HRED

PARLIAMENT
REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

*FOURTH REPORT ON THE*

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON

# HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

*SECOND SESSION OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT (2016/2017)*

on the

# Systems in Place to Protect Children from Abuse

## Committee Mandate

The Joint Select Committee on Human Rights, Equality and Diversity was established under House of Representatives Standing Order 106 and Senate Standing Order 96 and shall have the duty of considering, from time to time, and reporting whenever necessary, on all matters related to:

(a) compatibility of Acts of Parliament with human rights, and any matters relating to human rights in Trinidad and Tobago (but excluding consideration of individual cases);
(b) Government compliance with national and international human rights instruments to which Trinidad and Tobago is a party;
(c) the promotion of measures designed to enhance the equalization of opportunities and improvement in the quality of life and status of all peoples including marginalized groups on the basis of gender, age (elderly, youth, children) disability and the creation of an inclusive and more equitable society through greater social justice and sustainable human development within Trinidad and Tobago."

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| | |
|---|---|
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| Ms. Aaneesa Baksh | Parliamentary Intern |

## Publication

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## Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to:

The Secretary
Joint Select Committee on Human Rights, Equality and Diversity
Office of the Parliament
Levels G-7, Tower D
The Port of Spain International Waterfront Centre
1A Wrightson Road Port of Spain Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Tel: (868) 624-7275 Ext 2288; 2627 Fax: (868) 625-4672
Email: jschumanrights@ttparliament.org

**Date Laid in HOR:** **Date Laid in Senate:**

# Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..... 7
INTRODUCTION ..... 9
Human Rights and Child Abuse ..... 9
Definition of "Child" in Trinidad and Tobago ..... 10
Child Abuse Legislation ..... 10
Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago ..... 10
Child Abuse Agencies ..... 11
Child Abuse Statistics in Trinidad and Tobago ..... 13
Teenage Pregnancy Statistics in Trinidad and Tobago ..... 14
Child Abuse Programmes and Services ..... 15
Inquiry Objectives ..... 17
Conduct of the Inquiry ..... 17
EVIDENCE ..... 20
Objective 1: To examine the adequacy of programmes and services for detection, reduction and treatment of child abuse and teenage pregnancy ..... 20
Child Abuse and Teenage Pregnancy Statistics ..... 20
Programmes and Services for Child Abuse and Teenage Pregnancy ..... 22
Objective 2: To determine the adequacy of legislation in protecting children from abuse ..... 34
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ..... 36
Findings- Objective 1 ..... 36
Recommendations ..... 41
Findings - Objective 2 ..... 42
Recommendations ..... 43
APPENDIX I MINUTES ..... 45
APPENDIX II Verbatim Notes ..... 50
APPENDIX III PROCEDURE FOR TEENAGE PREGNANCY ..... 82
Ministry of Education ..... 83
Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago ..... 84
National Family Services Division, Ministry of Social Development and Family Services ..... 84
APPENDIX IV Programmes ..... 85
Ministry of Education ..... 86

Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago ..... 87
Child Protection Unit, TTPS ..... 90
APPENDIX V DEFICITS OF THE CHILDREN'S AUTHORITY ..... 91
APPENDIX VI LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS ..... 97
Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago ..... 98
Ministry of Education Circular Memorandum 76 of 2008 ..... 101
Role of the Children's Authority ..... 105
APPENDIX VII STATISTICS ..... 109
CPU, Statistics of Offences in which Children were Victims ..... 110
APPENDIX VIII Trinidad and Tobago Police Service Recommendations to improve support for child abuse victims ..... 118
APPENDIX IX CATT Evaluation Methods for Child Abuse Programmes and Services ..... 120
APPENDIX X PROCESSES ..... 123
Ministry of Education ..... 124
Child Protection Unit (CPU) - TTPS ..... 124

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| **BTS** | Break the Silence |
| **CATT** | Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago |
| **CCRFCNA** | Children's Community Residences, Foster Care and Nurseries Act |
| **CPIMS** | Child Protection Information Management Systems |
| **CPU** | Child Protection Unit |
| **FCDA** | Family and Children Division Act |
| **MOE** | Ministry of Education |
| **MSDFS** | Ministry of Social Development and Family Services |
| **OPM** | Office of the Prime Minister |
| **SSSD** | Student Support Services Division |
| **THA** | Tobago House of Assembly |
| **TTPS** | Trinidad and Tobago Police Service |
| **UNICEF** | United Nations Children's Fund |
| **VWSU** | Victim and Witness Support Unit |

## LIST OF TABLES


| | |
|---|---|
| **Table 1** | Budgetary Allocation of the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago for the fiscal years 2012 to 2017 |
| **Table 2** | Child Abuse Statistics for the period May 18, 2015 to February 17, 2016 |
| **Table 3** | Statistics on Teenage Abortions from 2007 to September 8, 2016 |
| **Table 4** | Officials Attendance List |
| **Table 5** | Number of Child Abuse Cases Reported from 2012 to 2016 |
| **Table 6** | Number of Child Abuse Reports for Special Needs Children from 2012 to 2016 |
| **Table 7** | Number of Child Sexual Abuse Cases from 2012 to 2016 |
| **Table 8** | Teenage Pregnancies in Schools in Trinidad and Tobago |
| **Table 9** | Achievements and Challenges of the Child Abuse Programmes of the |

SSSD, MOE

**Table 10** Achievements and Challenges of the CATT's Child Abuse Programmes

**Table 11** Achievements and Challenges of the Child Abuse Programmes of the CPU, TTPS

**Table 12** Achievements and Challenges of the Child Abuse Programmes of the NFSD, MSDFS

**Appendix III Table 1** Procedure for Teenage Pregnancy Cases MOE

**Appendix III Table 2** Procedure for Teenage Pregnancy Reports CATT

**Appendix III Table 3** Procedure for Teenage Pregnancy MSDFS

**Appendix IV Table 1** Responsive Programmes conducted by Student Support List of Topics of Sessions

**Appendix IV Table 2** Services

**Appendix IV Table 3** Public Education Activities

**Appendix IV Table 4** Programmes/Services for Child Abuse

**Appendix V Table 1** Staffing & Infrastructural deficits per unit at the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago

**Appendix V Table 2** Additional areas that require improvement in order to provide adequate programmes and services in the area of child abuse at CATT

**Appendix VI Table 1** Further Legislative Amendments

**Appendix VI Table 2** Status of Legislation and Issues

**Appendix VI Table 3** Edited matrix showing the role of the Children's Authority in relation to Child Offenders under the current legislative regime and proposed changes under the Family and Child Division Act, 2016.

**Appendix VII Table 1** Offences in Which Children Were Victims – By Year

**Appendix VII Table 2** Offences in Which Children Were Victims – By Police Geographical Division

**Appendix VII Table 3** Offences in Which Children Were Victims – By Sex

**Appendix VII Table 4** Offences in Which Children Were Victims – By Age Groups

**Appendix VIII Table 1** Procedural Recommendations of the TTPS

**Appendix IX Table 1** CATT Evaluation Methods

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. The Committee resolved at its Tenth Meeting held on December 02, 2016 to inquire into the systems in place to protect children from abuse and agreed that the following two (2) objectives would guide the inquiry:

- **to examine the adequacy of programmes and services for detection, reduction and treatment of child abuse and teenage pregnancy; and**
- **to determine the adequacy of legislation in protecting children from abuse.**

1.2. The Committee agreed that the Student Support Services Division (SSSD) of the Ministry of Education, the Child Protection Unit (CPU) of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) and the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (CATT) were to be invited to a public hearing on February 03, 2017.

1.3. The Committee obtained both oral and written evidence based on the objectives listed above.

1.4. Some of the significant issues raised during the public hearing were:

- ✓ the need to strengthen the data collection and analysis to assist in the development of programmes to efficiently and effectively respond and treat with cases of child abuse;
- ✓ the need to improve the detection rate of the child abuse cases in schools and to develop appropriate measures to address them;
- ✓ the need to finalise the Draft Trinidad and Tobago National Child Abuse Protocol: A Guide for Stakeholders;
- ✓ the overall decrease of sexual abuse cases reaching the courts but the apparent increase of sexual abuse reports in schools;
- ✓ the need for long term interventions to reduce the incidents of child abuse;

- ✓ the need for a Child Abuse Prevention Strategy;
- ✓ many of the Agencies that are charged with the responsibility to deal with the issues of child abuse face staffing and financial challenges;
- ✓ the difficulty that the Romeo Clause (which decriminalises sex between minors) creates to detect child abuse;
- ✓ the increased incidence of teenage pregnancy amongst children; and
- ✓ the need for additional networking amongst the government agencies and NGOs to clarify and assign roles and responsibilities for each agency involved with detection and treatment of child abuse.

1.5. The Committee submits its findings and recommendations with respect to the systems in place to protect children from abuse in Chapters 4 and 5.

# INTRODUCTION

## Human Rights and Child Abuse

2.1. The Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Section 4(a) states that one of the fundamental human rights and freedoms is, "*the right of the individual to life, liberty, security of the person and enjoyment of property and the right not to be deprived thereof except by due process of law*".

2.2. Trinidad and Tobago signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and A World Fit for Children (2002) that protects the rights of children and includes a provision to protect children from all forms of abuse and violence.

2.3. Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states, "*Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally. Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them. In terms of discipline, the Convention does not specify what forms of punishment parents should use. However any form of discipline involving violence is unacceptable. There are ways to discipline children that are effective in helping children learn about family and social expectations for their behaviour – ones that are non-violent, are appropriate to the child's level of development and take the best interests of the child into consideration. In most countries, laws already define what sorts of punishments are considered excessive or abusive. It is up to each government to review these laws in light of the Convention.*"

2.4. Article 48 of A World Fit for Children states, "*Societies must eliminate all forms of violence against children. Accordingly, we resolve to:*

*(a) Protect children from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence;*

*(b) Protect children from the impact of armed conflict and ensure compliance with international humanitarian law and human rights law;*

(c) *Protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation including paedophilia; trafficking, and abduction;*

(d) *Take immediate and effective measures to eliminate the worst forms of child labour as defined in International Labour Organization Convention No. 182, and elaborate and implement strategies for the elimination of child labour that is contrary to accepted international standards;*

(e) *Improve the plight of millions of children who live under especially difficult circumstances."*

## Definition of "Child" in Trinidad and Tobago

2.5. The Children Act, Chap. 46:01 defines a "child[1]" as a person under the age of eighteen (18) years. According to the 2011 Trinidad and Tobago Population and Housing Census, approximately twenty five percent (25%) of the population (330,102 persons) are children (i.e. persons aged 0-17 years)[2].

## Child Abuse Legislation

2.6. The Children Act, Chap. 46:01 provides protection and created offences for child abuse in the areas of prostitution, sexual offences, dangerous drugs, tobacco and alcohol.

## Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago

2.7. The Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago was established under the Children's Authority Act, Chap. 46:10. According to Section 5 of the Children's Authority Act, Chap. 46:10, the powers and functions of the Authority in relation to child abuse are:

(a) *"provide care, protection and rehabilitation of children in accordance with Part III of this Act(Children in care of need and protection);*

[1] Section 3(1) of the Children Act, 2012.
[2] Social Sector Investment Programme 2016, page 59.

*(b) investigate complaints made by any person with respect to any child who is in the care of a community residence, foster home or nursery, that the said residence, home or nursery failed to comply with the requisite standards prescribed under the Children's Community Residences, Foster Care and Nurseries Act, 2000 and any incident of mistreatment of children in such places;*

*(c) investigate complaints or reports of mistreatment of children;*

*(d) upon investigation, remove a child from his home where it is shown that the child is in imminent danger;"*

2.8. The Authority is managed by a Board of Management who are appointed by the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. The Board appoints a Director who is responsible for the day-to-day functions and coordinates the Adoption Unit and a Foster Care Unit.

2.9. The Authority's budgetary allocation for the period 2012 to 2017 is provided in Table 1.

**Table 1**
**Budgetary Allocation of the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago for the fiscal years 2012 to 2017**

| Actual 2012 | Actual 2013[3] | Actual 2014 | Revised Estimate 2015 | Revised Estimate 2016[4] | Estimate 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $8,000,000 | $18,730,000 | $23,436,000 | $30,000,000 | $30,000,000 | $36,000,000 |

## Child Abuse Agencies

### Child Protection Unit, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service

2.10. The Child Protection Unit (CPU) was established on March 27, 2015 and is mandated through the Children Act, Chap. 46:01 to carry out investigative and operational functions in

[3] Draft Estimates, Details of Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure for the Financial Year 2015, pg. 353.
[4] Draft Estimates, Details of Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure for the Financial Year 2016, pg. 574.

relation to crimes committed against children. There is one (1) CPU in each of the nine (9) divisions of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

## Student Support Services Division, Ministry of Education

2.11. The Ministry of Education provides programmes and services to address child abuse and teenage pregnancy via the Student Support Services Division (SSSD) and the School Supervision and Management Division (SSMD) of the Ministry of Education (MOE).

## National Family Services Division, Ministry of Social Development and Family Services

2.12. The National Family Services Division provides free services such as counselling; and Social Workers interview, assess and prepare an intervention plan for clients throughout ten (10) centers in Trinidad.

## Child Welfare League

2.13. The aims and objectives of the Child Welfare League are to:

*(a) promote in parents and guardians a sense of responsibility towards their children and towards young persons;*

*(b) advocate for changes in policy, programmes or legislation to improve the general quality of life of the children of Trinidad and Tobago; and*

*(c) co-operate with government in its implementation of policies whether based on local, regional or international obligations as well as the policies of—*

*(i) the Tobago House of Assembly; and*

*(ii) non-governmental organizations,*

*in relation to children and young persons*[5].

[5] Child Welfare League of Trinidad and Tobago (Incorporation) Act No. 27 of 2005; p784-785 http://www.ttparliament.org/legislations/a2005-27.pdf

## Child Abuse Statistics in Trinidad and Tobago

2.14. During the period May 18 to September 30, 2015[6], the highest reported types of abuse were sexual abuse, neglect, physical abuse and children lacking care and guardianship.

- 22.5% of all reports were allegations of sexual abuse against children;
- 19.6% of all reports were neglect cases;
- 15.8% of all reports were physical abuse cases; and
- 15.6% of all reports were cases of children lacking care and guardianship.

2.15. According to the Authority's Statistical Bulletin,[7] for the period May 18, 2015 to February 17, 2016, 14,000 calls were received and 4,158 valid cases were investigated.

2.16. A summary of statistical data is provided in Table 2.

**Table 2**
**Child Abuse Statistics for the period May 18, 2015 to February 17, 2016**

| ▪ Monthly Cases | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| May 2015: 198 | June 2015: 443 | July 2015: 370 | Aug 2015: 508 | Sept 2015: 499 |
| Oct 2015: 486 | Nov 2015: 462 | Dec 2015: 375 | Jan 2016: 503 | Feb 2016: 314 |
| ▪ **Sex** | | | | |
| Female: 58% | | Males: 41% | | |
| ▪ **Age Groups** | | | | |
| 0-3 years: 12.7% | 4-6 years: 13.73% | 7-9 years: 15.49% | 10-13 years: 2.63% | |
| 14-15 years: 19.96% | 16-17 years: 13.42% | Unknown: 2.07% | | |
| ▪ **Geographical Location** | | | | |
| San Juan-Laventille: 4.4% | Tunapuna/Piarco: 12.8% | Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo: 9.8% | | |
| Diego Martin: 8.6% | Chaguanas: 7.4% | Port of Spain: 7.2% | | |
| Princes Town: 6.3% | Arima: 5.8% | Sangre Grande: 5.2% | | |
| San Fernando: 5.2% | Penal/Debe: 4.7% | Siparia: 3.8% | | |

[6] Annual Report of the Children's Authority of T&T for the period ending September 30, 2015. P 31.
[7] Statistical Bulletin: Nine Months & Counting, May 18 2015 to February 17, 2016. Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago.
http://ttchildren.org/images/pdf/CA%209Mths%20&%20Counting%20Stat%20Bulletin%20Final.pdf

| Tobago: 2.6% | Rio Claro/Mayaro: 1.9% | Point Fortin: 1.7% |
|---|---|---|

- **Types of Abuse**

| Sexual Abuse: 22.44% | Neglect: 21.75% | Physical Abuse:15.54% | Emotional Abuse: 8.71% |
|---|---|---|---|
| Beyond Control: 9.09% | Suicide: 1.06% | Lost: 0.33% | Moral Danger: 1.80% |
| Trafficked: 0.02% | Other: 4.28% | Lacking Care & Guardianship: 13.50% | Child is found begging or receiving alms: 0.67 |

- **Reported Person Responsible for Abuse**

| Mother: 34.50% | Unknown: 18.70% | Father: 17.10% | Parents: 8.90% |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sibling: 2 % | Uncle: 1.90% | Step-Father: 5.50% | Relative: 2.70% |
| Grandmother: 1.60% | Caregiver: 0.40% | Other person known to victim: 2.60% | Step-Mother: 0.70% |
| Neighbour: 1.40% | Grandfather: 1.20% | Step-grandfather: 0.30% | |

## Teenage Pregnancy Statistics in Trinidad and Tobago

2.17. According to Integrated Strategic Framework for the Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy in the Caribbean, compiled by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in 2013, Trinidad and Tobago had recorded a 44.9 percent birth rate per 1,000 women between the ages of 15 and 19, , during the period 2010 to 2012[8]. Statistics also indicate that from 2007 to September 8, 2016, 2,918 teenaged girls had abortions at the nation's hospitals. A breakdown is provided in Table 3.

**Table 3**
**Statistics on Teenage Abortions from 2007 to September 8, 2016[9]**

| Hospital | 2007 to 2015 | 2015 to September 8, 2016 |
|---|---|---|
| **Port-of-Spain General Hospital** | 1,170 | 70 |
| **San Fernando General Hospital** | 889 | 4 |
| **Mount Hope Women's Hospital** | 387 | 13 |

[8] Trinidad Newsday, "Pregnant Teens- A Crisis" by Corey Connelly; May 25 2014.
[9] Minister of Health Response to House of Representatives Question No. 180. Hansard. September 9, 2016.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Sangre Grande District Hospital** | 150 | 10 |
| **Scarborough General Hospital** | 149 | 8 |
| **Area Hospital, Point Fortin** | 63 | 5 |
| **Total** | 2808 | 110 |

## Child Abuse Programmes and Services

### Child Protection Registry, CATT

2.18. The Registry Unit receives, logs and triages reports of children who may be in need of care and protection. The main mechanism for receiving reports is through the Authority's hotline 996 or 800-2014 which operates on a 24/7 basis. The Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS) includes a risk assessment module which assists in determining the level of risk attached to each report and then sends an alert to the Emergency Response Team for immediate action or to the Investigation Unit. As at September 30, 2015, the Registry Unit comprised of eight (8) staff members, two (2) of whom are team leaders.

### Emergency Response Team, CATT

2.19. The Emergency Response Team (ERT) was created in response to the volume of cases of children who were reported to be in imminent danger and where swift and effective intervention was required. As at September 30, 2015, this team comprised six (6) responders and a manager who works on a shift system to ensure immediate response day or night, weekends and public holidays. The ERT is the first responder in emergency situations and works collaboratively with the Police, in particular the CPU, as well as the emergency teams at various health institutions across the country. This team identifies, places and monitors children who are accommodated temporarily in places of safety, including the Authority's place of safety.

## Assessment Centres, CATT

2.20. The Assessment Teams carry out initial medical examinations, diagnostic assessments and formulate treatment plans for children in need of care and protection. Most services can be accessed in one centralised location, including the social work intake, medical examination, psychological assessments and where necessary, forensic interviews with the Police. As at September 30, 2015 this Team comprised of twenty-four (24) staff members including doctors, psychologists and social workers.

## Licensing, Regulations and Monitoring of Community Residences, CATT

2.21. The Children's Community Residences, Foster Care and Nurseries Act (CCRFCNA), Chap. 46:11 mandates the Authority to establish a robust licensing system for Community Residences. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of Community Residences and training of service providers are critical in ensuring high quality care and protection of children in residential care.

## Public Campaign – UNICEF – Breaking the Silence

2.22. In Trinidad and Tobago, UNICEF plays an advocacy role for the enunciation and roll out of Government's overall strategy for a strengthened child protection system in Trinidad and Tobago. The Break the Silence (BTS) campaign was initiated by the UWI Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS), St. Augustine Campus and was supported by UNICEF from 2007 through 2011. It was an action-oriented research project designed to examine how communities understand and respond to child sexual abuse. The symbol of the blue teddy bear with the bandage across its heart was adopted by the campaign to bring community and national attention to the scourge of child sexual abuse.

## Programmes, Child Welfare League

2.23. The Choices Programme is a Child Welfare League programme and was started in 1995 and targets girls between the ages of 13 and 18 (though the majority are between

15 and 17 years of age) who are experiencing their first pregnancies and who may live with parents or family members[10].

2.24. The Adolescent Mothers Programme is also a Child Welfare League programme that helps young mothers develop high levels of self-awareness and are enabled to find a sense of community and belonging. They also acquire an understanding of parenting and are provided with essential adult support, which they often lack at home. The young mothers also receive support in the form of transportation, food, clothing, money, meals, groceries and medication[11].

## Inquiry Objectives

2.25. At a meeting held on December 02, 2016, the Committee agreed that the objectives of the inquiry were:

i. **To examine the adequacy of programmes and services for detection, reduction and treatment of child abuse and teenage pregnancy; and**
ii. **To determine the adequacy of legislation in protecting children from abuse.**

## Conduct of the Inquiry

2.26. On February 03, 2017 a public hearing was held with Officials of the Student Support Services Division (SSSD) of the Ministry of Education, the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (CATT), the Child Protection Unit (CPU) of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) and the Child Welfare League. During this time, the Committee questioned the officials on the various matters based on the inquiry objectives.

2.27. Prior to the public hearing, notice was given as to the general objectives of the inquiry and in response, written submissions were received from the Ministry of

[10] UNICEF, Children in focus; 2003 http://www.unicef.org/easterncaribbean/cao_publications_cifed.pdf; p11.
[11] UNICEF, Children in focus; 2003 http://www.unicef.org/easterncaribbean/cao_publications_cifed.pdf; p11.

Education, the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (CATT), the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) and the Child Welfare League. These responses provided a frame of reference for the supplementary questions pursued at the hearing.

**Table 4**
**Officials Attendance List**

| Name | Position |
|---|---|
| **Ministry of Education** | |
| Mrs. Lenor Baptiste-Simmons | Permanent Secretary |
| Mr. Harrilal Seecharan | Chief Education Officer |
| Mr. Ashram Deoraj | Director, School Supervision & Management Division |
| Ms. Darlene Smith | Guidance Officer II, Student Support Services Division |
| **Trinidad and Tobago Police Service** | |
| Mr. Stephen Williams | Commissioner of Police (Ag.) |
| Ms. Beverly Rodriguez | Acting Superintendent |
| Ms. Beverly Paul | SRP Inspector |
| Ms. Bernadette Sealy | Victim and Witness Support Officer |
| **Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago** | |
| Ms. Safiya Noel | Director |
| Ms. Christalle Gemon | Deputy Director |
| Ms. Sharlene Jaggernauth | Manager, Legal Services |
| Child Welfare League | |
| Ms. Bernadette F. Mckie | Executive Director |
| Ms. Claudia Boodoosingh | Regional Co-ordinator Eastern Region |

2.28. The Committee also sought responses from six (6) additional stakeholders. However, written comments were only received from three (3) stakeholders:

- Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS);
- Institute for Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus; and
- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).

