



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 or 624-7275 Ext. 2288/2627.

*Committees Unit
February 03, 2017*