

# STATES OF JERSEY



## **HISTORICAL CHILD ABUSE: REQUEST TO COUNCIL OF MINISTERS (P.19/2011) – COMMENTS**

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**Presented to the States on 14th February 2011  
by the Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel**

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**STATES GREFFE**

## COMMENTS

The Panel firmly supports Senator F. du H. Le Gresley's request to the Council of Ministers to reconsider their decision not to hold a Committee of Enquiry to investigate any unresolved issues in relation to child abuse in the Island.

The Panel strongly believes that the States Assembly should be given the opportunity to debate the requirement for an independent public enquiry and therefore regards the Council's unilateral decision, as reported in R.8/2011, as unsatisfactory.

This report was received by members on their desks in the States Assembly on 1st February 2011 without prior notice, giving members only a limited opportunity to respond to the statement issued by the Chief Minister at the same meeting.

The Panel believes that there are a number of fundamental questions which ought to be addressed about the past management of children's homes, the monitoring of staff and procedures for dealing with any reports of abusive behaviour. Those personally affected by the events in the past should have the opportunity to have their stories heard.

The Panel notes that the previous Council of Ministers outlined these questions in a report to the States (R.27/2008) in which the then Council indicated the intention to hold a full public enquiry once the criminal process had been completed.

The Panel has always held the view that it is not within its own remit to investigate such issues, particularly those arising from individual complaints, and strongly believes that only a fully independent enquiry can deal fully and objectively with the issues.

The Panel acknowledges that our understanding of the historic child abuse that occurred in the Island has grown following the various reviews that have been undertaken since 2008. However, a reversal of the previous commitment to hold a full Committee of Enquiry is an extremely serious matter and the Panel believes that it is essential that these factors should be fully debated by the States before it is determined whether such a conclusion is warranted.