

July 2017

Report of an investigation, on behalf of Tynwald, into allegations relating to the management of case files and relationships with service users in the Department of Health and Social Care, Children and Family Services

Statement

In April 2016 the former MHK for Onchan, Peter Karran, moved a motion in Tynwald, asking that allegations relating to the way the Children and Family Services Division of the Department of Health and Social Care managed case files and relationships with service users be investigated.

Tynwald agreed an amended motion and the investigation was carried out by Paul Burnett and Bridget Griffin.

Both authors are independent of Government. Mr Burnett is the Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Children Board and Safeguarding Adults Partnership. Ms Griffin is a qualified social worker, experienced social work manager and reviewer.

The investigation took place between November 2016 and April 2017. It is based on analysis of ten cases that were identified by Mr Karran to evidence his allegations.

During June 2017 a draft Executive Summary of the report was shared with families, staff and politicians who had engaged with the investigation.

The main purpose of this process was to test the key findings and recommendations with those who had participated, to ensure that the authors had accurately reflected their contributions and to secure initial feedback on the conclusions. The authors have revised the report in light of the comments received during this process.

This report is scheduled to be presented to Tynwald in October 2017 together with a Government response and action plan to address its recommendations.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why was the Executive Summary shared with participants in June 2017 and not the full report?

As stated above, the main purpose of the meetings with families, staff and politicians in June was to test our key findings and recommendations to ensure these accurately reflected their contributions.

Because the key conclusions and recommendations were included in the Executive Summary, the authors of the report hoped this would demonstrate that the report

had fulfilled its brief and allow families to understand the conclusions and outcomes before the full report was published.

Participants will be given a copy of the full report to coincide with the publication of the Tynwald papers in October.

Why is the report being presented to Tynwald in October 2017?

The original expectation in June 2017 was that the report would be presented to Tynwald in July 2017. This date was discussed with the families during the meetings to share the Executive Summary.

The reason for the change to October is that the Council of Ministers asked that the report should be accompanied by a Government response to the report together with a plan of action to address the recommendations.

There had been some support for the inclusion of a plan of action during the consultative process. Some participants believed this would provide greater public confidence that action would be taken in areas identified for improvement.

The formulation of a response to the recommendations requires time for Ministers to reflect on the report and to consider appropriate action. This is the reason for reporting on the investigation in October, which is the earliest sitting of Tynwald after July.

To whom has the full report been released?

Following the decision to present the investigation and the Government's response to Tynwald in October, the full report was released to the Council of Ministers. The Social Policy and Children's Committee of the Council of Ministers, which includes the Ministers for Health and Social Care, Education and Children and Home Affairs, has been tasked with providing an action plan in response to the recommendations.

The original motion in Tynwald called on Mr Karran to provide 'full facts' to Paul Burnett for investigation. The motion was silent on how the report should be presented.

The approach to the report, as set out by the Council of Ministers will ensure that both the report and the Government response can receive proper scrutiny by Tynwald.

Why is it important to maintain confidentiality of the information that has been released to those participating in the investigation?

The Executive Summary report released in June was a draft document and was issued in confidence to recipients for the purpose of testing the key findings and recommendations with those who had participated, to ensure that the authors had accurately reflected their contributions and to secure initial feedback on the conclusions. .

The authors have made revisions to the report as a result of comments, views and opinions expressed during the consultation process in June. The final report will, therefore, differ from the draft released in June and any public sharing of the content of the draft could cause confusion and misunderstanding.

It is important to note that the revision includes the removal of the Executive Summary which the consultation indicated did not fully reflect the rationale behind the key findings and the comprehensive evidence that supported conclusions and recommendations.

Why is the full report to remain confidential until presented to Tynwald in October 2017?

The earlier release of the report to Ministers is specifically for the purpose of enabling them to prepare a response to the recommendations which will focus attention on action to be taken to address areas identified for improvement.

The full report will be released to participants in the investigation two weeks prior to the Tynwald sitting on 17th October. This will enable participants to consider the full report and make any representations to their elected representatives should they wish to submit these prior to the Tynwald sitting.

The release of any part of the report in isolation risks creating inaccurate perceptions of the overall findings and prejudicing consideration of the recommendations and actions by politicians at Tynwald in October. The authors of the report have endeavoured to produce a fair and accurate investigation and would be very concerned if selective parts of the report were shared in the public domain prior to its consideration by Tynwald, an action which would undermine consideration of the whole report.