



## Joint Select Committee on Human Rights, Equality and Diversity

---

### Public Hearing Summary

Friday February 03, 2017 at 10:30 a.m.

#### Topic:

Inquiry into the examination of the systems in place to protect children from abuse.

#### Committee Members:

The following Committee Members were present for the meeting:

- Dr. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly, MP – Chairman
- Mrs. Glenda Jennings-Smith, MP – Member
- Mrs. Vidia Gayadeen-Gopeesingh, MP – Member
- Mr. Kazim Hosein – Member
- Mr. Dennis Moses – Member
- Mr. Rodger Samuel – Member
- Mr. Randall Mitchell, MP – Member

#### Witnesses who appeared:

##### Student Support Services Division, Ministry of Education

- Mrs. Lenor Baptiste-Simmons      Permanent Secretary
- Mr. Harrilal Seecharan      Chief Education Officer
- Mr. Ashram Deoraj      Director, School Supervision & Management Division
- Ms. Darlene Smith      Guidance Officer II, Student Support Services Division

##### Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago

- Ms. Saffiya Noel      Director
- Ms. Christalle Gemon      Deputy Director
- Ms. Sharlene Jaggernauth      Manager, Legal Services

##### Child Protections Unit, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service

- Mr. Stephen Williams      Commissioner of Police (Ag.)
- Ms. Beverly Rodriguez      Acting Superintendent
- Ms. Beverly Paul      SRP Inspector
- Ms. Bernadette Sealy      Victim and Witness Support Officer

### **Child Welfare League:**

- Ms. Bernadette F. Mckie Executive Director
- Ms. Claudia Boodoosingh Regional Co-ordinator Eastern Region

### **Key issues discussed were:**

1. The need to strengthen the data collection and analysis to assist in the development of programmes to efficiently and effectively respond and treat with cases of child abuse;
2. The need to improve the detection rate of the child abuse cases in schools and to develop appropriate measures to address them;
3. The need to finalise the Draft Trinidad and Tobago National Child Abuse Protocol: A Guide for Stakeholders;
4. The overall decrease of sexual abuse cases but the apparent increase of sexual abuse reports in schools;
5. The need for long term interventions to reduce the incidents of child abuse;
6. The need for a Child Abuse Prevention Strategy;
7. Many of the Agencies that are charged with the responsibility to deal with the issues of child abuse face in staffing and financial challenges;
8. The difficulty that the Romeo Clause (which decriminalises sex between minors) creates to detect child abuse;
9. The increased incidence of teenage pregnancy amongst children; and
10. The need for additional networking amongst the government agencies and NGOs to roles and responsibilities for each agency involved with detection of child abuse.

### **View the Hearing:**

The hearing can be viewed on our YouTube page via the following link:

<https://youtu.be/YakBVdZ-Wig>

### **Contact Information:**

You may contact the Committee's Secretary at [jschumanrights@tparliament.org](mailto:jschumanrights@tparliament.org) or 624-7275 Ext. 2288/2627.

*Committees Unit  
February 03, 2017*