



STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr Jeremy Hanson MLA (Chair), Dr Marisa Paterson MLA (Deputy Chair),
Ms Jo Clay MLA

Inquiry into ACT Budget 2021–22
ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE
27 October 2021

Asked by Jo Clay MLA on 27 October 2021: Mick Gentleman MLA took on notice the following question(s):

[Ref: Hansard Transcript 27 October 2021 [PAGE 33]]

In relation to:

MS CLAY: I do, thank you, Chair. I was hoping, minister, for an update on our needle exchange program.

Mr Gentleman: Thanks very much for the question. I might just pass straight to the Commissioner for that detail.

Mr Johnson: Thank you, minister. I understand the needle exchange program was something that was contemplated some time ago but ultimately was voted against by staff. And so, as I understand it, that program has not progressed for—I might be corrected by people who have been around longer than me, but I think even as far back as 2010 or 2011, as I understand it.

MS CLAY: Can I get some more detail about that? I thought it was—was it government policy? I thought it was formed government policy.

Mr Gentleman: We will take that on notice, Ms Clay. It may have been for a previous government but, yes, we will take that on notice and come back to you.

MS CLAY: Okay, thank you. So I guess if it has been abandoned then I guess we need to know an update that that is no longer government policy, and perhaps the reasons why would be helpful. Thank you.

Mick Gentleman MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

Any process for development, consideration and implementation of a needle syringe program (NSP) requires appropriate consultation, in particular with staff and unions. In 2016 a proposed model was overwhelmingly rejected by eligible staff through ballot.

There has been no further progress of NSP policy since the unsuccessful ballot. A deed of agreement with the CPSU, signed by the previous Minister for Corrections remains in place. The deed of agreement provides that the implementation of any proposed model is subject to majority support by staff.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

Signature:



Date: 5/11/2021

By the Minister for Corrections, Mick Gentleman MLA