express 1.6.97)

Appendix H

The implications of abortion

Abortion is now widespread in the UK. Sadly the termination of human life has become an acceptable part of our culture.

Nearly seven million lives have been terminated since the 1967 Abortion Act was introduced. The majority of abortions are performed for 'social', not medical, reasons.

Apart from the termination of a life, the emotional and physical harm that can be caused to the mother has been grossly underestimated and has damaged family life. Contrary to the intentions of those who supported the original legislation, the widespread destruction of unborn children has become a de facto form of birth control.

This has contributed to widespread devaluation of the sexual relationship, such that intercourse is now seen primarily as a means of self-gratification rather than as an expression of intimate mutual acceptance and self-giving within the bond and context of marriage, and for purposes of pro-creation.

- **1000 abortions on girls of 14.** *More than 1,000 girls aged 14 and under are having abortions every year, according to official figures, reports the Daily Mail. The figure rose by eight per cent in only 12 months, and reinforces concerns that the Government is failing in its campaign to tackle the teenage pregnancy rate, which is the highest in Europe. The Government has pledged to halve pregnancies amongst under-18s by 2010, and £138million has been allocated since 1998 to fund the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, which involves making the morning-after pill, condoms and sex education more easily available. But studies show that teenage pregnancies are going up fastest in areas targeted by the unit, and sexual diseases amongst 16 to 19-year-olds have soared by 30 per cent since it was launched. Campaigners say the sharp rise in abortions also suggests that many schoolgirls who become pregnant could be having them terminated without their parents' consent or even their knowledge. (Daily Mail 21.2.2005)*
- **FPA say parents not the best people to advise a child.** *Parents are "no longer necessarily the best people to advise a child" about contraception, sexually transmitted infections and abortion, the high court heard this week reports the Guardian. Sexual health charity the Family Planning Association (FPA) told a judicial review into the confidentiality of doctors' advice on these matters to underage children that the traditional belief that "parents know what is best for a child" is out of date. Nathalie Lieven, appearing for the FPA, said parents had no right to know if under-16s were seeking treatment for sexually transmitted infections or unplanned pregnancy and the traditional "paternalistic approach" of informing parents was contrary to social changes over the past 20 years in western Europe. (The Guardian - 10/11/2005)*

Appendix I

Further Evidence

1. The marriage based family – the ideal

- **Young women prefer marriage**
The 21st Century Young Women's Survey of Great Britain commissioned by More magazine reveals that almost seven in ten of the 5,000 women aged 18-25 questioned hoped to be married before they have children. Seven in ten women believe "there is too much pressure to have sex". The report portrays a generation of females who are determined not to repeat the failed marriages of their parents. (Daily Telegraph - 14/10/2004)
- **Importance of two parent families**
According to research sponsored by the Economic and Social Research Council and led by Professor Sarah Curtis of London University, children are happier and have better chances in life if they are brought up in two-parent families. Research focused on 2,790 children aged 11-14 from East London and researchers discovered that children suffered more mental distress if they came from broken homes. (Daily Mail 12.1.05)

2. De-basing marriage

- **Sham marriages soar**
In answer to a written question the Home Office published the numbers of Sham Marriages reported by the Registrars. The numbers have risen from around 750 in 2001 to over 3500 last year, with some 110 people actually prosecuted for a variety of crimes related to the marriages. (Hansard - 08/03/2005)
- **Sham marriages by asylum seekers**
A memo to Beverley Hughes, the Immigration Minister from her department, estimates that there were about 15,000 sham marriages each year in Britain, ten times the published official estimate of 1,700. In some cases the couples do not even speak the same language. Many sham marriages are arranged by fixers who charge up to £10,000. The fee includes a package of finding a spouse, booking the wedding, arranging the witnesses, making the Home Office application for the immigrant to stay for the probationary year, and arranging the divorce once leave-to-remain is granted. (Sunday Telegraph 21.3.04)
- **Thousands of fake marriages make mockery of immigration laws**
A senior registrar, Mark Rimmer, has been conducting national research on the numbers of marriages motivated by the need of a passport rather than love. He claims that as many as one in five ceremonies in London – 8,000 each year – may be bogus. Criminal syndicates broker weddings between strangers, charging up to £5,000 per wedding. In some fake weddings, when the bride is asked the name of the man she wants to marry she has to first read it out of a passport. (Daily Telegraph 11.6.04)
- **Making plans for divorce before marriage**
The Solicitors Family Law Association is proposing that prenuptial agreements should become legally binding in England and Wales. It says that couples should be able to decide in advance how their assets would be divided on divorce instead of waiting until the courts do so for them. The courts believe that the institution of marriage will be undermined if couples are encouraged to think that forthcoming marriage could easily be brought to an end. David Salter, the Chairman of Association's Law Reform Committee said that there was a growing sense of unease amongst divorcing couples about the unpredictability of the courts' approach to the financial aspects of divorce. (Daily Telegraph 22.11.04)
- **Celebrity's mockery of marriage**
Britney Spears turned up drunk at a tacky Las Vegas chapel to get married to Jason Alexander. The marriage was dissolved after 55 hours. (Daily Mail 7.1.04)
- **Marriage that lasted 90 minutes**
Victoria Anderson and Scott McKie were married at Stockport Registrar Office at 2pm. At 3.30pm violence had broken out at the wedding reception. The bridegroom head-butted and

punched two Police Officers who had been called, and spent the night in jail. His wife cancelled the honeymoon and petitioned for divorce (Manchester Metro news 3.12.04).

3. Cohabitation – the price

- **Cohabiting couples are 'breaking up quicker'**

Cohabitation is now simply an "intense form of dating" because so many live-in couples then split up, according to research. Academics say that the common view of cohabitation as a stepping stone to marriage needed to be "seriously questioned". The research, in the journal Demography, was undertaken in America but mirrors the experience of Britain, where the average length of cohabitations is less than two years and where only four per cent last more than 10. Within five years of the birth of a child, eight per cent of married couples in Britain split up, compared to 52 per cent of cohabitantes and 25 per cent of those who marry after the birth. Researchers in America said cohabitation was easily entered into, but unlikely to lead to the altar. The Cornell University study reported that half of all cohabiting unions ended within a year and 90 per cent within five years, mostly because couples broke up. Indeed, said the researchers, cohabitation was emerging as "an intense form of dating". "The common view of cohabitation as a stepping stone to marriage needs to be seriously questioned," said Daniel Lichter, the director of the Bronfenbrenner Life Course Centre at Cornell. "Instead, serial cohabitation may be an emerging norm as cohabiting unions form and break up." (Daily Telegraph, 11/7/2006)

