

2024.04.30

3.18 Deputy K.L. Moore of the Minister for Children and Families regarding a reciprocal agreement for Jersey children in care (OQ.71/2024)

Will the Minister advise whether he has contacted his counterpart in the U.K. Government and what progress, if any, has been made to achieve a reciprocal agreement for Jersey children who are in care?

Connétable R.P. Vibert of St. Peter (The Minister for Children and Families):

I thank the Deputy for this question. Further to the Ministerial correspondence on 4th December with David Johnston O.B.E. (Order of the British Empire), M.P. (Member of Parliament), Minister for Children, Families and Wellbeing, officers from both Governments have been working to progress the shared objectives of strengthening the legislative arrangements for those children in care placed off-Island. The scope of the proposed amendment to the Children (Prescribed Orders - Northern Ireland, Guernsey and Isle of Man) Regulations 1991 has been agreed locally and communicated to officers at the Department of Education on 11th April. I have therefore not found it necessary to contact the Minister, David Johnston, as officers are engaged in this and we are moving forward. The office of the Children's Commissioner for Jersey has also been notified and briefed on the extent of the amendments sought, as I am mindful that this work is consistent with the recent concluding observations report by the U.N. (United Nations) Committee, which made specific recommendations to strengthen the governance relating to off-Island alternative care. In fact, I spoke with the Children's Commissioner in one of my first meetings with the new commissioner, saying how important I thought that it was to strengthen our position and to get these amendments made. Officers from the Department for Education have been requested to provide further advice regarding the next steps in this bilateral process, and we await their response to our communications of 11th April. The aim is to complete this project by the end of this year.

3.18.1 Deputy K.L. Moore:

I thank the Minister for his answer and update to the Assembly. I would simply ask whether he has given a private briefing to the relevant Scrutiny Panel.

The Connétable of St. Peter:

As yet I have not, but I am quite happy to do so, and I can make arrangements for that to happen. Thank you very much.