2.29. The **minutes** and **verbatim notes** are attached as **Appendix I** and **Appendix II respectively**.

# EVIDENCE

## Objective 1: To examine the adequacy of programmes and services for detection, reduction and treatment of child abuse and teenage pregnancy

### Child Abuse and Teenage Pregnancy Statistics

3.1. According to data submitted by the MOE, during the period from 2012 to 2016, the number of child abuse reports had increased in Trinidad and Tobago. Upon investigation by the MOE, eighty percent (80%) of the 1,909 reported cases in Table 5 were classified as genuine child abuse cases and twenty percent (20%) of the 1,909 cases occurred amongst sexually active teenagers within two years of each other. Table 6 highlights the number of abuse cases reported for special needs children from 2012 to 2016.

**Table 5**
**Number of Child Abuse Cases Reported from 2012 to 2016**

| Year | Primary School | Secondary School | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2012 | 109 | 160 | 269 |
| 2013 | 133 | 80 | 213 |
| 2014 | 294 | 107 | 401 |
| 2015 | 287 | 178 | 465 |
| 2016 | 334 | 227 | 561 |
| **Total** | **1157** | **752** | **1909** |

**Table 6**
**Number of Child Abuse Reports for Special Needs Children from 2012 to 2016**

| Year | Special Needs Children |
|---|---|
| 2012 | 0 |
| 2013 | 0 |
| 2014 | 5 |
| 2015 | 0 |
| 2016 | 2 |
| **Total** | **7** |

3.2. During the period 2012 to 2016, the MOE's data indicated that the number of child sexual abuse cases in Table 7 had also increased. However, the number of teenage pregnancies fluctuated during the same period as highlighted in Table 8.

**Table 7**
**Number of Child Sexual Abuse Cases from 2012 to 2016**

| Year | Primary School | Secondary School |
|---|---|---|
| 2012 | **29** | **31** |
| 2013 | **19** | **39** |
| 2014 | **67** | **32** |
| 2015 | **83** | **83** |
| 2016 | **165** | **110** |
| **Total** | **363** | **295** |

**Table 8**
**Teenage Pregnancies in Schools in Trinidad and Tobago**

| Year | Primary School | Secondary School |
|---|---|---|
| 2012 | **2** | **32** |
| 2013 | **3** | **16** |
| 2014 | **0** | **2** |
| 2015 | **0** | **0** |
| 2016 | **1** | **29** |
| **Total** | **6** | **79** |

3.3. According to the TTPS, from 2009 to 2016 there were 13,838 reports in which children were victims. A detailed breakdown is provided in Appendix VII.

3.4. The Child Welfare League records stated that younger girls are becoming involved in sexual acts and girls from twelve (12) years old are pregnant. As at February 03, 2017, the eldest mother in the League's programme was fifteen (15) years old.

## Programmes and Services for Child Abuse and Teenage Pregnancy

### *Challenges to Measure Child Protection Systems*

3.5. There is an absence of a one-size-fits-all approach to evaluate the adequacy of programmes and services for child protection systems. However, international standards[12] submitted by the CATT includes:

- ✓ Information about the service
- ✓ Child safeguarding
- ✓ Compliance with national regulations
- ✓ Equality and non-discrimination
- ✓ Child participation
- ✓ Staff experience, training and support
- ✓ Placement, planning and review
- ✓ Privacy
- ✓ Case management
- ✓ Records
- ✓ Effectiveness

### *Student Support Services Division, Ministry of Education*

#### Programmes and Services for Students

3.6. The SSSD, MOE provides programmes and services to address physical, sexual, psychological and verbal abuse. There are preventative and responsive programmes delivered classroom sessions and a list of preventative and responsive programmes is provided in Appendix IV Table 1. The MOE also has other programmes and services targeted to students affected by child abuse and teenage pregnancy such as:

- Parenting-in-Education Programme
- After School Study Programmes
- Learning Enhancement Centres
- Health and Family Life Education (HFLE)
- Individual, Group and Family Counselling
- Group Therapy for Abused Children
- Home and Family Intervention
- Psycho-educational Evaluations
- Consultations
- Multi-Disciplinary Team
- Child Care and Protection
- Therapy

[12] Meri Ghorkhmazyan, Meri and Denise StuckenbruckPaper entitled, Measuring the hard to measure: Global child protection indicators. 2013 International Society for Child Indicators Conference. May 30, 2013. Seoul, South Korea.
https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/sites/default/files/documents/p4_ghorkhmazyan1.pdf

- Teacher Education/Sensitization Sessions
- Classroom Debriefing Sessions
- Home and Community Visits
- Advocacy
- Assessments (Individual Intake, Social Functioning, Home Visit, Functional Behaviour)

## Programmes and Services for Teenage Parents

3.7. The programmes that are specifically designed to assist teenaged mothers and fathers are:

- Parenting-in-Education Programme;
- After School Study Programmes;
- Individual, Group and Therapeutic Programmes; and
- Academic Development Programmes.

## Programmes and Services for Principals, Parents/Guardians and Teachers

3.8. The SSSD, MOE has the responsibility for the delivery of information and awareness programmes to principals, parents/guardians and teachers. Several systems for supervision to reduce the opportunities for child abuse on school compounds includes camera installations, presence of school safety officers and supervision and monitoring of high risk areas.

## Intervention Procedure for Child Abuse Reports

3.9. The intervention process used by the School Social Work Unit in child abuse cases is provided in Appendix V Table 1.

## Procedure for Teenage Pregnancy Reports

3.10. The MOE is guided by Circular Memorandum 76 of 2008 dated September 02, 2008 for reports of child sexual abuse in Appendix VI. In the case of reports of teenage pregnancy as a result of sexual abuse the standard procedure is provided in Table 1 of Appendix III.

## Procedure for Staff Abuse Reports

3.11. Reports of child abuse by teachers are sent to the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) for investigation, report and disciplinary action. Pursuant to Circular No. 76 dated September 02, 2008 and Circular No. 25 dated June 03, 2014, any allegation of sexual misconduct involving a staff member is sent from the District School Supervisor to the TSC and within twenty-four (24) hours. The School Social Worker/Parent/Principal is also responsible for submitting a report to CPU as well as to the School Supervisor.

3.12. Over the past five (5) years, eight (8) teachers were charged for sexual abuse. As at February 23, 2017, there were thirty one (31) physical abuse cases and twelve (12) sexual abuse cases before the TSC.

## Procedure for Child to Child Abuse Reports

3.13. Reports of child to child abuse are investigated and the child victim is provided support by the SSSD or through referral to external agencies. In severe cases, a child aggressor is suspended and referred to the Learning Enhancement Centres for assessment and intervention.

## Achievements and Challenges

3.14. The achievements and challenges of the MOE's programmes and services are provided in Table 9.

**Table 9**
**Achievements and Challenges of the Child Abuse Programmes of the SSSD, MOE**

| Achievements | Challenges |
|---|---|
| **Preventative Programmes**<br>Increased student awareness of how to identify and report inappropriate sexual advances and abuse of any type;<br><br>Increased awareness of school personnel subsequent to sensitization information at Fraternity and Principal meetings; | Apparent societal culture of acceptance of violence<br><br>Response time of the TTPS and other agencies (CPU and CATT);<br><br>Limited staff to student ratios to deliver programmes |

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| Increased student awareness of how to inform an adult and seek help;<br><br>Increased involvement by parents in children's lives following Parent in Education Programmes;<br><br>**Metrics to Measure Success of Preventative Programmes:**<br>✓ pre and post sample surveys;<br>✓ oral questioning post sessions;<br>✓ session records of self-referral and peer-referrals;<br>✓ collation of referrals from SSSD records;<br>✓ PTA attendance records. The metric is the percentage of parents who attend PTA and PiE sessions;<br>✓ data from teacher, principal and parent consultations;<br>✓ school academic records.<br><br>**Treatment Programmes**<br><br>Increased resiliency and coping skills in students who are referred for child abuse;<br><br>The successful inter-agency collaboration and intervention to assist child;<br><br>Students are able to continue and progress in school.<br><br>**Metrics to Measure Success of Treatment Programmes:**<br>✓ number of parents who report making adjustments in their parenting style;<br>✓ parental involvement in school activities;<br>✓ student feedback on specific questions to test knowledge of child abuse;<br>✓ academic performance. | Additional resources required for improved efficiency to deliver services;<br><br>Contract officers deliver programmes and service and are subject to employment uncertainties and uncertain terms and conditions. e.g. 100% of School Social Workers and 64% of Guidance Staff, 100% Special Education staff are contracted officers;<br><br>Inter-agency sharing of data and duplication of data;<br><br>Sustaining of parental engagement;<br><br>Limited facilities for students to be placed in the event that they have to go to "A Place of Safety";<br><br>Only one (1) home in the country to facilitate teenage mothers;<br><br>Limited facilities that meet the standard criteria of the CATT. |

## *Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago*

### Programmes and Services

3.15. The Authority's provides many programmes for aiding children who are victims of child abuse and child sexual abuse. A list of public education activities from the Authority that were held with the media for the period January 2016 to December 2016 and services can be found in Appendix IV Table 2 and 3.

3.16. The Authority together with the other relevant stakeholders is currently developing the Draft Trinidad and Tobago National Child Abuse Protocol that will coordinate the guidelines and responsibilities for all the child service agencies.

3.17. The CATT provides programmes and services to victims of child abuse including:

- Academic and vocational programming
- Engaging in advocacy
- Case Management
- Referral for services such as:
  - parent training,
  - mentorship,
  - external counselling and psychotherapy,
- Facilitating supervised access
- Delivery of counselling and psychotherapy
  - psycho-educational assessments

3.18. In 2016, CATT participated in Outreach Activities conducted by other agencies across Trinidad and Tobago and other activities planned for 2017 are:

- Sensitization sessions at primary and secondary schools;
- Appealing to members of the public to be vigilant and report all incidents or suspicions of child abuse;
- Sensitization sessions for sport and youth groups (religious and secular); and
- Outreach activities or community caravans.

## Programmes and Services for Pregnant Teenager

3.19. The services available to assist pregnant teenagers are:

- Counselling;
- Medical support;
- Life Skills and Parenting Skills Training; and
- Advice to the mother on the placement options available to her for the new baby. e.g. adoption and foster care.

## Procedure for Teenage Pregnancy Reports

3.20. In the case of reports of teenage pregnancy as a result of sexual abuse the standard procedure is provided in Table 2 of Appendix III.

## Achievements and Challenges

3.21. The achievements and challenges of the CATT's programmes are provided in Table 10.

**Table 10**
**Achievements and Challenges of the CATT's Child Abuse Programmes**

| Achievements | Challenges |
|---|---|
| Establishment of Child Support Centre (CSC) to provide emergency and short-term placement to facilitate the instantaneous removal of children to a location that is secure, child-friendly and professionally staffed. From May 18, 2015 to December 13, 2016 there were 260 medical checks, 36 medical screening examinations, 127 debriefing sessions with residents, 236 individual counselling sessions and 2 group therapy sessions.<br><br>Total supervised access visits for the period November 2015 to September 2016 were 477.<br><br>Client progress | Limited staff<br><br>Limited spaces at Community Residences for the placement of children in need of care and protection<br><br>Difficulty to provide regular monitoring of all clients as each Case worker in the Child and Family Services Unit has a caseload of at least 280 cases<br><br>Due to funding challenges there are fewer referral options to ensure clients continue to receive cared after leaving CATT's Authority's direct care. e.g. National Mentorship Programme and the Adolescent Mothers Programme are not fully operational.<br><br>Programmes are only available during a particular time frame/ cycle, therefore clients |

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| | usually have to wait months before accessing them such as YTEPP and Servol.<br><br>Timeliness of getting positive feedback for the necessary interventions.<br><br>Insufficient external agencies that provide specialised services for abuse victims.<br><br>Limited programmes available to treat with specific problem behaviours that are a direct result of the abuse.<br><br>Challenges to access interventions for those that reside in remote areas. |

## *Child Protection Unit, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service*

### Programmes and Services for Child Abuse

3.22. The TTPS has increased the level of public awareness of child abuse through the Community Policing Secretariat, CPU, the VWSU and the media. A list of the programmes and services are provided in Appendix IV Table 4.

### Services for Teenage Adolescents

3.23. The Victim and Witness Support Unit TTPS provides support groups for adolescents in general, including:

- Raising and Empowering Adolescent Lives- Homicide Office;
- Sexual Offences Teen Support Group – Arouca Police Station;
- Teen Support Group – Couva Police Station; and
- Sex and Sexuality Workshop for teen sexual abuse victims- Arima Police Station.

### Procedure for Investigating Child Abuse Reports

3.24. The process map for the investigation of child abuse reports is provided in Appendix V Table 3. In the case of reports of teenage pregnancy as a result of sexual abuse the VWSU policy requires the following actions:

- Report information to the CPU within the Division for investigation;

- Client (both victim and familial systems) are counselled by either the VWSU or CATT;
- CATT attends to the overall care of child which includes safety, medical, psychological as well as legal needs that arise.

## Training for Child Abuse Cases

3.25. The Advanced Programmes Unit of the Police Training Academy conducts training in collaboration with non-governmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders to equip staff with the necessary knowledge and skills to deal with cases of child abuse and child sexual abuse. The training focuses on the following topics:

- Domestic Violence
- Human Trafficking
- Psychological Development of Children
- Interviewing of Children
- Forensic Interviewing of Child and Adolescent Victims
- Emotional Intelligence
- Children Act, Chap. 46:01

## Achievements and Challenges

3.26. The achievements and challenges of the CPU's programmes and services are provided in Table 11.

**Table 11**
**Achievements and Challenges of the Child Abuse Programmes of the CPU, TTPS**

| Achievements | Challenges |
|---|---|
| Number of perpetrators arrested and charged<br><br>Number of matters referred to the CATT<br><br>Number assisted interventions conducted of CATT<br><br>Number of removals from abusive homes<br><br>Timely investigations that led to the arrest and charging of individuals (1,410 cases were investigated from March 27, 2015 to March 2016)<br><br>Sensitizing communities through schools and other organizations about new | Limited human resources to provide 24 hour coverage and immediate response lead to prioritization of reports. Vacancies not filled.<br><br>Inadequate compliment of vehicles<br><br>Lack of child-friendly places to accommodate victims for interviewing at some police stations<br><br>Lack of cooperation from some district medical practitioners<br><br>Long medical appointment dates by medical personnel at CATT at their assessment centre for medical examination |

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| offences created under the new Children's Act 12 of 2012 as well as the function of the child Protection unit<br><br>Regaining public trust where persons shared information about other illegal activities not relating to child abuse and child sexual abuse and this information given to other TTPS Units/Sections which resulted in successful detection of offences. | Refusal by medical personnel at CATT to exam victims who fall within Section 20 which is decriminalizing of sexual activity between children **(Romeo Clause)**<br><br>Refusal by medical personnel to examine pregnant teenagers<br><br>Lack of safe houses and residences for children when removals are required to be done<br><br>Lack of cooperation from parents/guardians of some victims |

## ***National Family Services Division (NFSD), Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS)***

### Counselling Services

3.27. The NFSD of the MSDFS provides counselling to support children, parents and/or guardians of victims of child abuse/child sexual abuse. With respect to victims of child abuse, the Social Worker seeks:

- to enhance self-esteem because the child/children may feel unworthy and unimportant and may be experiencing guilt and self-blame;
- to encourage the victim to express their fears and ventilate their feelings.

3.28. With respect to parents of the child abuse victim, the Social Worker seeks:

- to sensitize parents/guardians to convey support for the child;
- to encourage parents to take time to listen to their children and to reassure them that they will do what it takes to protect them; and
- to enhance parental skills via sensitization on anger management, improving communication and alternative methods of disciplining children.

## Radio Programme

3.29. The programme 'It's Family Time Let's Talk' is conducted once a week and covers a number of family life issues such as, 'How to Recognize Child Abuse and How to Get Help'.

## Referrals

3.30. Upon receipt an initial report of child abuse an initial interview and a psycho-social assessment are conducted with the child and the parents or legal guardians. Thereafter, referrals are made to the CPU and CATT and networking with stakeholders regarding specific information related to cases and referrals.

## Procedure for Teenage Pregnancy Reports

3.31. The process for reports of teenage pregnancy as a result of child abuse is provided in Table 3 of Appendix III.

## Achievements and Challenges

3.32. The overall challenges for the NFSD are staff shortages in the area of Professional Social Workers, limited substantive positions and limited financial resources to execute its programmes. The achievements and challenges specific to its programmes are provided in Table 12.

**Table 12**
**Achievements and Challenges of the Child Abuse Programmes of the NFSD, MSDFS**

| Programme | Achievements | Challenges |
|---|---|---|
| Counselling | For the Fiscal Year 2015/2016, counselling offered to four thousand and seventy (4070) persons. There were one hundred and thirty seven (137) interventions with respect to child abuse and thirty (30) interventions for child sexual abuse. | The reluctance of parents to engage in discussions on human sexuality.<br><br>The unwillingness of parents to follow through with cases of child abuse/child sexual abuse. Some parents have indicated that the process is |

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| | | lengthy and time consuming especially in the preparation of the police reports. |
| Radio Programme | Subsequent self-referrals and requests for lectures and workshops on the topic of child abuse by individuals, community groups and organizations. There is follow up support and rehabilitation as long as is required. | - |

## ***Choices Adolescent Mothers Programme, Teenage Pregnancy Programme***

3.33. The Adolescent Mothers Programme of the Child Welfare League assists teenaged mothers through their pregnancies with the goal of preventing a second pregnancy of the mother in her teenage years. During this day-programme, teenage mothers are trained in vocational skills and remedial academics.

3.34. Adolescent Mothers Centres offer day care services, individual and group counselling, skills training, literacy training and academic courses, health and nutrition information, parenting courses and personal development training. In addition, individual counseling and family intervention sessions are held to develop a better relations between the teenage mother, parents and siblings.

3.35. In instances where the CATT refers a child to the Choices Programme, the assigned officer monitors the child for the duration of the programme and continues to monitor the child to ensure there is sufficient support from other agencies and family members.

## *The Shelter, Teenage Pregnancy Programme*

3.36. The Shelter provides direct services to survivors of physical and emotional abuse and their children. Residents are required to meet with a counsellor as a condition of stay.

3.37. Direct services include providing a safe physical space for survivors of violence and their children through maintenance of a shelter facility. Other services include accommodation, counselling, dental care, education and skills training, legal aid, job placement, clothing, food and relocation assistance.

## *UNICEF-Supported Policies in the Area of Child Abuse*

3.38. The Child-Friendly Schools Framework was developed by UNICEF as an inclusive, healthy and protective for all children, effective with children and involved with families and communities and is based on the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child. A rights-based, child friendly school has two (2) basic characteristics:

- It is a child-seeking school that is, actively identifying excluded children to get them enrolled in school and included in learning, treating children as subjects with rights and state as duty-bearers with obligations to fulfil these rights, and demonstrating, promoting, and helping to monitor the rights and well-being of all children in the community.

- It is a child-centered school, that is, acting in the best interests of the child, leading to the realization of the child's full potential, and concerned both about the "whole" child (including health, nutritional status, and well-being) and about what happens to children — in their families and communities – before they enter school and after they leave it, including helping to defend and protect all children from abuse and harm.

3.39. It should also be noted that:

- UNICEF is supporting the Government of Trinidad and Tobago through the MSDFS to review and reform its social protection programming through a child-sensitive lens;

- UNICEF is providing technical support to the OPM for the development of a National Child Policy;

- In 2012, UNICEF conducted a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in Trinidad and Tobago that seeks to fill the international data gaps for monitoring the situation of children and women. As at December 21, 2016, the MICS conducted in Trinidad and Tobago is yet to be officially cleared by the Government for public release and use in decision-making.

## *Challenges to Address Child Abuse, UNICEF*

3.40. According to UNICEF, addressing the issue of child sexual abuse requires collaboration from the disciplines of health, education, psychology, law enforcement and justice, vocational training and social work, amongst others. The following challenges to implement policy were submitted with respect to Trinidad and Tobago:

- lack of financial resources and professional capacity, conflicting agendas among stakeholders and differences in understanding of the issues;

- coordination difficulties between stakeholders, between government ministries and between Government and non-governmental organizations and the absence of key focal points for coordination;

- stakeholders have different resources and funding priorities;

- policies often do not accommodate realistic funding to implement the intended activities, either leaving activities unaccomplished or placing the burden of attracting funds on the non-governmental organizations;

## Objective 2: To determine the adequacy of legislation in protecting children from abuse

3.41. Section 20 of the Children's Act, Chap. 46:01 also known as the 'Romeo Clause', provides for the decriminalisation of sexual activity amongst children as it seeks to protect children who engage in sexual experimentation. However, this section can cause

difficulties for child protection agencies to determine whether there was criminal intent in the act, as it is only applicable if the children's ages are within two years of each other.

3.42. The Education Act, Chap. 39:01 provides the guidelines for the operation of the schools in Trinidad and Tobago. However, it does not include a provision for sexual education to be taught in schools.

3.43. Schedule 5 of the Family and Children Division Act, 2016 altered the scope of the responsibility of the Children's Authority:

- to appoint an intermediary in cases where a police is conducting and interview with a child; (See Table 2 Appendix VI)

3.44. The list of further legislative amendments identified by the CATT in order to improve its operations in the area of child abuse are provided in Appendix VI.

# FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Findings- Objective 1

### To examine the adequacy of programmes and services for detection, reduction and treatment of child abuse and teenage pregnancy.

***Adequacy of Child Abuse Programmes and Services***

**Common Challenges**

4.1. During the inquiry process, the Committee was informed that the primary problem for the CPU, SSSD and the CATT is inadequate funding for the various programmes necessary to support the rehabilitation and protection of the children who have been victims of abuse or sexual abuse. The SSSD, CPU and the CATT are also understaffed with professionals to manage the caseloads, to provide long-term intervention services and a coordinated prevention strategy in the area of child abuse.

4.2. UNICEF and CATT identified that there are difficulties with inter-agency collaboration and coordination involved in the detection, reduction and treatment of child abuse in Trinidad and Tobago. The Committee noted that the Draft Trinidad and Tobago National Child Abuse Protocol: A Guide for Stakeholders had not been approved and finalised.

4.3. The Committee noted the difficulties experienced by the MOE to aggregate the child abuse data in schools due to confidentiality issues and high staff turnover. However, parallel systems exist in other agencies such as the CPIMS of the CATT that triages public calls and the Crime and Problem Analysis Branch of the TTPS that processes investigation data.

**Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago**

4.4. The Committee is pleased that one of the outputs of the current strategic review of CATT's operations to date, is to develop a prevention strategy for child abuse and child sexual abuse based on empirical evidence.

4.5. The Committee was pleased that during the period May 2015 to December 2016, 129 children received care at the Child Support Centre, CATT. The Committee was also pleased that in 2017 the CATT plans to target the communities with the highest rates of child abuse and child sexual abuse including San Juan/ Laventille, Tunapuna/Piarco and Couva/ Tabaquite/ Talparo.

4.6. The Committee was concerned that as at January 13, 2017, the CATT was operating at fifty-two percent of its human resources capacity with 124 out of 242 approved staff only. This had impacted the level of service delivery of child abuse services including Assessment (48% approved staff), Child and Family Services (22% approved staff), Adoption and Foster Care at (24% approved staff) and Investigation at (54% approved staff).

4.7. The Committee noted in Appendix V, the additional areas submitted by the CATT that require improvement in order to provide adequate programmes and services in the area of child abuse. The CATT also highlighted a number of infrastructural deficits of the community residences, assessment centres and reception centres.

