

2.7 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture regarding personnel changes within the Youth Service:

Would the Minister clarify the purpose of recent personnel changes within the Youth Service, and advise whether all youth clubs now have a qualified youth worker and if not, why not?

The Deputy of St. John (The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture):

My Assistant Minister, Deputy Rod Bryans, has responsibility for the Youth Service and I would seek your leave and the Assembly's that he answers the question.

Deputy R.G. Bryans of St. Helier (Assistant Minister for Education, Sport and Culture - rapporteur):

I thank the Deputy for bringing to the Assembly a question relating to the Youth Service. All youth projects currently have a qualified senior youth worker who is either entirely dedicated to them or shared with another project. Precise arrangements vary between projects according to the demand from young people. Training is mandatory for all other adults working with young people in the service and this is ongoing. Personnel changes involve moving staff between projects to meet the needs of young people in the service. Frontline youth workers are the priority. Any reorganisation is designed to create a stronger, more modern service. While the C.S.R. (Comprehensive Spending Review) process has been a catalyst for change, it would have taken place anyway in order to provide professional developmental opportunities for staff. There are also areas where the team wants to investigate new initiatives so that it can reach more young people and target specific groups. They are eager to review, refresh and refocus what they do. Youth culture is constantly changing so the Youth Service has to reflect this. Jersey has an outstanding Youth Service, which I have experienced first-hand over the past few months. I have been closely involved in discussions with staff, Parishes and young people about the changes taking place, putting the right resources in the right place at the right time. I think if the Deputy has specific concerns, I know he sits on one of the Youth Committees for St. Clement, I am more than happy, as would be the principal youth worker, to have a meeting with him should he request that. Thank you.

2.7.1 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

I am grateful for the Assistant Minister's comments. I wonder if he could tell the Members whether in fact he is happy with the example of the failures where we have a constantly changing population with the redevelopment of the estate, and stability is needed, but what we are getting is a transit youth officer; and the youth officer that was with us is now doing a job that is probably not the best use of her skills. Could the Assistant Minister explain why this cost-saving exercise has left the situation as it is?

Deputy R.G. Bryans:

I think I have partially explained that but I will just go a little bit further to say there are circumstances, which I explained in the private conversation with the Deputy, that relate to confidences and I would not want to bring those in front of the Assembly, so like I say, I am more than willing and happy to have a private conversation with him if he so wishes.