

Question on Notice

No. 632

Asked on 25 March 2010

MR POWELL asked the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport (MR REEVES)—

QUESTION

With reference to Question on Notice No. 120 of 2010, which stated in reference to the utilisation of the Structured Decision Making tool framework that ‘marital status of the parent is not identified as a risk factor in this research’—

Will the Minister advise (a) the date that this framework was initiated as the framework for the department, (b) the reasoning for the adoption of this framework over other available frameworks and (c) when the most recent review on the effectiveness of this framework took place?

ANSWER

The Crime and Misconduct Commission's Inquiry in 2004 recommended that Child Safety: “identify and establish a suite of professional practices and decision tools to help regulate, standardise and record the front line decisions taken by Child Safety Officers. The tools and practices will focus around the core elements required for effective intake and assessment of notifications, case planning, case management and placement.”

An independent academic from Griffith University's Justice Modelling Unit was asked by Child Safety to analyse and compare the evidence-base of several key child protection risk assessment systems, including the Structured Decision Making system. The Structured Decision Making tools developed by the Children's Research Centre were identified as having the strongest reliability and validity and the Structured Decision Making system was recommended as the most consistent with the blueprint recommendation to implement a suite of decision making tools.

A staged introduction commenced in December 2004 with a full electronic implementation of the entire suite in March 2007. A process of customisation and training preceded the implementation.

In September 2008, Child Safety Services completed a review of the screening criteria and response priority tools which are used as part of the intake process. Child Safety Services facilitated extensive consultation with staff, key government and non-government stakeholders and the Children's Research Centre. The review found the tools were well supported.

In January 2009, Child Safety Services completed a further review of the child strength and needs assessment tool which assists in guiding the case planning process.

In addition, the Children's Research Centre provides six monthly management reports that provide analysis of the current use of the tools and any issues around implementation by Child Safety Service Centres.