**Ministry of Education**

4.8. The Committee was pleased that the success rate for MOE's programmes and services included:

- ✓ 100% of students receive professional intervention upon referral for incidents of child abuse;

- ✓ 95% of students remain in school or attend alternative programmes subsequent to teenage pregnancy;
- ✓ 80% of students are aware of how to identify and report child abuse;
- ✓ 98% of students remain in school or attend alternative programmes subsequent to child abuse interventions.

4.9. The Committee was pleased that the SSSD, MOE has ongoing training sessions for teachers in order to facilitate the identification of symptoms of child abuse.

4.10. The Committee was concerned that staff constraints had led to the prioritization of responsive approaches rather than a proactive approach to child abuse reports. For example, the ratio of School Social Workers in Primary Schools is 1:7, the ratio of School Social Workers in Secondary Schools is 1:3, the ratio of Guidance Officers in Primary Schools is 1:3, the ratio of Guidance Officers in Secondary Schools is 1:1 and a maximum of one (1) Clinical Psychologist in each Education District.

4.11. The Committee was pleased that the MOE has Circular Memorandum No. 76 entitled 'Procedures for all School Personnel Re: Matters of Child Sexual Abuse' mandating the protocol for principals of schools to whom child abuse or child sexual abuse was reported.

4.12. The Committee was concerned that as at February 03, 2017, the MOE had an estimated 117 child abuse cases involving teachers at the Teaching Service Commission and that 19 of the 117 are sexual abuse cases with offences ranging from touching, sexting, hugging and sexual intercourse.

4.13. According to the CATT's Statistical Bulletin[13] for the period May 18, 2015 to February 17, 2016, the incidence of child abuse appeared to be higher during school holidays and over

[13] Statistical Bulletin: Nine Months & Counting, May 18 2015 to February 17, 2016. Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago.
http://ttchildren.org/images/pdf/CA%209Mths%20&%20Counting%20Stat%20Bulletin%20Final.pdf

a quarter of all cases involved children under the age of six. However, the Committee noted that the MOE's programmes for Early Childhood Care and Education are provided based on request only.

**Trinidad and Tobago Police Service**

4.14. The Committee was pleased that the TTPS had developed a Child Protection and Awareness in-service twelve month diploma programme to improve its level of effectiveness to treat with child abuse cases.

4.15. The Committee was pleased that CPU together with the Community Policing Unit has embarked on an Outreach programme to sensitise citizens on the topic of child abuse and child sexual abuse as well as to target areas with high incidences of child abuse reports.

4.16. The Committee was pleased that five (5) additional Victim and Witness Support Officers and one (1) Manager would be employed at the VWSU by the end of third quarter of February 2017.

4.17. The Committee found that in order to prosecute the perpetrator of the offence committed, the TTPS must have the support of the victim, in the form of a statement before taking the matter before the court. However, there is rarely support by the victim to move forward with teenage pregnancy charges.

4.18. The Committee noted the proposed recommendations to improve the level of support for victims of child abuse in Appendix VIII.

**Child Welfare League**

4.19. The Committee noted that the Child Welfare League's records, indicated an increase in teenage pregnancy in the south-western area of Trinidad. However, there is an absence of operations of this organisation in the south-western area of Trinidad.

4.20. The Child Welfare League indicated to the Committee there is an increase in the number of teenaged mothers impregnated by their stepfathers and males twenty five (25) years old and over.

4.21. The Committee is pleased that the Child Welfare League is reviewing its programme to include the parents of the teenaged mothers, as well as additional community outreach and parenting courses.

**UNICEF**

4.22. The Committee noted that as at December 21, 2016, the implementation process for the UNICEF Child-Friendly Schools Framework had begun in Tobago in collaboration with the THA. However, UNICEF is awaiting an expression of interest from the MOE, Trinidad.

**Stakeholder Relationships**

4.23. According to the MOE and TTPS, there is a need to review, strengthen and formalise collaboration amongst stakeholders with respect to programmes and services in the area of child abuse.

***Adequacy of Teenage Pregnancy Programmes and Services***

4.24. The Committee noted that the CATT does not have a designated programme for teenage mothers and utilizes the Choices Adolescent Mother's Program of the Child Welfare League. It was also expressed that the Choices Program, which is one of the two (2) facilities which accept pregnant teenagers, is not operating at full capacity.

4.25. The Committee was pleased that the programme encourages daily attendance in order for teenaged mothers to return to secondary school.

## Recommendations

4.26. **The Committee recommends the finalisation of the Trinidad and Tobago National Child Abuse Protocol: A Guide for Stakeholders by July 2017.**

4.27. **The Committee recommends that the Office of the Prime Minister seek additional funding to address the infrastructural deficits at the Community Residences and Rehabilitation Centres.**

4.28. **The Committee acknowledges the programmes and services provided by the agencies and suggests that the agencies broaden programmes and sensitisation sessions to ensure a wider range of awareness amongst the population.**

4.29. **The Committee recommends that the MOE introduce regular sexual education programmes and sensitisation sessions in primary and secondary schools, to minimise the number of students becoming sexually active during the ages of ten (10) to seventeen (17).**

4.30. **The Committee suggests that increased child sexual abuse sensitisation sessions be conducted in the south-western area of Trinidad by the CATT and TTPS.**

4.31. **The Committee recommends that the OPM increase the funding to the CATT to allow for increased child abuse programmes and services.**

4.32. **The Committee recommends that the MOE, the TTPS and the CATT take steps to reduce the critical shortage of qualified human resources at their facilities.**

4.33. **The Committee recommends that the Ministry of National Security through the TTPS increase the budgetary allocation for the CPU to increase the number of units available in each division of the TTPS especially for the larger divisions.**

## Findings - Objective 2

### To determine the adequacy of legislation in protecting children from abuse.

4.34. The Committee found that the Education Act, Chap. 39:01 currently used by the MOE does not include a provision mandating sex education in schools. It was proposed that sexual education can be part of the school curriculum as an appropriate and practical mean of protecting young girls against teenage pregnancy by empowering them to understand their rights under the law.

4.35. During the hearing, the Committee was informed of the difficulties of recognising criminal intent in cases where the Romeo Clause could be exploited as a defence. As such there may be times when cases of sexual abuse amongst children cannot be prosecuted.

4.36. The Committee noted that the age of criminal responsibility with regard to sexual crimes is twelve (12) years old, as such, the Romeo Clause does not necessarily or automatically debar a twelve (12) year old child from facing prosecution if it is found that they were coerced, involved in or perpetrated a sexual crime.

4.37. The Family and Child Division Act (FCDA), 2016 has not yet been proclaimed and this has resulted in the inability of the agencies to adequately aid the victims of child abuse and child sexual abuse for the duration of the case. Schedule 5 of the Family and Child Division Act, 2016, seeks to expand the abilities of the CATT through the Children's Authority Act, Chap 46:10 as well as amend other child related Acts including the Young Offenders Detention Act, Chap 13:05, the Adoption of Children Act, 2000, Status of

Children Act, Chap 46:07, the Children's Community Residences, Foster Care and Nurseries Act No. 65 of 2000 and the Children Act No. 12 of 2012.

## Recommendations

4.38. **Given the amendments to the child related Acts proposed in Schedule 5 of the FCDA, the Committee recommends that Schedule 5 of the FCDA be proclaimed as soon as possible to implement the amendments in the Act.**

4.39. **The Committee recommends the MOE create a policy that mandate the teaching of sexual education to the students in both primary and secondary schools.**

Your Committee respectfully submits this Report for the consideration of Parliament.

Sgd.
Dr. Nyan Gadsby Dolly, MP
Chairman

Sgd.
Mr. Kazim Hosein
Member

Sgd.
Mr. Randall Mitchell, MP
Member

Sgd.
Mrs. Glenda Jennings-Smith, MP
Member

Sgd.
Mrs. Vidia Gayadeen-Gopeesingh, MP
Member

Sgd.
Mr. Dennis Moses
Member

Sgd.
Mr. Rodger Samuel
Member

Sgd.
Dr. Dhanayshar Mahabir
Member

**May 19, 2017**

# APPENDIX I
# MINUTES

**EXCERPT OF MINUTES OF THE TWELFTH MEETING OF THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY, HELD IN THE J. HAMILTON MAURICE ROOM, MEZZANINE FLOOR, TOWER D PORT OF SPAIN INTERNATIONAL WATERFRONT CENTRE, 1A WRIGHTSON ROAD, PORT OF SPAIN ON FRIDAY FEBRUARY 3, 2017**

**Present**

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|---|---|
| Dr. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly, MP | Chairman |
| Mrs. Vidia Gayadeen-Gopeesingh, MP | Member |
| Mr. Rodger Samuel | Member |
| Mr. Randall Mitchell, MP | Member |
| Mrs. Glenda Jennings-Smith | Member |
| Mr. Kazim Hosein | Member |
| Mr. Dennis Moses | Member |

**Secretariat**

| | |
|---|---|
| Ms. Candice Skerrette | Secretary |
| Mrs. Angelique Massiah | Assistant Secretary |
| Ms. Khisha Peterkin | Assistant Secretary |
| Ms. Aaneesa Baksh | Parliamentary Intern |

**Absent/Excused**

| | |
|---|---|
| Dr. Dhanayshar Mahabir | Member [Excused] |

**Student Support Services Division, Ministry of Education**

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|---|---|
| Mrs. Lenor Baptiste-Simmons | Permanent Secretary |
| Mr. Harrilal Seecharan | Chief Education Officer |
| Mr. Ashram Deoraj | Director, School Supervision & Management Division |
| Ms. Darlene Smith | Guidance Officer II |

**Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago**

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|---|---|
| Ms. Safiya Noel | Director |
| Ms. Christalle Gemon | Deputy Director- Care, Legal and Regulatory Services |
| Ms. Sharlene Jaggernauth | Manager, Legal Services |

**Child Protection Unit, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service**

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|---|---|
| Mr. Stephen Williams | Commissioner of Police (Ag.) |
| Ms. Beverly Rodriguez | Acting Superintendent |
| Ms. Beverly Paul | SRP Inspector |

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| Ms. Bernadette Sealy | Victim and Witness Support Officer |

**Child Welfare League**

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| Ms. Bernadette F. Mckie | Executive Director |
| Ms. Claudia Boodoosingh | Regional Co-ordinator Eastern Region |

**Public Hearing**

9.1 The meeting reconvened at 10:35 a.m. in the J. Hamilton Maurice Room.

9.2 The Chairman welcomed and thanked the Officials for attending. Introductions were made.

9.3 The Chairman provided the inquiry objectives and acknowledged receipt stakeholder submissions from Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, UNICEF and the Institute of Gender, UWI, St. Augustine.

9.4 The Chairman invited opening statements from:

- Ms. Safiya Noel, Director, Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago;
- Ms. Lenor Baptiste- Simmons, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education;
- Mr Stephen Williams, Acting Commissioner of Police; and
- Ms. Bernadette F. McKie, Executive Director, Child Welfare League of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Summary of Discussions**

10.1 The following issues arose during discussions with the officials *(for further details, please see the verbatim notes)*:

i. The detection rate of sexual abuse in primary schools, inclusive of the following associated matters:
   a) Challenges within the system to aggregate data;
   b) The need for a Monitoring and Evaluation Unit within the Ministry of Education;
   c) The sources of reports on sexual abuse and child pregnancies;
   d) The need for collaboration with the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS);
   e) The methods used to track absent students;
   f) The procedure to treat with parents who are aware of their child's abuse but who fail to deal with it; and

g) The discrepancies in the statistics supplied to the Committee by the TTPS and those TTPS provided to the Trinidad Guardian (see article dated January 26, 2017).

ii. The detection of psychological effects on abused children;

iii. The need to finalise the Draft Trinidad and Tobago National Child Abuse Protocol: A Guide for Stakeholders;

iv. The accessibility of Guidance Officers within Primary Schools following reports of child abuse;

v. Determination of the overall decrease of sexual abuse but the apparent increase of incidences of sexual offences in schools;

vi. The need for long term interventions to reduce the incidents of child abuse;

vii. The need for a Prevention Strategy;

viii. The low charge rate of fathers who impregnate teenage girls;

ix. The high percentage of mothers responsible for child abuse and what can be done to reduce the incidence of abuse by mothers;

x. The lack of programmes available in geographical areas with high incidences of teenage pregnancies;

xi. The adequacy of the *"Romeo"* clause;

xii. The Ministry of Education's tracking mechanisms for abuse cases in schools;

xiii. The Children's Authority's tracking mechanisms for abuse cases in orphanages;

xiv. The percentage of teenage girls which return to the Child Welfare League with another pregnancy;

xv. Whether teachers have ever been victimized or threatened by parents of an abused child;

xvi. Recent allegations of abuse at the School for the Blind; and

xvii. The definition of *"serious indecency"*.

10.2 The Chairman allowed the following persons to make closing statements:

- Ms. Safiya Noel, Director, Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago;
- Ms. Lenor Baptiste- Simmons, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education;
- Mr. Stephen Williams, Acting Commissioner of Police; and
- Ms. Bernadette F. Mckie, Executive Director, Child Welfare League of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Request for Written Submissions**

11.1 During the public hearing, written submissions were requested on:

- The number of child abuse reports from 2009 to 2016 inclusive of sex, police division; age group and type of abuse; (Trinidad and Tobago Police Service);
- The number of child abuse cases over the past five years that the Ministry of Education were brought before the courts on account of being vicariously liable; (Ministry of Education)
- The detection rate of child abuse by the Student Support Services Division over the past five years; (Ministry of Education) and
- The number of abuse cases reported for special needs children over the past five years. (Ministry of Education)

**Adjournment**

12.1 The Chairman provided a summary of the discussions, thanked everyone who attended and thereafter adjourned the meeting at 12:45 p.m.

I certify that the Minutes are true and correct.

Chairman

Secretary

*February 10, 2017*

# APPENDIX II
# Verbatim Notes

**VERBATIM NOTES OF THE TWELFTH MEETING OF THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY HELD IN THE ARNOLD THOMASOS ROOM (WEST), LEVEL 6, (IN CAMERA) AND J. HAMILTON MAURICE ROOM (MEZZANINE FLOOR) (IN PUBLIC), OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENT, TOWER D, THE PORT OF SPAIN INTERNATIONAL WATERFRONT CENTRE, #1A WRIGHTSON ROAD, PORT OF SPAIN, ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 03, 2017 AT 10.35 A.M.**

**PRESENT**

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| Dr. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly | Chairman |
| Mr. Kazim Hosein | Member |
| Mrs. Glenda Jennings-Smith | Member |
| Mr. Randall Mitchell | Member |
| Mrs. Vidia Gayadeen-Gopeesingh | Member |
| Mr. Dennis Moses | Member |
| Mr. Rodger Samuel | Member |
| Ms. Candice Skerrette | Secretary |
| Ms. Khisha Peterkin | Assistant Secretary |
| Mrs. Angelique Massiah | Assistant Secretary |
| Ms. Aaneesa Baksh | Parliamentary Intern |

**ABSENT**

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| Dr. Dhanayshar Mahabir | Member |

**OFFICIALS FROM THE CHILDREN'S AUTHORITY**

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| Mrs. Safiya Noel | Director |
| Ms. Christalle Gemon | Deputy Director – Care, Legal and Regulatory Services |
| Ms. Sharlene Jaggernauth | Manager – Legal Services |

**OFFICIALS FROM THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

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| Mrs. Lenor Baptiste-Simmons | Permanent Secretary – Ministry of Education |
| Mr. Harrilal Seecharan | Chief Education Officer |
| Mr. Ashram Deoraj | Director, School Supervision & Management Division |
| Ms. Darlene Smith | Guidance Officer II -Student Support Services Division |

**OFFICIALS FROM THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO POLICE SERVICE**

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| Mr. Stephen Williams | Commissioner of Police (Ag.) |
| Ms. Beverly Paul | SRP Inspector – Child Protection Unit |
| Ms. Beverly Rodriguez | Acting Superintendent – Child Protection Unit |
| Ms. Bernadette Sealy | Victim and Witness Support Officer – TTPS |

**OFICIALS FROM THE CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE**

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| Mrs. Bernadette F. Mckie | Executive Director |
| Ms. Claudia Boodoosingh | Regional Co-ordinator Eastern Region |

**Madam Chairman:** Good morning everyone. It is my pleasure to reconvene and to welcome the viewing and listening audience to the Twelfth Meeting of the Joint Select Committee on Human Rights, Equality and Diversity. This public hearing is being broadcast live on Parliament Channel 11, Parliament Radio 10.5 FM and the Parliament's YouTube Channel, *ParlView*.

I would like to welcome here with us, officials from the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, the Child Protection Unit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, as well as the Student Support Services Division of the Ministry of Education. My name is Dr. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly and I am the Chairman of this Joint Select Committee, and I would like now to invite the members of the Committee to introduce themselves starting with Sen. Samuel.

[*Introductions made by the members of the Committee*]

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you, Committee. And now I would like to ask the representatives who are here with us to introduce themselves as well. Please begin with the Children's Authority.

[*Introductions made by the Officials*]

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you so much for being here with us today. I am sorry. Please, continue.

[*Continuation of Introduction by the Officials*]

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you so much and sorry about that. Trinidad and Tobago has signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child, 1989, and the A World Fit for Children, 2002, which protects the right of children and includes a provision to protect children from all forms of abuse and violence. This morning we would have opened our newspapers to be greeted with two stories that are really very relevant to what we are doing here.

The first was the story about Wayne Griffith who has been charged with assaulting his six-year-old son, and the gruesome details of that assault really resonate with us as we look at what we are investing and enquiring about today in terms of child abuse. And the other one that resonate with us is the story that has been making the papers for a number of days with respect to young Tristan Khan, who has undergone bullying at school to the extent that he is now in the hospital with a broken arm and complications from that incident.

Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child states:

"Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally. Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them."

And as we look at Article 43 of A World Fit for Children, it states:

"Societies must eliminate all forms of violence against children...

(a)" Protecting them—"from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence;

(b) ...from the impact of armed conflict...

(c) ...from all forms of sexual exploitation including paedophilia; trafficking..." —et cetera.

And it goes on to talk about the different things that we need to protect children from.

Today, we are looking at child abuse in Trinidad and Tobago, and looking at the systems in place to protect children from child abuse and the legislation as well that goes along with that. So, as the enquiry has developed, the objectives of this enquiry today, specifically, are:

(a) to examine the adequacy of programmes and services for detection, reduction and treatment of child abuse and teenage pregnancy; and

(b) to determine the adequacy of legislation in protecting children from abuse.

This is something that is very important in our society generally, and specifically based on recent articles in our newspapers and things that have been going in our country, it really is critical that we take a look at how we are protecting our children.

I would like to remind viewers and listeners that you can send the Committee questions related to today's topic via email at parl101@ttparliament.org, or on our Facebook page at ttparliament, or Twitter @ttparliament.

At this time I would also like to acknowledge receipt of two stakeholders' submissions requested from the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, UNICEF, and the Institute of Gender, UWI, St. Augustine. At this point in time, I would like to invite the officials who are here with us to make brief opening statements. Again, we can start with the Children's Authority.

**Ms. Noel:** Good morning, Madam Chairman and members of the Committee. Thank you for having the Children's Authority at this enquiry. The overarching objective of the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago is to promote the well-being of all children, provide care and protection for vulnerable children, and ensure compliance with national legislation and obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Authority has been operational for a period of 20 months as the package of children's legislation was proclaimed in May 2015. At the Authority, six units are presently tasked with the responsibility to treat with child abuse reports and provide appropriate interventions. They work collaboratively and cross-functionally to achieve the ultimate goal of assessing the overall well-being of the

child, ensuring that the child is not at risk of danger or harm, and providing the best treatment and care recommendations for the child's rehabilitation.

The successes of the organization's interventions can be gaged by accessing whether persons receiving services such as counselling and psychotherapy, experience improvements in their symptoms and functioning across a range of life domains. Clients' and service providers' feedback is also a useful method utilized to measure the success of the Authority's interventions.

Most of the treatment interventions recommended for our clientele are not widely available in the public sector, and therefore, are very costly. In several cases the Authority has had to pay for these services ourselves. This, however, is not sustainable given the limited funds available to the authority. We therefore require additional funding to ensure that key services are accessed for our vulnerable clients. In cases of a child being pregnant as a result of sexual abuse, we focus on interventions that would secure the child's best interest such as placement, assessment and counselling. The monitoring of the child and her family after the birth of the baby is also critical.

While the staff in these six units work tirelessly in the best interest of the children, these units are not adequately staffed to respond to the volume of child abuse reports received. Consequently, there is an inevitable delay in the reports being investigated, children waiting to be assessed and children referred for interventions and case management. Additionally, the Authority is presently operating just over 50 per cent of its human resource capacity based on the approved establishment. So there is also an urgent need for expansion of the Authority staff.

There is also an urgent need for facilities within Trinidad and Tobago. Places of safety, reception centres, transition facilities, hostels and additional assessment centres are needed in order to meet the requirements of the legislation and the case load of the Authority. The absence of these facilities can compromise the quality of care provided to children in need of care and protection. Also, the Authority continues to advocate very strongly for the development of a national protocol for child abuse. This protocol it is hoped will be approved by the Cabinet, which would be binding on all relevant Ministries and their subsidiary agencies. To date, there is a draft national protocol on child abuse, enshrining all the agreed protocols with the stakeholders. However, the protocol requires finalization before implementation.

Comprehensive training and retraining, we see as also a critical factor as the professionals providing services to these children require that need to improve on skills constantly and to learn from the experiences had. Overall, the Authority works diligently with limited resources. Nevertheless, additional human resources and financial resources would go a long way in improving the service delivery to the children of Trinidad and Tobago.

So, Madam Chair and Committee members, thank you very much.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much. Could we have the statement from the Ministry of Education?

**Mrs. Baptiste-Simmons:** The Ministry of Education is charged with the responsibility for the holistic

development of learners, students in the education system. The Ministry of Education provides programmes and services to address the issue of child abuse and teenage pregnancy mainly through the Student Support Services Division. This unit was created by Cabinet in 2004 to provide services to students who have significant learning disabilities; need guidance for academic personal, social and career development; have emotional, behavioural and social difficulties; have learning, vision or mobility challenges; are gifted and talented; or are educationally disadvantaged.

The Ministry of Education applies the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services definition and the national legislative framework for child abuse by defining child abuse as any act or inaction on the part of a parent or caregiver which results in the neglect, physical harm, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a child 18 years and under.

The Ministry of Education, the services are divided into either preventative or responsive. The preventative programmes are built into the guidance curriculum of Trinidad and Tobago, which states that the primary goal seeks to impact specific skills and learning opportunities in a proactive and preventative manner. The curriculum consists of assisting students to develop attitude skills and knowledge to manage change successfully, accept and take responsibility for feelings, ensure personal safety and enhance relationship skills.

With respect to the responsive initiatives, the Ministry has taken a number—we have adopted quite a number of programmes and it really speaks to child rights and responsibilities and our target ordinance, our parents, our teachers, our students. We have initiated a number programmes: anti-bullying programmes; we have done support of understanding a special needs child; we have been looking at gang violence; understanding our teenagers. So we have adopted quite a number of programmes.

In implementing our programmes, we have noted a number of challenges, one of which critically is the staffing of our Student Support Services Division. That unit consists of around 500 persons, but we have recognized the ratio of guidance officers, school social workers to the number of student population and the number of incidents, that it seems and it appears that we need more of our guidance officers, or school social workers out there in the school system.

