

2020.02.25

13 Deputy M.R. Higgins of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding evidence-gathering by the States of Jersey Police from underage victims of alleged grooming by an adult: (OQ.59/2020)

Will the Minister explain to Members in what circumstances, if any, the States of Jersey Police do not interview, or take evidence, from underage victims of alleged grooming by an adult and how quickly do any such interviews, or evidence gathering generally take place after the police become aware of the allegations in such cases?

The Connétable of St. Clement (The Minister for Home Affairs):

Yes, I am pleased to advise Members that there are no circumstances - and I repeat no circumstances - under which the Police would not take timely and positive action to investigate reported, or suspected crimes, including those involved in grooming, or exploitation of young people. This includes the taking of statements, as well as securing and preserving evidence. Whilst the non-co-operation of alleged victims can hinder investigations, the Police continue to do all that they can to protect and safeguard suspected victims of crime.

3.13.1 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Will the Minister for Home Affairs please tell me the source of that information? The Children's Commissioner and myself both have concerns about some children, aged 15, who have still not been interviewed and the evidence taken from their phones that can be used in a criminal investigation.

The Connétable of St. Clement:

If the Deputy has evidence of inappropriate behaviour by the States of Jersey Police, then there is a route available to him, to complain to the Professional Standards Department, who will investigate any allegations of inappropriate investigation.

3.13.2 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

I have a meeting with the Chief Officer of Police coming up next month and I will raise it with him first. Professional Standards, he knows what my views are of the whole police complaints process and how inadequate it is. Will the Minister be prepared to meet with the Children's Commissioner and myself to look at some of these items that are giving concern, so that we can make sure that the States of Jersey are doing their job and that all young people are not being groomed by adults for whatever purpose they have in mind.

The Connétable of St. Clement:

I am pleased the Deputy is going to see the Chief of Police. He is quite right, this is an operational matter and, therefore, it is a matter for the Chief of Police. It is not a political matter, although, obviously, I would take an interest in it. If the Deputy wishes me to come with him when he meets the Chief of Police, I would be very pleased to do so.