



**STANDING COMMITTEE
OF
TYNWALD COURT
OFFICIAL REPORT**

**RECORTYS OIKOIL
BING VEAYN TINVAAL**

**PROCEEDINGS
DAALTYN**

**SOCIAL AFFAIRS
POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**GRANDPARENTS' RIGHTS
(PETITION FOR REDRESS OF GRIEVANCE)**

HANSARD

Douglas, Monday, 1st June 2020

PP2020/0102

SAPRC-GR, No. 1/19-20

All published Official Reports can be found on the Tynwald website:

www.tynwald.org.im/business/hansard

*Published by the Office of the Clerk of Tynwald, Legislative Buildings,
Finch Road, Douglas, Isle of Man, IM1 3PW. © High Court of Tynwald, 2020*

Members Present:

Chairman: Ms J M Edge MHK
Mr P A Greenhill MLC
Mr M J Perkins MHK

Clerk:

Mr J D C King

Assistant Clerk:

Ms I Perry

Contents

Procedural.....	3
EVIDENCE OF Chief Inspector Cathryn Bradley.....	3
<i>The Committee sat in private at 11.30 a.m.</i>	7

Standing Committee of Tynwald on Social Affairs Policy Review

Grandparents' rights (Petition for Redress of Grievance)

*The Committee met virtually at 11.15 a.m.
Proceedings were conducted and broadcast live
from the Legislative Council Chamber.*

[MS EDGE *in the Chair*]

Procedural

The Chairman (Ms Edge): Welcome to this public meeting of the Social Affairs Policy Review Committee, a Standing Committee of Tynwald.

I am Julie Edge, MHK and I chair this Committee. Alongside me today is Mr Martyn Perkins MHK and Mr Peter Greenhill MLC.

5 In the interests of social distancing this meeting is being held remotely with all participants speaking from separate locations. Please can we all ensure our mobile phones are off or on silent so that we do not have any interruptions.

10 Today we will be hearing from Chief Inspector Cathryn Bradley on the topic of grandparents' rights. This inquiry was established following a resolution of Tynwald Court in November 2019 to refer a Petition for Redress of Grievance to the Committee

EVIDENCE OF Chief Inspector Cathryn Bradley

Q1. The Chairman: For the record, I would like to begin by asking you to please state your name, job title and how long you have been in that role.

15 **Ms Bradley:** I am Cathryn Bradley, I am a Chief Inspector. I have got 29 years' service in the Police and I am Chief Inspector in the protective services, which means I have responsibility for vulnerability, risk and risk management. I have been in this current role for the last two years.

Q2. The Chairman: Thank you.
20 Is there anything else; would you like to make a statement about any work around children and adverse childhood effects on children?

25 **Ms Bradley:** I think it is important that it is recognised I am not an expert. I am a police officer with 29 years' service who has worked in a number of areas across the Constabulary over those years. What I am bringing is policing experience to this matter. We do not hold any data. We do not hold any facts or figures in relation to grandparents' rights. I suppose it is a purely common sense, practical approach that I will be bringing.

Q3. The Chairman: Okay, thank you.

30 As part of the Constabulary's initial response to the inquiry you commented that whenever a child needs to be removed from a potentially harmful situation the first port of call would be to place them with family. How is it determined if that other family member is suitable to take the child?

35 **Ms Bradley:** So we can deal with children arising in lots of situations. In an emergency situation it can be that we take a child under a Police Protection Order, which allows us to remove a child from an environment or a situation for up to 72 hours.

40 What happens during that time is that, in partnership with the Children and Families Department of Health and Social Care, an assessment is made of the situation that resulted in the child being removed by the Police and where is then an appropriate place for that child to then be moved to, if it is deemed inappropriate for the child to return to that environment.

So we work with partners to make that decision.

45 **Q4. The Chairman:** Are you aware of children that a grandparent has been the port of call for the first place of safety?

Ms Bradley: Yes, absolutely, a grandparent, as there has been with other family members, absolutely.

50 **Q5. Mr Perkins:** Is there any kind of priority list that you look at or is it a given that the grandparents will be the next port of call?

Ms Bradley: No, there is no kind of priority list.

55 If it is a situation where we have removed a child the family will make suggestions on who could be considered or not be considered. There is no priority list. Often these are families we have not had any dealings with before, so we do not know the history or the dynamics within that environment.

Mr Perkins: Thank you.

60 **Q6. Mr Greenhill:** Are you able to do any background checks on any of the people that you are considering as being the appropriate place?

65 **Ms Bradley:** We can from the Police; we can check our systems to see if a person is known or not known.

Q7. The Chairman: Who is responsible for putting the suggestions forward? Is it the parents or step-parents that have the say with the authorities to say where they would like the children to be placed?

70 **Ms Bradley:** It would always be we would ask, 'Is there anybody who would be suitable or could be considered?' It is clear then we are in the hands of the family – who they tell us or do not tell us about. And then from that is when we would make our checks.

75 So clearly, if we have a situation where a family does not provide the information or the details of a family member then we are in a position that we probably could not consider them.

Q8. The Chairman: So would referral to the care system be deemed more appropriate to placing children with a family member who they have previously have had little contact with?