We have also been working with a number of stakeholders throughout Trinidad and Tobago in executing our programmes. A number of stakeholders that we have been working with include the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services through the Social Welfare and National Family Services; the Ministry of Health; the Office of the Prime Minister and Gender Affairs and Child Development; the Judiciary; the Ministry of National Security; CBOs/FBOs that include Mary Care, Choice is the Programme, Servol, Rape Crisis Association, Childline, Safe Home, Trinidad and Tobago Coalition Against Domestic Violence, YMCA, ALTA and Family Planning.

Looking at our data and looking at the incidents in our schools, we know that the Ministry of Education, again, has to develop partnerships. Partnerships have to work with the communities to develop

a number and a range of programmes that target and ensure that our children are safe, both on our schools compound as well as in our communities.

Thank you very much.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much. At this point I would like to recognize the representatives from the Child Welfare League—thank you so much for being here with us—and invite them to make their statement after the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service does their opening statement.

**Mr. Williams:** Hon. Chairman and members of the Committee, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service is the main law enforcement agency in Trinidad and Tobago, charged with the responsibility for addressing crime and criminality across the land by way of special focus as it relates to matters affecting children, both from an offender and a victim perspective. We have set up a specialized unit in a form of the Child Protection Unit since March 2015, and that unit carries out the responsibility of investigating matters relating to children. Since that time to now, that Unit has been given as much staff as we can provide.

At this point, we are building out additional members of staff for that unit. We have submitted to the Committee an extensive response to some of the questions that we have been posed to us and we are here today to add if there are any additional concerns and questions that the Committee has. So I have available a small team of the persons who are the experts. I am just here as the head of the organization to facilitate. Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you so much. Representatives from the Child Welfare League.

**Ms. Mckie:** Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. The Child Welfare League is a non-governmental organization. We have preschools and nurseries. We have been functioning for the past 99 years. What we are doing presently, we are more focus on the teenage pregnancy, where we have the teenage mothers attend our daily exercises. We tutor the girls in beauty culture, we give remedial academics so they can return to secondary school. Our main aim at the Choices Programme is to try to prevent a second pregnancy during their teenage age. Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much. At this time we are going to commence the questioning. I would like to remind members of the Committee, as well as officials, to direct any questions you may have through the Chair as we proceed in an orderly manner. If I may, I would like to open the questioning.

In examining the written submissions from the Ministry of Education, as well as from the TTPS, the Child Protection Unit, in 2014 the statistics given by the Ministry of Education indicated 99 cases of sexual abuse in both primary and secondary schools— 99 combined for primary and secondary schools. Based on the statistics given to us by the police service, there are two categories of offences, sex with a female between the ages of 14 and 16 and sex with a female under the age of 14, and both came up combined to 361 in the same year 2014. So 99 cases of sexual abuse from the Ministry of Education with respect to primary and secondary, to 362 based on the police service statistics with respect to sex with a female under 14 and up to 16. So every female, or most females in this country in that age group are usually enrolled in

school. If even we say that 25 per cent of them are outside of school, then we are still down to 271 cases of sex with females under the age of 16 which should be classified as abuse. Now if there are 271 and only 99 detected according to the statistics by the Ministry of Education, that says 37 per cent detection of abuse in the schools.

So I am directing this question to both agencies. Is that a reasonable measure of what can be detected at this point in time of the abuse of children in schools? I am just using that as an example. How is the detection rate of child abuse in schools; how is that done; how do you find out whether there is abuse going on; what is put in place to find that out; what percentage do you think you actually capture; is there a direct relationship between what is detected by the police and what happens in the school; is that information passed on in any way; and is there any kind of synergy going on there to be able to ensure that most of these cases of abuse are picked up?

**Mr. Seecharan:** Good morning. Let me try to contextualize the data provided by the Ministry of Education. When the Student Support Services Division was set up, the approach used to deal with incidents of sexual abuse and pregnancy and child abuse in general, a case approach is utilized and there are case files prepared for each case that an officer from the Student Support Services treat with. What has happened and because of confidentiality issues, the system for aggregating the data is still a challenge for us. In other words, we have issues where there may be cases dealt by officers which may not have been aggregated. So there is an issue there, one with the data.

That has been compounded also by the fact that both from the guidance and the social work areas we have a number of contract officers, and because of the numbers involved, and the turnover and renewal of contracts, you have gaps in terms of personnel who are treating with cases. So that could account for some of the missing data. So that the figure we have presented, and based on our knowledge of what is taking place in the system, I think it is understated. In addition to that, we have recognized that there is a need for us and we are working on, as part of our thrust within the Ministry, to put to monitoring and evaluation system in place, and therefore, we are attempting to correct that in a systematic manner across the Ministry.

There are also instances where cases may be reported to the police service and which is not brought to our attention. You asked about the measures that we have in place in terms of detection, and there are several ways in which these cases usually from teachers, deans, from staff within the school. When these are brought to our attention, a referral will be done to the Student Support Services Division and then it becomes a case that they would follow up, or it could come to us directly from officers who are in the school—that is from the Student Support Services—whether it is guidance officers, or we may have reports by some students about a case that they are aware of. So there are multiple sources in which they come to our attention.

There are also instances, and in some cases of pregnancy where it manifests itself within the system

as absenteeism. So you have a student who might be out of school for an extended period. Sometimes we have difficulty getting information or locating the student and it may be that in some instances these students go away, they have the baby and they return, and it is not presented to us in that way. So I really want to qualify the data by saying that we recognized within the Ministry that there are a number of gaps that exist in terms of the data. We acknowledge that, it is understated, and therefore, it is one of the things that we are working towards correcting.

In addition to that, we have made approaches, for example, to the Ministry of Health to collaborate in terms of—because pregnancy and child abuse very often is dealt with at the health institutions so that some of these cases can be identified and follow-up action taken. Certainly, there is the need for us to collaborate with the police service in terms of information. Now we have put a system in place, particularly for example with sexual abuse, where there is a compulsory requirement for reporting. So that cases brought to our attention are reported, but we have to collaborate with data; we also report to the Children's Authority. Maybe their data might be more comprehensive because they may get from multiple sources.

So I just wanted to qualify the data we have provided with a certain degree of caution in terms of some of the gaps that exist and the need for us to liaise with other agencies in terms of getting a holistic picture and to collaborate so that we could more efficiently deal with the issue.

**Madam Chairman:** Sorry, before the TTPS responds, what you just said about that collaboration would take in very nicely, because a question has come to us from our online viewers asking if the Ministry tracks areas where children who have been abused would most likely turn up. So example, the doctors and so on. So when you spoke about that collaboration with the Ministry of Health, as well as the police service, that falls nicely into the answer to this kind of question because, as you said, absenteeism from school may be what presents itself and that in itself—I mean, the question may be asked about how that is dealt with, but then the child may be present in another institution and can be tracked if that collaborative method or approach is used to track the child. Could we get a response from the TTPS now? Thanks.

**Mr. Williams:** Hon. Chairman, the TTPS receives its reports from numerous sources. So whatever source brings a report to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service it is then recorded as one of report for investigation. So the numbers as reflected there will be reports brought to our attention from all the various sources that we are exposed to. So whether it is from the school, whether it is from parents, or whether it is from guardians, whether it is from organizations such as NGOs, all those reports are reflected by way of our numbers.

**Madam Chairman:** And maybe we can ask this question very quickly. That information that is obtained, is it fed into any kind of database, or fed directly to other interested parties, for example, the Children's Authority or the Ministry of Education? Is there a formal channel by which this information is disbursed?

**Ms. Paul:** When we receive a report it is immediately sent to the Children's Authority, and internally we have the CAPA Unit that captures the data. But reports we receive, it is sent to the Children's Authority.

**Madam Chairman:** If I could ask one quick question again coming from our online viewers. To the Children's Authority: what is the procedure to deal with parents where a child is abused with the knowledge of the parents, either by the parents or the parents are aware of the abuse, but are not doing anything about this; what is the response of the Children's Authority to that situation?

**11.05 a.m.**

**Ms. Gemon:** At the Children's Authority, we have what we call a Child Protection Information Management System where calls coming in from the public are channelled through the system and we triage the level of risk. And what the system is able to do is to give us details of the report and once we get the details, if there is some criminality attached, we liaise with the Child Protection Unit. The Child Protection Unit is responsible for the criminal investigation and we focus on the child.

If it is that through the report, we determine that the parent was aware of the abuse, we focus on the child. We ensure that the child is protected in cases where the parent is aware of the abuse or involved in the abuse. There may be a situation where the child has to be placed with another relative or removed from the situation. If there is criminality involved, then the police service takes over and investigates the criminal side of the matter. So we really focus on the child, the rehabilitation, ensuring that the child is safe but in terms of the criminal aspect, the police handle that.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you. Sen. Samuel.

**Mr. Samuel:** Good morning, again. According to the *Guardian* article on Thursday 26th of January, 2017, the CPU quoted in the media that since its inception in May 2015, the CPU has so far investigated a total of 3,108 cases. But when we look at the data report submitted by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, there seems to be a drastic difference between the figures quoted by the CPU. As a matter of fact, the police report indicates 2015-2016 as 877 reports of sexual offences.

I would like to ask what is the reason for the discrepancy in the statistics?—because I have the newspaper clipping. Acting Superintendent Rodriguez, as well as Inspector Beverly Paul were interviewed and they stated the figures quoted—3,108 cases, while the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service report 2015 and 2016 has an accumulated amount of 877. So I would like to know why the drastic difference. And maybe, Chair, I could ask the second question that pertains to it one time. Could I do that?

**Madam Chairman:** Well, they seem to be discussing the first one, so let us let them do the first one and then you can ask your second one.

**Mr. Samuel:** So there is a difference of 2,231 and I would like to find out why were these cases not indicated in the submissions by the police service?

**Ms. Rodriguez:** Good morning, everyone. I quoted the number—I gave statistics from the period May 2015 to December 2015. I gave a breakdown. I had 986 matters under investigation for that period. For the period 2016—that will be the 1st of January2016 to the 31st of December—we had 2,122 matters under investigations. For the period, we quoted the whole period—that is from May 2015 to December 2016—we

had 3,108 matters being investigated. Out of that, we had, for the year 2016, 591 matters being resolved and we had for the year 2015—that is from May to December 31, 2015—we had 271 matters resolved; and we had 722 matters before the court from the inception of the unit to the 31st of December 2016.

And the resolved matters would be matters that would have been brought to us and we had no criminal cases or anything going to court with respect—we did not identify any criminal offences in those matters. Those are the matters that we resolved.

**Mr. Samuel:** I understand what you are saying, but I have the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service report of sex offences by type and gender, Appendix 1, and 2015, 565; the entire 2016, 312; that accumulated to 877. Are we saying that the figures that you were using are different to the figures reported by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service? Because this is the Appendix submitted. So I just wanted to find out why the drastic difference and what could have caused the drastic difference. It may be a mathematical problem, it may be some kind of reporting mechanism problem, you know. I am not too sure.

**Mr. Williams:** We have a system, Crime and Problem Analysis Branch, which processes the data for the police service. With the advent of the new legislation, there are new offences which are brought on board and therefore, the old classification has not taken up all the new offences. What was presented—3,108—is a total of all the offences investigated, all the reports investigated by the police. So yes, there is some level of discrepancy with the Appendix but that would have been generated by way of the arrangements now being worked out in relation to the classification through the electronic mechanism.

**Mr. Samuel:** I am still taken aback, Commissioner, because on the list-out on Appendix I, you have, in 2015, some 13 or 14 sexual offences and in 2016, you have 11.

**Madam Chairman:** Perhaps what may assist, what are the new offences that have not—or some examples of the new offences in 2015 and 2016 that would have been calculated in the figure given in the newspaper report that are present here in the Appendix.

**Ms. Paul:** You have offences such as meeting after sexual grooming; for example, you have like sexual penetration. Before the new legislation, you had offences like grievous sexual assault, serious indecency, buggery and all those offences were separate. However, with the new legislation, you have all being amalgamated into the offence of sexual penetration. These are some of the—according to the new legislation, that is how it is being classified. You have inciting a child in prostitution, exposing a child to a sexual act. There are a lot of new offences and we are liaising with the CAPA Unit to have the new classifications. So that is why it would appear so, but we are working on it.

**Mr. Samuel:** Are we then saying that the Child Protection Unit which is under the purview of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service has a difficulty in submitting the kind of data to the police service so that their records can be up to date? Because this is what I am hearing.

**Mr. Williams:** I do not think it is that message we are sending. The listing that you have, that you possess, at the Appendix, it is classified as serious crimes by type.

**Madam Chairman:** We actually have one that says "sex offences by type" and it does include for 2015 and 2016, some of the categories that you have spoken of. You see a difference between the information with 2009 where you had nine offences, right, nine categories and in 2015, it is a maximum of 14 now, which includes some of the maybe newer classifications that you have mentioned, but it still really begs the question—that dichotomy is very large, and one wonders what was left out of this Appendix. Then what category of sexual offence is so large now that it is taking up 2,000-and- something offences as opposed to eight. Yeah, it seems.

**Ms. Paul:** We have the offence of sexual touching, sexual penetration.

**Madam Chairman:** I think we are going to go round in circles because we do have some of these categories here. What I want to suggest is that we have not received a full report with respect to the sex offences. I think that is clear because if it has a difference of 2,000-and-something, it means that there are a number of things that were not presented here and, therefore, it throws some doubt on the accuracy of the information that has been presented to us, because some of those very categories are present; and even if they were not, it would mean that there is a very large category of sexual offence that we have not been privy to either. So in either case, whichever way you look at it, there has been a difficulty with information presented to the Committee. Commissioner, you would like to respond?

**Mr. Williams:** We will verify the numbers and if necessary, I will resubmit the data with the updated and adjusted position. Clearly, there are some classification issues and as I watch here, we have serious crimes, we have minor crimes; then there is a general report to the back which just spoke to offences and listed offences. So it is a classification issue and presentation issue so I will go through it and ensure that what is resubmitted is one submission in relation to offences related to children. So the classification of serious minor, minor offence is not necessarily relevant.

**Madam Chairman:** Sorry, we also do have reports of sex offences by type, gender division. You have that as well?

**Mr. Williams:** Yes.

**Madam Chairman:** Right, so this is really what I think we are probably referring to but we can look forward to a resubmission of some information. Sen. Samuel.

**Mr. Samuel:** Could I just also comment that as Acting Superintendent Rodriguez would have reiterated in the statement in the *Guardian*, when she clearly looked at sexual offences, you know, 260 for a period, she was looking at a lot of sexual offences in that article, so I think something needs to be clarified and I agree to revisit the numbers and get it together again.

**Mr. Williams:** Just to indicate that offences against children are not only sexual offences. So what this quoted, if we quote sexual offences and we look at that as all offences against children, that is just one grouping. But we will resubmit and make it crystal clear the information in relation to children and child abuse.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you so much. Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh.

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** Thank you, Chair. As you know, children who are sexually abused, they will manifest certain emotional and psychological behaviour in school. These children, when they present themselves in school, is it then that the Ministry or whoever is in charge is not picking up these different behaviours with the children? And perhaps that may be one of the reasons attributing to the disparity in the numbers because with a follow-up question from the Chair, in 2015, the Ministry of Education reported only 275 cases and we have the CPU of the TTPS saying 3,000 cases.

We have a circular sent from the Ministry of Education mandating principals to report sexual cases or incidents where they have picked up children behaving in an abnormal way. So is there a disconnect between the CPU, the Ministry of Education and the Children's Authority? Because what is happening, as I am reading, we are seeing that we have so many programmes in place to pick up these "abnormalities" and still nothing is happening. Is it then now that you have to revisit your programmes and see how to recharge and how best you could deal with these situations? Because, as I said, there was a mandate from the Ministry of Education telling principals, you have to report it to the Student Support Services and also to the school supervisors. Thank you.

**Mr. Seecharan:** Thank you, Chair. Clearly, as I indicated, the figures that we have submitted, we recognize that there is some understatement in terms of the cases, and even cases that might have been dealt with by officers within the Ministry may not have come in the aggregation because of the process that has been used where the emphasis was on confidentiality and filing information as opposed to aggregating it, which we are trying to correct. So there is some understatement in terms of the number of cases that we have been able to pull together.

In terms of not recognizing instances where students might have been abused, what we have been doing through the Student Support Services is mounting a number of training sessions for teachers to facilitate them identifying—and that is an ongoing process. Because of challenges with actual numbers, we have to prioritize. So if there is a case of abuse that is presented, that is given priority as opposed to a training session. So that you are right. There may be instances where we have cases which may present symptoms but in some situations, it may not have been picked up and that is part of our process, part of what we are looking at in terms of improving the training of personnel at the school in addressing.

**Madam Chairman:** The Children's Authority.

**Ms. Noel:** Yes, if I may, through you, Chair, I also wanted to indicate I would have said in my opening statements that there is a critical need for us to finalize the National Protocol on Child Abuse. That document seeks to demarcate very clearly the responsibilities of the various entities that treat with children and to understand where their responsibilities start and where they end and how to treat with each other so there is no duplication of resources, but however, there would be a network that will be able to greater capture all the children that may be in need of care and protection.

So there has been a lot of work that has been done with all these agencies here today; however, there is need now to finalize those protocols and have agreements and MOUs to ensure that everybody is working with the same concept, working with the same protocols and the processes that seamlessly interlink. So I think that is a critical component of this working seamlessly within the country.

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** Of those numbers, the 275, how many of those children with special needs, children who are challenged—because I believe, two weeks ago, there was some incident in the School for the Blind where there were some untoward activities going on there. Do you have a number for those children who we will say are most vulnerable or vulnerable?

**Mr. Seecharan:** Part of the intervention that the Student Support Services Division rolls out will also bring in our special education personnel where needed. I do not have that data in front of me. We could look at it and probably give you some feedback on that. But, as I said earlier, the figure that we have presented, we have recognized that there are some challenges in terms of cases that we have even treated but not brought forward in the data. We may have to go back into our archives with individual records to do that.

One of the things that we are doing and we have recognized this—we have been working on it for a little while now—is that we have to also fix—and I agree with the Children's Authority in terms of agencies working together because there may be instances that may not present or we can assist with but it is not brought to our attention. But one of the things we have to do in the Ministry is to fix our data collection system, our monitoring and evaluation system, so that even within the Ministry, we are clear in terms of all cases. We have had increase in reporting but we have to be clear that all cases that are presented are actually recorded and we have that big picture.

**Mrs. Jennings-Smith:** My question is directed to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education. I noted that the primary schools, the number of sex abuse cases in the primary schools was higher than the secondary schools. I want to ask you if there are any counsellors at primary schools for that purpose.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Simmons:** With respect to reports that are received, we would have officers that are assigned immediately, once we have the instances. Once the information is brought to the Ministry of Education, we would despatch—in many instances, we would despatch a team of persons who get out—who go into the schools. So, it is available.

**Mrs. Jennings-Smith:** Are you satisfied with that arrangement? Because you are looking at—in your own quotation, you spoke about having that environment to detect. So are you satisfied with that arrangement?

**Mrs. Baptiste-Simmons:** No. Okay, I would answer that first and then the CEO would, at least—what areas I have left out, the Chief Education Officer would add. But in looking at it, I have always wondered why it is that we are not providing, as they would say, a citizen-centred service as opposed to a case. In meeting with the Student Support Services, I had remarked the fact that it is time for us to move away from merely providing this—it would seem that we react and we need to begin, as you said, the detection. Early detection, meaning that we have analyzed the information at the school and within the context, but that

we build a system that responds, that understands what is happening and responds.

So in a meeting, we have decided that we need to relook, we need to develop an activity which we would call a citizen-centred service as opposed to a customer relations or customer service that we provide in terms of cases, where we wait for an incident to occur and then we react. So in the Ministry, we have begun the discussion towards that.

But in terms of the numbers, what was said to me is in light of the number of incidents, then it means that the system—we have to roll out with a different structure entirely in terms of ensuring that the data, the information is collected, because, again, it is between the qualitative data and analyze that we have the person to respond. The numbers are really small. CEO, you can add at this point.

**Mr. Seecharan:** Yeah, just two quick points. The first one is any incident that is brought to our attention, whether it is at the primary or secondary school, we prioritize and there is an immediate response. However, in terms of—I think the question asked about numbers and we did indicate that there are some concerns with the numbers and the ratios. Currently, we have the Student Support Services Division organized, we have the guidance, we have special ed and social work, and we also have a diagnostic assessment and intervention unit which is a small number of clinical and behavioural persons who treat with it.

At the secondary level, we run a ratio of approximately one guidance officer to one school. At the primary level, it is about one to five for guidance and/or social work, both at the primary and secondary, one to five for social work. So that since our programme involves both a proactive and a responsive approach, when we have to respond, often it mitigates the effort on the proactive side; in other words, because we prioritize incidents that occur for immediate intervention. So the simple answer to your question is while we do address, on a priority basis, all incidents that take place and are brought to our attention, in terms of the effectiveness of the programme, the number ratios mitigate against that effective part of the strategy.

Now, we have put some structures in place to facilitate. For example, at the district, we have a multidisciplinary team because while we are speaking here about sexual abuse and child abuse, generally, there are a number of other areas that the unit deals with so that it falls within the overarching programme and, therefore, the issue of contracts and renewal and the timeliness of that also create some problem for us in terms of ensuring that the staffing ratios meet all the needs that we have.

**Madam Chairman:** I will ask two questions and I am going to ask them one after the next. The first question is simply: why are we so understaffed with respect to the guidance counsellors and so on? Social sciences and social work always seem to be very oversubscribed at our tertiary institutions and yet still we always hear of the understaffing. Is there a need, at this point, to make a special call or a special emphasis on getting people into this area, in this critical area of service to the country? And there are different ways of doing that kind of thing. But in your opinion, is there the need, at this point—and this also goes to the TTPS,

people involved in this critical kind of social service—is there a need to make a special call for citizens to get into that area? That is my first question.

The second question is, based on the information available, the statistics available to us from the police service as well as the Ministry of Education, it seems that while sexual offences seem to be going down and I am saying this based on the information which we already discussed may have its challenges, it seems as though sexual offences overall seem to be going down; but within the schools, it seems to be going up. There is a question here with respect to: is it because we are detecting it better now or is it because it is simply occurring more now?

So two questions. One dealing with the understaffing issue. Is there an urgent need at this point for a concentration and a focus into getting people into the social service area to boost the number of guidance officers and so on? And the second question is: is it an actual thing that we are experiencing based on the data that we have, sexual offences going down countrywide or nationwide but sexual offences in schools going up, and what could be the cause of that very disturbing trend that seems to be presenting itself?

**Mr. Seecharan:** Chair, I will answer the second question first. Within the last two years, we have taken a number of steps, not just the circulars but in terms of interaction with principals and supervisors in terms of making it compulsory for reporting. So that we believe that some of the increases that we are seeing have really to do with the reporting as opposed to an actual increase.

**11.35a.m.**

But as I said, my initial statement, in terms of the data concerns and being a person who works with data, unless we get the true picture and the total data it might be difficult to say, but we believe that we have had an increase in reporting of incidents. So that our data might show a trend going up. And we are seeing that not just for sexual offences. I think it is incidents of indiscipline where schools are required to report immediately. So, that is the trend that we are seeing.

In terms of whether we need to direct persons into the different areas of study, I think it is two-fold. One is, and within the Ministry we have been looking at it, given the size of the institutions and the number of persons, our HR department deals with more than 10,000 teachers. In Student Support Services alone we have more than 500 persons, a number of them on contract. We have in the schools the IT technicians who are on contract. We have the business operation assistants who are contract positions. I think part of the challenge we have experienced or we are experiencing within the Ministry is the challenge for HR to manage that whole recruitment and filling of vacancies process. I think that is part of it, because there are positions on the establishment, positions that we have available, that sometime take an inordinate amount of time to fill, and that is one of the areas we are attempting to address.

