



Tutors' Alliance Ltd. Press Release

Private Tutor Sentenced for Child Sex Convictions

Tutors' Alliance Warns Parents to be Vigilant when Employing a Private Tutor

On Friday 2nd July 2010, Ugochukwu Okorie was sentenced to seven years imprisonment at the Inner London Crown Court.¹ This private tutor was convicted of seven child sex charges on 2nd June 2010.

The victims, two girls aged 10 and 6, were tutored by Okorie until earlier this year when the elder of the girls revealed the abuse she had suffered at the hands of Okorie to an aunt. When police raided Okorie's home, they found over 1200 images of girls including one taken in a hotel room of Okorie with a 14 year-old girl he had sex with. The tutor who was born in Nigeria, had worked around the world but most recently at colleges in London as well as the family home of the two girls in Camberwell.

Okorie was found guilty of four counts of child assault by penetration, two counts of sexual assault and one count of possessing indecent images of children.²

The case raises serious questions about the way we protect children in the UK who receive lessons from a private tutor. Current research suggests that around 20% of UK pupils have had a tutor at some stage in their education, a figure which rises to a third in the London area.³ At present, there is no government regulation of the industry meaning anyone can set up as a tutor without the most basic of background checks.

The officer in charge of the Okorie case expressed concerns about children's safety. DC John Knox stated following the trial:

"This case shows the potential perils of home tutoring, whereby people who are not CRB checked, put their details on supermarket notice boards or through word of mouth and have access to very vulnerable children and become trusted by parents."⁴

Tutors' Alliance also believes that this situation leaves children vulnerable to risks from tutors such as Okorie. Tutors' Alliance is the professional membership organisation for tutors in the UK which has repeatedly campaigned for greater regulation of the private tuition industry, including compulsory CRB checks. All self-employed tutors who are members of Tutors' Alliance have Enhanced CRB or Disclosure Scotland certificates. In the absence of government regulation, Tutors' Alliance has developed the innovative Tutor Check, a report given to parents by tutors which details the tutor's qualifications, experience and credentials. The Tutor Check gives parents peace of mind that their tutor has been thoroughly vetted by an external organisation with expertise in private tuition.

¹ http://www.thisislocalondon.co.uk/news/8252081.LEWISHAM__Tutor_jailed_for_sexually_abusing_girls/

² Primary source, The Telegraph, "Parents warned to check private tutors' records after teacher's child sex convictions" 3rd June 2010.

³ IPSOS Mori Poll for the Sutton Trust, published June 2010.

⁴ Quoted in The Telegraph (n.1).



The recent announcement by Theresa May on the future of the Vetting and Barring Scheme has further highlighted the importance accorded to parents in ensuring that private tutors are fit to work with children. The government currently has no plans to make Enhanced CRB checks mandatory for private tutors, leaving parents to make their own checks on their tutor.

Tutors' Alliance founder and managing director, Valerie Kemp has given her reaction to the Okorie case:

“Tutors such as Ugochukwu Okorie are few and far between but the fact of the matter is that Okorie should have been prevented from becoming a tutor in the first place. Although Enhanced CRB certificates are not a fail-safe method of preventing sexual assaults like those which Okorie committed, by showing parents a certificate, to some extent, tutors are able to demonstrate their suitability. However, parents must be vigilant. Tutors' Alliance has developed a checklist which parents should use at interview stage to determine whether the tutor is appropriate for the needs of their child. The Tutor Check has been specifically designed to meet all the statements on the checklist and gives parents the reassurance that these checks have been independently carried out through a rigorous system.”

Tutors' Alliance advises parents to check the tutor's:

- Eligibility to work in the UK
- Enhanced CRB or Disclosure Scotland certificate
- Academic qualifications
- Previous employment and any other relevant training (child protection or first aid courses).
- Knowledge of the education curriculum
- Experience of working with children of a similar age to the pupil
- References.

Tutors' Alliance can obtain Enhanced Disclosures for their members and has a policy of renewing Enhanced Disclosures on an annual basis. Valerie Kemp says in relation to tutors:

“Sometimes parents are unaware that Enhanced Disclosures are available for private tutors through organisation such as Tutors' Alliance and are highly recommended. Tutors should show parents their certificate at the first meeting and be prepared to explain what it means. Tutors need to be aware of child protection issues involved in working on a one-to-one basis with a child in the home. The door should always be left open, it is advisable to have another adult in the vicinity and physical contact with the child should be avoided. The tutor-pupil relationship should be based on mutual trust.”

The Okorie case may be extreme but Tutors' Alliance hopes that it will raise awareness of the steps parents can take to protect their children and the lack of regulation in the private tuition industry.

Tutors' Alliance offers a wealth of information for parents looking for a tutor on their website, www.tutorsalliance.co.uk. For further information about Tutors' Alliance or the private tuition industry in general, please contact Valerie Kemp on 01224 433163 or by e-mail at valerie@tutorsalliance.co.uk.

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