

Question on Notice

No. 1438

Asked on Wednesday 7 October 2009

MR DEMPSEY ASKED THE MINISTER FOR CHILD SAFETY AND MINISTER FOR SPORT (MR REEVES)—

How many paternal tests has Child Safety conducted of parents of children known to the department in the last three years and under what legislative powers is the department conducting these tests?

ANSWER:

Section 97 of the *Child Protection Act 1999* allows a delegated officer to authorise the medical examination or treatment of a child subject to an order granting custody to the Chief Executive, including a child subject to a child protection care agreement. However in using this provision, Child Safety Officers must be guided by professional medical opinion and advice as to what constitutes reasonable examination or treatment in the circumstances. Child Safety Officers would first give careful consideration to the authorisation of a medical examination or treatment of a child subject to a child protection care agreement.

Chapter 5 of the Child Safety Practice Manual states “DNA testing would only occur in exceptional circumstances. If the matter relates to a court application, consultation should occur with Court Services Unit”.

Information on paternity testing is not reportable from the Integrated Client Management System. As the Member would be aware, undertaking a case by case manual count would redirect critical frontline child protection staff’s attention from their key child protection responsibilities.