

4.11 Deputy M.R. Higgins of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding lessons learnt by the Children and Adult Mental Health Services following the handling of recent issues such as Haut de la Garenne and Family X:

What lessons, if any, have been learnt by the Children and Adult Mental Health Services following the handling of recent issues such as Haut de la Garenne and Family X, and can she assure Members that they are not failing their clients, that is, the people who they are supposed to be assisting and protecting?

Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier (Assistant Minister for Health and Social Services - rapporteur):

In answering this question, I would like to assure the Deputy that I am trying to be helpful, but he does mention recent issues and the “Children and Adult Mental Services”, and it is the “Children and Adolescent Mental Services”. Haut de la Garenne shut in 1986 and while the victims were helped by psychiatrists and psychologists from the U.K., this has never ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

I am sorry. There is a buzz coming from the Senatorial benches, which I shall be grateful for ...

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Sir, I was just proving to the Minister that there are cases of mis-selling.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Perhaps you might do so outside the Assembly, Senator.

Deputy J.A. Martin:

As I was saying, there was never a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in 1986 for the victims. Again, in the Family X case, this House decided that we did not have the expertise to deal with the children in this family and we decided to send them to the U.K. for specialist treatment. The other part of the question asks are we failing our clients. C.A.M.H.S. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) has had a lot of investment over the last 3 to 4 years: 4 extra psychologists, a team manager and the budget has gone in 2009 from approximately £1.8 million to £2.4 million, but there is more investment needed. I hope that can help the Deputy.

4.11.1 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

The Assistant Minister is aware that a serious case review has been called into the handling of a case that led to the tragic death of one young person. She is also aware that the head of the Children’s Service is refusing to organise a meeting between a social worker and a vulnerable woman that she let down because the social worker is feeling stressed and harassed. He is putting his employee’s interests ahead of the woman and the family, who the department have let down for 20 years. Is she satisfied that the department has learnt any lessons from their treatment of people in the past? Family X, by the way, I am still not convinced, because there are other vulnerable families. Is she convinced that they are really genuinely dealing with these cases when they keep on putting up walls and walls and walls and doors to stop people getting the help they require?

Deputy J.A. Martin:

On the case of refusing to meet with the Deputy and one of his constituents, that is ongoing and I thought we had come to an agreement and we will have to discuss this individual case outside of the Chamber. Yes, we did learn lessons from the very first serious case review

into Family X. There were 45 recommendations and actions to be done by all the departments involved. Early intervention, we do now have M.A.S.H., and I was then going to then say M.A.S.T. (Multi-agency Support Teams) in all our secondary schools. We do have early intervention as far as possible but the referrals to C.A.M.H.S. alone last year increased between 7 to 8 per cent on the year before. In just the cases of the prevalence and diagnosing autism and Asperger's spectrum, they increased from 15 referrals in 2011 to 31 referrals in 2012. It is not like diagnosing somebody with a broken leg, it is a very complicated area for children and adolescents, and it is only going to grow. We know we need 14 more primary schools to service children born in the last few years, so this service will have to grow as well.

4.11.2 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Is the Assistant Minister aware that Deputy Hilton's review has already attracted over 20 people who have come forward with complaints or concerns about the Children's Service and Adult Mental Health? Would she agree with me that if we are really going to see if the department is doing its job then we should be appealing to the public who are not fully aware of the review to come forward and make submissions to us so we can investigate once and for all whether they are doing their job? Will she also join in the appeal for people to come forward?

Deputy J.A. Martin:

I am sure if the department can help in any way... I did not mention, it was in my notes, we do welcome the review from the Health, Housing and Social Security Panel and it will be concluded ... I do hear the call for evidence going out on most of the radio stations – 103 - but if Scrutiny feels that we can ask people to contribute, we will do so. We look forward to this review. It is an area that they feel needs to be looked into and I hope that it does stand up to Scrutiny, but we will always take on board Scrutiny's recommendations.