There are some areas where there may be a deficit, in terms of persons available. My colleague, the guidance officer, might be able to identify some of those. But I think, for us, if we can get all the positions

that are available filled first, and I am talking about persons whose contract would have come to an end, and sometimes there is a delay in the renewal process, if we can have that system working properly, then it puts us in a good footing for the next step where we can then make a proper analysis, in terms of how much more we need.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Simms:** As we look at the education system, it is a microcosm of the wider society, and over the years as a Permanent Secretary and having worked in the education system for quite a number of years, we recognize that we are responding. What is happening in our wider society is impacting in our schools, it is. And, therefore, the reaction has been that if it is for security, the Ministry of Education is responsible. If it is for, as we say, Student Support Services, the Ministry of Education responds. The social ills, we are seeing it in our schools and we have increased the number of guidance officers, the number of school social workers. We are increasing. But I think what we need to do is it has to be a general response at the national level that allows our children—because at the end of the day, you recognize that the matrix, the outcomes of our students are affected, because the Ministry of Education's focus is shifting away from really educating to becoming school social workers, guidance officers. So there must be, as we are sitting here, a national response that supports our education system. Because most of what we are seeing, even the incidents, it is in our homes, it is in our communities, but it impacts the students that are in our schools.

So even as you ask the question how can we, in terms of understaffing, if you increase the numbers, if we continue to increase the number of school social workers it means that the Ministry of Education may not—we would have to put another system in place to be able to manage what is now the Student Support Services Division, because that in itself, 500 persons, and if we are looking at thousands of persons out there in the system, the management of that, it will speak to a new type of structure. Right? Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Sen. Samuel, just before you answer, the TTPS wanted to respond. In your responses, if I could just ask. I know the figures. We had a challenge with that. I was really asking, is it that sexual offences are going down? Maybe you can give us some insight on that. The figures that we have before us seem to suggest that. So if that is true, and then I think the Children's Authority also wants to respond on these two points, and then we would take Sen. Samuel's questions.

**Ms. Paul:** The Child Protection Unit, the TTPS has embarked on an awareness programme together with the other arm, which is the Community Policing Unit, and persons are being sensitized. They are more aware now of the legislation, the offences, because we have been going into schools and other places.

We sometimes collaborate with the Ministry of Education, also the Ministry of Health and the National Family Services. We have been having outreach programmes in village councils and churches and we are on that awareness programme and people, because of the services they are now aware of, they are coming in and making reports to the police and we are getting these numbers of reports coming in. They are now more aware of themselves so, I believe because of that, the awareness that they now have, right, they would be, what should I say, they are more protective of themselves, and so on so. That is why you

might see the appearance of the reports going down because we start from preschool. So, at that age children are being more aware of offences and how to protect themselves.

**Madam Chairman:** So you are confirming that sexual offences are going down?

**Ms. Paul:** Yes, because, you know, the awareness now that is taking place, yes.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. So we look forward when we get the resubmission to the full picture on it. It does seem so but we know there was a little challenge with the information that we have. Children's Authority.

**Ms. Noel:** Yes, Madam Chair, thank you. We also wanted to add to the discussion. Firstly, concerning your question on staffing, we believe that there is a need for additional professionals in this field for two major reasons. One, to provide long-term intervention services to children that are found to experience trauma. Many times the interventions require a long-term provision of services. So while there may be detection, there may be initial de-escalation of the situation, there is a requirement for long-term intervention to restore normal functioning.

And, secondly, to embark on a coordinated prevention strategy, which requires persons to go into communities and into the homes to provide mechanisms and tools to allow children to protect themselves, and families to protect their children. So besides the detection and the initial response to a report, there is a need for long-term intervention and I believe as well prevention strategies.

With regard to the question on the sexual abuse and whether it is in fact declining, the Children's Authority has a central repository of data through our child protection information management system and what we have seen since proclamation to now, is that consistently sexual abuse has been the highest category of abuses against children. As a matter of fact, it accounts for generally about a quarter of the reports. Now, while the number of reports received, it is increasing at a slower rate, the percentage, that is sexual abuse, holds its position. So at any given point in time, generally, sexual abuse accounts for 23 to 25 per cent of all the reports that the Authority has received.

So, from our standpoint, we have not necessarily seen a decline in reports on child abuse, sexual abuse against children. We are seeing that the percentage or the proportion of abuse cases when it comes to sexual abuse, has maintained its position and we believe that it is two-pronged also. One, there is more reporting. Persons feel more confident to report. There are more mechanisms. Persons can report through the police. The police would advise the authority. Persons can report to the Authority. The Authority then advises the police and also there is a mechanism with Social Support Services Division and the Authority as well.

Also, we suspect, as we look at the data and we look at the nature of the cases, that there are more children venturing into sexual activities, either coerced, or by "consent" as we put it. So, we are not seeing the decline but we want to say that what our statistics are showing is that there is a consistent amount of reports with regard to sexual abuse.

**Madam Chairman:** Sen. Samuel, just before you come in, I am just noting that I am hearing from the police service that there is a decline in sexual offences but with respect to children the data from the Ministry of Education does indicate that it is increasing and that may be understated data. The Children's Authority is indicating they are not seeing that decrease, with respect to children on children sexual offences either.

If I could just quickly ask the Child Welfare League to be brought into the discussion as you deal with teenage pregnancy, which is also an indicator of abuse in many cases, because these are under-aged children. Are you seeing any decrease in the number of pregnancies? I know there may be various reasons but what is your immediate response to the trend of child sexual abuse, based on your experience? Is it increasing or are you seeing a decrease?

**Ms. Mckie:** With the adolescent mothers it is increasing in some areas and decreasing in some. Where we have the—[*Interruption*]

**Madam Chairman:** Sorry, when you say areas, do you mean geographic areas?

**Ms. Mckie:** Geographic areas.

**Madam Chairman:** And where would you see that increase?

**Ms. Mckie:** In the south-western division. But we do not have any centres down there. In the eastern region, in the north-eastern region it is decreasing.

**Madam Chairman:** So that would kind of correspond, if you say urban or rural. Would you say that it is generally increasing in the rural areas but decreasing in urban areas?

**Ms. Mckie:** Yes, I would say that. You see, what is happening, we do not have any programmes in the south-western area, we only have I would say, in the East-West Corridor we have programmes.

**Madam Chairman:** So, generally we are seeing that kind of an increase, if we can say, in child sexual abuse and we are getting that from the three agencies.

**Ms. Mckie:** What is happening is that the girls, a lot of younger girls are getting involved in sexual acts. What we get is like 12-year-olds, 13 year-olds who are pregnant. Right now the eldest is about 15. That is what we are seeing. But it is not all the cases that come to us.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. We are going to take Sen. Samuel now and I hope I get some time to speak to Children's Authority on the Romeo clause. But we will see how that comes after.

**Mr. Samuel:** Chair, you sort of took the words out of my mouth when it came to teenage pregnancies, because this question is to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, with regard to charges. If you have some many teenage pregnancies, why are we not seeing the police service, the incidents of charges against people who perpetrate in this manner, as high as? It is said that you have about 2,500 teenage pregnancies on an annual basis. That has been purported in the media and stuff like that, but we are not hearing of that amount of cases against fathers. Someone said to me: well, the children are no longer putting the name of the father on the birth certificate, but probably you need to cooperate with the Ministry of Education and find out which fathers come in the school to pick up the children and if ask the children who is daddy then

the daddy might be found out in a smart way. That is one question to the TTPS.

But according to the annual report of the Children's Authority 2015 and 2016, I recognize a trend with reported persons responsible for abuse, and mothers are high, 34.5 per cent reported responsible for abuse are mothers. Unknown, I am kind of worried about the unknown category. Because if it is reported is it that the child is not saying who is abusing them? Then I see fathers at 17 per cent and then it goes down after that.

The third question is to the Child Protection Unit. I recognize that there were some areas of concern, and when it comes to the cases reported and those valid cases that were being investigated, one of the concern was that there are areas that are high. San Juan/Laventille, Tunapuna/Piarco had the highest overall reported cases of sexual abuse. They had 195, as opposed to Tunapuna/Piarco, 145 and Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo, 108. Are there specialized programmes targeted for areas where these reported cases are high to significantly work within those communities to reduce it?

I recognize when it comes to physical abuse the same areas fall victim to that, San Juan/Laventille, 126; Tunapuna/Piarco, 124; Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo, 70. So what we are seeing in your concerns is that there are specific areas that the incidences seem to be very prevalent and if they are prevalent what programmes are you designing or have you designed to get into these communities, these areas, these schools, whatever, to now deal with it?

Because general things do not work in specific things and one cap does not fit all. So it means that if your reports are stating that these are high reports then they should be targeted. The community should be targeted. The area should be targeted. I would like to know what programmes have you invested in for such communities where you have these high reports of both sexual abuse and physical abuse and what are the outcomes of these programmes, and what were the measuring sticks used to now determine if they are successful or not? So that was three questions, Ma'am.

**Madam Chairman:** Could you remind us who the first was to?

**Mr. Samuel:** Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, with regard to those people that are charged, with regard to the purported 2,500 teenagers who are pregnant annually.

**Madam Chairman:** So let us deal with that one specifically.

**Ms. Rodriguez:** Sir, I will deal with the charges as against the teenage pregnancy. I am not too familiar with the 2,500 figure but what we do Sir, as long as we get a report involving a teenager relative to pregnancy we carry out a thorough investigation and at the end of that investigation if there is evidence to prosecute anybody relative to an offence committed, we do it. But we must have the support of the victim who will be the mother. We must have her support where statements are concerned, in order to take the matter before the court. We must.

**Madam Chairman:** Do you usually get that support?

**Ms. Rodriguez:** Very rare, very rare.

**Madam Chairman:** And that may be the answer as to why we do not see. I just want to ask a quick follow-up there. How many, in cases of teenage pregnancy and I relate it to this whole Romeo clause, children are being impregnated by children? Is that a common trend or is it really that you are seeing more of the older men impregnating the younger women? Is it more prevalent now that you are seeing that kind of closeness in age, in terms of teenagers being impregnated?

**Ms. Paul:** Yes, there are a number of cases involving the Romeo clause, and there are challenges with that, with respect to section 20 of the Children Act, the decriminalization of sexual activities between children, and you have those three categories, the two years apart and the three years apart.

There is a challenge, reports would come and there is a situation with medical personnel. We have some cases where we would request medicals and we are being told that the doctors could face litigation because no offence is committed. However, there are four conditions to be satisfied, and it should not be actually so, because part of our procedure to carry forward the investigation, a medical must be done.

So when sometimes you go and once it is said that you have teenagers two years apart or three years apart, according to category under which they fall, we are getting a stumbling block there. But the investigations will determine if any charges can be pursued, because if it is the two persons are of the same sex, they are in a familial relation like incest, and so, we have to proceed with criminal charges. But there is a challenge there with having medicals done. But, we have a number of reports with close in age, the Romeo clause. But we have been facing challenges, because after you conduct an investigation that is when you would determine the course which would be taken, whether charges are laid. And if those four conditions are not satisfied, obviously charges would be laid, but part of our procedure is that a medical be done and we are experiencing challenges with that.

**Madam Chairman:** Very quickly, Child Welfare League, you deal specifically with pregnancy in teenage girls. Are you also seeing a trend or more of a trend now where teenagers are the fathers of the children?

**Ms. Mckie:** No. It is mostly men over 25 you will find that and also stepfathers.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. Sen. Samuel to your second question now.

**Mr. Samuel:** Chair, therefore the statement from the last speaker agrees with the hon. Attorney General because on June01, 2016, the Attorney General in a meeting at his office said that between 2008 and 2015, a total of 35 girls under 12 became pregnant by adult men and 2,654 girls between 13 and 16 were also made pregnant by adult men. He clarified emphatically that 81 girls between the ages of 13 and 16 became pregnant. Their pregnancies were terminated between 2011 and 2015 and 683 girls 17 to 19 terminated their pregnancies over the same period.

So what I am hearing from the last speaker seems to collaborate with the Attorney General and it means that there seems to be information that is available. I think we need to access the information that is available to make sure that we are on the right road, because of the information I gathered from the Attorney General and what we are hearing today collaborates with that. I just wanted to let you know that.

The second question was to the Children's Authority, with regard to the persons responsible for abuse and why do you feel—we now we are in an age of single mothers and; single homes with mothers. But what could be done to significantly reduce the 34 per cent of mothers that are abusing their children, and I want to know the unknown clause.

**Ms. Noel:** Thank you for your question. With regard to mothers being identified by the reporter as the alleged perpetrator, what we have found is that mothers who feel frustrated and feel alone without support mechanisms, they are the ones who tend to perpetrate the abuse of neglect. That is what we are seeing as the highest category perpetrated by mothers and at times physical abuse, and it is really because they lack support systems to aid them in raising their children. That is really what we are seeing as the cause and so really it is a national response to provide those support mechanisms to families, because they have the single mothers. When you think single parent, you usually think mothers but there are fathers as well. But it is really the support mechanisms for a family.

And the unknown category really has to do with when someone makes a report to the Children's Authority, at times they may not know who the perpetrator is but they recognize that a child is in despair and they have contacted us.

When we have investigated the report and we identified the perpetrator, then the categories change to whomever we identify them to be. So that unknown category may be those reports that we have not yet investigated, where we have no yet or we have investigated and have not yet identified the perpetrator.

**Madam Chairman:** Sen. Samuel, your third question.

**Mr. Samuel:** The third question is to the CPU. Because you have areas of concern, geographical areas of concern, whether it is municipality or borough, you have high incidences in specific areas. You have the San Juan/ Laventille, Tunapuna/Piarco, Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo in both instances of physical abuse and sexual abuse as the highest reported thus far and you are very concerned. I want to know what specific programmes, what programmes have you designed to know get into these areas and begin to now spread your wings and try to curb on the incidences and then use that as a sort of pilot project to now work in other areas in the future, if they too arise?

**Ms. Rodriguez:** Sir, we have embarked on a sensitization drive. What we do, we work in collaboration with the community police officers. We go to schools, preschools, primary schools, secondary schools. We even have the caravan where we distribute flyers and give information booklets to the persons in attendance and we also go further by attending, have our officers attend the station council meetings, which are kept in the various districts with the different stakeholders, and we also have our officers attend the town meetings and have them sensitize the public about the various offences.

**Mr. Samuel:** Are those specific or are those generalized programmes that you embark upon across the region? I want to know, for instance if you go to the doctor with a specific problem, he deals with the specific problem in a special way and not from a generalized standpoint. Seeing that you have picked up

that there are areas, there are municipalities that have high incidences of sexual abuse, as well as physical abuse, I want to suggest that you look into these areas and design specific programmes to now get into these areas and then keep the data and all of the statistics, so that you can utilize the data and statistics in future if something happens in another particular area. So that is my suggestion to you.

**Mr. Williams:** We do note your recommendation, Sen. Samuel.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. I want you to allow me some latitude here. I want to refer to the incident that was reported in the paper about a child, a Standard 1 pupil, being bullied and suffering a broken arm and other injuries.

**12.05 p.m.**

To the Ministry of Education: do you agree that the Ministry of Education can be vicariously liable for that abuse—that bullying perpetrated on that child? I am asking that because it is reported that the parent made complaints and nothing was done, no response. So is it that the Ministry of Education can be vicariously liable before the courts? Has the Ministry of Education been brought before the courts on account of being vicariously liable? That is the first question.

The second question is social media. We have seen a number of videos where teachers rough up and physically beat students, unruly students or otherwise. What is the rate of these reports where teachers physically abuse children? What is done about it? Has the Ministry of Education been brought before the courts on account of that physical abuse?

**Mr. Seecharan:** The answer to your first question is yes. In fact, the Education Act ascribes responsibility for the safety of students to principals in secondary schools and, by extension, it becomes the responsibility of the Ministry. I am not aware of instances where we have been brought before the courts. What I can tell you, however, there are instances where students may have been injured in school and through our insurance the Ministry would have paid compensation in that regard.

With respect to acts by teachers on students, what I have—at the current time, what I can give you is specific to disciplinary matters and not specific teacher/student cases. We have about 117 matters involving teachers that are before the Teaching Service Commission and from that— because I was preparing for this I looked at the number of sexual abuse cases and we have 19 from that 117 ranging from touching, sexting, hugging and sexual intercourse with students. So we have 19 and these are currently before the commission.

In terms of the procedure that the Ministry has in place for dealing with errant teachers, there is a disciplinary process that we have. I am going to talk generally first. So any incident where there is misconduct on the part of the teacher—and it does not necessarily mean teacher/student—any incident which is considered as misconduct, the process is that there is an investigation and then that matter is brought before the Teaching Service Commission who will then decide on the process for disciplinary action.

In instances where the offence might be or put students in danger, like in the instances of sexual misconduct, there is an arrangement between the Ministry and the Teaching Service Commission where a report is sent within 24 hours and it may result in a cease-reporting issue from the commission pending the determination of that. In instances where we determine that we cannot wait 24 hours, those teachers are asked to report to the district. So we take them out immediately from the system. There is a clearly defined disciplinary process, and that does not prevent or exclude if it is a criminal matter that the police do their own investigation and they go through the process.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Lastly, what about instances of emotional mental abuse in terms of teaching picking on children, putting them to the back of the class, putting them out of the class, refusing to teach them, that sort of thing? Have you received such reports?

**Mr. Seecharan:** There would have been reports and, as I indicated, once they come to our attention, we do an investigation. In terms of how it is addressed, it is addressed two-fold. Once there are instances where students are abused, a Student Support Services person. At the secondary level we have a Guidance Officer, basically attached to the school. They will intervene and basically advocate for the child and maybe mount counselling session or whatever is required to treat with that.

In the instance where—and we are dealing now with the teacher—if the investigation reveals that there is misconduct on the part of the teacher, the disciplinary process is instituted, and depending on the recommendation from the investigating officer, it can then go forward to the Teaching Service Commission recommending disciplinary action.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Lastly, do you agree that absentee teachers affect the rights of a child and can be deemed abuse?

**Mr. Seecharan:** You are asking me to do an interpretation and I am not a legal person, but it is an area that the Ministry considers critical. We have instituted a number of things to deal with the issue of absenteeism and also irregularity and punctuality of teachers. We have done a number—part of the challenge we have had in dealing with that had to do—there is the procedural discipline process that the Ministry uses. It means before a teacher can be charged, we have to go through the process of speaking, counselling, writing, and if that process is not followed through, often when it gets to taking action against the teacher the case falls down.

So we have done a series of training sessions with principals in terms of instituting the disciplinary process to ensure that when it comes to taking action, the matter can go forward. We are still having challenges because there are some principals who are hesitant to go all the way. They may write, do the initial warning letter and the counselling, but to take it all the way, sometimes that is a challenge. So we have done some training.

We have also provided—part of it is in the writing process that needs to be followed. Some of our principals are not aware of the regulations they need to quote and all of that, so we have actually done

templates where principals can utilize and follow through the process. So it is an area of concern that we have. In fact, and I can just add, one of the areas we have been addressing in a serious way for the last year or two is the issue of indiscipline in schools. For example, teachers who are not present in a classroom at the beginning of the day, sometimes you may have incidents. So part of our strategy involves clear guidelines for supervision of students, not just in classrooms and during class but also arrangements utilizing deans and safety security officers on the school compound. You would have noticed, within recent times some of the incidents that are coming forward now are actually taking place outside of the school environment.

**Madam Chairman:** I want to ask a question that deals with the second part of the objectives, which is determining the adequacy of legislation in protecting children from abuse. I am asking this in the context of the Romeo Clause. What is done and how does this clause, how does it make life difficult or how do you treat with it in the context of a school environment—say, a primary school environment where you have a 10-year-old and a 12- year-old engaging in sexual activity that is, based on the legislation, not considered abusive? How is this dealt with in the school? I would like to hear the views of maybe all the representatives here on whether or not the Romeo clause constitutes an inadequacy in the legislation or has it presented any type of problem with respect to children and their interactions within the school context and in general?

**Mr. Seecharan:** I would ask our Guidance Officer to respond since she is intimately involved in the process.

**Ms. Smith:** Good day to the panel. Within the school environment, the Romeo clause can be seen both in primary and secondary schools. You have to recognize that experimentation and sexual curiosity, while we may frown upon it, it is deemed as normal. We have to also be aware that our culture and the world is changing. The children have access and more exposure to a lot of sexual activities and pornography. Even via the cell phones that we may casually hand a three-year-old, a four-year-old to play with and use, and they click a button and a cookie comes up and you are seeing porn. So what we have seen happening several times is children even in the infant classes can experiment, and when we do go in and investigate, it is simply because last night—when we found out and we go in—some parents still allow five-year-old and six-year-old children to sleep in bedrooms and in their beds. When they think they are sleeping, they are not. So, therefore, when I come to school the next day, I want to act out what I saw happen at home.

Children get up during the night and walk into the living room and big brother, uncle, granny, aunty or somebody is watching some form of pornographic material and, therefore, I come in school and I want to act it out. So that they themselves may not be actual victims of abuse at home, but you are seeing it and the continuous exposure is also making me want to perform and act out. So that the Romeo clause helps to protect sometimes the innocent experimentation that may be taking place, but it is something that we have to also be vigilant and ensure that it is not being abused under the cover of that protection. Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** If it is at all determined that there is something untoward going on and the ages of the

children fall within that category, is there anything that can be done? This is probably to the police service and the Children's Authority. What can be done?

**Ms. Paul:** In the settings of the Romeo clause, there are certain conditions, and if these conditions exist something can be done because if it is proven, evidence is had where the child has been forced or coerced or exploited or has been groomed, and in the grooming it does not necessarily mean the child itself, but it could be a parent or guardian or somebody who has control of that child and the person, you know, is exploiting that person to gain the trust in order to engage in some activity with the child. If it is the persons are of the same sex or in a familial relationship like if it is two brothers or something, incest is still an offence, and that age difference. If these conditions exist then the police can prosecute because inside there are offences, you know— same sex and all that that exists, so something can be done. But I believe in some cases that, you know, because of this I would put it maybe across like a sort of inadequacy that in the law that this sometimes is exploited just as the young people are experimenting. They are using this—

**Madam Chairman:** As a loophole. It is possible to be used as a loophole then?

**Ms, Paul:** Yes.

**Madam Chairman:** Children's Authority, do you want to make a comment on this?

**Ms. Noel:** Just to add to what Inspector Paul is saying, there are four conditions that must be satisfied: the age gap which could be two or three years in some cases; they must not be in a familial relationship; not be of the same sex but, very importantly, also do not reveal any element of exploitation, coercion, threat, deception, grooming or manipulation in that relationship. And so, when a report is received besides those other factors existing, it is important that as the police carries out its investigation, that it will attempt to determine whether any of these other elements exist which may be sometimes pretty difficult to uncover, but this really is the context within which it was framed.

**Ms. Gemon:** It is important to note as well that the age of criminal responsibility with regard to sexual crimes is 12 years old. So the Romeo clause does not debar children, kids who are 12 years old, from facing prosecution if it is found that they have coerced or if they have been involved or if they have perpetrated a sexual crime. That is important to note as well. We have had situations where children have perpetrated against other children even though they fall within the closing age. We have worked with the police to investigate those cases, and we have also worked within the authority to rehabilitate, to counsel and to help those children, because very often children who perpetrate against other children have faced some sort of abuse themselves. We have seen that evidence very clearly.

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** Thank you. The question is for the Children's Authority and the Ministry of Education. Does the Ministry track cases of abuse in denominational schools? What is the follow-up process with the monitoring of these abused children? To the Children's Authority: do you all track cases of abuse in orphanages? I would also like to ask one question to the Child Welfare League. With those teenaged girls, how many of those return with a second and third pregnancy?