80 **Ms Bradley:** I cannot answer that because that is a decision that is made by our partners in Children and Families about whether a child is or is not placed in care.

Q9. The Chairman: So the Police have no experience of being able to submit some supporting evidence or anything? It is purely a Social Care responsibility?

85 **Ms Bradley:** Yes, I mean we work together, but I am talking about the immediacy of an emerging situation where we have had to remove a child. And so clearly if we have information about a proposed person we would share that to deem if we felt they were appropriate or not. But the ultimate decision on where a placement is made does not rest with the Police.

Q10. Mr Perkins: Do you have good cooperation with the Social Services and do they do everything in a timely manner?

90

Ms Bradley: I think that is a question that is quite difficult for me to answer because we deal with them in so many different situations. But certainly in relation to when the child comes to us in that immediacy of a Police Protection Order, they turn in a timely fashion and we are bound by timescales.

95

Q11. The Chairman: So do you feel the timescale perhaps is an issue for making sure that children are placed correctly and sometimes a decision may be taken due to that timescale? I know it is in the law that you have to do that but do you think that is something that needs to be looked at?

100

Ms Bradley: Well, we have 72 hours, which is a long time to be able to make initial assessments. I do not think to extend that time would bring any great benefits.

105 **Q12. The Chairman:** And do you feel Children and Families have secured children appropriately? Have you experienced any difficulties with a placement that you have had to then be involved in following that placement?

110 **Ms Bradley:** I think that often does happen but that is because some of the children that we deal with it can be a very complex history, background and situation, and they have already been through one experience of being removed from the home environment so understandably that would cause distress to them and upset to them. So if we do have some problems after that it is not uncommon and is not to be unexpected.

115 **Q13. The Chairman:** In relation to adverse childhood experience, have you noticed any benefit of children having contact with their grandparents or other extended family members following exposure to a harmful situation?

120 **Ms Bradley:** As I said before, we do not keep data on this. There is actually no legislation around grandparents' rights and there is no legislation in comparable jurisdictions around grandparents' rights. In fact, there is very little research about the impact upon relationships of children and grandparents.

125 But what we do know is with adverse childhood experiences a strong social connection in a nurturing environment does help provide some of the basics, particularly in crisis, and can help build resilience for a child.

So that, as I say, is purely from a common sense, practical experience that I bring but we do understand with adverse childhood experiences that strong social connection is of paramount importance to them and can make a difference to their resilience and what long-term impact that adverse experience or experiences can have.

130

Q14. The Chairman: So is there anything in the current law that you think a change could be made that could make it more supportive for anybody involved in a situation involving a child?

Ms Bradley: Within the current legislation I would say not.

135 If you bear with me, I am just thinking through what legislation we have. I am not aware of anything that could be amended or altered to bring that in as a consideration and I think it would be quite complex to achieve.

Q15. The Chairman: So when you say you do not have data or you do not collect data, with regard to any successes for adverse childhood experiences in future and any work going forward, do you think it is possible a register of some form could be a shared agreement between yourself and DHSC? You obviously share data currently. Is there any way ... or do Children and Families keep the data for any of these situations, it is just that the Police do not?

Ms Bradley: I am sure that Children and Families do keep data; well, they will keep data about the families and the children that they are involved with.

We do keep data about people that we are involved with, clearly, and we can give numbers. There is just nothing specific about children with grandparents and grandparents' rights.

The Chairman: Okay, thank you.

150

Q16. Mr Perkins: Have you any views on keeping these records going forward? Because obviously – and I know it takes a long time for a young child to grow into a teenager – but I suppose a bit like demographics in the health service, they keep a view on various things that may alter stuff going down the line. And early intervention has always been a big part of my thinking; the earlier we can intervene with problem families the less hassle we have at the other end.

Ms Bradley: Yes, absolutely, I totally agree with you.

160 So we are currently working with Public Health on a wide public health approach to policing but also specifically looking at adverse childhood experiences so that we understand, as Mr Perkins has said, the demographics of our population who have actually been subject to adverse childhood experiences and what we can do in the future to improve that for all the children on the Island.

Q17. The Chairman: Do you do any work with the schools or is it purely children and some families that you work with in this area?

170 **Ms Bradley:** No, we work within schools. We have neighbourhood officers that are affiliated to schools; we work with DESC and part of the PSHE curriculum as well around healthy relationships, rights and responsibilities. So we do work with many partners, it is not just Children and Families that we work with to support children.

Q18. The Chairman: And with regard to adverse childhood experiences, obviously it is quite a new area of work that a number of jurisdictions are looking at. You are talking generations before you can see anything come through on that, but with regard to the Police, in particular in other jurisdictions, has anybody done any work on this in advance of what the Isle of Man have?

Ms Bradley: Not that I am aware of, no.

180 **Q19. The Chairman:** Well, it is great to know that you are looking at that and hopefully that will support children going forward in the future and families.

Thank you very much for sitting with the Committee today and the Committee will now sit in private.

185 **Ms Bradley:** Lovely, thank you very much.

The Committee sat in private at 11.30 a.m.