4. Children – the victims

- **More first-born children start life without a father**

According to research carried out by the Millennium Cohort Survey backed by the government, 18% of first-born children begin life in a house with only a single mother to care for them. Kathleen Kiernan, Professor of Social Policy and Demography at the London School of Economics told the National Family and Parenting Institute's conference "A hallmark of unmarried parenthood in Britain, is the fragile beginning of these families". A study of 18,000 families in 2001/2002 found that when second and third children were accounted for, 15% were born into single parent homes. 60% of the children were born to married parents and 25% to cohabiting couples. (Daily Telegraph 18.6.04)

- **More than half of babies in Wales born outside wedlock**

More than half the children born in Wales last year were outside marriage, according to the Office for National Statistics. Wales was the first of the constituent countries of the UK where the babies of married parents were now in a minority, although the rates for north-east England in 2003 stood at 53.5%. Over the last two decades, fertility of women in their thirties and forties has increased while that of women in their twenties or younger has decreased. (Office for National Statistics Press Release, 16/12/04)

- **Mother left family to go on holiday**

A mother of five left her children with her 13-year-old son while she went on holiday with her boyfriend. The prosecutor said "Her desire for a holiday with her boyfriend was such that she disregarded the welfare of her children". (Manchester Metro - 10/09/2003)

- **Child abuse risk through unmarried cohabiting step-fathers**

All studies of child-abuse victims which look at family type, identify the step-family as representing the highest risk to children. However, the term step-father needs to be defined, since it used to refer to men who were married to women with children by other men. It is now used to describe any man in the household, whether married to the mother or not. An NSPCC study of 1988 which separated married step-fathers from unmarried cohabiting men found that married step-fathers were less likely to abuse: 'for nonnatal fathers marriage appears to be associated with a greater commitment to the father role'. (Gordon, M. and Creighton, S. (1988), 'Natal and nonnatal fathers as sexual abusers in the United Kingdom: A Comparative Analysis', Journal of Marriage and the Family 50, pp. 99–105.)

- **Children addicted to Heroin**

Four children aged 11 have been treated for addiction to heroin, and 70 youngsters under 16 have been arrested for drug dealing in Scotland. The figures were revealed one week after the outcry over an 11-year-old schoolgirl who collapsed at her desk during lessons after

taking heroin. Seven of Scotland's eight police forces produced figures on the number of children arrested for dealing drugs. In Strathclyde, the biggest police area, 29 children under 15 had been reported for dealing. In Fife, police dealt with 10 cases of children under 16 arrested for supplying heroin. Prof Neil McKeganey, of the drug misuse research centre at Glasgow University, said: "Society now has a very large number of children who, from infancy, are growing up in family homes where serious drugs misuse is part and parcel of their young lives... These children have an intimate knowledge of drug addiction at a much earlier age". Margaret Mitchell, the Conservative justice spokesman, called for a "zero tolerance" approach. (*Daily Telegraph* 06/02/2006)

- **Sexually explicit children's novel**
*Melvin Burgess has written a novel entitled "Doing It" aimed at young boys. Francisca Dow, Managing Director of Puffin Books, who will publish it in paperback, said "Doing It, is about sex ... it is incredibly warm and funny". "It will be branded with a Penguin adult logo not our children's Puffin one". Its cover announces it as "Melvin Burgess's latest assault on teenage morals". Jan Barlow of Brook welcomed the book, but said that it could add to the pressure on young teenagers to be sexually active "Young people tell us that they think that if everyone else they know is having sex and they are not, then there must be something wrong with them". Burgess's novel 'Junk' was about a teenage girl who becomes addicted to heroin after running away from her dysfunctional family. It won the children's literature prize in 1997 – the Carnegie Medal. His last book 'Lady : My Life is a Bitch' is a fantasy about a sexually active teenage girl who gets turned into a dog on heat. Both books led to widespread public criticism. (*The Times* - 29/03/2003)*

5. Divorce – the implications

- **Divorce Costs Billions**
*According to figures published by the Centre for Policy Studies, the average couple with two children will cost the State £80,000 over ten years if they split up. Enabling single parents to raise children alone cost the State between £71,000 and £123,000 over the same period. Bob Rowthorn, Professor of Economics at University of Cambridge, says, "The long-term cost of subsidising family break-up is unsustainable. It is time to switch resources towards a system that encourages and supports two-parent families to ensure their survival." With one in three children expected to experience divorce the potential cost to the Exchequer could run to billions of pounds. (*The Times* - 22/06/2005)*
- **Benefits couple to divorce – to get bigger council house**
*A couple with 10 children who receive nearly £28,000 a year in benefits are set to divorce so they can get a second free house from the state. Robert Bentley, 47, lives with his second wife Nichola, 27, in a three-bedroom semi-detached home in a smart suburb of Bristol, paid for by the taxpayer. But as the council has so far refused to pay for a bigger house for his enormous family, he believes the only option is to undergo a sham divorce so that they will be re-housed. Now the couple have complained that their three-bedroom housing association property in Bradley Stoke, Bristol, is too small. They have begged South Gloucestershire Council for a larger house - and are to split up to get re-housed. Mr Bentley, who hasn't worked since 2003, said: 'I don't think it's too much to ask. This house is just too small for all of us and the children are always arguing. 'I've got depression and it's too much to cope with. Myself and Nichola are now getting a divorce because we can't manage. 'I've been told the only way to get moved to the top of the list is if I declare myself homeless.' (*Divorce Online*, 6/7/2006)*
- **Intergenerational impact of divorce**
Children of divorced parents often bitterly vow not to repeat the same mistakes. They want to avoid putting themselves and their own children through the pain that comes from the dissolution of a marriage. But, according to assistant professor Nicholas H. Wolfinger in the University of Utah's Department of Family & Consumer studies, these children's aspirations face unfavourable odds: "Growing up in a divorced family greatly increases the chances of ending one's own marriage, a phenomenon called the divorce cycle." Wolfinger has spent a decade studying the marriages of children from divorced homes in America. These children are more likely to marry as teens, cohabit and marry someone who is also a child of divorced parents. And they are also one-third less likely to marry if they are over age 20. Wolfinger's research also suggests that if one spouse comes from divorced parents, the couple may be up to twice as likely to divorce. Spouses who are both children of divorced parents are three

times more likely to divorce as couples who both hail from intact families. (2-in-2-1 UK Marriage News - 18/07/2005)