**Madam Chairman:** So you will address the first question first?

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** Yes. The first one is to the Ministry of Education—if the Ministry tracks cases of abuse in all schools including denominational schools?

**Mr. Seecharan:** The answer is yes. All public schools we follow up in, both denominational and government schools. As to the follow-up process, I would ask our Guidance Officer to respond.

**Ms. Smith:** Our follow-up process will be in conjunction in adherence to the legislation, mandatory reporting and is also based on the severity of the issue and the offence committed. So that our social workers would be the first line of intervention once detected and reported and referred from and cases handed over from guidance. Once it is handed over to the social worker, they will start to do the home visits, the necessary reporting, counselling with the child. If it is that it requires further intervention and follow-up, we would then pass it on to either our psychologist or our behavioural specialist for further intervention and support for that child. And, again, it is also a question of the nature of the abuse and what exactly may have happened. With pregnancy, et cetera, then a further intervention would be required based on the nature of the abuse and presented issues.

**Madam Chairman:** Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh, your second question.

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** This is to the Children's Authority, whether you track cases of abuse in orphanages.

**Ms. Noel:** Yes, we do, not very often, but when we do get reports of children that reside in community residences, previously called orphanages, we do track them just as any other report of child abuse. They come from really two strands. There may be a child who may have been specifically abused who resides at a community residence or there may be abusive behaviour by a staff and management of community residences that put children at risk. So from the two ends we do track and investigate and we will protect the children as we would do any other child.

**Madam Chairman:** Your third question to the Child Welfare League.

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** Although I know you are saying you are trying to protect those teenaged girls having a second pregnancy or a third. So how many of those come back perhaps with a second or third?

**Ms. Mckie:** Our programme only allows the girls to attend with one pregnancy, but we do some follow-up and those follow-ups, the second pregnancy, all we can do for them is counselling because our programme only allows one pregnancy. Just about 2 per cent you will find have a second pregnancy. We, however, are reviewing if we can take a girl with a second pregnancy, but it is not within our programme, since it is an intervention for one pregnancy only.

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** And 2 per cent represents how many girls?

**Ms. Mckie:** Just about three girls, two or three girls.

**Madam Chairman:** We are going to take our last question from Minister Moses.

**Mr. Moses:** Thank you very much, Chair. In the setting of the school—this is directed to the Ministry of Education—do you have any sense of how often the teacher could become a victim of the child's abuser, whether any threats might have been directed at the teacher?

**Mr. Seecharan:** I would not be able to quantify. We have instances where teachers are threatened by students. They would be collected in our data as incidents of indiscipline. We do collect all incidents of indiscipline in schools and we have categories. So it would be collected there. We will have to go in and disaggregate to get that, but we do have instances of threats to teachers by students.

**Mr. Moses:** Even outside the framework of the school relative to the threats, meaning the abuser might have been without the school system?

**Mr. Seecharan:** And this is by the teacher's way, you are looking at, outside of the school system?

**Mr. Moses:** No, the abuser outside of the school system and directed at the teacher within the school system.

**Madam Chairman:** So parents or guardians who may have abused the child now are making advances towards the teacher in a negative way.

**Mr. Seecharan:** I am not aware. I would ask Ms. Smith to respond, but I am not aware of such instances.

**Ms. Smith:** Abuse and dysfunctional and deviant behaviour could emanate—fall from anywhere—and there would be instances where parents may be angry or feel some level of injustice may have been meted out at different points in time. We, Student Support Services, will seldom track parents being angry or meting out any acts of violence on teachers. That will not be our remit because our focus will always be on students.

**Madam Chairman:** All right, so that was our last question.

**Ms. Smith:** May I just add one thing though. We do have a programme with parenting in education whereby we do several programmes and activities with parents within the schools and within the communities to address and help teach them various skill sets that we believe is also important in helping them move forward and to work in a positive manner in nurturing their own children. So those programmes will help us.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. Thank you very much. So that was our last question. Our very large question is going to come from Sen. Samuel.

**Mr. Samuel:** Ministry of Education. On Wednesday 25th January on CNC3 there was a discussion about allegations of abuse at schools for the blind. I am not too sure if you are aware of the allegations and the question is: what sort of checks and balances has the Ministry put in place or have in place to scrutinize the operations of these institutions from a preventative mechanism? And if I may add a question to that to the police service, in your report there is a category called "serious indecency". I would really like that to be explained so that the national public could understand what serious indecency is all about.

**Mr. Seecharan:** The School for the Blind, the actual operation of the school is under the purview of the

Ministry of Education but the facilities, the building, are owned by the Blind Welfare Association. The reports that are emanating really arise from I would say a conflict between the association and the Ministry of Education personnel in terms of the operation of the school, but the Ministry would have spent a tremendous amount of funds in refurbishing the school within recent times.

Previously, there would have been accommodation for students attending the school to stay over and there was a service provided by the Blind Welfare Association. However, based on reports we have had, we have opted that it is the Ministry of Education to provide transport to and from the school to students. So currently there is not those overnight facilities and, therefore, currently our system for supervision of the school falls under the Director of School Supervision where we monitor the operation of the school.

What is emanating in terms of a conflict is not a student/teacher conflict, it is really one between the administration, the principal and the association. In fact, even today we had to intervene because the association is asking to be ascribed denominational status and what goes with that. They are attempting to reinstitute the overnighting facilities where currently we do not have any students accessing it. So in terms of the operation of the school with respect to school personnel and students, there are no issues. We are, in fact, currently in the Ministry looking at how we best resolve that situation and whether it is in the best interest of the students to continue occupying that facility or we look at other facilities.

**Madam Chairman:** And the last response from the police service based on the question of the definition of "serious indecency".

**Ms. Rodriguez:** An act of serious indecency is an act other than sexual intercourse whether natural or unnatural by a person involving the use of the genital organ for the purpose of arousing or gratifying sexual desire. That is the definition we have here.

**Madam Chairman:** On that note, I would like to invite the representatives from each of the organizations to give a brief closing comment. We have spoken a lot, we have dealt with a lot and we have looked at a lot and bearing in mind that what we have been considering would have been the adequacy of programmes and services for detection, reduction and treatment of child abuse and teenage pregnancy and to determine the adequacy of legislation in protecting children from abuse. So I now invite the representatives to make brief closing comments based on our discussions here today.

**12.35p.m.**

**Ms. Noel:** Thank you, Madam Chairman and members of the Committee. The Children's Authority as far as we see it has a significant role in streamlining and assisting with providing a coordinated response to child abuse in the country. With being operational just about 20 months now, what we have accumulated over that time was not only data, but experience that will provide us with critical information to help shape how we go forward. What we are doing right now is a strategic review, really evaluating where we are and what those experiences have taught us. Coming out of that, what we are seeking to do is to develop a

prevention strategy, because while we treat with the reports of abuse we understand that there is a critical need for prevention strategy. A targeted response based on empirical evidence, that is very, very important for the nation.

So we are hoping that within three to five years we ought to see a reduction in child abuse. Our key performance indicators as an organization within the unit will also follow that pattern, so that we can really track and measure that we are, in fact, accomplishing what we have set out to do.

The Authority as a whole we believe that we are well poised to really make an impact on the nation as it grows, and also we see the Authority as part of the future crime-fighting initiative. If we treat with child abuse now it will have a positive impact on the reduction of crime in the future. We really believe that we are positioned to make that impact. So we valiantly go for and go after our mandate, and we expect to see results. Thank you very much.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you so much. Ministry of Education.

**Ms. Baptiste-Simmons:** From our deliberations today, we recognize that we need to look at our monitoring and evaluation system. It means that we have to not only be collecting data that is relevant to the schools, but understanding that there is data out there and that we need to have an inter-agency/interministerial approach in terms of the data collection, the data analysis, the data reporting and data sharing.

We at the Ministry recognize that we are not only to collect specific types of data that would allow us to make interventions, but in terms of being preventive, in terms of, as you said, tracking to ensure that our students have, in fact, benefited, that the parents, the community, that we are seeing the change and the notable change.

The intervention, as we said, we must understand data and we must understand that the intervention must be contextualized, in that we should not have interventions that are just general, but specific to what is happening within our various education districts and our schools.

We recognize also that we need to look at our staffing. If we are providing a service, it must not only be in terms of reacting. We should not be in reaction mode in terms of having a team when an incident occurs, but it means that we have to be able to detect and remediate in a quick space of time.

Listening to all that is being said, we really need to partner with the TTPS and continue the partnership with the Children's Authority in ensuring that we meet the needs of all of our children. That is, from ECCE even up to tertiary level. So I think we are poised to move ahead, it is just that from the information gathered here today and the discussions, we need to take these areas on board as we plan and move ahead in the Ministry of Education.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you so much. Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

**Mr. Williams:** Hon. Chairman and members, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service clearly understands its role, a role which is critical in treating with the demands of a level of protection for the children of this nation. There is a suite of legislation available to us, the issue about its adequacy at this point in time, we

will not be able to effectively comment on it. However, we intend to utilize the legislation in its full context, and over time we may be able to make that determination.

At the present time we have a specialized unit. That specialized unit is being fully staffed. We are not at the point where we want to be in relation to numbers, but on a continuous basis we are adding staff to that unit so that they can provide the kind of service necessary in the present context of things and the demands for the service of the Child Protection Unit.

Beyond the Child Protection Unit, we have the Victim and Witness Support Unit which addresses the concerns of victims and witnesses to crime. We are at this present moment also staffing out that unit. We are at the moment adding five victim and witness support officers to the unit, and we are also finalising the employment of a manager. Those things will come to closure within the next two weeks; so that unit is effectively being strengthened.

We are giving our full commitment and we intend to work with all the agencies in a partnering role and a collaborative role, all geared towards ensuring that the children of this nation are protected. Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you, and Child Welfare League.

**Ms. Mckie:** We are looking at reviewing our programme to include the parents of the teenaged mothers, and also to do more community outreach because the parents, in particular the single mothers, what is happening with them is that the daughters are overriding their rules and this is where we find most of the teenaged pregnancies. We want to do more parenting courses. See if we can meet again with our stakeholders. We had other voluntary organizations who do work like us, to get them on board with us to do some more work with the mothers. In some cases there are single fathers. And also to see if we can reach out to the areas in the south-western district where there is a higher rate of teenaged pregnancy.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you so much.

We have had a discussion today that has really exposed some areas, as it relates to the issue of child abuse in TrinidadandTobago. We have had here some of the agencies that deal directly with children in abusive situations, and what has come out is that there are more reported cases of child abuse. Whether it is that there are more cases, more offences actually occurring or there is a greater way now of more reporting of incidences. It is clear that it is a situation we have to look at, because in either case it means that there is a present need that we have to attend to.

The units that are specifically geared for dealing with children and abused children are just about coming on two years old with respect to the Child Protection Unit as well as the Children's Authority, and therefore there are issues in both cases with respect to understaffing and, of course, under-resourcing with respect to financial means.

Some issues within the Ministry of Education as well with respect to the Student Support Services Division have come out with respect to filling of vacancies. That process may be a problem, as well the

whole issue of having qualified staff to be able to function in some of the more specialized areas, especially dealing with long-term care for these children who may need it.

We have spoken about the fact that detection of child abuse needs to be boosted, and there needs to be more interaction between the agencies that would detect abuse. Also with respect to data collection, that needs to be more robust to be able to provide the kind of analysis that would assist in, for example, specifically gearing programmes in different geographic areas to deal with child abuse, and whatever particular type of child abuse is more prevalent in that area. So that our response can be a little more proactive than reactive, because in some instances based on all the factors and the challenges, we are so busy outing the fires that it is difficult to deal with the proactive response that would be the best practice.

With respect to reduction, we have spoken about the whole-of-government approach, where it is not an issue for the Ministry of Education alone necessarily, or the Children's Authority alone or the police service alone, but NGOs such as the Child Welfare League that also assist. These networks exist within all of the stakeholders here, but it is just a matter of maybe—as was suggested by the Children's Authority—coming to the point where there is some document that outlines and demarcates where the different roles come in, and so everyone is on the same page knowing where they come in with respect to the overall treatment of children who have been abused.

I want to thank the officials who have been here with us and who have been so very forthright in giving their answers to the questions that have been presented. I want to thank our viewers and our listeners who were here with us, persons in the public gallery, as well as members of the Committee who have been here. This issue really presents a clear and present danger to the future of Trinidad and Tobago insofar as it impacts our children and their development.

So I want to thank you again and thank the Secretariat of the Committee. I will like at this point to declare this meeting adjourned.

**12.45p.m.:** *Meeting adjourned*.

# APPENDIX III PROCEDURE FOR TEENAGE PREGNANCY

## Ministry of Education

**Table 1**
**Procedure for Teenage Pregnancy Cases MOE**

| MOE's Standard Procedures for Teenage Pregnancy Cases |
|---|
| ✓ Initiate preliminary assessment to identify needs;<br>✓ Depending on the needs identified, SSSD personnel will then make the necessary referrals to external agencies/services including the Ministry of Social Welfare, and National Family Services for further support;<br>✓ Conduct individual sessions to provide emotional/psychological support. Student's thoughts and feelings about the pregnancy should be explored together with her thoughts and feelings about continuing her education;<br>✓ Advocate for the rights of the student in cases where Principal / teachers may not want the student on the compound.<br><br>**During Pregnancy**<br>✓ Student receives support for continuing education via access to classroom assignments as well as the option of continuation classes;<br>✓ Student referred to the Choices Programme (Adolescent Mothers' Programme), and/or the Mary Care Centre for Teenage Mothers to access further support during pregnancy.<br><br>**After-Delivery Procedures**<br>✓ A psycho-social assessment by the Guidance Officer II and Senior Social Worker of the District to determine readiness and ability to return to school;<br>Counselling, including development of educational and career plans;<br>✓ Family counselling to ensure support in place at home so student is able to study/complete assignments etc.;<br>✓ Information about facilities/support in place for the care of the child, during the day when she returns to school;<br>✓ Study skills strategies and remedial support if deemed necessary.<br><br>**Other Areas to Note**<br>✓ The student may either remain in that school or be transferred to another school based on the circumstances of each case;<br>✓ The student is afforded the opportunity to repeat the year if deemed necessary;<br>✓ Special concession requests are made to CXC if student is near due date during the sitting of the exams to have child in separate room in the event of an emergency;<br>✓ Upon the student's re-integration to school, the Guidance Officer 1 and School Social Worker continue to monitor and provide support;<br>✓ If the baby's father is of school age, the Guidance Officer makes every effort to provide guidance and counselling. |

## Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago

**Table 2**
**Procedure for Teenage Pregnancy Reports CATT**

| CATT's Standard Procedure for Teenage Pregnancy Reports |
|---|
| ✓ Allegation of sexual abuse is usually jointly investigated by CATT and CPU<br>✓ CATT will seek placement, assessments and interventions in the best interest of the child<br>✓ Child may remain in the family in cases where there is no likelihood of access to the child by the perpetrator.<br>✓ In cases where the child cannot remain in the home either due to psychological or physical safety concerns, the child may be placed with the suitably assessed family members, other suitably assessed fit persons or in Foster Care. |

## National Family Services Division, Ministry of Social Development and Family Services

**Table 3**
**Procedure for Teenage Pregnancy MSDFS**

| MSDFS' Standard Procedure for Teenage Pregnancy Reports |
|---|
| ✓ Interviews are conducted with the abused child and significant others to gather information<br>✓ Confirmation that a report was made to the CPU nearest to the victim's residence. If no, a report is made and if yes, follow up is undertaken on the status of the investigation<br>✓ Counselling is offered to the child and significant others<br>✓ Referral and liaise with other relevant agencies by the Social Worker as may be necessary<br>✓ Follow up with the victim and family |

# APPENDIX IV
# Programmes

## Ministry of Education

**Table 1**
**Responsive Programmes conducted by Student Support List of Topics of Sessions**

| TOPICS | TARGET AUDIENCE |
|---|---|
| **Child Rights and Responsibilities** | Parents, Teachers, Students |
| **Choices and Decision Making** | Students |
| **Carnival Safety and Awareness** | Students and Parents |
| **Functions, Roles and Responsibilities of the School Social Worker** | Parents, Teachers |
| **Healthy Me/Happy Me** | Students and Teachers |
| **Appropriate and Inappropriate behaviours** | Primary Students |
| **Inappropriate Sexual Behaviours** | Secondary Students |
| **Child Abuse (Types, indicators, coping mechanisms)** | Parents, Teachers, Students |
| **Emotional Intelligence** | Parents, Teachers, Students |
| **Understanding Teenagers** | Parents, Teachers |
| **The Importance of Confidentiality** | Teachers |
| **Laws on Child Abuse** | Parents, Teachers, Students |
| **Supporting or Understanding your Special Needs Child** | Parents, Teachers |
| **Social Media** | Parents, Teachers, Students |
| **Bullying** | Parents, Teachers, Students |
| **The Impact of Childhood Experiences on Child Development** | Parents, Teachers |
| **Gang Violence: Indicators and Risks** | Parents, Students |
| **Positive Discipline** | Parents, Teachers |
| **Absenteeism** | Parents, Teachers, Students |
| **Building Positive Relationships** | Parents, Teachers, Students |
| **Effective Communication** | Parents, Teachers, Students |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Parenting Styles and Skills** | Parents |
| **Understanding Behavioural Challenges** | Parents, Teachers, Students |
| **Anger and Stress Management** | Parents, Teachers, Students |
| **Trauma and its Effect on Behaviour** | Parents, Teachers, |
| **The Effect of Addictions: Substance, Gambling, Pornography, Sex etc.** | Parents, Teachers, Students |
| **Human Trafficking** | Students |
| **Understanding the Risks of STIs** | Students |

## Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago

**Table 2**
**Services**

| SERVICE | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|
| Assessment | At the heart of the new system is the multi-disciplinary assessment of children. As explained in Section 2.1.4, a Treatment Plan is developed for each child, which identifies the optimal placement option and rehabilitative interventions. |
| Forensic Interviews | The CATT and the CPU often conduct joint Forensic Interviews in respect of child victims. The Children Act makes provision for the interviews to be recorded and used as evidence in Court. This ensures that the child is not re-traumatized as he or she moves through the system, having to tell the story of abuse again and again. Due to concerns expressed by the DPP, the CATT conducted a simulation exercise for the DPP with the aim of fully ventilating the process of the interview, however, it has not received feedback. As such, the Forensic Interviews have been paused. It is hoped that critical feedback will soon be forthcoming so that this important service can resume. |
| Forensic Medicals | Forensic medicals are conducted for victims of sexual abuse. This ensures that high quality evidence is available in Court proceedings. |
| Case Facilitation/Monitoring | The close monitoring of a child to ensure that the recommendations in the Treatment Plan are being carried out, and to track the progress of same. This is critical for Case Management as it enables |

| | |
|---|---|
| | the worker to respond quickly to changes in the client's situation and increase, decrease, terminate or maintain services as required. |
| Child and Family Counselling | The provision of supportive counselling to the child who is in need of care and protection as well as to the families of these children. |
| Psychological Services | The provision of support through a team of psychologists within the Child and Family Services Unit to children and their families. |
| Resource Brokering/Referral | The identification of, location and linking of client systems to needed resources in a timely manner. The worker assists the client in choosing the most appropriate service option and assists in negotiating the terms of service delivery. |
| Psychosocial Intervention | Psychosocial interventions refer to different therapeutic techniques, usually classed as non-pharmacological (not involving medication), that address the psychological aspects of an individual or group and consider the person's or group's situation from a societal, familial perspective. |
| Reintegration of children | The provision of a range of services to facilitate the preparation of a child and family to be reunited where this is deemed to be possible, appropriate and in the child's best interest. |
| Crisis Intervention | The provision of emergency and temporary care given to a child who, because of unusual stress in his or her life renders him/her unable to function as normal, in order to interrupt the downward spiral of maladaptive behaviour and return the child to their usual level of pre-crisis functioning. |
| Supervised Access/Visits | The provision of supervised contact between a child who has been removed from his/her family and the parents or other adult family members. It also involves contact between a parent and his/her child where such contact is not otherwise deemed safe. Supervised access visits ensure the child's safety and continuity of relationships with the child's natural support system. Additionally, supervised access visits provide an opportunity to evaluate the interactions between the child and his/her family for the purpose of reintegrating a child into the family. Additional facilities are required for supervised access as the Family Court and CATT are now over burdened with burgeoning schedules. |
| Juvenile Inventory for Functioning Tool /Assessment (JIFF) | JIFF is a computerized interview that is self-administered by the youth or caregiver(s). JIFF assessments are recommended for youth ages 9-19 but can be used for children as young as six (6). The Authority administers the JIFF interview tool which helps guide the creation of care plans by mapping out areas in the client and family life which may need improvement or support. While this tool is commonly used for children with beyond control behaviours, it also helps to screen for child abuse. |

**Table 3**
**Public Education Activities**

| MEDIA HOUSE | INTERVIEW TOPIC |
|---|---|
| Isaac Radio 98.1FM | Role and function of the Authority as well as child protection tips during the Carnival season |
| Sky 99.5 FM | How to identify signs of abuse |
| Power 102.1 FM | Protecting children during Carnival season |
| Sky 99.5 FM | Children Act 2012, Corporal punishment and alternative forms of discipline |
| Sky 99.5 FM | The Authority's "Nine Months and Counting" Bulletin |
| WACK Radio 90.1FM | Child abuse prevention |
| 103FM | Foster Care and Adoption Services |
| CNMG | Child abuse reports, the Authority's ability to manage the current case load and rehabilitation for child perpetrators and their victims. |
| Radio and TV Jaagriti | Services offered by the Authority |
| Isaac Radio 98.1FM | Intervention and child protection |
| Power 102.1 FM | Child rights and child abuse |
| CNC3's morning show | The Authority's one year anniversary- highlighting achievements, challenges and next steps |
| TV6 morning show | The Authority's one year anniversary – highlighting achievements, challenges and next steps |
| Radio and TV Jaagriti | Foster Care |
| CNMG 's morning show | The Authority's assessment process and its intervention regarding child marriages |
| Sky 99.5 FM | Monitoring of community residences, child marriages and child abuse |
| IETV | Role of the Authority |
| WINTV | Child protection tips |
| Trinity TV | The need for Foster Care providers |
| IBN Channel 8 | Child abuse statistics, prevention and protection tips |
| Radio and TV Jaagriti | How parents can keep children safe from abuse during the holidays |

## Child Protection Unit, TTPS

**Table 4**
**Programmes/Services for Child Abuse**

| UNIT | PROGRAMMES | SERVICES |
|---|---|---|
| Community Policing Secretariat | School Lectures<br>Single Parent Intervention Programme 2015<br>Parental Workshops<br>Resistance and Prevention Programme | Emotional Intelligence Training<br>Mediation and Family Mediation Training<br>School Liaison Officers<br>Provision of School Hampers<br>Mediation Services<br>Counselling Services<br>Distribution of Child Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse fliers at community town meetings |
| Victim and Witness Support Unit | Post-Traumatic Stress Support Programme | Provision of counselling services for victims<br>Education of victims, families and other stakeholders on secondary victimisation<br>Liaison with various state and NGOs for aid for victims of crime<br>Relocation of victims<br>Mediation Services<br>Detention and prosecution of offenders |
| Child Protection Unit | Participating in seminars with the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services | Assist in the removal of children from dangerous situations<br>Implementation of court orders related to children<br>Visits to children at home or in other institutions<br>Referrals to other agencies and stakeholders for further intervention and follow-up |
| Electronic Media | Child Abuse Awareness Campaign on Social Media Sites (Facebook, Twitter) as well as on Radio and Television | - |

