

20.11.30

10 Deputy M.R. Higgins of the Minister for Children and Housing regarding records (OQ.345/2020):

Will the Minister advise the Assembly what steps, if any, he is taking to ensure that Children's Services records are accurate; to enable all service users to review their records, particularly any in which there may be accusations of child abuse or neglect; and to ensure that no inaccurate information is provided to the courts when they are considering matters that could potentially see a child removed from their parents?

Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour (The Minister for Children and Housing):

Parents and carers, along with children and young people where their age is appropriate, are invited to and encouraged to contribute to child protection case conferences, Child in Need meetings and Children Looked After reviews. Assessments are shared with parents and carers and their views are obtained and recorded. Children, young people and their parents are entitled to make subject access requests for all information held on the child's social care files. Third-party information is redacted where consent from a third party has not been given. Further steps are taken to ensure accuracy of information via a triangulation of information through multi-agency partners. The case recording policy has been recently updated and will be signed off at senior leadership team level for the rollout in December 2020. In conjunction with this, case recording training has been developed and will be delivered to all social care staff on a rolling basis from December 2020. The practice standards were launched alongside the quality assurance framework in October 2020 and staff from across the service helped too in the development of these. Our practice standards sets out clear expectations for all staff to adhere to, ensuring that they work restoratively and transparently with children and young people and their families in Jersey. The quality assurance framework is a mechanism that measures the practice within the service and beyond to the wider partnership. All members of the public are encouraged to make complaints, comments and compliments using the customer feedback management system. This is available to the social care managers who have been trained in this system and encourage self-service or load information on to the system on an individual's behalf. We have also recruited a quality assurance officer who will co-ordinate our work on this system from 4th December 2020.

3.10.1 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

I met with the Minister on Thursday and for the first time, I think he has had his first case of inaccurate information, or no minutes being produced and things of that order to him first-hand in front of his officers. So instead of reading what his officers have given him, will he go away and look at it in reality which bears no relationship to what he said?

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Of course it is not right for me to discuss individual cases. What I will say, however, this is something that has been notified to the department. New frameworks and policies are being put in place and that staff members are being put in place in order to assure the information that the department has. The department recognises this as an issue that it needs to improve on and, under the steps taken by the previous Minister, things are being put in place.