- **Leading head teacher attacks selfish divorcees**

Graham Able, headmaster of Dulwich College told the Headmasters and Headmistresses Conference that some couples were pursuing their "self-gratification no matter what the cost to others". He said "Unfortunately there is more interest in and concern for individual rights than there is in our duties to one another, to society at large and especially to our children". "While there are many examples of single and divorced parents who give excellent support to their children, we all know that those growing up under the same roof as their mother and their father are much less likely to require additional pastoral care at school". He said that children from broken homes can suffer in their schoolwork and behaviour and find it more difficult to relate to other pupils and adults. New official figures show that divorce rates rose sharply last year. Almost 150,000 break-ups were recorded in 2002 – 4,000 more than the year before and nearly 7,000 up on 2000. He said that an absent or "non-existent" father was a major issue for adolescent boys. The Office for National Statistics have revealed that last year about 150,000 children – a quarter of them under 5 – were left in broken homes due to divorce. Further ONS data shows that 1.33% of all marriages ended in divorce within 2002, up from 1.30% in 2001 and 1.29% the year before. (Daily Mail 7.10.03)

- **Soaring divorce levels**

Figures from the Office for National Statistics show that more than 40% of marriages are now likely to break up within the lifetime of the marriage. They also show that couples are splitting up earlier. Divorce within ten years of marriage was 3% in 1951, 7% in 1961, 17% in 1971, 23% in 1981 and 41% now. The highest number of marriage breakdowns occur among men aged 30-34 and women aged 25-29 or where there had been a pre-marital conception. A total of 147,735 divorces were granted in England and Wales last year, a rise of 4,000 on 2001. A growing number of children are affected by family breakdown – 149,335 children under 16 experienced their parents divorcing in 2002. Two-thirds of fathers never see their children within two years of divorce. (Daily Telegraph- 29/08/2003)

6. **Undermining the marriage-based family**

- **Government abolishes distinction between marriage & friendship in forces**

The government is introducing a system under which the girlfriends of servicemen killed in action will be paid an ex-gratia payment equivalent to the pension a widow would receive. This follows a decision to give £250,000 to the girlfriend of an SAS trooper killed in Sierra Leone in 2000. Ministers are now proposing to make ex-gratia payments on a case by case basis following consultations with focus groups set up within the services. (Daily Telegraph,- 02/03/2003)

- **Further government attack on marriage**

Unmarried and homosexual partners of Armed Forces personnel are to be given the same rights of compensation and pensions as widows. As part as a major revamp of benefits, servicemen and women will simply have to pre-register their girlfriend or boyfriend to qualify. Ivor Caplin, Minister responsible, defended the proposals saying that they "reflect modern practice". (Daily Telegraph 16.9.03)

- **Generational effects of broken homes**

Children from broken homes face far greater risks in all major areas of life They are more likely to experience hardships – whether low income, unemployment, poverty, or homelessness. They are more likely to experience problems – whether to well-being, health or crime. They are more likely to be unsuccessful – whether at school, at work or in relationships They are more likely to avoid marriage and more likely to divorce if they do marry (O'Neill, 2002, The Fatherless Family, London. CIVITAS)

7. **Homosexuality – some problems**

- **Lesbian wins the right to share former lovers child**

In a landmark legal battle Lord Justice Thorpe has reversed a ruling made at Telford County Court last November that denied joint residence to a 46-year-old woman whose partner conceived 2 children now aged 6 and 3 by artificial insemination while they were together.

The relationship ended in May 2003. Lord Thorpe has said the children would benefit from allowing shared parental responsibility between the former parents and added "What has been said about the importance of fathers is of equal application in same sex partners". The appeal judge said judicial recognition of family diversity was needed as the family had evolved in modern society. *The Times* - 08/04/2005

- **Collapse of civil partnership after twelve weeks**

A lesbian couple, Liz King and Daphne Ligthard, registered their civil partnership in February under the Civil Partnerships Act which came into force in December. The couple are separating after Miss King said she no longer loved Miss Ligthard. The relationship collapsed when one of the partners took an interest in another woman. Lawyers say that under the law the couple cannot terminate their partnership until it has been in existence for at least a year. "Adultery" is not recognised as grounds for ending a civil partnership although 'unreasonable behaviour' can be cited. (*Daily Telegraph* 19.6.06)

- **Lesbians abused adopted children**

Lesley Broughton, 31 and Lynne Sheridan, 30 were the first lesbians to adopt under a trial scheme set up by Bolton Social Services. Over a two and half year period they subjected two girls aged 7 & 9 to a series of punishments involving both physical violence and verbal abuse. They were hit and punched and forced to swallow washing-up liquid until they vomited. Throughout the period of abuse Broughton and Sheridan were receiving glowing reports from social workers about their relationships with the girls. The family's next door neighbour logged incidents of abuse and eventually reported the couple to the police. They both pleaded guilty to two counts of cruelty and two administering obnoxious substances. Sheridan further admitted obtaining property by deception and evasion of liability by deception in relation to benefits. She was given a 240-hour Community Punishment Order, her accomplice one lasting 150 hours. Both were banned from working with children. *Daily Telegraph* - 11/03/2004

- **Gay couple charged for abusing their foster children**

Wakefield Council placed young boys in the care of two homosexual men who abused them. A mother of 8 year old twins raised concerns about them with Social Services after finding a photograph of one of the boys as he used the lavatory, but the authorities chose to take no action after accepting that the two men had been 'naive and silly' for taking the photograph. They started abusing their charges three months after this incident and the offences continued over an eleven month period. Ian Wathey, 41, was jailed at Leeds Crown Court for five years after being convicted of four counts of sexual activity with a child and one offence of causing a child to watch sexual activity. Craig Faunch, 32, received a six year prison sentence after he was found guilty of five charges of engaging in sexual activity with a child and two of taking indecent photographs of a child. Judge Cahill told Faunch "Once you realised Social Services were going to take no action in respect of the photos that had been found, and believed your ridiculous story about why you had taken it, you went on to abuse others in your care, believing yourself to be safe from the authorities". She found it 'incredible' that the photographs had not been reported to police in time to possibly prevent the abuse. Their victims included a 14 year old boy with Aspergers Syndrome who had a mental age of 7 and was forced by Wathey to watch explicit gay pornography. The judge said another youngster, with a "very troubled background" was only in their care for a few weeks before being abused by Faunch. The police were eventually called into investigate the couple after one of the boys told a woman he had been touched by one of the men. Kate Penrose, the senior Crown Prosecutor for West Yorkshire said "As foster parents they took vulnerable children into their home and should have provided them with a stable loving environment. Instead of being treated with kindness and dignity, they were subjected to abuse at the hand of two people who were responsible for their safety and wellbeing". Kitty Ferris, Wakefield Council's Service Director for Children in Need, said "Although correct procedures were carried out at every stage, the Service has reviewed its internal procedures to identify what lessons should be learned". (*Daily Telegraph* 24.6.06)

