

2014.11.25

4.7 Deputy J.A. Hilton of the Chief Minister regarding the status of the Joint Safeguarding Board:

Will the Chief Minister explain why the Joint Safeguarding Board is not on a statutory footing and detail what measures, if any, he intends to take to address this?

Senator I.J. Gorst (The Chief Minister):

May I ask my Assistant Minister with responsibility for safeguarding to answer?

Senator P.F. Routier (Assistant Chief Minister - rapporteur)

Work is being undertaken to review the legislative changes required to ensure compliance with the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Children, which was extended to Jersey earlier this year. This work will be finalised early in the New Year. At this point I will bring forward a range of legislative changes and the timeframe it will take, including placing the Joint Safeguarding Board on a statutory footing. In the meantime, a Memorandum of Understanding is in place and those members who had the opportunity to join us at the corporate parenting safeguarding meeting the other day heard the independent safeguarding chair say that it is an effective arrangement which is currently in place pending the development of the relevant legislation, which will be brought forward as soon as we can.

4.7.1 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

Supplementary question? The Safeguarding Board was set up several years ago and the Memorandum of Understanding was brought in because we did not have the legislation in place. Does the Minister not agree with me that a number of years have elapsed since then and we should have done a lot more?

Senator P.F. Routier:

The original Children's Safeguarding Panel, which was established... because we have only recently established the adult's one. When the new independent chairperson came into place a year or so ago she identified to us the suggestion that it should be on a statutory basis. Prior to that there had not been a suggestion of the need to have it on a statutory basis that I am aware of, but certainly when the new chair came into place she identified that that would be a thing to have and that is something we are aiming to do as soon as we effectively can.

4.7.2 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

I was certainly aware, after talking with the previous chair of the Safeguarding Board, that he expressed surprise that the idea of it being put on a statutory footing had not been explored further, but I accept that maybe the Assistant Minister had not had that conversation with him. Can the Assistant Minister assure Members that this will come back to the House at quick speed?

Senator P.F. Routier:

Certainly. The intention is to do a scoping of the work that is required under the United Nations Convention for the Rights of Children, which will have obviously various elements to it, but it will include putting the Safeguarding Board on a statutory footing, and we will do that as soon as we possibly can.