

GlaxoSmithKline executive resigns as Ofsted adviser

By Tom Peterkin

Last updated: 5:26 PM BST 11/07/2008

A senior pharmaceutical executive has been forced to resign his position as an advisor to the schools inspectorate, just one month after he was appointed, because of alleged potential conflicts in the testing and use of drugs on children.

Paul Blackburn, the vice-president and financial controller at GlaxoSmithKline, was appointed to Ofsted shortly after the company won a contract to vaccinate 12 and 13-year-old schoolgirls against the sexually transmitted virus linked to cervical cancer.

Yesterday GSK said "unfounded allegations" were made to Ofsted and Mr Blackburn had been asked to resign by the schools watchdog.

It had been hoped that Mr Blackburn would bring private sector expertise to the public sector. His contribution had been praised by Ed Balls, the Schools Secretary.

But campaigners have claimed the cervical cancer vaccination programme would "normalize" childhood sex.

They also pointed to criticisms of GSK by the medicines regulator for belatedly reporting side-effects in adolescents of anti-depressants being tested.

An Ofsted spokesman said: "Paul Blackburn resigned as a non executive member of the Ofsted Board on 5th July. His resignation follows public concerns about the activities of his employer GSK.

"Paul did not want any negative press interest to detract from the excellent work of Ofsted and therefore resigned. As far as Ofsted is concerned the matter is now concluded."

Mr Blackburn said: "At Ofsted's request, I have resigned. This is very disappointing for me personally and I hope it will not dissuade others currently working in companies to consider roles with public bodies.

"I wish to make it clear that this decision should in no ways give credibility to the spurious allegations which have been reported regarding GlaxoSmithKline. These are

entirely without foundation and have been previously addressed by the company. Rather, it is my desire that the work of Ofsted continue unhindered by negative media attention."

Story from Telegraph News:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2286567/GlaxoSmithKline-executive-resigns-as-Ofsted-adviser.html>

Information appearing on telegraph.co.uk is the copyright of Telegraph Media Group Limited and must not be reproduced in any medium without licence.

If you require any further information on permitted use, or a licence to republish any part of the Site (or any Content), please email us at syndication@telegraph.co.uk, or contact us by telephone on +44 20 7931 1010, Facsimile: +44 207 931 2867.