

2.13 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding measures to ensure continued delivery of front line services through the third sector (charitable or voluntary) organisations in 2012 and 2013:

I hope we get some more evidence-based answers in the continuation questions. What measures, if any, does the Minister have in place to ensure continued delivery of front line services through third sector, charitable or voluntary, organisations in 2012 and 2013?

The Deputy of Trinity (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

Health and Social Services recognises that the third sector, be it charitable or private sector, is vital to our Island. Not only as providers of services, but because of the unique ability of charities and not-for-profit organisations to reach into a community to provide support and a voice to individuals in need. Our recently published Green Paper, which was developed with considerable input with the third sector, clearly outlines options for delivering increasingly more services in the community. The third sector is absolutely integral to this. In addition the Young People's Strategic Framework, which will be provided to Members in the coming weeks, sets out a decision-making structure that has third sector firmly embedded within.

[16:15]

Health and Social Services officers are also working with a group of third sector organisations and the Association of Jersey Charities to explore options for establishing a third sector development forum. The aim is to support the professionalism of the sector, ensuring that it is vibrant, active and well-placed to promote and develop civil society.

2.13.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does the Minister accept that the £140,000 worth of savings enforced on third sector deliverers in 2011 were running against the trend and she says in her answer to question 20 earlier: "At this point in time there are no plans to ask these organisations to take additional 3 per cent or 5 per cent cuts, although this cannot be ruled out if required." Will she state either that as far as she is concerned they will not be required; will she offer that guarantee, or will she say by when that guarantee can be offered?

The Deputy of Trinity:

I say we continue to work with the third sector and charitable organisations: £140,000 efficiency savings across the recipients - and it was not forced on them; we sought every single one of them, and some of them were able to make some efficiencies and some were not able. I stick by the answer in my written question. I propose activities for 2012 and 2013 stands as it is, and I cannot absolutely give this guarantee. We are in discussions with a third sector and as soon as I can I will.

2.13.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

If I may, can I seek her assurance that proposals to cut in this area will be ruled out by the time her part of the Annual Business Plan comes to the House?

The Deputy of Trinity:

At this moment in time I am unable to give any guarantees. I recognise the support that the third sector needs, but as soon as I can, I will. I hope I will not be able to, but at this moment in time I cannot give that cast guarantee.

2.13.3 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

The previous Head of Family Nursing was leading a move to consolidate the location of a number of N.G.O.s (Non-Governmental Organisations) which would have reduced costs and particularly H. and S.S. (Health and Social Services) expense. What is being done in this regard?

The Deputy of Trinity:

Sorry, I did not quite understand the Senator's question. Is she looking at the Family Services combining with other non-government offices? Is that what she is talking about?

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

No. There was a move to consolidate a number of charities so that they could share administrative... they were not going to join together. They were going to share a building so they could share administrative costs, and the Head of Family Nursing and Home Care was getting them together and getting the organisations to agree on this, and to see where they could do it. Also, I believe, talking to Property Holdings to see whether there was a suitable building. I do not know what has happened to those proposals, because it is something I feel very strongly about.

The Deputy of Trinity:

I thank the Senator for the clarification. It is something that perhaps we need to bring up with the Association of Jersey Charities and this forum that we hope to meet in. At the present unfortunately all the charitable organisations are a kind of person in their own right - I have not put that quite right - rather than talking as a group. That is the importance of this forum, which we are hoping to establish fairly soon. That is one issue that we will definitely bring up on the agenda.

2.13.4 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

I am sorry; this is a supplementary. Might I suggest that the Minister gets the notes of the meetings from Family Nursing and Home Care so that they do not have to reinvent the wheel and start again at the beginning?

The Deputy of Trinity:

I can do that if the Family Nursing Services will agree to them being released. It is not only Family Nursing Services that the Senator is talking about, but it is other organisations too. So we will have to just take one step at a time. But I thank the Senator for her suggestion.

2.13.5 Senator F. du H. Le Gresley:

Will the Minister be introducing 3-year cash limits for charities grant-funded by her department?

The Deputy of Trinity:

If the change in the Public Finances Law allows the department to look at 3-year cash limits, yes, it is something that we will do. It is something I think that the charitable sector would very much welcome.

2.13.6 Deputy M. Tadier:

Does the Minister agree that perhaps an unintended consequence of the efficiency savings related to the charitable and voluntary sector means that they are having to charge for services and items which they never had to charge for before, perhaps such as bandages, dressings, and this may have an unintended consequence among others of individuals going to A. and E. (Accident and Emergency) for their services inappropriately, where they could have been in the past provided quite happily by the aforementioned sector?

The Deputy of Trinity:

If the Deputy is talking about Family Nursing Services charging for supplies and bandages and dressings, the supplies have been subsidised and, as I understand, Family Nursing Services have always charged for dressings.

2.13.7 Deputy A.E. Jeune:

When the Minister started her answer to this question she, I thought, said that her department was working with the third sector and others. Given that, following on from what Senator Ferguson said, if Family Nursing Services are working with the other charities, would the Minister please ensure that her officers are working with Family Nursing Services?

The Deputy of Trinity:

Ye, we work with every single third sector organisation, be that very small like the Hyperbaric Service to the ones like Family Nursing Services. We will do, and we will continue to do so.

2.13.8 Deputy G.P. Southern:

I find it very disappointing that the Minister cannot rule out any cuts in this area, given that the Annual Business Plan is required to be finalised by the end of this month in 10 days' time. Is that the case that her portion of the Annual Business Plan has not yet been finalised, and if so, when will it be finalised and where will we know whether this area is affected or not?

The Deputy of Trinity:

I hope to be able to ... it is just about finalised; it is last bits and pieces sorting it out. But I can rule it out for 12 or even 13.