



Blaze a trail The Jarl Squad, a ceremonial team of Vikings, gather at their longship for the Up Helly Aa festival in Lerwick, which celebrates Shetland's Norse heritage

School lectures tell teenage pupils that abortion is like a Nazi crime

Kat Lay Health Correspondent

Pupils in hundreds of schools are being told that abortions are like the crimes of the Nazis by speakers said to be “peddling junk science”, *The Times* can reveal.

Schoolgirls are taught by campaigners from anti-abortion groups that the procedure will render them infertile, depressed and suicidal.

Experts have launched a “fact-based” guide to abortion, backed by public health chiefs, which they have called on schools to adopt. The guide, by the Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare (FSRH), the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and education groups, was created in response to concerns about children being exposed to speakers who push anti-choice rhetoric and spread incorrect information about the risks.

One lesson plan by the anti-abortion Christian charity Lovewise, seen by *The Times*, compares abortion in cases of

“medical abnormality” to the crimes of Nazi Germany against disabled people.

Lisa Hallgarten, head of policy at Brook, a sexual health charity for the under-25s, said: “Only this week I went into a school to deliver a lecture about pregnancy choices and abortion to find the school had invited an anti-abortion speaker the week before. The teacher herself had concerns about whether the information that had been given out was accurate. I was invited to dispel the myths and I don't really think that is a great model for delivering education.”

Slides produced by Lovewise claim that abortions can cause “infertility, especially due to infection, and premature labour in subsequent pregnancies”. They say that women who have had an abortion are “up to three times more likely to get depressed” and “seven times more likely to commit suicide”.

A 2013 report suggested that at least 9 per cent of schools, including academies and comprehensives as well as

Catholic schools, had used speakers from anti-abortion groups to teach subjects including science, religious studies, and sex and relationship education.

Katherine O'Brien, of the charity the British Pregnancy Advisory Service, said: “It is of course absolutely right that pupils are able to explore different views on abortion within the context of an ethical debate. However, it is not acceptable for organisations to peddle junk science within the classroom to advance their own ideological agenda.”

She said that the Lovewise presentation was highly inaccurate and could “have a negative impact on pupils' health and wellbeing”.

The new guide, produced for use in schools and backed by Public Health England, includes a myth-busting section, which reassures pupils that abortion does not result in future infertility, does not increase the risk of miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy or a low placenta, and does not cause mental ill-

ness. It adds that abortion does not increase the risk of developing breast cancer, another myth.

Sex education lessons will be a legal requirement in English secondary schools from 2020. Draft statutory guidance says that schools should provide “medically and legally accurate, impartial information” on abortion.

Tracey Masters, of the FSRH said: “It is incredibly important for young people to be told truth, to be given information and then allowed to work out their own personal beliefs. Those two things are not incompatible.”

A Lovewise report said presenters had delivered about 110 sessions last year; some will have covered other topics. Liz Jones, assistant director of Lovewise, said: “The resource is currently being reviewed and updated.” She claimed that abortion complicated by infection may lead to health problems and that some studies had cited emotional problems after abortion.

Children in polluted areas ‘more likely to get depression’

Chris Smyth

Children living in polluted areas are up to four times as likely to develop depression, an exploratory study has found.

Although the study cannot prove cause and effect, the data offers some of the first hints that traffic fumes might lead to mental health problems in vulnerable people.

Air pollution has long been known to cause heart and lung problems and evidence is mounting that it might lead to

a range of other diseases by causing chronic tissue inflammation, intensifying calls for more government action.

A study of 284 children in London found that the quarter exposed to the highest levels of pollution were several times as likely to develop depression by the age of 18. Helen Fisher of King's College London, who led the study, said it “provides us with initial clues that air pollution may be associated with later mental health problems as well as physical health problems”.

Larger studies are now planned to

pin down the link, reported in the journal *Psychiatry Research*. No connection between pollution and mental illness at the age of 12 was found, but Dr Fisher argued “it could be that it requires years of exposure before there are sufficient biological effects to lead to the development of depression”.

She said that it was plausible that pollution could damage the developing brain. “There is an increasing body of research that inflammation in the brain is linked to the development of depression, and that fine air pollutant parti-

cles have been shown to pass through the blood-brain barrier and lead to increases in inflammation in the brain.”

Despite efforts to take account of wealth and class, such studies struggle to control such factors completely, and this study was not able to tell if noise pollution contributed to the effect.

Daniel Maughan, of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, said: “We welcome this new research and encourage further studies looking at the impact of air quality on other age groups and other mental health conditions.”

Quintagram® No 287

Solve all five clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Steal, pinch (6)

— — — — —

2 Prize (6)

— — — — —

3 Formulate (a document) (4,2)

— — — — —

4 State of northwest India (6)

— — — — —

5 Gymnastic manoeuvre (8)

— — — — —

A	A	A	A	B	B	C	D
D	E	E	F	F	I	I	J
K	L	L	N	P	P	P	P
R	R	R	R	U	U	W	W

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Open jail for baby killer

A man who suffocated his three baby children in Staffordshire is to be moved to an open prison. Simon Smith was jailed for a minimum of 24 years in 1996 but told by the judge that he should serve life. Rachel Playfair, mother of Lauren, aged six months, criticised the Parole Board's recommendation that he be moved. “He's only 50, so he can father another child. He is pure evil,” she told the BBC. The Parole Board said the Ministry of Justice would make the final decision.

Ecclestone family row

Bernie Ecclestone is suing his former son-in-law James Stunt over an alleged debt of £89,000. Mr Ecclestone's company wants the 37-year-old gold trader — who called the former Formula 1 boss a dwarf during his divorce from his daughter, Petra — to pay back cash it says it is owed over a deal to make souvenir coins, the *Daily Mail* has reported.

NHS neglected baby

Medical staff missed three chances to spot that a baby aged 15 months had sepsis. Evie Crandle died in April last year, two days after she was sent home from Whiston Hospital with painkillers. After an inquest in Liverpool, the assistant coroner ruled she had died from natural causes contributed to by neglect. The NHS has apologised.

Lawyers ‘hit landlords’

A law lecturer drove his car at his landlords, rugby tackled one and his wife, a lawyer, hit one of their friends with a metal pole, Southampton magistrates' court was told. Peter Orji, 43, of Brighton University, and Chinenye Orji were angry at being ordered to move out. They deny assault and using threats. The trial continues.

Father's plea to fugitive

The father of a woman who joined a drug gang after getting divorced has begged her to give herself up. Angela Davey, 38, admitted dealing cocaine at Norwich crown court in October then went on the run. She is thought to have become homeless after her marriage broke down. David Wilkes, 65, said: “She is a victim, and she is not the first.”