- **Christians penalised**

A couple were turned down as foster parents for a 15 year (heterosexual) girl when they said that they would not feel able to encourage a homosexual lifestyle because of their Christian faith. Another couple were accepted as adoptive parents and to the delight of Social Services accepted three brothers who no one else wanted. But when they made reference to their Christianity on their form, they were suddenly told the boys were in demand after all. This was despite the fact that 91% of adopters in a 1998-99 study claimed to be Christians. Patricia Morgan studied the outcome of children being brought up by homosexual couples in

her 2002 book "children as trophies" and found that children suffer socially, educationally and emotionally when brought up by only one sex. Even pro-gay studies show that between 8 and 33% of children with homosexual parent subsequently embrace a homosexual lifestyle (compared with less than 4% of the population as whole). Some 40% of the sons of lesbian mothers display mainly feminine qualities and 50% of their daughters mainly masculine qualities (it is none among children of heterosexual mothers). 84% of the public still oppose the adoption of children by homosexual men. (Anne Atkins, writing in the Daily Express 5.10.04)

8. Undermining parents

- **Father concerned about son's drug habit taken to court**

Mark Bishop, approached the mother of one of his son's best friends to voice concern that both seemed to be using drugs. He was taken to Reading Crown Court and charged with harassment. Mr. Bishop said he simply tried to share his concerns with the mother of his son's friend. He said he had found evidence that his son, then 15, was using drugs and when confronted the boy admitted using cannabis with his friend, then aged 16. He said "My concern was that cannabis could lead to the pair getting their hands on heroin or ecstasy". He knew that young people in the area of Bracknell where they lived used drugs and a friend's son had died from taking them. He had contacted his son's school and the police and he made a citizen's arrest when a boy arrived at his home asking for money for drugs sold to his son. He was acquitted at Reading Crown Court. He said "This case should never have come to court. For more than 14 months my family and I have had to face up to the real possibility that I could be taken away and thrown into prison". Liam Rose, a friend of his son Aaron, admitted at the trial that he regularly smoked cannabis with Aaron. (Daily Telegraph - 19/08/2003)
- **Parents have "no right to know"**

Pro-life groups have unanimously condemned this week's High Court ruling denying parents the right to know if their daughters under 16 are being advised on having an abortion. Doctors or health workers treating young girls for sexually transmitted diseases or contraception, will also not need to inform parents. LIFE said it has "deep unease" about the verdict, calling it "yet another defeat for the family" and a victory for those seeking to drive a "wedge between parents and children". Spokeswoman Michaela O'Sullivan added: "For years now an arrogant elite of self-appointed reproductive health experts have been steadily undermining the family, despite the wealth of evidence demonstrating that married families are the best arena for bringing up children. This out of touch attitude was perfectly demonstrated by Nathalie Lleven of the FPA earlier in the hearing when she described as "out-dated" the idea that parents usually know what is best for their own children". (Catholic Times - 29/01/2006)
- **Schoolgirl's abortion arranged behind family's back by health 'outreach' worker**

A so-called 'School outreach worker', with no medical training, regularly visits schools to give sex training as part of the national Teenage Pregnancy strategy. Employed by the Mansfield Primary Care Trust she arranged an abortion for Melissa Smith (14) without her family's permission or knowledge. She had been provided with the pill by a local Family Planning Clinic and had met the worker who gave sex education lessons in Melissa's school once or twice a week. When Melissa and her mother talked they decided to keep the baby, but the doctors told them that the foetus would have suffered irreparable damage from the pill and the termination was completed. Her mother, Maureen, was horrified and appalled when she discovered what had happened and felt that she had effectively been stripped of her parental rights. She said "When my daughter had an appendix operation last year I had to sign two consent forms, yet no one thought it necessary to tell me about this. Who decides that I have no right to know that my 14 year old child is pregnant and to help her reach a decision, but that a young outreach worker who hardly knew her does?" Melissa was a pupil at the Brunts School in Mansfield. Daily Mail - 14/05/2004

9. Sex Education – the downside

- **Children to be taught about oral and anal sex**

Children as young as 13 are being advised on oral sex, anal sex, orgasms and being good in bed in a booklet published by the Family Planning Association (FPA). Entitled 'Love, Sex and Relationships' the booklet is aimed at 13-16 year olds although the legal age of consent is 16. It is being distributed to schools and youth groups. Anne Wayman, the FPA's Chief Executive said the booklet gave clear "impartial" advice to young people who wanted more information

about emotions, sexuality and relationships. The booklet advises teenagers how they can tell when they are ready to have sex and contains cartoon characters saying "I like to touch myself" or "I like to dress up as a girl" and "Does my crotch look bigger than this". In the section on oral sex it says "Many people enjoy it; others are not interested. Often called a 'blow job' when done to a man and 'going down' when done to a woman". Another section on anal sex says "many gay men never have anal sex. You can be straight, gay or bisexual. Some people enjoy it; others aren't interested". Another part of the booklet poses the question "How can I be good at sex?" it says "no one is born sexually experienced and most of the fun is in learning. Talk to your partner. Ask what they like". Miss Wayman said "Young people are getting a huge amount of information about sex all the time. They need accurate information before they become sexually active. Regarding the problem of teenage pregnancy, Beverley Hughes who is the Children's Minister said she was virtually powerless in trying to solve the problem. (Daily Telegraph - 10/06/2005)

- **Sex education normalises sexual activity in young people**

A newly released sex education manual for children aged 13 to 16, put out by the UK's FPA (Family Planning Association), is being harshly criticized by pro-family groups as being very inappropriate for children. The booklet includes information on how to perform various sexual acts including anal and oral sex, and includes a chapter titled, "How can I be good at sex?" One example found in the chapter explains, "No-one is born sexually experienced, and most of the fun is learning. Talk to your partner. Ask what they like. Be aware of their feelings as well as your own pleasure." The booklet encourages children to explore their homosexual attractions, and contains details on masturbation. The manual also details where a child could get abortifacients like the morning-after and birth control pills without their parents knowledge or consent.

