



PRESS RELEASE

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Lewisham Islamic Centre responds to articles On the fostering story

We have read with interest the story unfolding before us about a Christian child who was placed in the care of a Muslim family. The suggestion was that this was inappropriate because the child should have been placed with a family from the same cultural and religious background. Navigating through all the misinformation created by the usual propagandists of deceit and hate, it transpires now that the child was only temporarily in the care of the Muslim family pending a successful assessment for her to be placed in the care of her grandmother, who unbeknown to the Islamophobes, is herself a Muslim.

This really is a non-story and another glaring example of “dog-whistle” Islamophobia, where any event involving Muslims, however innocuous, becomes a national story entirely fabricated or spun to the depths of the gutter to engender ill feeling towards Muslims and Islam. This hysteria is underpinned by a warped narrative that we must be suspicious of Muslims and always view them through the lens of national security. Opportunities open to all other communities are turned into an issue of a secret agenda when concerning the Muslim community. For example, if a Muslim seeks to become a school governor, then there's a potential “Trojan horse threat”; if a Muslim seeks to enter into local government and politics, the “entryism” card is used; if you are a Muslim taxi driver, then you are marred by links to grooming gangs and if you seek recourse through the legal system, then you must be engaging in “law fare”.

What makes this “story” even more ludicrous is the despicable attempt to link Imam Shakeel Begg to its falsity. It is correct that the Lewisham Islamic Centre hosted an event last year on the 'Importance and Need of Foster Carers in the Muslim Community' in partnership with Network Recruitment Solutions (NRS), who are responsible for the recruitment and assessment of Foster Carers for Lewisham. The untold societal good of hosting and promoting fostering within the Muslim community is a thing not worthy of the slightest acknowledgement or commendation

by Islamophobes. “An assault against reason”, succinctly put by Al Gore. Clearly this fostering event at LIC is unrelated in any way to the story in question. However, with the spreading of misinformation and fake news, scraping the bottom of the barrel to achieve their objectives – photoshopping veils unto unveiled Muslim women; fabricating quotes from a so-called anonymous social security supervisor – is wholly unsurprising for the likes of The Times, The Telegraph and The Daily Mail.

Tower Hamlets Council responded to the articles, “While we cannot go into details of a case that would identify a child in foster care, there are inaccuracies in the reporting of it”, a statement which sums up and is to be found in the wake of the journalism of the aforesaid papers.

Whilst the uproar surrounding the story centred on the fact that a White, Christian child was placed in the temporary care of a non-white Muslim family, the irony of course is that low representation of Muslim foster carers results in the greater likelihood of Muslim children being placed with non-Muslim families with increased risk of the loss of the Muslim child’s religious and cultural identity, to the muted disquiet of the concerned media outlets and their eager contributors from The Henry Jackson Society.

We understand that these organisations resent and gnash their teeth at the ongoing success of the Lewisham Islamic Centre and its continued status as a real pillar in the community. We truly understand their frustration and resentment and thank them for giving the Centre and its webpage national coverage. We also use this opportunity to remind Muslims able to offer foster care to make the intention in these blessed days of Hajj and magnify their status in the eyes of Allah (God) the Almighty, remembering Prophet Muhammad’s (peace be upon him) statement about “the one who cares for an orphan and myself will be together in Paradise like this,” (holding his index and middle fingers together).