

**REPLY BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR
EMPLOYMENT & SOCIAL SECURITY
TO QUESTIONS ASKED PURSUANT TO RULE 14 OF THE
RULES OF PROCEDURE BY DEPUTY LESTER QUERPEL**

In 2015, a review of the implementation of the Children Law 2008, was undertaken here in the Bailiwick by Professor Kathleen Marshall, on behalf of the Scrutiny Committee. In her report, which was published in November 2015, Professor Marshall made 21 recommendations that she felt could be pursued by the States. With that very much in mind, I ask that you please provide me with answers to the Rule 14 questions laid out below.

...

Question 1A

What has your department done so far to pursue Professor Marshall's recommendations?

Answer

The Committee for Employment & Social Security believes that there is only one recommendation in Professor Marshall's report that is directly related to the mandate of the Committee. That is recommendation 6, which says:

'Consideration should be given to providing legal aid for mediation by suitably trained Advocates in appropriate circumstances.'

The Committee has received a preliminary briefing on the recommendation and its background, by the Guernsey Legal Aid Service, which is overseen by the Committee.

Question 1B

What is your department currently doing to pursue those recommendations?

Answer

In order to progress the recommendation, Guernsey Legal Aid Service sought and, has recently received, detailed information from the Family Proceedings Advisory Service regarding the provision of mediation services, proposals for development of these services and regarding legal aid funding of mediation. The Guernsey Legal Aid Service is committed to participate in further discussions regarding the development of mediation services alongside the Family Proceedings Advisory Service and other relevant agencies. Any future proposals regarding legal aid funding of mediation services and providers that arise from those discussions will be referred to the Committee for approval.

Question 1C

What will your department be doing in the future to pursue those recommendations?

Answer

The Committee will await a report and recommendation from the Guernsey Legal Aid Service, following conclusion of the discussions referred to above, before considering the merits of providing legal aid for mediation by suitably trained Advocates.

Question 2

Will the President of your department (or another political representative of your department in the President's absence) be making regular statements during future States debates, that update the States Assembly on the progress your department has made, in pursuit of the recommendations?

Answer

The Committee does not intend to provide statements or updates during States debates on the progress in pursuit of the single recommendation relevant to the mandate of the Committee.

Question 3

If the answer to question 2 is 'yes', then please can you tell me when the first statement will be made and also the dates for subsequent statements in future years, throughout the term of the current Assembly?

Answer

Not applicable.

Question 4

If the answer to question 2 is 'no', then please can you tell me how you will be keeping the Assembly informed regarding your departments attempts to pursue the recommendations?

Answer

In the event that there is an extension of the services for which legal aid is available, the changes will be notified by way of media releases, through the agencies most closely connected with the services and through public information material.

Question 5

Will your department also be providing the media with similar statements and updates, so they may in turn, broadcast and publish them for the benefit of the general public?

Answer

Yes. In the event of a material change in the services for which legal aid is available, this will be publicized.

Date of Receipt of the Question: 15th December 2016

Date of Reply: 29th December 2016