

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION 139/2006
7 November 2006

The Opposition is committed to bringing to the public's notice, with the agreement of those concerned, the problems that have been affecting the Social Services Agency, which the Minister responsible denies have existed. This demonstrates that it is not a question of an odd isolated incident affecting one particular individual.

One other family who has had problems with the care provided for their child is a case where the mother and grandmother of the affected party repeatedly have raised issues with the Agency.

The family whose child was taken into care under the Adults Service for 5 years allege that the child was submitted to serious abusive practices whilst under the care of the Dr Giraldi Home. Practices which they maintain Senior Staff at Dr Giraldi Home and Social Services Agency were well aware of. The Board of the Agency presumably must have been informed of this.

To start with, the child was placed in the care of the Agency even though no Care Order was in place.

The family claims that for five years the child was subjected to 'punishments' such as being made to stand in a room on his own holding a pile of books whilst his mother would watch helplessly until the carer deemed that the punishment was sufficient. This young child, it seems, has an epileptic condition and has repeated fits. It is reported that his head was stuck in freezers and he was 'given' cold showers as a form of behaviour modification. The child was constantly covered in bruises and suffered accidents such as black eyes and a broken foot.

The flat in which he was housed inexcusably failed to comply with Health & Safety Standards to the point that the child was infected with scabies. On another instance the family state that when he was ill in hospital with chicken pox all staff members except one refused to care for him, placing the child in a vulnerable and at risk situation. The mother of the child had a breakdown and needed psychiatric care for months to help her overcome the trauma she was living. They lament that the child did not participate during these years in any child-orientated activities - like attending a

family birthday party; and state that 'they had him locked up like an animal in a cage'.

It is alleged that the child was not fed adequately and consequently suffered an eating disorder and that his personal hygiene was neglected. The family claims that the Chief Executive Officer refused to meet them to discuss their complaints and that the incidents of which they had complained was known to many others in the home who were afraid to speak out. They further state that they have 'stolen' their child's childhood away and that although many people know what has happened in the Home, they are afraid.

ENDS