

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY DEPUTY M.R. HIGGINS OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 17th JUNE 2014**

Question

Will the Minister -

- (a) set out the definitions of sexual, physical and emotional abuse used by the Children's Department when assessing allegations of such abuse;
- (b) set out the procedures adopted internally by the Department when such abuse is alleged;
- (c) explain in full the various steps and bodies that are consulted or involved in deciding whether abuse actually took place;
- (d) state what safeguards there are to ensure that the various bodies in (c) are given complete and accurate information regarding the alleged abuses and the procedures that are adopted by the Department to ensure that any factually incorrect information that is forwarded to decision makers is corrected as rapidly as possible?

Answer

- (a) All of the agencies involved in responding to allegations of abuse work within the definitions and procedures detailed in the JCPC Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures (February 2011). Presenting issues at the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) are defined as follows:

Category	Description
Child in Need	Children who are assessed as requiring services in order to ensure their health and development needs are met. What will happen to the child's health and development without services? This is the question to be considered and the likely effect the services will have on the child's standard of health and development.
Domestic Abuse	An incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; emotional.
Child Protection	Children who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Concerns about abuse and maltreatment. In this situation the Decision maker will consider the need for taking action to immediately protect the child (child protection investigation).

Child Sexual Exploitation	This involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive ‘something’ _e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, affection, money etc) as a result of performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities. CSE can also occur through the use of technology without the child’s immediate recognition.
Missing Children	A missing child is anyone whose whereabouts are unknown, whatever the circumstances of disappearance. The child will be considered missing until located and his/her wellbeing, or otherwise, established.
Self Harm	The definition of self-harm adopted by the NICE guideline is ‘intentional self-poisoning or injury, irrespective of the apparent purpose of the act’. Self-harm includes poisoning, asphyxiation, cutting, burning and other self-inflicted injuries.
Sexting	This refers to sexual communications with content that includes both pictures and text messages, sent (by under 16 year olds) using mobile phones and other electronic media. “Youth produced sexual images”

The document is published and available on the Safeguarding Board website at jcpc@gov.je.

- (b) All enquiries will be received within the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). This includes Children’s Service, the States of Jersey Police, Education welfare officers and health service representatives. Possible progress from this includes a multi agency discussion, multi agency strategy meeting, joint investigation, allocation to social work services, further assessment, registration under the Child Protection structure, and accommodation by the Minister for a Looked After Child. The Minister has a duty to investigate and accommodate where necessary.
- (c) As above
- (d) MASH and Social Work teams may work with fragments of information at an initial stage, but further exploration with other agencies will lead to a comprehensive picture being gathered. All enquiries into MASH allow each case to be dealt with by all agencies simultaneously under joint working protocols. This is shared on a confidential basis with those involved with the children as and when needed to ensure that they are safeguarded. Prior to the development of the MASH all agencies worked to joint protocols however, the co-location of teams into the MASH and the development of a single IT system to capture the information since August 2013 has enabled more efficient use of existing resources to respond to enquiries.