# APPENDIX V DEFICITS OF THE CHILDREN'S AUTHORITY

**Table 1**
**Table showing details of staffing & Infrastructural deficits per unit at the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago.**

| Area of Mandate | Legislative Provision | Unit with responsibility | Issues identified/infrastructural |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Investigate and make recommendations with respect to the adoption of children in accordance with the Adoption of Children Act, 2000** | s.5(1)(b) CAA[14] 2000 | Adoption | Need for increased number of specialised staff trained in investigations for adoption cases to explore which children in CRs may be freed for adoption |
| **Investigate complaints made by any person with respect to any child who is in the care of a community residence, foster home or nursery, that the said residence, home or nursery failed to comply with the requisite standards prescribed under the Children's Community residences Foster Care and Nurseries Act, 2000 (CCRFCNA) and any incident of mistreatment of children in such places.** | s. 5(1)(c) CAA 2000 | Licensing and Monitoring | • Non-compliance by staff employed at children's homes with regulations due to protection by Unions who argue against changes to their job specifications<br>• Lack of properly trained and specialist staff in CRs generally leading to non-compliance minimum requirements for licensing for example, proper record keeping.<br>• Insufficient number of trained staff in the CRs who can cp |
| Investigate complaints or reports of mistreatment of children | s.5(1)(d) CAA 2000 | Investigation | • Grossly inadequate number of staff based on case loads<br>• Need for training of judiciary/magistracy and other stakeholders in relation to the referral of matters and the role of the Authority vs other agencies such as Probation<br>• Improved collaboration and training needed with CPU of the TTPS |

[14] Children's Authority Act Chapter 46:10

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Upon investigation, remove a child from his home where it is shown that the child is in imminent danger | s. 5(1)(e) CAA 2000 | Emergency Response Unit | • Greater number of trained staff needed<br>• No Tobago Office to facilitate ERT |
| Monitor community residences, foster homes and nurseries and conduct periodic reviews to determine their compliance with such requirements as may be prescribed | s.5(1)(f) CAA 2000 | Licensing and Monitoring | |
| Issue, suspend and revoke licenses of community residences and nurseries provided under the (CCRFCNA)<br>Duty to issue or refuse license within 6 months of receiving an application. | s.5(1)(g) CAA 2000<br>s. 4(2) CCRFCNA8 | Licensing and Monitoring | • Since proclamation, only 7 homes have met the standards for licensing and have received licenses.<br>• CRs need further financial support to bring them up to the infrastructural / quality of care standard for licensing<br>• Proclamation of sections 3 and 17 may now be advisable |
| Maintenance of Assessment and Support Centres for the initial assessment and referral of children coming to the attention of the Authority (also called "Intake Centre" under section 14(5)) | s. 14(2)(a) CAA 2000 | Assessment | • Since proclamation, there only 2 Assessment Centres have been established (Mt. Hope and San Fernando Teaching Hospital)<br>• There is no assessment centre in Central and East Trinidad or Tobago. This increases the strain on existing centres and gives rise to long appointment dates. Funding required for these to be established. |
| Duty to evaluate all children resident in a community residence and the suitability of the placement of the child in the community residence | s. 25(2) CCRFCNA | Investigation /Assessment | • Lack of proper record keeping on the children by Managers of the Homes prior to proclamation has stymied this process as investigation |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | has to commence from scratch to determine possibility of familial reintegration for each child |
| Liaise with support services and agencies for counselling, investigations and continued management of cases | s.14(2)(b) CAA 2000 | Child and Family Services (CFS) | • Gross understaffing having regard to case load<br>• No partnership with other state based support services such as NFS leading to overburdening of CFS staff with respect |
| Maintenance of Reception Centres for the temporary care of children received by the Authority (for a period of up to 12 weeks) and with the following staff made available for the initial medical examination, diagnostic assessments and formulation of treatment plans:<br>- Qualified social workers<br>- A child psychologist<br>- Medical and other qualified personnel<br>- A Child Psychiatrist | s.14(4) CAA 2000 | Child Support Centre | • Since proclamation, the Authority has set up one Reception Centre/ Intake Centre (Child Support Centre) which has the capacity to accommodate up to 20 children only. This space is grossly inadequate.<br>• No child psychiatrist on site<br>• Greater number of trained staff needed |
| Duty to make immediate Wardship application upon receipt of child into care | s.23(1) CAA 2000 | Legal | • As a consequence of the necessity to properly investigate circumstances of and determine whereabouts of parent / guardian it has proven to be logistically impossible to file Application for Wardship proceedings immediately upon receipt into care. |

**Table 2**
**Additional areas that require improvement in order to provide adequate programmes and services in the area of child abuse at CATT**

| AREA | REQUIREMENTS |
|---|---|
| **Human Resources** | ✓ Recruitment of additional staff to all areas<br>✓ Child and Family Services Unit has 1, 413 cases referred to it for intervention and case management and the Assessment Centres have waiting periods extending into months.<br>✓ Lack of staff posed challenges to the operation and services delivery of the organisation.<br>✓ The Authority recently conducted a review of the strategy and operations and proposed a new organisational structure. |
| **Financial Resources** | ✓ Treatment interventions recommended for the CATT's clientele are not widely available and therefore very costly in several cases the CATT has had to pay for the services.<br>✓ The provision of additional financial resources allocated to Authority to allow for easier and quicker access to these needed intervention for clients.<br>✓ CATT requested $88,122,768 for the financial year ended 2016/2017 but was allocated for 2017 $37,100,000, 58% less than the amount requested.<br>✓ The reduced funding has impacted in the following ways:<br>– Lack of expenditure to house children in need of care and protection at the existing Child Support Centre<br>– Insufficient resources for recruitment of new staff<br>– Insufficient allocation to increase adoption and foster care related which serves as an alternative remedial placement option for abused children.<br>– Lack of resources to be allocated towards the rehabilitation of victims of abuse who in turn become child offenders. |
| **Training** | ✓ Training of staff in areas specific to child protection to aid in the level of support to victims of child abuse.<br>✓ Specialist training required to provide the requisite support, particularly in areas such as play therapy, and trauma focused cognitive behavioural therapy. |
| **Placement** | ✓ Insufficient placement options places a strain on CATT's ability to effectively execute its supportive interventions.<br>✓ Children received into care can be placed with family members and guardians. Those who do not have persons who are able and willing to care for them are sent to foster or residential care.<br>✓ Insufficient foster carers and many do not opt to care for adolescents with challenging behaviours<br>✓ There are two transitional homes catering to children over the age of 16 who are preparing for independent living, but they have signalled an intention to close on January 15th 2017.<br>✓ No hostels at this time. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | ✓ Expansion of placement facilities including additional foster carers, transition facilities and hostels as well as mental health facilities so as to ensure that child victims acquire the requisite support. |
| **Support to partner agencies** | ✓ Agencies with responsibility for providing services to child victims and their families:<br>– National Family Services Division<br>– Student Support Services Division<br>– National Mentorship Programme<br>– Child Guidance Clinics<br>– Various Mental Health Clinics and Wellness Centres<br>✓ The agencies plagued with staff shortages, training issues, insufficient material resources and high caseload sizes resulting in referees not being able to access timely and high quality intervention services<br>✓ Increased capacity of the agencies needed to effectively execute their mandate |
| **Support to NGOs** | ✓ NGOs in the child protection sector provide various support interventions including:<br>– Individual and family counselling and therapy<br>– Parent and child support groups<br>– Mentorship<br>– Parent training<br>– Music therapy<br>– Occupational therapy<br>– Physiotherapy<br>– Aqua therapy<br>✓ Some of the services are free of charge but many are offered at a cost<br>✓ The NGO sector needs to be strengthened to enable greater availability of services which are affordable and accessible to the public augmenting gaps in the public system and offering additional avenues for child victims of abuse and their families to access support services. |
| **Collaboration** | ✓ The child protection sector is fragmented and there is room for improvement in communication among the agencies.<br>✓ Lack of communication leads to in some cases difficulties accessing the client information and reports among agencies, as well as some agencies foregoing their responsibilities in favour of other agencies taking the lead and executing the requisite work.<br>✓ Greater inter-agency collaboration and stakeholder engagement are needed together with the clarification of roles and responsibilities of various agencies intervening in similar cases.<br>✓ The finalisation and roll of a National Child Abuse Protocol meant to define the role of the key players in the child protection sector |
| **Criminal Investigation** | ✓ Improvement in the rate of criminal investigations and prosecution.<br>✓ Alleged persecutors need to be brought to justice swiftly<br>✓ Improvement in the level of support to victims of abuse and their families<br>✓ Address the gaps with solutions that empower and strengthen agencies and child protection workers at the micro and macro level. |

# APPENDIX VI
# LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS

## Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago

**Table 1**
**Further Legislative Amendments**

| Areas of further Legislative Amendment |
|---|
| ✓ Section 31 of the Sexual Offences Act Chap. 11:28 may be amended to include a wider range of sexual offences which may be committed against children under the Children Act 2012. The amendment to Section 31 caused by the Children's Act includes only the offences of sexual penetration, sexual touching and offences elating to female genital mutilation as being subject to mandatory reporting.<br><br>✓ Have frontline personnel (the police, teachers, social workers, other child care professionals) subject to mandatory reporting provisions in relation to the Authority, enabling the Authority to receive all reports relating to potential child abuse, reducing chances of a child slipping through the cracks<br><br>✓ Legislation guarding against the payment of costs in child protection litigation, where it is shown that the Authority has acting in accordance with a report received and investigated its statutory duty and good faith. |

**Table 2**
**Status of Legislation and Issues**

| Act | Purpose and Effect | Provision still unproclaimed | Issues identified |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Children's Authority Act Chapter 46:10 (Act No. 64 of 2000)** | This Act establishes the Children's Authority to act as the guardian of the children in T&T. it is regarded the 'parent Act' of the Authority as it sets out the substantive mandate of the Authority. This Act was fully proclaimed on 18th May 2015, save for Section 3A. | Section 3A (Objects of Authority) | Proclamation recommended. |
| **Children's Community Residences, Foster Care and Nurseries Act 65 of 2000 (CCRFCNA)** | This Act makes provision for the monitoring, licensing and regulation of Community Residences, Foster Care and Nurseries in T&T by the Children's Authority.<br>The Act was partially proclaimed on 18th May, 2015. | Section 3(1) and 3(2) and Section 17- These provisions create the offence of operating a CR without a license. | Although the delayed proclamation of the Section was intended to provide a grace period to allow homes the time to comply with the requirements for licensing, this was based on the assumption that the homes |

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|---|---|---|---|
| | | | would apply to be licensed pursuant to section 4 CCRFCNA.<br><br>However, ten of the hoes have not applied for a license in spite of continued reminders by the Authority of the necessity to do so.<br><br>The continued non-proclamation of these provisions impedes the Authority's licensing and monitoring power since there is no criminal or civil, sanction which would compel an existing residence to apply for a license. |
| | | **<u>Nurseries:</u>**<br>Part V (Sections 42-52A) – This part sets out the provisions that establish the Authority's function to license and monitor nurseries.<br>The Authority advised that this Part could not be proclaimed due to lack of policy which would form the basis for Regulations in relation to nurseries. | There continues to be a clear and urgent need for the regulation nurseries, however, the regulations have not yet been approved.<br>Licensing and Monitoring Unit is under resourced to initiate the necessary research/ investigation of existing nurseries.<br>Specialised staff must be recruited to undertake the development of the necessary gap analysis/ research necessary for the development of the necessary systems to operationalise the regulation of nurseries. |
| **The Children's Act, 2012** | The Act repealed and replaced the Children Act Chap 46:01 and increases the range of sexual offences committed against children. Broadens the scope of treatment with respect to children who are victims of abuse and neglect and deals more comprehensively with treatment of children in conflict with the law. | Section 60(3), 64(1), 64(2), 70(a), 72 and 73<br>The Authority advised against proclamation as these sections make reference to placement of children at Rehabilitation Centres which did not exist at the time of proclamation. | The absence of Rehabilitation Centres has been the subject of massive and ongoing litigation against the State and has led to the amendment of the Young Offenders Detention Act (YODA) to allow for the Youth Training Centre (YTC) to be designated as a Rehabilitation Centre by the Minister of National Security.<br>This amendment has been achieved through Schedule 5 (consequential amendment) of the Family and Children Division (FCD) Act No. 6 of 2016 (Item 9). |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | However, the proclamation of this Act and the consequential amendment to the YODA is urgently required to treat with the current lacuna created by the absence of Rehabilitation Centres and reduce the ongoing liability being faced by the State. |
| **The Adoption of Children Act** | This Act amends to the Adoption of Children Act No. 67 of 2000, to inter alia, replace the Adoption Board with the Children's Authority, introduce the process of freeing children for adoption and international adoptions. | Fully proclaimed and operational together with Adoption of Children Regulations | Several amendments to the Adoption Act have been brought about through Schedule 5 to the FCD Act No. 6 of 2016.<br>The proclamation of this Act has now necessitated Trinidad and Tobago becoming a signatory to the Hague Convention on International Adoption for international adoption protections, as new legislation now includes provisions for international adoption. |

## Ministry of Education Circular Memorandum 76 of 2008

File No. E: 58/1/6 CODE: 09:03
Circular Memorandum No. 76

FROM: Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education

TO: Principals (Primary & Secondary), Co-coordinators' (ECCE), School Supervisors, Director of Curriculum Division, Manager, and Student Support Services Division

DATE: September 02, 2008

SUBJECT: **Procedures for all School Personnel Re: Matters of Child Sexual Abuse**

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**Your attention is drawn to the following procedures for managing reports of Child Sexual Abuse at all schools and ECCE Centres.**

i. Legal Prescription

According to the Sexual Offences Act No 27 of 1986, indictable sexual offences include:

- Rape
- Sexual intercourse with a female under 14 years of age
- Sexual intercourse with a female between 14 years and 16 years
- Sexual intercourse with a male under 16 years
- Incest
- Sexual intercourse with an adopted minor
- Sexual intercourse with a minor employee
- Sexual intercourse with a mentally subnormal person
- Buggery
- Indecent assault
- Serious indecency.

Act No. 31, of 2000 (an Amendment to the Sexual Offences Act) provides for the **Mandatory Reporting** of a sexual offence against a minor. (A minor is defined as anyone under 18 years of age) **Section 31 (1) states in part that:**
**"Any person who:-**

- is the parent or guardian of a minor;
- has the actual custody, charge or control of a minor;
- has the temporary custody, care, charge or control of a minor for a special purpose as his attendant, employer or teacher, or in any capacity... and who has reasonable grounds for believing that a sexual offence has been committed in respect of that minor, **shall report the grounds for his belief to a police officer as soon as is reasonably practicable".**

ii. **Procedures**

When a student/adult makes a report to any school personnel, such a person has the responsibility to report the matter using the following guidelines:

- Listen, get the facts and record the information as given by the person making the report: victim, or any other person. The basic principles governing the process are: (a) "believing the child" and (b) do no harm to the client.
- Record all information consistent with the provisions of Act 31, 2000. Section 31B
- Report the matter to the Principal/Co-ordinator in his/her role a reporting officer for the school.
- Principal, and person(s) informing the Principal (teacher, parent, student and other adults), **MUST** then make a formal report in person at the Police Station (all persons with knowledge has the responsibility to report to the Police). Principal is to inform parents **AFTER** making report to the Station.
- Police are also to inform parents.
- Principal must then report to the Ministry via normal reporting channels.
- Copies of all reports, including all supporting documents must be forwarded to the Legal Division of the Ministry of Education for appropriate advice and direction.
- Principal must simultaneously make appropriate referral to Student Support Services Division at the Direct Office so that support for the student and family could be provided. The referral must include:-
    a. A completed Referral Form
    b. Copies of written reports – under confidential cover directly to relevant Officer
    c. Contact information for student and parents.
- Student Support Services Division personnel (Guidance Officer II and Senior School Worker) must follow departmental procedures in providing intervention and support services.

iii. **Important to Note**

The entire procedure has three (3) main stages:

- **Reporting:** School personnel have the responsibility to report, NOT to investigate, determine fact, or make judgments of innocent or guilty.
- **Investigating:** The Police are responsible for investigating and determining whether charges should be laid. The police enforce the Law.
- **Determining:** The Magistrate/Judge determines guilt or innocence. They dispense justice.

All Supervisors, Principals are to ensure that the contents of this Circular are drawn to the attention of all school personnel in schools and Early Childhood and Care Education Centres.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Office of the Chief Education Officer

**File No. 19/1/15**

**Circular Memorandum No. 25**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **FROM** | : | Chief Education Officer<br>Ministry of Education |
| **TO** | : | All Primary and Secondary School Principals |
| **DATE** | : | 3rd June 2014 |
| **SUBJECT** | : | **Sexual Offences** |

The Education Act Chapter 39:01 Section 27 states that Principals of schools shall be responsible for the day to day management of their school including – (a) "the supervision of the physical safety of pupils and (d) the discipline of the school". This means that Principals have a direct responsibility for all students in their respective schools.

This responsibility extends to ascertaining why students may have had a prolonged absence from school and/or may have "dropped out" of the school without providing documented justifiable reasons.

Additionally, the data presently available suggests that students may have absented themselves and/or dropped out of school because of pregnancy, sexual assault or related issue. It many cases, it appears that Principals or persons in authority on the school's compound may have had knowledge of the reason for a student's absenteeism and decided not to report they matter.

I wish to make it abundantly clear that any person having such knowledge and/or suspicion that a sexual offence may have been committed has a legal obligation to report the matter to the police forthwith. The Sexual Offences Act, Chapter 11:28 Amended by Act 31 of 2000, Section 31.

**(1) States "Any person who—**

***(a)* is the parent or guardian of a minor;**

***(b)* has the actual custody, charge or control of a minor;**

**(c) has the temporary custody, care, charge or control of a minor for a special purpose, as his attendant, employer or teacher, or in any other capacity; or**

*(d)* is a medical practitioner, or a registered nurse or
midwife, and has performed a medical examination in respect of a minor, and who has reasonable grounds for believing that a sexual offence has been committed in respect of that minor, shall report the grounds for his belief to a police officer as soon as reasonably practicable.

**(2) Any person who without reasonable excuse fails to comply with the requirements of subsection (1), is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of fifteen thousand dollars or to imprisonment for a term of seven years or to both such fine and imprisonment.**

**According to the said Act a "minor" means a person under eighteen years of age.**

Principals must forward a report to the Chief Education Officer through the established channel of communication. A copy of the report must also be sent to School Supervisor and Student Support Services Division

Principals are advised to strictly abide by the law and to bring this Circular to every person in authority at the school.

**Mr. Harrilal Seecharan**
**Chief Education Officer**
**Ministry of Education**

## Role of the Children's Authority

**Table 3**

**Edited matrix showing the role of the Children's Authority in relation to Child Offenders under the current legislative regime and proposed changes under the Family and Child Division Act, 2016.**

| PRESENT ROLE OF THE AUTHORITY | RELEVANT PROVISION | PROPOSED CHANGES TO AUTHORITY'S ROLE UNDER CONSEQUENTIAL LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS CONTAINED WITHIN SCHEDULE 5 OF THE FCD BILL 2016 | COMMENTS |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **PROPOSED ROLE OF THE AUTHORITY IN RELATION TO THE CONDUCT OF POLICE INTERVIEWS WITH CHILD OFFENDERS**<br><br>**Clause 17 of Schedule 5 of the FCD Bill** provides for the amendment of the Children Act, 2012 by the introduction of a new **Section 51B** which provides as follows:<br><br>51B. (1) Whenever a police officer is interviewing a child suspect, the following persons shall be present:<br><br>(a) the parent, guardian or person with responsibility for the child;<br>and<br>(b) Duty Counsel or a private attorney for the child.<br><br>(2) **Whenever a police officer is interviewing a child who is a suspect, victim, witness or otherwise, and it appears to the police officer that the child's ability to follow the interview or to communicate should be facilitated through an intermediary, the police officer may make an application to the Children's Authority to appoint a competent and qualified person to act as an intermediary**.<br>(3) Notwithstanding subsection (2**), any of the following persons may request that the police make an application to the Children's** | **Concern regarding conflict:**<br><br>The CA cannot be expected to participate in both a prosecutorial and protective role in relation to the child. This creates a clear conflict with the CA's care and protection role – which may apply to the same child in parallel care proceedings.<br><br>**Staffing implications:**<br><br>• Clarification needed as to whether the "intermediary" |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Authority to appoint a competent and qualified person to act as an intermediary**:<br><br>(a) the parent, guardian or person with responsibility for the child; and<br>(b) Duty Counsel or a private attorney for the child.<br><br>(4) On receipt of an application from the police officer under subsection (2) or (3), the Children's Authority may, if it is of the view that such appointment is desirable, appoint an intermediary.<br><br>(5) The functions of the intermediary under this section are -<br>(a) to communicate –<br><br>(i) to the child suspect, questions put to him; and<br>(ii) to any person asking such questions, the answers given by the child suspect<br>in reply to them; and<br><br>b) to advise the police officer who is conducting the interview as to –<br><br>(i) the most appropriate way to ask the child questions in order to elicit accurate and clear responses; and<br>(ii)the meaning of a child's response having regard to the child's age and stage of development.<br><br>(6) A person shall not be eligible to act as an intermediary under this section, unless he makes a declaration before a Justice of the Peace, in the form set out in Schedule 1A.<br><br>(7) A child intermediary shall not obstruct the officer in the conduct of an interview. | must necessarily be employed by the CA or whether the CA may develop a pool of external providers who may be utilised by the police<br>• If external providers are to be used who will fund these services, following the "appointment" of these persons by the CA?<br>• The role of the other support services such as VWSU should be considered |

| | | | |
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| | | (8) For the purposes of this section, "child suspect" means a child whom a police officer has reasonable cause to believe has committed a criminal offence.";<br><br>**Recommendations in JCP Multi Agency Protocol**<br><br>Further to the consequential amendment to Section 51B of the Children Act, 2012 providing fort the appointment of a child intermediary the JCP MAP proposes that the CA:<br><br>"**shall maintain a list of all psychologists and social workers. Upon receiving notification from the police of the arrest of a child they shall immediately assign a psychologist or social worker to deal with the case."** | |
| | | **DUTY TO LOCATE "APPROPRIATE ADULT" WHERE THE CHILD OFFENDERS PARENTS CANNOT BE LOCATED AFTER THE CHILD'S ARREST**<br><br>**The JCP Multi Agency Protocol** suggests that a duty be conferred on the Authority to ensure that an appropriate adult is contacted as soon as possible where, upon the arrest of a child, the police are unable to contact the parent, guardian or person with responsibility for the child | Given that "an Attorney at Law for the child" is listed among the possible "appropriate adults", it is clear that the Duty Counsel who is appointed to the child's case in accordance with the Legal Aid and Advice Act can serve as the appropriate adult, if there is no other person available for this purpose. There is therefore no need |

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|---|---|---|---|
| | | | for the Authority to engage in a search for any other person, for the required purpose i.e. the protection of the child to be achieved. |

