

3.6 Deputy M.R. Higgins of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the level of evidence seen by the Minister in relation to a specific child protection matter:

Further to the Minister's response to my oral question on 30th June 2014 regarding the Head of Children's Service comments that a young child observing a sexual act at close proximity does not represent a child protection issue, could the Minister confirm whether she has had sight of all the supporting evidence/correspondence relating to this particular child protection matter to support her department's actions and her statements to the Assembly?

Deputy A.E. Pryke of Trinity (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

I met with the individual concerned over a year ago and I reviewed some of the supporting evidence and correspondence to that case, but not all; some of it is purely operational matter. I leave it at that.

3.6.1 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Can the Minister tell me if she has seen a copy of this letter which was written by the Head of the Children's Service to the individual concerned? It says: "While I understand your concern and anxiety around the outcome of our previous assessment, I remain confident the situation you referred to, while misguided and inappropriate, did not necessitate further action of the child protection procedure. For your information, I have personally reviewed the recording and concur with the conclusions reached by my own team and our police colleagues. Of course, should you have any new concerns or information you think we may need to be aware of then I would urge you to contact our team." I might add, the Minister at that meeting was also shown some still photographs taken from the videotape and the final paragraph says: "On a related matter, I would urge some caution circulating sensitive pictures without the subjects' consent, given that we have made it clear to you that we do not consider it to be a child protection matter." In other words, a young child observing at extremely close proximity, almost being held, and what was going on being described to him, does not represent a child protection matter in the eyes of the Head of the Children's Service and yourself. Is that correct, Minister?

The Deputy of Trinity:

As I said, this is an operational matter. I cannot say whether I have read that particular letter or not; that was over a year ago. But this issue was looked at by the Probation Office, the Jersey Police, as well as the past Chair of Safeguarding and the present Chair of Safeguarding. It is a multi-agency decision.

The Bailiff:

Do you wish a final question then, Deputy Higgins?

3.6.2 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

I will just come back to that, yes. The only person who has seen the tape out of all those people she has mentioned is one, the Head of the Children's Service and a police officer who did not provide the full information to that particular body. I have seen the minutes of that body and it is not in there, so is the Minister still content to say the matter has been properly investigated and that it is not a child protection matter?

The Deputy of Trinity:

It has been a multi-agency approach and, as I said to the Deputy last time, if he feels that it is not appropriate the door is still open to talk to the independent Chair of the Safeguarding Panel and I would suggest that he does.