

2015.07.14

4.13 Deputy M. Tadier of the Chief Minister regarding applications for care, supervision or freeing orders:

Further to the Chief Minister's response to a written question 8844 on 16th June 2015, will the Chief Minister explain why it would be disproportionately resource intensive to conduct the review required to establish how many of the applications for care, supervision or freeing orders did not have a lawyer appointed and how many had a lawyer appointed over 3 months after proceedings commenced, and will he undertake to provide the information?

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

In order to answer the question each file would have to be individually checked to see, (1) whether a lawyer for the children was appointed, (2) when the act of court was made appointing the lawyer and (3) when the initial application for a care order was made. This manual checking would be required in each case to check whether the time between the appointment of a lawyer and the date of application exceeded 3 months. For the cases dealt with in 2010 each file would need to be checked to see whether it was dealt with before or after 17th August 2010. As there have been 41 applications during this time period this would be disproportionately resource intensive. It would also, of course, detract from the important work currently being undertaken to make appropriate applications to safeguard and protect vulnerable children. However, it is now hoped that the data will be available by the end of September 2015.

4.13.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

I thank the Minister for that answer. It would have been helpful if that could have been intimated initially in the written question. There was no suggestion of a helpful answer to try and suggest what information could be procured even on a bit by bit basis. I seem to be suffering from the same problem that the P.A.C. (Public Accounts Committee) Chairman in question 11 indicated. Could I ask the Chief Minister, given the fact that there were only 75 applications currently that needed to be checked, would it not be better to make sure that the information was held in a format that is easily retrievable in future and that given the fact that he said that every time a new file is opened the advice is put in it, that kind of information should be recorded as we go along so it can be easily retrieved in the future?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I am not personally familiar with the file-keeping processes which this department might use, however I can say from my experience across many departments that the Deputy makes a good point and this is part of the modernisation of government, looking at the way that we hold data so that it is easily accessible and can be, to some extent, machine readable by others as well.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I thank the Minister for his answer.