

**2. Adoption Bill 2021 –  
Third Reading approved with amendment; Bill passed**

Mrs Sharpe to move:

*That the Adoption Bill 2021 be read a third time and do pass.*

**The President:** Item 2, Adoption Bill for Third Reading. Hon. Member, Mrs Sharpe to move.

**Mrs Sharpe:** Thank you, Mr President.

In moving the Third Reading of the Adoption Bill 2021 today, I do not intend to reiterate the principles of the Bill in detail, as I feel these have been covered during previous Readings. What I would like to do is to thank very much the legislative officers of the Department of Health and Social Care, significantly Sarah Kewley, who has been in charge of this Bill, and Ben Bryan, and also in particular Debbie Brayshaw, former Director of Children and Families, who has continued to give her professional input post-retirement.

I would also like to thank the Hon. Member for Ramsey, Mr Hooper, for his useful input into the Bill in the House of Keys and my hon. colleague on Council, Mrs Poole-Wilson, for her queries, corrections and observations. Both Members have undoubtedly helped improve the Bill and their input is very much appreciated by the Department.

I would also like to sincerely thank all Hon. Members for their consideration and contributions throughout the passage of the Adoption Bill, from the initial presentation onwards. I really do appreciate the time you have all taken to scrutinise this legislation so carefully; and I would also like to thank my hon. colleague, Mrs Lord-Brennan, for seconding the Bill.

I further wish to extend thanks to the Attorney General's Chambers for their support to the Department of Health and Social Care, and in particular to the drafter of the Bill, Dr Paul Bridges, who has worked tirelessly and diligently to draft the Bill and the resulting amendments made in both Houses.

I do believe that we have achieved the greatest aim of the Bill: to update the Island's adoption legislation. We can now say with some certainty that Manx adoption legislation reflects societal attitudes in the 21st century. By updating this legislation, we are seeking to improve the lives of vulnerable children by giving them much-needed stability at the earliest and most appropriate opportunity. This is the whole point of the Bill and something I feel parliament, Government and the judiciary must not lose sight of.

I think it is worth my reiterating, because I have previously said this on the floor of Tynwald, Mr President, that if there is one thing I have learnt from my research into the 150-year history of children in care on this Island, it is that whatever we think we are doing well, hindsight inevitably proves that we are never doing enough. To that end, looking to the next administration, I look forward to the second phase of the Department's commitment to improve circumstances for vulnerable children through a new and improved Children and Young Persons Act. But for the time being, Mr President, based on what we know right now in time, I do believe we have before us an Adoption Bill which will make significant improvements to the lives of vulnerable children.

Mr President, I beg to move that the Adoption Bill 2021 be read for the third time.

**The President:** Thank you.  
Mrs Lord-Brennan.

**Mrs Lord-Brennan:** Thank you, Mr President.

I am very happy to second the Third Reading of this Bill, and I hope that it makes a big difference for children and families who need to go through this process.

**The President:** Thank you.

Yes, Mrs Poole-Wilson.

**Mrs Poole-Wilson:** Thank you, Mr President.

Thanks to the hon. mover for her kind words and in the process of continuous scrutiny, the drafter, Dr Paul Bridges, did spot one further amendment which I seek to move at this Third Reading stage. It is a technical amendment which is published on the Order Paper, and it is to move text down a line. That is simply in order to make it clear in the Bill, clause 19(1), that the relevant text applies to subparagraphs (a) and (b) of that subclause as opposed to only applying to paragraph (b).

So it is a technical amendment, as I say, Mr President, and I beg to move the amendment standing in my name:

*Amendment to clause 19*

*1. Page 33, line 16, move the words beginning with 'but,' to 'order' down to line 17 as full-out words.*

**The President:** Thank you.

Miss August-Hanson.

**Miss August-Hanson:** I would like to second the amendment. Thank you, Mr President.

**The President:** Mrs Sharpe to reply.

**Mrs Sharpe:** Thank you, Mr President, and I would like to thank the Hon. Member for this amendment, which the Department fully supports.

Thank you.

**The President:** Thank you.

I put the amendment. Those in favour of the amendment to clause 19, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

I put the question that the Adoption Bill 2021 do pass. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.