

2017.11.14

2.9 Deputy M.R. Higgins of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding complaints made by children or young people in Residential and Secure Services: [1(610)]

Will the Minister explain how complaints made by children or young people in Residential and Secure Services are dealt with and how children are represented in the complaints and appeals process?

Senator A.K.F. Green (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

A robust complaint and investigation system is an important component in promoting and ensuring the safeguarding of children and young people. Children and young people can make a direct approach to the complaints section within H.S.S.D. (Health and Social Services Department). Complaints can be received on behalf of the children from independent visitors, social workers, a member of residential staff, a youth worker or any other participation worker. We also have the Jersey Your Voice initiative run by Barnardo's which is funded by my department, whose staff regularly visit the residential settings. The young people in residential care also have a forum of peers where they can raise concerns and seek advice from other residents. All complaints are treated seriously, investigated thoroughly with the oversight of the Director of Children's Social Work before a response to the complaint is sent.

[11:00]

2.9.1 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

The question was asking how children are represented in the complaints and appeals process. The Minister mentioned that they can make complaints and gave some details of the procedure, but he missed the key question which was: how are they represented when they bring a complaint to the department and appeal?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

I probably did not make it very clear. They can be represented by any of those people that they want to accompany them or to carry out the complaint and appear before any investigation person on their behalf. Any of those people can do that. It may be interesting for the Deputy and the Members to know, we have also purchased an app called Momo, which is not up and running yet, but it is an interactive participation app for young people and agencies to provide them an opportunity to provide feedback in a modern way, using Smartphone or other computer tablets.

2.9.2 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Just following through: are the children entitled to legal representation or representation by people external to your department? I want to know the process and, again, have there been any appeals and who represented them with the appeals?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

It is not a legal process, so if they wish to be legally represented they may do so but it is not something we would pay for. But we certainly encourage young people to be represented or to have advocates on their behalf. It is something we encourage and support and there was a number of organisations, including N.S.P.C.C. (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children), Barnardo's and the Youth Service that would do that on their behalf.

