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Christine Beddoe
Director, ECPAT UK
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27 August 2010

Dear Ms Beddoe,

R v Matthews

I write further to my letter of 14 July in relation to the above case, which has now been reviewed by the regional Complex Casework Unit.

The review established that there were 3 areas where failings had affected the outcome of this case. These can broadly be summarised as:

- Failure to record our advice in respect of the first contact with police and provision of the original letter of request on our computer system, which meant that there was a lack of an audit trail, leading to a lack of progression by the reviewing lawyer and managers;
- Lack of appreciation of the wider implications of mounting a complex prosecution involving victims and witnesses from abroad without specialist assistance from the regional Complex Casework Unit;
- Lack of guidance to prosecutors on our internal Infonet in respect of the potential delays and possible problems associated with letters of request to India and more generally in prosecuting cases where a number of witnesses are due to give evidence from abroad.

As a result of this review, the Chief Crown Prosecutor for Gloucestershire has provided guidance to his lawyers and managers across the South West that any similar requests for advice from the police should be referred to the regional Complex Casework Unit for their guidance and assistance on the steps required for a successful prosecution.

I have also ensured that the legal guidance on International Enquiries provided to all staff within the CPS has been substantially updated to ensure that the service we provide nationally is consistent our Core Quality Standards.

Thank you for raising this issue with me. Our responsibility to protect children both at home and abroad, in conjunction with our police colleagues, is one that the Crown Prosecution Service takes very seriously.

Yours

DPA

KEIR STARMER QC