

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION 101/2010

21 July 2010

It is obvious that this Government lack both the conviction and the arguments with which to defend the policy decisions that they take. Their latest response to the Opposition statement regarding the case of a 14 year old girl who had to spend two nights in prison is a case in point.

The issue is not whether the minor had breached a curfew or not, as the Care Agency says in their press release. The issue is that when the minor was taken to court for breaching the curfew the magistrate did not have anywhere else to send her because according to the Government's social services department they did not have the resources to deal with the case. The juvenile therefore ended up in prison.

It is obvious from the tone of the Care Agency's statement and of the interview given by Minister Jaime Netto that the Government are unrepentant and that they believe that they have nothing to apologise for. This is in line with the attitude that Gibraltar has come to expect from a GSD Government who believe that everything they do is always right and that the consequences of their policies cannot be questioned or challenged by anyone.

It is Minister Netto and his Government who have indulged in political point scoring. They should know that the Opposition drew attention to the lack of facilities to deal with these kind of cases last year, well before this incident had taken place. Our comments now are consistent with the views that we expressed at the time.

Commenting on the matter, Shadow Minister with responsibility for social services Neil Costa said:

“The Minister continues to place information surrounding this case into the public domain in a feeble attempt to justify his own political position and explain the shortcomings of the policies of his Government. We understand that this information is not entirely accurate. In any event, even if what the Government has said were to be 100% accurate, it does not detract from the main point at issue. The bottom line is that the Government is completely mistaken in its belief that social services exist to deal with “normal” and “run of the mill” situations. They are incapable of accepting that there was no safety net for this young person in her time of need.”