(Lifesite.net News, 10/6/2005 see <<http://www.lifesite.net/ldn/2005/jun/05061004.html>>)

- **Is sex really what 11-year old children want?**

www.likeitit.org.uk is a website for teenagers about sex by Mary Stopes. To get a free 'condom card' you can fill out your details on this website and receive it through the post with information. Mary Stopes says that a survey by NOP and MSI of 1000 11-15 year olds shows that 66% are worried about getting HIV, 48% are worried about getting a good job, 39% are worried about being bullied, 46% are worried about parents splitting up. The Public Health Laboratory Service says that between 1991 and 2001 chlamydial infection has risen by 122% and 365% of women with the infection were under 20. Syphilis has risen by 207% and gonorrhoea by 35%. (The Catholic Herald 04.04.03)

- **Children's sex guide urges them to 'talk dirty'**

Coordination Group Publications have published a 64-page booklet for use in school classrooms to give pupils detailed descriptions of sex acts in a chatty dialogue. It reads "There is not accounting for taste. Not everyone likes oral sex. Not everyone likes ham and cheese sarnies either". It recommends "sexual touching, talking dirty face to face or on the phone, even sexy emails and text messages as a 'warm up' to having sex". It also goes into detail about penis size while in other sections provides graphic details about gay sex. The publication is used in numerous secondary schools for Personal, Social and health Education class (PHSE). (Daily Mail 13.2.06)

- **An example of Sex Education**

In an open letter to John Clare of the Education section of the Daily Telegraph, an English secondary school teacher wrote the following:

"If you think what follows is awkward for a family newspaper, consider what it's like for me, a middle-aged English teacher, who is required to teach "personal, social and health education" to 12-year-olds at a secondary school in Sussex. I'm instructed to base one lesson on a list of 10 statements that the pupils have to rate on a scale of one to 10 "with 10 being really serious". The statements include: "My friend has given her boyfriend a blow-job; my friend has snogged her female friend; my friend snogged his male friend; my friend has had unprotected oral sex; my friend has had unprotected anal sex; my friend had her friend's older brother come on to her and force her into having sex." The approved materials for another lesson require the pupils to match a list of words and phrases with the correct definition. Among these are: "Mutual masturbation – people use their hands to stimulate the other person; dam – latex sheet to cover female genitals in oral sex; finger cot – latex finger glove to cover finger in digital sex; digital sex – when a finger penetrates the vagina or anus; orgasm – the climax of sexual activity." The official aim is to teach pupils "as they develop a sense of sexual identity" that there are "different sexual orientations" and "different cultural norms in society

today in sexual relationships". Quite apart from the fact that I wasn't trained to teach any of this, and feel extremely uncomfortable doing it, should I really be required to introduce 12-year-olds to "a range of sexual lifestyles"?"

John Clare's answer was No. (*Daily Telegraph* - 16/11/2005)

- **Teachers 'should not tell pupils that sex outside marriage is wrong'**
Teachers have been warned not to suggest to ten-year-olds that sex before marriage is wrong. The Family Planning Association has said that such an attitude is 'judgmental' and primary school teachers should 'respect the diversity' of society when teaching about sex and relationships. The advice comes as the rates of STDs soar among teenagers. In a guidance leaflet aimed at teachers of children aged nine to ten, the charity said: 'To say that sex outside marriage is always wrong will inevitably contradict the experience of some pupils with regard to their own parents/carers' lifestyles.' Teachers should bear in mind that the lifestyles of some parents have to be taken into account 'regardless of the position adopted by the school'. MP Ann Widdecombe has said that children should be taught to save sex until they are married. 'I think the FPA are being profoundly irresponsible,' she said. 'They are saying sex before marriage is acceptable. Organisations like the FPA shouldn't be giving information to schools'. The FPA brochure called *How Much? How Soon?*, also tells teachers they should feel free to discuss gay relationships with under-tens, saying: 'talking about homosexuality does not constitute as "promoting" it.' (*Daily Mail* 17.4.04)
- **Corruption of children through sex 'education'**
The Family Planning Association has produced a teachers' guide on sex education (produced with lottery money), and it includes a booklet for girls which includes illustrations of masturbation. That guide called 'Girls Out Loud' has been widely criticised and the guide which is aimed at 12-16 year old girls encourages discussions about possible planks of society which include "everyone has the right to use pornography" and "there is no age of consent for sex, alcohol or driving"; "regardless of age, contraception is free and widely available" and "abortion services are free and widely available". (*Daily Mail* 15.11.04)

10. Teenage pregnancy and abortion – a huge problem

- **Government money fails to halt rise in teenage pregnancies**
Teenage pregnancies in England have risen by more than 800 in 12 months despite the millions of pounds spent by Government on strategies to reduce them. Latest figures from the Teenage Pregnancy Unit show pregnancies among under 18's rose from 38,439 in 2001, of which 46% were aborted, to 39,286 in 2002. Abortion statistics for 2002 are not yet available. Teenage birth rates in Britain remain the highest in Western Europe. One in every ten babies born in England is to a teenage mother. Professor David Paton of Nottingham University Business School said, "Since the start of the teenage pregnancy strategy in 1999 the Government has poured a lot of money into improving services such as family planning provision for young people. Unfortunately most of the research evidence suggest this sort of approach has very little impact on teenage pregnancy rates, compared to wider social factors such as educational achievement and poverty". A spokesman for the Department of Education and Skills, which oversees the Teenage Pregnancy Unit, said, "The marginal increase in teenage pregnancies highlights the importance of strengthening the implementation of our teenage pregnancy strategy". Asked what the point was of strengthening a strategy that did not appear to be working, the spokesman said, "It is a long-term strategy. We don't expect things to happen in a few years". (*Daily Telegraph* - 05/03/2004)
- **1000 abortions on girls of 14**
More than 1,000 girls aged 14 and under are having abortions every year, according to official figures reports the *Daily Mail*. The figure rose by eight per cent in only 12 months, and reinforces concerns that the Government is failing in its campaign to tackle the teenage pregnancy rate, which is the highest in Europe. The Government has pledged to halve pregnancies amongst under-18s by 2010, and £138million has been allocated since 1998 to fund the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, which involves making the morning-after pill, condoms and sex education more easily available. But studies show that teenage pregnancies are going up fastest in areas targeted by the unit, and sexual diseases amongst 16 to 19-year-olds have soared by 30 per cent since it was launched. Campaigners say the sharp rise in abortions also suggests that many schoolgirls who become pregnant could be having them terminated without their parents' consent or even their knowledge. (*Daily Mail* 21st February, 2005)

