

DECIDE ON VACCINE THAT PRICKED CONSCIENCE OF SOME BELIEVERS

Public schools to measles jab

by PAUL FRANCIS
and SUSIE STEINER

evin McSharry, headteacher of St es Catholic High School in Orange Road, Burnt Oak, said the decision whether to accept the vaccination has left to the parents and very few had drawn.

The fact that as a school we accept the vaccine does not mean that we accept the original abortion," he said.

The tissue was taken from a foetus aborted 30 years ago and Mr McSharry said the remoteness of time was also a factor in the school's decision to accept the vaccine.

"Bishops have compared it to a person who was murdered and using that person's organs to help people in transplants," he added.

One girls' school, St Michael's Catholic Grammar in North Finchley, reported that a number of parents had asked for their daughters be withdrawn from the programme in the wake of the publicity over the vaccine's origins.

"We have had a number of parents asking for their daughters not to be vaccinated," said acting head Ursula Morrissey.

"We have given it a lot of thought but are following the teaching of the Catholic church, which says parents are the primary educators."

"It will be available but the right thing to do is let the parents make the decision," she added.

The debate had highlighted widespread disapproval of the use of foetal tissue to make vaccines, she added.

The immunisation of some 50,000 school children in Barnet got underway last week at Whitefield School in Cricklewood.

Withdrawn

Other Catholic schools reported few. If any, requests from parents for their children to be withdrawn.

And some criticised the decision by two leading Catholic public schools in the north of England to ban the use of the combined rubella and measles vaccine.

Public health chiefs defended the immunisation campaign this week and pointed out the vaccine was derived from a small number of cells from a single foetus aborted in 1966.

"The vaccine is highly purified and does not contain any foetal tissue," said Dr Maurice Sussman, Barnet's director of public health.

"There is no alternative source of rubella vaccine and to develop an alternative would take seven to ten years."



Get to the point: Barnet's vaccination programme arrived at Queenswell Junior School, Whetstone, on Tuesday

BRONWYN EVAN

Council's eruv legal bill tops £23,000 amid new opposition

BARNET paid more than £23,000 to the lawyer who represented it at the public inquiry into the eruv, the Times Group has learned.

The legal fees to barrister John Taylor QC totalled a massive £23,676 - amounting to some £4,000 for each day of the inquiry held last year.

The bill is likely to have made the inquiry the most expensive ever fought by the council. Officials' time in assessing the application, together with extensive public consultation, is thought to have pushed overall costs close to £100,000.

The setting up of the eruv, meanwhile, faces further delays.

Dr Jeffrey Segall, a longstanding opponent from Cricklewood, is trying to challenge in the High Court the Secretary of State's decision to allow the eruv, claiming the planning inspector failed to consider social harmony when he approved it.

Barnet's legal bill was so large that the former Conservative administration, whose decision to reject the eruv application led to the inquiry, was forced to cushion the blow on its planning budget with a one-off cash injection.

A council spokesman confirmed that the budget committee had agreed the extra allocation last year.

The largest part of Mr Taylor's bill was the £10,000 he charged to attend the

inquiry. But he also charged £6,250 for five 'refresher' sessions and £1,500 for advice on the case before the inquiry. With VAT, the bill totalled £23,676.25.

Councillor Jack Cohen, current chairman of Barnet's town planning committee and a supporter of the eruv, said: "The only people who seem to benefit from these situations are the lawyers."

"This is on top of the other costs involved in this application."

"It is a warning that when we look at applications we have to make decision's on planning merits - and those decisions have to be sensible ones."

News extra

Bubbly bursts

A BANK robber spent more than £1,000 on a night of champagne and prostitutes after the last in a string of armed raids that netted £55,000 - but was captured because his car containing evidence was clamped, the Old Bailey heard on Monday.

Steven Ifield, 25, of Ilford, was jailed for 14 years for firearms offence and seven armed raids including one at Midland Bank in Mill Hill on January 5, and one at Lloyds in Borehamwood on January 11. He denied all charges.

Four women jurors and a woman in the public gallery wept as he was sentenced.

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