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BRITAIN

## Taxpayers fund Internet guide to gay 'cruising'

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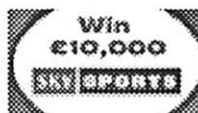
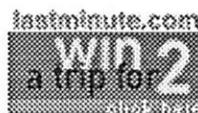
A LONDON Health Authority has been condemned for spending thousands of pounds on an Internet site that advises homosexual men on having sex in parks and public lavatories.

The Internet guide to "cruising and cottaging", funded by the Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham Health Authority, contains sexually explicit information and images, as well as details about the etiquette of cruising and what to do if caught.

The website, which was produced on the authority's behalf by Health First, a specialist health promotion agency, advises gay men that "having sex in a public environment can involve safety risks other than having sex in private" and recommends that cruisers avoid getting into cars with strangers or going to the top of tower blocks.

It also provides advice on how to avoid being attacked by "queer-bashers". "Having a cruising 'buddy' can be a good idea," the site states. "This could be someone you meet regularly at the cottage or cruising area or someone you take along. If trouble does occur in the area, this may be good for your safety and theirs." Cruisers are also advised to be considerate to local residents and are reminded that "groups of men loitering around late at night can be especially threatening to women and older people".

The site adds that cruisers are breaking the law by having sex in public. It also tells them to be "polite and co-operative" if caught by police and reminds them that, although required to give some details, they do



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not have to tell police about their job.

Colin Hart, director of the Christian Institute, said the site was effectively promoting homosexuality and should be banned. He said people would be horrified to learn that their taxes were funding "gay proselytism". He said: "We tracked down £1 million of this sort of expenditure by a number of health authorities in just three weeks. Clearly it is just the tip of the iceberg. This money would be better spent on health education."

Liam Fox, the Shadow Health Secretary, described the revelation as a return to the 1980s heyday of the loony Left and demanded that ministers investigate immediately. He said: "The health service is hard-pressed for cash and people in considerable stress and pain are waiting for life-saving surgery. This will add insult to injury. It is nothing to do with public health but everything to do with an unrepresentative politically correct fad. It seems the loony Left have anticipated the return of Ken Livingstone as mayor of London." Ann Widdecombe, the Shadow Home Secretary, also called for an urgent inquiry.

A spokeswoman for the health authority last night defended the site, saying it was designed to provide information to gay men about preventing the spread of HIV. She added that the authority had 2,140 people with HIV living within its boundary, representing one-eighth of all people in Britain infected with the virus.

Louis Levy, the acting director of Health First, said: "The development of the site was based on clear evidence that HIV-positive gay men were in need of the information that this site provides."

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