11. **Unhappy, worried, depressed and unruly young people**

- **Unhappiness among people in their early 30's**
A report entitled 'Seven Ages of Man and Woman' published by the Economic and Social Research Council, has found that the number of people in their early 30's who report feeling symptoms of depression and anxiety has doubled in just over a decade from 1 in 14 in the late 1980's to 1 in 7 today. The survey covered 17,000 born in 1970. Elsa Ferri, one of the authors of the report and a former senior research fellow at London University's Institute of Education found that family life among today's 30 year olds was characterised by "instability and diversity" with the incidence of "partnership breakdown" doubling since the late 1980's. Sunday Telegraph - 20/06/2004
- **Young people consumed by worries.**
The Young People in 2004 produced by the Schools Health Education Unit report surveyed 40,000 children aged 10-15 in 452 schools. A third of girls aged 10 to 11 admitted they were sometimes afraid to go to school because of bullying. Nearly 60 percent of 14 to 15 year old girls and more than half of 12 and 13 year olds were unhappy with their weight. Between a third and a quarter of boys said they wanted to be slimmer. Half of older teenage girls and nearly a third of teenage boys reported taking painkillers at least once during the previous weeks. One in four 10 to 15 year olds expressed anxiety at being on the streets after dark describing their neighbourhoods as poor or very poor. A quarter of older boys and 18 percent of girls said they were certain or fairly sure their friends carried weapons for protection when going out. Three out of ten primary age pupils worried about family problems at home. A quarter of 14 and 15 year old girls were concerned about their health with half worrying about their appearance. Up to 60 percent of older pupils said they were fairly certain they knew somebody who took drugs. A quarter of 15 year olds said they had tried cannabis. One in ten primary age children rising to a quarter of boys said they had drunk alcohol in the past seven days with some claiming to have consumed spirits such as vodka and whisky. A quarter of 13 year olds and up to 45 percent of pupils in year 10 said they too had had an alcoholic drink in the past week. Up to half said their parents always knew about it. The report said that parents often argued that they were teaching their children how to drink responsibly. One in five older girls said they had not eaten lunch the day before. 17 percent said they had not had breakfast before coming. (The Times - 22/04/2005)
- **A generation of unruly, depressed teenagers**
According to a Nuffield Foundation Research Project conducted by the Institute of Psychiatry at Kings College, London and Manchester University, the number of 15 year olds suffering from anxiety and depression has increased by 70% since the mid 1980's. The research looked at three generations of 15 year olds in 1974, 1986 and 1999. The figures reported show substantial increases in those with behavioural and emotional difficulties. Nuffield Foundation stated "This is not a trend which is being driven by a small number kids who are getting worse, but a much more widespread malaise. Britain has one of the lowest rates of youngsters staying in education past 16". The study 'Times Trends in Adolescent Health' was published in the Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry. John Coleman, Director of the Study for Adolescence said "The changing nature of the family is central. Teenagers are affected by instability of family life which causes a lot of difficulty: it muddles up roles and there is not the support for young people as previously". These findings precede two Government initiatives – The Tomlinson report on Education for 14-19 year olds and the Green Paper on Youth, both of which are intended to respond to mounting concerns about the behaviour of young people. The change in behaviour is alarming. The percentage of 15 year old boys with behavioural difficulties has risen from 7.6% in 1974 to 12.1% in 1986 to 16.7% in 1999. The figures for girls were 6% in 1974; 8.6% in 1986 and 13.1% in 1999. The percentage of 15 year old boys with emotional difficulties was 7.8% in 1974; 7.8% in 1986 but 13.3% in 1999. The figures for girls were 12.8% in 1974; 13.4% in 1986 and 20.4% in 1999. (Daily Telegraph - 14/09/2004)
- **Broken homes fuel rising crime says judge**
Judge John Curran addressing an all-Wales High Sheriffs' Seminar in Cardiff said that the broken home was at the root of much of the crime he saw. The absence of a responsible male role model and the failure to stamp out disruptive behaviour was setting too many children on a course of under achievement and crime. The Judge, who has 40 years

experience in criminal law said “Society had to recognise that single teenage mothers often made bad parents because they were too young to raise children properly”. He predicated that unless more was done to encourage parents to stay together and teach them how to bring up a happy, well-adjusted child, the problem would only get worse. He said “A depressingly common theme of the early lives of offenders, as revealed by my own long experience and in the reports I read, is the separation of the parents at a very early stage of the child’s life”. He said the vast majority of separate parents did raise their children successfully – “the fact is, however, that all too many of those who end up in the criminal justice system do so against a background of an absent parent – usually the father”. He said “If there is one thing a boy needs in life, it is the interest and good example of a concerned and responsible father. So many offenders have not had that advantage and it cannot be a coincidence”. Judge Curran also condemned sex education which sometimes merely amounted to “an instruction manual in how to have intercourse”, drug taking and binge drinking. He said that cracking down on drug abuse and binge drinking were vital – “the children swigging lager from a can in the park or outside the local shop are prime candidates for the drift into crime. (Daily Mail 8.11.05)

