

3.10 Deputy M.R. Higgins of the Chief Minister regarding the decision of the Jersey Independent Safeguarding Panel's decision not to instigate a Serious Case Review into the arrest and welfare of the lady known as H.G:

Will the Chief Minister inform Members what reasons, if any, the Jersey Independent Safeguarding Chair gave when deciding not to instigate a Serious Case Review, despite having consulted with the bodies involved with the arrest and welfare of the lady known as H.G and having taken advice from those bodies, and was the Chief Minister advised why H.G was not interviewed before the Chair's decision was reached?

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

The Adult Safeguarding Board was created earlier this year to ensure that Jersey could better safeguard adults, including conducting serious case reviews where appropriate. This was a significant and positive step forward for the Island. The independent chair, who is a leading expert in serious case reviews, consulted with the relevant agencies and made a decision to initiate a report on this case mirroring the serious case review process. This was rightly a decision for the independent chair. The chair will provide an opportunity for H.G to meet her if she so wishes before the report is finalised and published.

3.10.1 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

I am pleased to hear that the Chair is going to meet with H.G. That is a step forward if she is willing to see her. Can the Chief Minister tell me, he mentioned it was not a serious case review, it is a review by the independent chair, in fact the reason why I assume, was in the written answer to question 10. We find that the Independent Safeguarding bodies have no Memorandum of Association, that we are aware of. It has not gone to the Council of Ministers yet and it has not come in a report to the States. It also appears that the sub-groups that make up these panels also do not have terms of references because these are waiting to be finalised. So considering we set up this body a year ago, does the Chief Minister think December 2013 sufficient that we find out that the body has no real teeth of anything else at the moment?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

We did not set up this body a year ago; it is part of our work from earlier this year. I cannot remember exactly the date, but it is only a number of months that the Adult Safeguarding Board has been set up and the Deputy thinks we should be going even faster. He recognises that it was an important move forward in Jersey dealing with safeguarding issues and I am delighted that he supports it. The one thing that he seems to have missed is where I said that the review undertaken mirrors a serious case review and, therefore, I hope that will give the Deputy satisfaction.

3.10.2 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Just following on, because I was quite surprised to read the answer to question 10 about the lack of M.O.U.s (Memorandum of Understanding) and so on that have come to the States. I am aware of at least 4 families who are seeking serious case reviews of both children and adult mental health. Will the Chief Minister assure me that on 10th December he will be bringing the M.O.U.s to the States so that we can get this body working and we can try and get these reviews and deal with the problems faced by these families?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

It should not be for politicians to be making decisions or trying to influence those decisions. It is rightly for the safeguarding boards to do their work. I am not certain that the timescale

for reporting the M.O.U. will be next week because I do not think the Council of Ministers will be considering it until their next Council meeting, which is 18th December. I think it is important that the Assembly understands what a serious case review is and what it is not. I probably do not have time to go into the detail of that, but it is very important that we do understand that, that we are not politically influencing these and that decisions are made by the appropriate bodies and independent people that we have put in place. We have brought to Jersey, we are very fortunate to have a very experienced, high quality, independent chair of the safeguarding structure, and we should allow her to do her work in an appropriate fashion. That is exactly why we set these bodies up, so that we are removed and they are done without fear or favour. I understand that the Deputy is, in due course, due to be meeting the independent chair and he will be able to discuss the processes and the issues that he seems to be concerned about.