

3.16 Deputy S. Pitman of the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture regarding the usage of the Youth Service:

Would the Assistant Minister advise why such low numbers of young people are using the Youth Service, as demonstrated in the 2009 Annual Social Survey, and outline what plans, if any, he has to increase the usage of this facility?

Deputy J.G. Reed of St. Ouen (The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture):

I have asked my Assistant Minister, Deputy Green, to respond to this question.

Deputy A.K.F. Green (Assistant Minister for Education, Sport and Culture - rapporteur):

The figures in the survey do not fully represent the contribution that the Youth Service plays in support of young people. The department's figures indicate that just over 28 per cent of young people aged between 12 and 18 engage with the Youth Service. This benchmarks well compared to the U.K. of 30 per cent, particularly when considering that Jersey's Youth Service is only one of the opportunities available to young people. Many take advantage of activities through the arts, culture, sports and other uniformed groups. This was the first time that the Jersey Annual Social Survey has included questions about the Youth Service which identified the need in the future for a survey solely aimed at young people. The department has already discussed this with the Statistics Unit and is now looking to develop a young people's survey that could have a multi-agency approach and link to the development of the Children and Young People's Plan. The Youth Service does and will continue to ask young people what they want from their youth service, listen to the suggestions on how to improve what is provided and, in addition, the department will continue to promote the service and ensure that all youth activities are recognised as part of the overall provision for our young people.

3.16.1 Deputy S. Pitman:

Could the Assistant Minister inform Members at the moment how the department advertise the Youth Service to these young people?

Deputy A.K.F. Green:

We reach out to young people in a number of different ways. We have information at the schools, we have information at Highlands College, and we also run regular spots with the media as well and, in particular, the media that the young people listen to, perhaps the alternative to the radio that we are being published on at the moment. So we are attempting to reach young people, but it must be remembered that a lot of the young people who say that they do not have the time to engage, that is because they are already engaged with, as I say, services that are not part of those that are provided by E.S.C. (Education, Sport and Culture) but are facilitated, such as the arts and sports.

3.16.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

Will the Deputy advise the Assembly whether the drop-in café at the Weighbridge has been re-opened or, if not, whether it is planning to be re-opened any time soon?

Deputy A.K.F. Green:

Regretfully, I can advise the Assembly that it is probably going to be some time before the drop-in café is open, and that has been through no neglect or through no fault of the department and we have been beavering away and indeed the Chief

Minister has assisted us in trying to get this moving, but because of that, we have now purchased a van which will be stationed around the harbour area to provide some sort of focus for the outreach people to work. So we are aware of the problem. We regret that the Move-On Café is not open and we are pushing as hard as we can to get it done, but it has taken rather a long time with the contractor.

3.16.3 Deputy D.J. De Sousa:

When I was involved in the citizenship programme last year with secondary schools, one of the first things that came out in that exercise was that students are not fully aware of the youth provision, and I did speak to the Minister about it at the time. We do need to raise this. Would the Assistant Minister look at raising this so that more youths are aware of what is available to keep them off the street?

Deputy A.K.F. Green:

Yes, I fully understand the need to keep our young people fully engaged, and indeed many of them are. This is the whole basis of the young people's survey that we are going to carry out. We will use the information gained there to ensure that we reach out to more people. It must be remembered that the service engages and uses quite a lot of its resources to engage with people that are having difficulty. We do a lot of work through the Prince's Trust and other such organisations to reach out to people who really need the service, but we will be working very hard to ensure that we reach all young people or as many as possible.

3.16.4 Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour:

From the Jersey Annual Social Survey, a fixed 21 per cent said that they do not know enough about the Youth Service. What is the department proactively doing to inform the Members? I am interested in what is being implemented to educate and update. Thank you.

The Bailiff:

Concisely, please, Deputy.

Deputy A.K.F. Green:

I think part of the problem is that a lot of the activities we provide are not regarded as part of the Youth Service, for example, in sport and culture. We will be reaching out. We are going to carry out the survey and we will be reaching out to ensure that we can reach young people as easily as possible.

3.16.5 Deputy S. Pitman:

There are obviously serious reasons why people want the Youth Service to be utilised more, and I refer to the Annual Social Survey on page 54 when it talks about crime. It talks about antisocial behaviour, and it says of those people questioned, 66 per cent of them identified young people being involved, aged 18 and under being involved in antisocial behaviour. When we look at the figure or even if it is 28 per cent, it is still a very low usage among these young people. So would the Assistant Minister confirm that indeed, after this survey of young people has been carried out, that drastic action will be undertaken to get the message across to young people about what the Youth Service can do for them?

Deputy A.K.F. Green:

Yes, I can confirm that we will be ensuring that the people are aware - the young people particularly but also their guardians and parents - of what we can do to provide services for young people.

The Bailiff:

I think we just have time for the question from Deputy Le Hérissier of the Chief Minister, but he is not here. Very well.

Deputy J.A. Hilton:

Deputy Le Hérissier had to leave early to attend a funeral and he asked if I would request the Assembly to allow the question to be put back later this afternoon.

The Bailiff:

We have run out of time, I think, but no doubt an answer can be given in writing.

Deputy J.A. Hilton:

If that is not possible, yes, he did request that the answer be given in writing.

The Bailiff:

Very well.

Deputy J.A. Hilton:

Thank you.