

The logo for F.A.C.T. (False Allegations - Campaign for Truth) is displayed in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters on a black rectangular background.

FALSE ALLEGATIONS - CAMPAIGN FOR TRUTH

Falsely Accused Carers, Teachers and other professionals

<http://www.factuk.org/> PO Box 90, TODMORDEN, OL14 9BA Email: sec@factuk.org

OPEN LETTER to the Home Secretary, Secretary of State for Justice,
Director of Public Prosecutions, President of Association of Chief Police Officers,
Director General of the National Crime Agency (NCA)

29th November 2013

Dear Sirs,

Re: The hounding and murder of Bijan Ebrahimi

Most people will be aware of the circumstances surrounding the vigilante hounding and burning to death of the late Bijan Ebrahimi (See: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-25139185>). As his murderer and the accomplice have now been sentenced we feel it is appropriate to make some observations relating to this and other cases of false allegations and vigilantism for consideration at a parliamentary level and by the Ministry of Justice and Home Office and principal criminal justice services.

We write as committee members for FACT (Falsely Accused Carers, Teachers and other professionals), a voluntary organisation which supports and gives voice to wrongly accused professionals in positions of trust and their families. Some of our members have suffered jail sentences, others have been accused and either been found innocent of any crime or had charges dropped before any court appearance. All have suffered loss in one way or another as a result of false accusations (e.g. physical or verbal abuse, loss of employment, stress, marital breakdown, financial loss, etc.). An increasing number have been victim to false accusation without any charge brought by the police and have still suffered. We are aware of people who have been fired or 'retired' without any chance of appeal when they have only been subject to an internal enquiry by their employer (i.e. not the police). Justice for, and the 'human rights' of, an accused adult are often put on hold when it comes to cases of alleged child abuse. The alleged victim becomes simply "*the victim*" and "the accused" is identified from the start as "*the perpetrator*" or worse, in the mind of the public and the press, "*a paedophile*". This is certainly demonstrated in the terrible events surrounding the murder of Bijan Ebrahimi. One could say similar things

about actor Michael Le Vell, who continues to suffer persecution despite being found innocent of any crime. It seems one is guilty of child abuse purely by reason of accusation.

What particularly disturbs us in the reported comments made by police spokesmen and some politicians is the 'suggestion' that the tormenting and murder of Mr Ebrahimi was not justified because he wasn't a paedophile. In other words, if he were it would have been less of a crime to kill him. This cannot be tolerated in a civilised society. Yet the hysteria surrounding the issue of child abuse whipped up by the press and encouraged by some politicians, leading child protection charities and those in the safeguarding industry may lead to this conclusion. There has been a cultural shift towards suspension of disbelief whenever allegations of abuse are made, which is good for genuine victims but which makes it far too easy to criminalise innocent people based on rumour, prejudice and unwarranted suspicion.

For this reason we are writing this open letter to you to question whether this subject and area of law is being handled with sensitivity and even-handedness, so that justice is achieved for real victims and so that the falsely accused are able to clear their names and return to normal life without stain on their character. We should like to see an independent investigation into the way child abuse accusations are handled and reported - by safeguarding professionals, the police, lawyers, the media and the Home Office.

The murder of Bijan Ebrahimi is an extreme example of the kind of persecution and prejudiced justice and breach of due process that affects many people. In the present climate of suspicion and fear about child abuse and sexual crimes, we trust that this horrendous crime will serve as a wake-up call and a warning.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Parry *on behalf of the* **National Committee of FACT**
(Falsely Accused Carers, Teachers and other professionals)