

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION 135/2006
2 November 2006

Further to the recent press release on the concerns that exist amongst the families of service users, regarding the Social Services Agency. The Opposition committed itself to provide information which would demonstrate that contrary to the claims of the Minister for Social Services, the worries expressed by Mrs Tonie Beiso, recently made public are not an isolated case and that many others have experienced similar difficulties.

Many families claim to have experienced serious shortcomings in the service provided. They all claim to have experienced incidents which indicate that the Agency has failed to provide the quality of care that users are entitled to expect and the Minister claims exists.

In one particular case, the child was prescribed a tranquilizer following the family seeking medical advice. When the child, who was normally looked after by the parents, needed respite care, the Agency would be handed the tablets that he needed to take.

The family became seriously concerned that the medication was not being administered. These concerns were met with excuses that the tablets had not been handed over. When the family insisted that they had, the response was the lame excuse that they must have been inadvertently put away by mistake.

On other occasions the medication was still in its box and had not been administered.

More recently, now that the young man is permanently in the home, the family has found that instead of tablets the medication is now in liquid form. On one particular visit, the service user was given a cupful and then a second one. Later, when he was in a home visit with the family and had the medication with him, they discovered on reading the label of the bottle that the amount that they had seen administered was probably in the order of ten times the correct dosage.

Another area of concern when the young man was growing up and buying new clothes there was the number of occasions when there were missing items of clothing which they reported. Although

this was brought up as a regular feature no satisfactory answers were provided and no action was taken to put things right.

The experience of this family, which is not an isolated incident, describes a pattern in the provision of the service over a number of years and which is not likely to be addressed as long as there is complacency at the top on the basis that everyone, barring a few malcontents, has been very happy with things the way they are.

ENDS