# APPENDIX VII
# STATISTICS

## CPU, Statistics of Offences in which Children were Victims

**Table 1**
**OFFENCES IN WHICH CHILDREN WERE VICTIMS – BY YEAR**

| Offences | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | Grand Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ALLOW CHILD TO BEG ON STREET** | | 2 | | | | | | | **2** |
| **ASSAULT AND BEAT** | 388 | 568 | 678 | 670 | 476 | 425 | 440 | 314 | **3959** |
| **ATTEMPT MURDER** | | | | | | | 2 | | **2** |
| **ATTEMPT SUICIDE** | | | | | | | 4 | | **4** |
| **ATTEMPT TO CHOKE** | | | | | | | 1 | | **1** |
| **BREACH OF PEACE** | 5 | 19 | 23 | 18 | 26 | 15 | 17 | | **123** |
| **BREACH OF PROTECTION ORDER** | 1 | 2 | 3 | | | | | | **6** |
| **BREAKING OFFENCES** | 19 | 14 | 19 | 14 | 12 | 13 | 6 | 6 | **103** |
| **CHILD ABANDONMENT** | | 7 | 11 | 6 | 11 | | 1 | | **36** |
| **CHILD ABUSE** | | | | | | | 2 | 2 | **4** |
| **CRUELTY TO CHILDREN** | | 1 | | 9 | 1 | 1 | 10 | 34 | **56** |
| **EMBEZZLEMENT, FALSE PRETENSE, FRAUD, ETC.** | | | 1 | | | | | | **1** |
| **FRAUD OFFENCES** | 1 | | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | 1 | **6** |
| **GENERAL LARCENY** | 33 | 49 | 54 | 68 | 53 | 44 | 45 | 44 | **390** |
| **INDECENT ASSAULT** | 93 | 111 | 91 | 148 | 131 | 129 | 57 | 16 | **776** |
| **INDECENT EXPOSURE** | | | 1 | | | | | | **1** |
| **KIDNAPPING** | 17 | 11 | 15 | 31 | 9 | 12 | 19 | 6 | **120** |
| **LARCENY DWELLING HOUSE** | 3 | 2 | 6 | 12 | 5 | 3 | | | **31** |
| **MALICIOUS DAMAGE** | | | | | | | 2 | | **2** |
| **MALICIOUS WOUNDING** | 39 | 35 | 40 | 35 | 18 | 17 | 21 | 11 | **216** |
| **MINOR LARCENY** | 132 | 160 | 144 | 163 | 92 | 90 | 97 | 89 | **967** |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **MINOR MALICIOUS DAMAGE** | 3 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | | **35** |
| **MURDER** | 37 | 24 | 14 | 9 | 28 | 18 | 12 | 19 | **161** |
| **OTHER MINOR CRIMES** | 11 | 13 | 16 | 17 | 9 | 13 | 11 | 22 | **112** |
| **OTHER SERIOUS CRIMES** | 9 | 11 | 17 | 20 | 8 | 18 | 3 | 24 | **110** |
| **ROBBERY** | 386 | 341 | 285 | 326 | 202 | 155 | 152 | 127 | **1974** |
| **SERIOUS INDECENCY** | 30 | 41 | 36 | 64 | 53 | 54 | 51 | 14 | **343** |
| **SEXUAL OFFENCES** | 504 | 486 | 488 | 723 | 374 | 646 | 514 | 313 | **4048** |
| **UNCONTROLLABLE CHILD** | | | | | | | | 1 | **1** |
| **WOUNDING/SHOOTING** | 30 | 27 | 42 | 35 | 31 | 34 | 31 | 18 | **248** |
| GRAND TOTAL | **1741** | **1933** | **1990** | **2374** | **1544** | **1692** | **1503** | **1061** | **13838** |

**Table 2**
**OFFENCES IN WHICH CHILDREN WERE VICTIMS – BY POLICE GEOGRAPHICAL DIVISION**

| Offences | CENTRAL | EASTERN | NORTH EASTERN | NORTHERN | PORT OF SPAIN | SOUTH WESTERN | SOUTHERN | TOBAGO | WESTERN | Grand Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ALLOW CHILD TO BEG ON STREET** | | 2 | | | | | | | | **2** |
| **ASSAULT AND BEAT** | 728 | 159 | 228 | 583 | 253 | 300 | 1001 | 174 | 533 | **3959** |
| **ATTEMPT MURDER** | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | **2** |
| **ATTEMPT SUICIDE** | | | | 1 | | | 3 | | | **4** |
| **ATTEMPT TO CHOKE** | | | | | | | | 1 | | **1** |
| **BREACH OF PEACE** | 23 | 3 | 3 | 20 | 5 | 13 | 26 | 11 | 19 | **123** |
| **BREACH OF PROTECTION ORDER** | 2 | | | 1 | | 2 | 1 | | | **6** |
| **BREAKING OFFENCES** | 23 | 6 | 10 | 14 | 8 | 4 | 17 | 10 | 11 | **103** |
| **CHILD ABANDONMENT** | 5 | 1 | | 3 | 1 | 13 | 10 | 3 | | **36** |
| **CHILD ABUSE** | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | | | 1 | | **4** |
| **CRUELTY TO CHILDREN** | | 6 | 1 | 6 | 32 | 2 | | 7 | 2 | **56** |
| **EMBEZZLEMENT, FALSE PRETENSE, FRAUD, ETC.** | | | | | | | 1 | | | **1** |
| **FRAUD OFFENCES** | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | **6** |
| **GENERAL LARCENY** | 33 | 11 | 34 | 73 | 107 | 11 | 48 | 21 | 52 | **390** |
| **INDECENT ASSAULT** | 96 | 110 | 46 | 110 | 48 | 80 | 174 | 39 | 73 | **776** |
| **INDECENT EXPOSURE** | | | | | 1 | | | | | **1** |
| **KIDNAPPING** | 12 | 8 | 7 | 13 | 23 | 11 | 24 | 13 | 9 | **120** |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **LARCENY DWELLING HOUSE** | 3 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 1 | 2 | **31** |
| **MALICIOUS DAMAGE** | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | **2** |
| **MALICIOUS WOUNDING** | 22 | 21 | 19 | 26 | 15 | 15 | 56 | 26 | 16 | **216** |
| **MINOR LARCENY** | 112 | 26 | 48 | 135 | 138 | 56 | 250 | 48 | 154 | **967** |
| **MINOR MALICIOUS DAMAGE** | 7 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 11 | 4 | 3 | **35** |
| **MURDER** | 16 | 6 | 17 | 36 | 47 | 7 | 13 | 4 | 15 | **161** |
| **OTHER MINOR CRIMES** | 21 | 10 | 3 | 19 | 22 | 6 | 21 | 3 | 7 | **112** |
| **OTHER SERIOUS CRIMES** | 11 | 8 | 4 | 13 | 24 | 6 | 21 | 11 | 12 | **110** |
| **ROBBERY** | 278 | 69 | 195 | 415 | 286 | 72 | 303 | 36 | 320 | **1974** |
| **SERIOUS INDECENCY** | 35 | 39 | 23 | 51 | 38 | 51 | 58 | 27 | 21 | **343** |
| **SEXUAL OFFENCES** | 380 | 662 | 384 | 598 | 332 | 392 | 687 | 311 | 302 | **4048** |
| **UNCONTROLLABLE CHILD** | | 1 | | | | | | | | **1** |
| **WOUNDING/SHOOTING** | 21 | 12 | 15 | 40 | 82 | 11 | 30 | 4 | 33 | **248** |
| GRAND TOTAL | **1831** | **1166** | **1043** | **2169** | **1468** | **1056** | **2765** | **756** | **1584** | **13838** |

**Table 3**
**OFFENCES IN WHICH CHILDREN WERE VICTIMS – BY SEX**

| OFFENCE | FEMALE | MALE | GRAND TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| **ALLOW CHILD TO BEG ON STREET** | | 2 | **2** |
| **ASSAULT AND BEAT** | 1608 | 2351 | **3959** |
| **ATTEMPT MURDER** | 1 | 1 | **2** |
| **ATTEMPT SUICIDE** | 4 | | **4** |
| **ATTEMPT TO CHOKE** | 1 | | **1** |
| **BREACH OF PEACE** | 60 | 63 | **123** |
| **BREACH OF PROTECTION ORDER** | 4 | 2 | **6** |
| **BREAKING OFFENCES** | 60 | 43 | **103** |
| **CHILD ABANDONMENT** | 13 | 23 | **36** |
| **CHILD ABUSE** | 4 | | **4** |
| **CRUELTY TO CHILDREN** | 30 | 26 | **56** |
| **EMBEZZLEMENT, FALSE PRETENSE, FRAUD, ETC.** | | 1 | **1** |
| **FRAUD OFFENCES** | 1 | 5 | **6** |
| **GENERAL LARCENY** | 130 | 260 | **390** |
| **INDECENT ASSAULT** | 736 | 40 | **776** |
| **INDECENT EXPOSURE** | 1 | | **1** |
| **KIDNAPPING** | 82 | 38 | **120** |
| **LARCENY DWELLING HOUSE** | 15 | 16 | **31** |
| **MALICIOUS DAMAGE** | | 2 | **2** |
| **MALICIOUS WOUNDING** | 44 | 172 | **216** |
| **MINOR LARCENY** | 289 | 678 | **967** |
| **MINOR MALICIOUS DAMAGE** | 14 | 21 | **35** |
| **MURDER** | 28 | 133 | **161** |
| **OTHER MINOR CRIMES** | 65 | 47 | **112** |
| **OTHER SERIOUS CRIMES** | 64 | 46 | **110** |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **ROBBERY** | 311 | 1663 | **1974** |
| **SERIOUS INDECENCY** | 252 | 91 | **343** |
| **SEXUAL OFFENCES** | 3954 | 94 | **4048** |
| **UNCONTROLLABLE CHILD** | | 1 | **1** |
| **WOUNDING/SHOOTING** | 49 | 199 | **248** |
| GRAND TOTAL | **7820** | **6018** | **13838** |

**Table 4**
**OFFENCES IN WHICH CHILDREN WERE VICTIMS – BY AGE GROUPS**

| OFFENCE | 10-14 YRS | 15-17 YRS | Under 9 YRS | Grand Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ALLOW CHILD TO BEG ON STREET** | | | 2 | **2** |
| **ASSAULT AND BEAT** | 1376 | 2153 | 430 | **3959** |
| **ATTEMPT MURDER** | | 1 | 1 | **2** |
| **ATTEMPT SUICIDE** | 1 | 3 | | **4** |
| **ATTEMPT TO CHOKE** | 1 | | | **1** |
| **BREACH OF PEACE** | 27 | 88 | 8 | **123** |
| **BREACH OF PROTECTION ORDER** | 2 | 3 | 1 | **6** |
| **BREAKING OFFENCES** | 27 | 70 | 6 | **103** |
| **CHILD ABANDONMENT** | 10 | 5 | 21 | **36** |
| **CHILD ABUSE** | 1 | 1 | 2 | **4** |
| **CRUELTY TO CHILDREN** | 21 | 3 | 32 | **56** |
| **EMBEZZLEMENT, FALSE PRETENSE, FRAUD, ETC.** | 1 | | | **1** |
| **FRAUD OFFENCES** | 3 | 3 | | **6** |
| **GENERAL LARCENY** | 114 | 271 | 5 | **390** |
| **INDECENT ASSAULT** | 423 | 216 | 137 | **776** |
| **INDECENT EXPOSURE** | 1 | | | **1** |
| **KIDNAPPING** | 34 | 79 | 7 | **120** |
| **LARCENY DWELLING HOUSE** | 9 | 22 | | **31** |
| **MALICIOUS DAMAGE** | 1 | | 1 | **2** |
| **MALICIOUS WOUNDING** | 48 | 158 | 10 | **216** |
| **MINOR LARCENY** | 347 | 606 | 14 | **967** |
| **MINOR MALICIOUS DAMAGE** | 12 | 17 | 6 | **35** |
| **MURDER** | 18 | 108 | 35 | **161** |
| **OTHER MINOR CRIMES** | 43 | 49 | 20 | **112** |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **OTHER SERIOUS CRIMES** | 29 | 61 | 20 | **110** |
| **ROBBERY** | 517 | 1444 | 13 | **1974** |
| **SERIOUS INDECENCY** | 173 | 85 | 85 | **343** |
| **SEXUAL OFFENCES** | 1921 | 1784 | 343 | **1** |
| **UNCONTROLLABLE CHILD** | | 1 | | **248** |
| **WOUNDING/SHOOTING** | 45 | 171 | 32 | **248** |
| GRAND TOTAL | **5205** | **7402** | **1231** | **13838** |

| AGE GROUP | FEMALE | MALE | GRAND TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| **10-14 YRS** | 3373 | 1832 | **5205** |
| **15-17 YRS** | 3740 | 3662 | **7402** |
| **UNDER 9 YRS** | 707 | 524 | **1231** |
| GRAND TOTAL | **7820** | **6018** | **13838** |

# APPENDIX VIII
# Trinidad and Tobago Police Service Recommendations to improve support for child abuse victims

**Table 1**
**Procedural Recommendations of the TTPS**

| **Procedural Recommendations** |
|---|
| 1. Formal standard operating referral procedures from agency to agency;<br>2. Creation of a Social Support System for all NGOs/FBOs and Governmental agencies providing these services;<br>3. A more timely and efficient follow up and intervention by the relevant stake holders in relation to the social and psychological aspect for victims and their family on a long term basis<br>4. Increased follow-up by Social Service providers;<br>5. Greater stakeholder partnership; |
| **Service Recommendations** |
| 6. Rationalisation (less duplication) of services;<br>**7.** Increased community outreach especially in communities where statistics reflect higher incidence of child abuse; |
| **Staffing Recommendations** |
| 8. Increased manpower in the TTPS, VWSU and the CPU remains understaffed with fourteen officers currently servicing the country<br>9. Training for members of staff and other stake holders at these residences |
| 10. Increased number of social workers, psychologist and other professionals in these institutions |
| **Infrastructural Recommendations** |
| 11. Acquisition of shelters and residences for the placement of victims |
| **Judicial System** |
| 12. Faster delivery of the justice system to settle legal proceedings related to child abuse and child sexual abuse<br>13. Faster trials and determination of matters before the court involving victims of Child Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse |

# APPENDIX IX
# CATT Evaluation Methods for Child Abuse Programmes and Services

**Table 1**
**CATT Evaluation Methods**

| Evaluation Methods |
|---|
| 1. Quality check interviews with clients<br>2. Clinical supervision<br>3. Clinical observation of service provision<br>4. Training of staff<br>5. Consistent and focused reporting<br>6. Data tracking<br>7. Consistent case supervision and management – Individual and Group Supervision<br>8. Monitoring<br>9. Case Consultation with subject matter experts<br>10. Intra-Unit and Inter-Unit Case Conferencing<br>11. Consistent review of individual care plans |
| **Monthly Checks to track Productivity Levels** |
| 1. Referrals for financial support<br>2. Referrals to therapeutic services<br>3. Referrals to recreational programmes<br>4. Referrals for school enrolment and academic support<br>5. Referrals for medical treatment<br>6. Referrals for assessments (educational, psychological, psychiatric, substance abuse)<br>7. Approval for home leave<br>8. Approval for reintegration with family<br>9. Referrals for alternative care – foster care or adoption |
| **Success of Counselling and Psychotherapy** |
| 1. Fewer clinical symptoms as measured by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-V)4<br>2. Lower clinical and subclinical scores on clinical inventories that measure the presenting clinical issues<br>3. Increased scores on counteracting positive measures (for example, self-esteem, assertiveness)<br>4. Increased participation and engagement in therapeutic sessions<br>5. Increased insight into personal and systemic issues<br>6. Fewer negative thought patterns, and more adaptive and constructive cognitive attributions<br>7. Less or no likelihood of ideation and committal of acts of self-harm and harm to others<br>8. Less or cessation of substance use<br>9. Improved behavioural outcomes<br>10. Improved social skills and adaptation with others<br>11. Parental participation and access of recommended therapeutic programmes |

12. Completion of activities and homework tasks assigned during therapeutic sessions
13. Enrolment and adaptation in a programme (for example, academic, vocational), which can be further measured by sessions attended, progress reports (that is, test scores, skill acquisition)
14. Further help-seeking behaviours and demonstrations of client empowerment by the clients themselves.

**Measurement of Family Support**

1. Improvement in communication between parents and children
2. Improvement in communication between parents (that is, less conflict so as to suggest healthy family communication and environment for children)
3. Improvement in bonding between parents and children
4. Parental commitment to the visits and therapeutic work, as measured by their attendance at sessions
5. Less overt and covert conflict between parents and children
6. Demonstrable improvements in housing/living arrangements, employment/financial situation, and skill-building by parents to allow for progress towards reintegration

**Client Feedback**

1. Feedback from children and family members
2. Feedback from other service providers

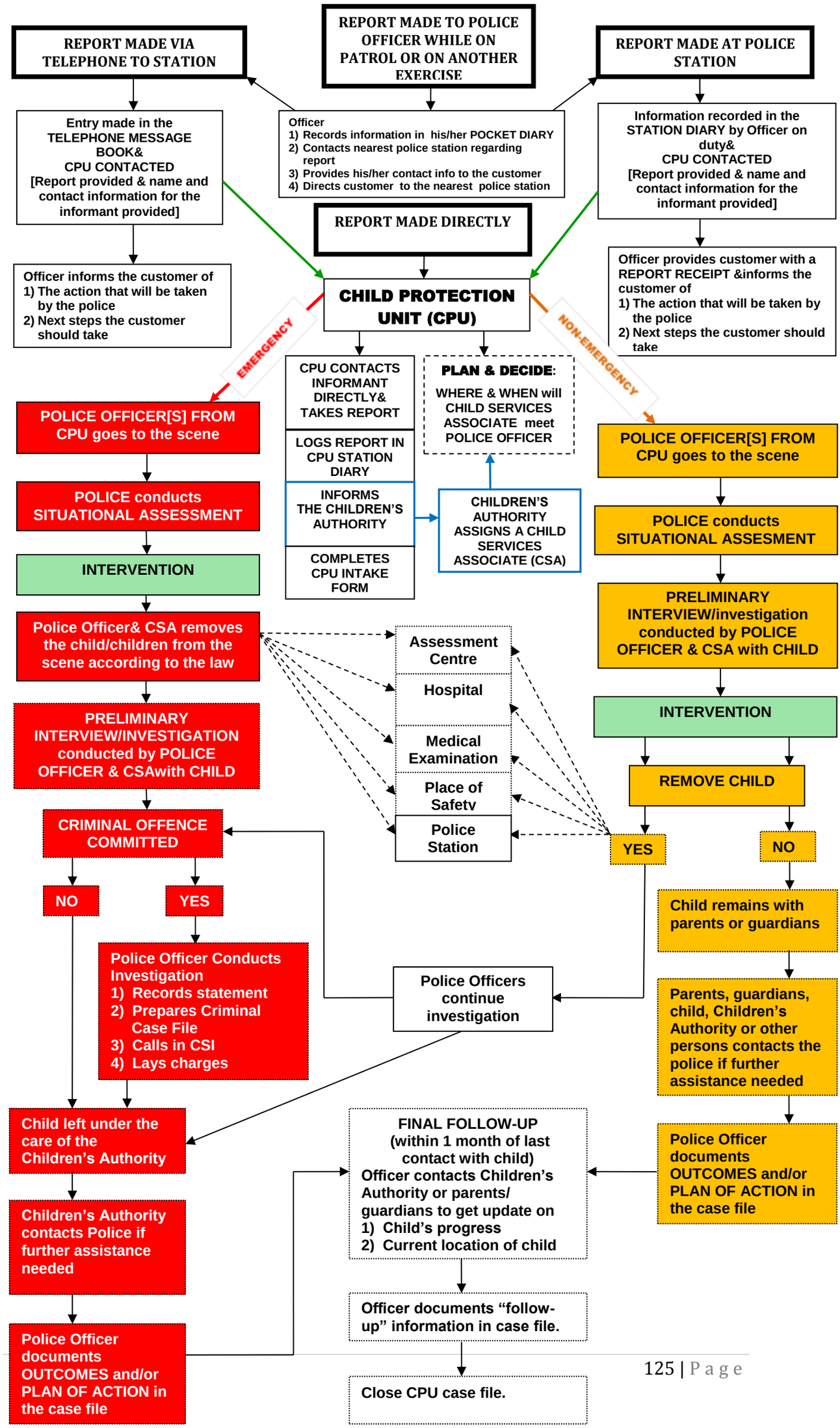
# APPENDIX X
# PROCESSES

## Ministry of Education

**Table 1**
**The School Social Work Unit intervention process for Child Abuse Cases**

- Student is interviewed
- Make reports to relevant agencies (Internal/External)
- Inform parent of social investigation, if parent is not the perpetrator
- Parent/Teachers are interviewed if necessary
- Home visit conducted
- Conduct Assessments
- Develop Intervention Plan
- Relocation - e.g. Transfer,, safe home, family member home etc.
- Provide students and parents with support
- Individual and or group counselling for student and or family members
- Parenting in Education Workshop
- Teacher Information Sessions
- Continued Support
- Periodic Assessments/Intervention Plan - Referral to external specialised agencies
- Debriefing is conducted by the School Social Worker and Guidance Officer once the abuse is public information

## Child Protection Unit (CPU) - TTPS


REPORT MADE VIA TELEPHONE TO STATION
REPORT MADE TO POLICE OFFICER WHILE ON PATROL OR ON ANOTHER EXERCISE
REPORT MADE AT POLICE STATION
Entry made in the TELEPHONE MESSAGE BOOK& CPU CONTACTED [Report provided & name and contact information for the informant provided]
Officer
1) Records information in his/her POCKET DIARY
2) Contacts nearest police station regarding report
3) Provides his/her contact info to the customer
4) Directs customer to the nearest police station
Information recorded in the STATION DIARY by Officer on duty& CPU CONTACTED [Report provided & name and contact information for the informant provided]
REPORT MADE DIRECTLY
Officer informs the customer of
1) The action that will be taken by the police
2) Next steps the customer should take
CHILD PROTECTION UNIT (CPU)
Officer provides customer with a REPORT RECEIPT &informs the customer of
1) The action that will be taken by the police
2) Next steps the customer should take
EMERGENCY
NON-EMERGENCY
CPU CONTACTS INFORMANT DIRECTLY& TAKES REPORT
LOGS REPORT IN CPU STATION DIARY
INFORMS THE CHILDREN'S AUTHORITY
COMPLETES CPU INTAKE FORM
PLAN & DECIDE:
WHERE & WHEN will CHILD SERVICES ASSOCIATE meet POLICE OFFICER
CHILDREN'S AUTHORITY ASSIGNS A CHILD SERVICES ASSOCIATE (CSA)
POLICE OFFICER[S] FROM CPU goes to the scene
POLICE conducts SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT
INTERVENTION
Police Officer& CSA removes the child/children from the scene according to the law
PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW/INVESTIGATION conducted by POLICE OFFICER & CSAwith CHILD
CRIMINAL OFFENCE COMMITTED
NO
YES
Police Officer Conducts Investigation
1) Records statement
2) Prepares Criminal Case File
3) Calls in CSI
4) Lays charges
Child left under the care of the Children's Authority
Children's Authority contacts Police if further assistance needed
Police Officer documents OUTCOMES and/or PLAN OF ACTION in the case file
Assessment Centre
Hospital
Medical Examination
Place of Safety
Police Station
POLICE OFFICER[S] FROM CPU goes to the scene
POLICE conducts SITUATIONAL ASSESMENT
PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW/investigation conducted by POLICE OFFICER & CSA with CHILD
INTERVENTION
REMOVE CHILD
YES
NO
Child remains with parents or guardians
Parents, guardians, child, Children's Authority or other persons contacts the police if further assistance needed
Police Officer documents OUTCOMES and/or PLAN OF ACTION in the case file
Police Officers continue investigation
FINAL FOLLOW-UP (within 1 month of last contact with child)
Officer contacts Children's Authority or parents/ guardians to get update on
1) Child's progress
2) Current location of child
Officer documents "follow-up" information in case file.
Close CPU case file.