12. Multi-partnering – the consequences

- Promiscuity leads to disease
There has been a massive increase in sexual promiscuity as measured by the number of lifetime sexual partners, a significant increase in risky sexual behaviour and a trend to earlier sexual intercourse. The key to reducing STIs will be addressing the underlying cause for the epidemic of STIs, which is mainly the steep increase in promiscuity.
The number of lifetime sexual partners had increased from 8.6 to 12.7 for men and from 3.7 to 6.5 for women over the past 10 years. Britons also have sex at an earlier age now. For over 55s the average age of losing their virginity was 19, within the 25-34 age group it was 16 and among the 16-24 year olds it is only 15. Over the past 10 years, there has been a “considerably higher rate of new partner acquisition among those younger than 25 years and those not cohabiting or married. These strong age effects are reflected in the substantially higher incidence of STIs in those younger than 25 years, compared with older people.” (The Observer, Sex uncovered, result of a poll of 1027 adults aged 16 or over; 27 October 2002; Johnson AM et al. Sexual behaviour in Britain: partnerships, practices, and HIV risk behaviours. National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles; Natsal 2000; Lancet 2001: 358; 1835-42)
- **GU clinic attendance doubles**
There has been a doubling in GU (genito-urinary medicine) clinic attendances over the past 10 years. A record attendance at GU clinics has failed to stop the dramatic increase in STIs. To increase access to GU services even further will not stop the epidemic of STIs.
Between 1991 and 2001, attendances at GU clinics in England, Wales & Northern Ireland rose from 669,291 to 1,332,910. At the same time, there has been a dramatic increase in all STIs. The government’s drive to further increase access to GU clinics will therefore not stop the epidemic of STIs. (Sexually Transmitted infections in the UK: new episodes seen at Genitourinary Medicine Clinics, 1991 – 2001; Public Health Laboratory)
- **Key factor in STIs**
The most important risk factor for contracting an STI is the number of lifetime partners, not whether a person does or does not use condoms. The benefits of increased condom use were more than offset by increased number of sexual partners.
A small increase in condom use has been observed over the past 10 years in the National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles. This survey concludes that, due to the increase in risky sexual behaviour the ‘benefits of condom use were offset by increases in reported partners’. To rely on condoms without emphasis on reducing casual sex – as the government seems to be doing – will not stop the epidemic of STIs. (Johnson AM et al.; Natsal 2000; Lancet 2001: 358; 1835-42. The Medical Institute for Sexual Health: Sex, condoms and STI’s – what we now know. 2002)

- **No 'safe sex'**
There is no such thing as 'safe sex' relying only on condoms. Even the consistent use of condoms only leads to a delay in contracting STIs, especially non-HIV STIs. The overwhelming majority of the population does not use condoms consistently. Inconsistent (i.e. less than 100%) use of condoms does not decrease the transmission of STIs. The true meaning of 'safe sex' is mutual monogamy between uninfected partners. Current UK policy does not promote this definition of 'safe sex' but instead relies on condoms, which are not as 'safe' as has been claimed.

There is no such thing as 'safe sex', there is however only sex between safe partners. The National Institutes of Health, USA and The Medical Institute examined condom effectiveness for STIs. While there is good evidence that "always condom use, i.e. 100% of times" reduced the risk of HIV, gonorrhoea, syphilis and chlamydia transmission, there is insufficient evidence that condoms were effective in reducing transmission of many other STIs including human papilloma virus, which is associated with cervical cancer, genital warts, herpes simplex, and others. The large majority of people do not use condoms consistently. Consistent condom use is observed in only 24% of men and 18% of women in the UK. Even a doubling of consistent condom use would still mean that less than half of the population would use condoms consistently. However, inconsistent condom use (i.e. less than 100% of times) has not been shown to reduce the risk of transmission of most STIs. 14% of couples experience an unintended pregnancy during the first year of "typical" use of condoms for contraception. It is surprising to note that – while everyone is aware that condoms may break or slip, resulting possibly in an unwanted pregnancy – the assumption is still that condom use equals "safe sex. More recent research shows that consistent condom use delays – rather than prevents – the transmission of STIs, especially non-HIV STIs. Regular twice weekly intercourse using condoms leads to a delay in contracting chlamydia, gonorrhoea and syphilis but is unlikely to prevent the transmission of these STIs. When using condoms, these STIs are transmitted within a few years rather than within a few months without using condoms.

(National Institutes of Health. Workshop summary: Scientific evidence on condom effectiveness for sexually transmitted disease prevention; 2000. The Medical Institute for Sexual Health: Sex, condoms and STI's – what we now know. 2002. Johnson AM et al. Natsal 2000; Lancet 2001: 358; 1835-42.)

13. Learning from Uganda

- **A successful model to reduce STIs**
A country that, unlike the UK, has dramatically reduced STIs, in particular HIV, is Uganda. Among some groups, the reduction of HIV was up to 80%. The main reason for the success in Uganda was the reduction in casual sex rather than the promotion of condoms. In Uganda, HIV prevalence declined nationally from 21% to 9.8% between 1991–1998, continuing to fall to 6.4% among pregnant women. The most important factor in this decline is a decrease in non-regular partners by 65% during 1989-95. While condom use doubled (to ever-use of condoms of 23% in Uganda which is still lower than neighbouring countries) and delay of sexual debut also increased, the unique factor in Uganda, compared to other African countries, was the steep decline in multiple sexual relationships. Reduction in number of partners has a greater effect on preventing HIV infections than either condom use or treatment of STIs. Other countries in east and southern Africa that have committed greater resources and have implemented many elements of global policy, condom provision, treatment of STDs, media programmes, testing and counselling have seen HIV prevalence increase throughout the 1990s. Many of these countries have made progress in important areas e.g. South Africa has the highest rate of condom use and Botswana is advanced in terms of treatment, but they have not seen the same decline in HIV infection that is seen in Uganda.

(United States Agency for International Development: The 'ABCs' of HIV prevention. 'ABC' Expert Technical Meeting September 17, 2002; (available under www.usaid.gov/pop_health/aids/Publications) United States Agency for International Development: The 'ABCs' of HIV prevention. Press release January 2003. Green EC. Sexual partner reduction and HIV infection. Sexually Transmitted Infections 2000; 76: p145. Dr Daniel Low-Beer and Rand L Stoneburner: Behaviour and communication change in reducing HIV: is Uganda unique? African Journal of AIDS Research 2003, 2(1): 9–21.)

- **ABC: 'Abstinence, Be faithful, or use Condoms'**
Uganda promotes 'ABC' as the basis of sex and relationship education: ABC stands for 'Abstinence, Be faithful, or use Condoms', in that order of emphasis. It is not 'abstinence only'

or 'condoms only'. Condoms are needed if 'A' or 'B' fail. Rather than relying on failed policies such as the distribution of condoms without emphasising partner reduction or abstinence, Uganda adopted a successful campaign at modifying behaviour, mainly aimed at reducing casual sex. The subsequent fall in HIV cases has been dramatic.

