

Sex offenders barred from jobs near kids

A city district in Shanghai will permanently bar people convicted of sex-related offenses from entering professions that have close contact with juveniles. It's the latest effort to better protect minors from potential sexual assault.

People with records of rape, child molestation, organizing prostitution, introducing others to prostitutes or providing shelter for prostitution will be forbidden from working in schools, medical institutions, amusement venues, sports stadiums and libraries that have close contact with minors in Minhang district, the district's procuratorate said.

The ban, the first of such in the country, took effect on Friday.

The names and records of people with sexual offenses have been provided by the district's police department and prosecuting agency to all relevant institutions, and will be updated regularly to ensure that the information is accurate.

Su Wenying, a child protection officer at the China office of UNICEF, said the regulation is an effective approach to protect children.

"There has been research in some Western countries showing that pedophiles and those who could possibly sexually abuse juveniles are more inclined to choose industries with plenty of opportunities to get near minors," Su said. "It's essential to remove such people from areas for children."

She said applicants for jobs related to children in the United Kingdom and the United States—such as coaches or jobs in schools or children's hospitals—must be screened for past sexual offenses. The same rule applies to some international organizations specializing in children's issues.

She also praised the ban, which is the result of a five-month discussion among various government sectors in the district, including the prosecuting agency, the police, courts, education, civil affairs, sports and health.

"Protecting minors is not only the responsibility of law enforcement departments. It must combine the efforts of various social resources," Su said.

Song Yinghui, deputy director of the law school at Beijing Normal University, said the ban is worth extending to all regions in Shanghai, and even the whole country, to better establish a barrier to protect children from potential harm.

In November, the Minhang district people's court sentenced a male teacher from an educational institution where children take extra classes outside of school, to two years and six months in prison for molesting a girl during

private tutoring at his home in July last year.

The man, surnamed Qian, was also barred from all educational institutions in the city for three years after completing his jail term. It was the first time a sexual offender in the city was banned from an industry to protect minors.