

3.8 Deputy J.A. Hilton of St. Helier of the Chief Minister regarding the publication of the 'Family W' Serious Case Review:

Can the Chief Minister inform members why the "Family W" Serious Case Review is not to be published, even though the report is complete?

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

I will ask Senator Routier to answer this, as he is Chairman of the Adult Safeguarding Panel.

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

The Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Board is in the process of talking to the children and family members who are at the heart of this review. However, I cannot answer this question until that has been done. As soon as that has happened, I will ensure that States Members are provided with all of the relevant information.

3.8.1 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

Is the Assistant Minister aware there are a number of serious child sexual abuse cases to be reviewed by the Safeguarding Board and does this fact cause him alarm, as it would appear the protection of Island children is failing yet again?

Senator P.F. Routier:

I am aware that there are some more cases to be reviewed and, as we have not been used to having as many cases as are currently coming forward, it is of concern. What is, I think, positive about these reviews taking place is that it is being looked at very seriously that we need to ensure that, when a case is being reviewed, some learning is made across all the services and that it is identified, if there had been some failings, that best practice is brought forward in the future.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

As the question is about when reports are going to be published, I would like to ask when the report on the woman known as H.G. is going to be reported by this panel? Because there seems to be cases being reviewed but no reports coming out and made public. Can the Assistant Minister tell us when it will be ...

The Bailiff:

Sorry, Deputy, that is not related to this question. It is not the same body at all. Very well, Deputy Le Hérissier?

3.8.2 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

The rapporteur referred to learnings. If several cases are alive at the moment, could the rapporteur tell us what lessons have been learned? Because surely it could be construed as a failure that cases have reached this level. Given all the money that has been ploughed into these issues over the last few years, why were the warning signs not picked up at the appropriate management and organisational levels?

Senator P.F. Routier:

The establishment of the Safeguarding Boards for Children and Adults, which have only been established in recent times, is, I think, a real positive step forward for the States generally. The Deputy is quite right: there has been extra investment put in after the Williamson Report to ensure that services are the best we can possibly have them. There is, obviously with these cases coming forward, a recognition that there needs to be some improvements to services, and that will be highlighted when the reports are finalised.

[10:30]

But I need to remind Members about this particular case that, until the family and the people who are involved are spoken to, it is very difficult; we cannot talk about it until that happens.

3.8.3 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Can I get clarification: could the rapporteur tell us - and I appreciate in a way it should be the Minister - has he been able to draw any conclusions where the failings are as opposed to just focusing on this case?

Senator P.F. Routier:

Not as yet, no.

3.8.4 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

It would seem to me that with the X Family, the G Family and numerous other families, the States of Jersey are still failing our children badly [**Approbation**] and we need to address this as soon as possible. I am very concerned that the Assistant Minister has agreed with me that there are a number of serious child sexual abuse cases coming forward; we need to establish as soon as possible exactly what is going wrong. Is the Assistant Minister satisfied that we have the expertise available in the Island to establish when sexual abuse is occurring within families?

Senator P.F. Routier:

I can only agree with the questioner with regard to the concerns that she has. I, too, share those concerns and want to ensure that everything is looked at in an appropriate manner. The question with regards whether we have the correct facilities and expertise in the Island to look at these cases is something we need to look at very closely. I think we need to ensure that with the help of the safeguarding chairperson who is doing these reviews, she is going to come forward with recommendations which we will have to act on. I would not be able to stand here and defend a service which was not performing correctly and I would hope that if it does require extra resources they would be coming forward.