'Recent data from Uganda and other countries where HIV prevalence has been reduced or stabilized suggest that an "ABC"-based approach can alter patterns of personal behaviour ... Successful prevention programs in places like Uganda, Senegal, and Jamaica have employed a multi-pronged approach to behaviour change, involving promotion of abstinence or delayed onset of sexual debut and fidelity/partner reduction, along with condom use especially for higher risk sexual encounters. By finding common ground among diverse political, religious, public health, and other constituencies, such an approach can facilitate a more concerted and unified prevention effort.' (United States Agency for International Development: The 'ABCs' of HIV prevention. Press release January 2003)

- **Government urged to follow ABC**

While we are aware of cultural differences, we urge the government to learn from the success of Uganda's balanced 'ABC' approach to sexual health and urge this approach to be adopted throughout the UK. A public health campaign aimed at modifying behaviour, with a predominant emphasis on reduction of casual sex, is the only measure that will stop the epidemic of STIs in the UK. To combat STIs with the currently adopted strategy will fail. The current UK policy on sexual health is based on the National Strategy for Sexual Health and HIV, (Department of Health 2001) and the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy in 1999. The government has been attempting to tackle high teenage pregnancy rates and increasing rates of STIs in the UK. The aim is to halve teenage pregnancy rates by 2010. The Teenage Pregnancy Strategy policy initiatives are very similar to those introduced by the Conservative Government in 1992 with the aim of halving the underage pregnancy rate by the year 2000. The National Strategy for Sexual Health does not promote the only evidence-based definition of safe sex, which is (apart from abstinence) mutual monogamy among uninfected partners. The National Strategy does not even mention the word marriage, even though the majority of the population – 83% - still considers monogamy and marriage as the preferred form of relationship. Reduction in casual sex does not even feature in the National Strategy for sexual health and HIV. The National Strategy is therefore doomed to fail, since it does not address the underlying problem, the dramatic increase in casual sex. (In a recent poll 83% of respondents aged 16 or over believed that monogamy is desirable. Source: The Observer, Sex uncovered. 27 October 2002; National Strategy for Sexual Health and HIV, Department of Health, 2001; (www.doh.gov.uk/nshs/bettersexualhealth.pdf))

- **Contrast between UK and Uganda**

The contrast between the UK approach and the Ugandan approach to sexual health can be demonstrated by graphs examining the prevalence of STIs in both countries over time. While in the UK, STI rates increase despite a National Strategy of sexual health, in Uganda, within a few years of adopting ABC to combat HIV, the rates of HIV fell. It is therefore obvious, that the current approach to sexual health has failed to stem the rise in STIs. Despite a massive increase in family planning clinics for underage girls and the distribution of the morning-after pill, there has been no significant change in the underage conception rate since 1975. However, access to family planning clinics and distribution of emergency contraception is being promoted in the National Strategy for Sexual Health and HIV and the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy (TPS) as measures to be taken to reduce teenage pregnancy. The aim of the current TPS is to halve teenage pregnancy rates by 2010. The TPS policy initiatives are very similar to those introduced by the Conservative Government in 1992 (following their Health of the Nation report) with the aim of halving the underage pregnancy rate by the year 2000. It is therefore unlikely that policies that failed in the 1990s suddenly become effective a decade later. Also of relevance is the Gillick Ruling when access to family planning by under 16s in England (but not in Scotland) was severely restricted for most of 1985 and which led to a temporary halt in the year-on year increase in teenage conceptions in England, but not in Scotland.

The failure of current policies shows a near tripling of the rates of chlamydia infections in 16-19 year olds and a significant increase in the under 16-year-olds over the past decade despite a sexual health strategy. (Professor D. Paton, Presentation, Attlee Suite, Portcullis House, House of Commons, 12th November 2003)

14. Developments endanger families

● Technology destroying family life

Technology is destroying traditional family life as young adolescents increasingly spend more time in their bedrooms playing their computer games, surfing the internet or watching television, videos and DVD's, a study by Mintel claims. 77% of children aged between 11 & 14 have a television in their room and 64% have their own DVD player or video recorder, it found. One in four also has a computer in his or her room. 66% play computer games in their rooms and at least one in four boys spends more than 15 hours a week playing with computer game consoles. The report concluded that a significant number of children are not experiencing family life. Three out of five 11-14 year olds say that everyone at home is free to get on with their lives and interests and 53% say that as long as they do well at school, they can do what they like. A similar proportion – 51% say they prefer spending time on their own. Jenny Catlin, a consumer analyst at Mintel said "Sadly, it does seem that in many cases modern technology has now replaced the family unit so that everyone does whatever they want, when they want, even if it means doing it on their own. (Daily Telegraph 13.8.04)

● Designer children proposed

Proposals published by the Human Fertility and Embryology Authority (HFEA) would allow couples to choose donated sperm and eggs to create their own designer child. Donors would be screened so that characteristics such as height, eye colour and intelligence (as well as sex) could be chosen. The purported aim is to match the donors as closely as possible to the couple wanting the child, as guidelines currently state, but the system is readily open to abuse. In America, donors are routinely screened for school and university grades, family medical history, mental state, personal profiles and family background, and physical traits including height, weight and colour of eye, skin and hair. The HFEA would also allow payments to donors. (The Times - 12/11/2004)

● Comparative evidence on child poverty

This study, part of the Joseph Rowntree Fund's "What will it take to end child poverty in the UK?" programme, reviews how other countries have tackled child poverty, and how the UK compares. The study uses international comparisons to help put the fight against child poverty in the UK in perspective, both by exploring how other countries have tackled the problem and by pointing to some underlying characteristics of child poverty distinctive to the UK. In particular it focuses on the effect of high levels of lone parent families (for which the UK is comparable with Sweden) and the effect of government redistribution on bringing families above the poverty line. Some of the findings include:-

- *After Sweden the UK has the highest proportion of children living in lone parent families in the EU15.*
- *It also has the second highest child poverty rate (after Portugal) for lone parents.*
- *This is mainly because the UK has the highest proportion of children in lone parent families who are not in employment.*
- *The UK also has the highest proportion of all children living in workless families.*
- *Workless families have a comparatively high child poverty risk in the UK (third highest after Portugal and Italy).*
- *The UK has a comparatively high risk of child poverty in large (4+ children) families – it is only higher in France, Italy and Portugal.*

Joseph Rowntree Fund, 6.7.2006 see <<http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/9781859354902.pdf>>

● IVF bungle gave boy the wrong father

A 13 year old boy has discovered that the man he always called his father was not related to him and that their assumed relationship arose from another fertility treatment mistake. The boy's five year battle for the truth ended in victory after the Family Division of the High Court ruled that "his father" since the divorce from his mother, should take a DNA test. This case follows one at a fertility clinic which resulted in a white couple giving birth to black twins when the wrong sperm was used. The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority set up in 1991 to regulate fertility clinics said that it had introduced new procedures in October last year. Clinics were required to double check and 'witness' the identification of eggs, sperm and the woman throughout the procedures. (Daily Telegraph - 23/08/2003)

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