

12 March 2001

### **Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy**

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the membership of the task force formed to study Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy; and if he will make a statement. [146327]

**Mr. Hutton:** We have not formed a task force to study Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy.

However, the Griffith's review (Review of the Research Framework in the North Staffordshire National Health Service Trust) recommended that the Department convene an expert and inter-disciplinary panel to review methods of identification of children who have either had illnesses induced or fabricated by their carer. In response to this recommendation, which the Government accepted, a steering group has been formed to develop draft guidance for public consultation. This guidance is being developed within the framework of our interagency guidance on child protection "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (1999).

The group is chaired by Mr. Bruce Clark, a senior official of the Department, and in addition to the external members listed, comprises administrative officials, together with medical, nursing and health advisers, from the Department of Health, the Department for Education and Employment, the Home Office and the National Assembly for Wales.

The external members include:

Dr. G Adshead--Royal College of Psychiatry

Ms I Charles-Edwards--English National Board of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting

Mr. J Fox--Association of Chief Police Officers

Ms S Hensman--Royal College of Nursing

Ms D Kinnair--Community Practitioner and Health Visitors Association

Ms S Smallman--United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting

Dr. D Sowden--Royal College of General Practitioners

Mr. A Webb--Association of Directors of Social Services.