



## PRESS RELEASE

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The Opposition spokesperson for Social Affairs, Mr Neil Costa states that, "The Government should have apologised over the 14 year's old treatment", in reference to the minor having spent two nights in prison for breaching her curfew condition on three occasions.

What is unfortunate is that Mr Costa has chosen to ignore the fact of why the minor had "no fixed abode". The day before the Court hearing the child was taken from the family home by an adult friend without the knowledge or consent of the mother. In fact the current "guardian" happens to be the mother of the child's adult friend. This action was without the knowledge or input of Social Services, notwithstanding the months of mediation and support to this family.

Therefore, had this unexpected and sudden intervention not happened, the child could have remained in the family home without having spent the two nights in prison awaiting the outcome of her trial.

Furthermore, Mr Costa has chosen to ignore from the Minister's interview the clear difference the Minister makes between a minor who is genuinely abandoned and for which the Care Agency must assume responsibility, and a minor with charges of fire-setting which poses a risk to other children in the care of the Care Agency.

If Mr Costa was not so predisposed to obfuscate the sensitive details of this case, for cheap political point scoring against the Government, then he would be able to understand the complexities of Social Care, and the great advance that has been made thanks to the current Government. It is extraordinary that the GSLP/Liberals speak of lack of resources, when this Government has increased the budget for Social Services by 500% the resources left by the GSLP which, completely ignored all areas of social services.