

3.5 Senator A. Breckon of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the allocation of Social Workers to all 4 States Secondary schools:

Can the Minister advise whether Recommendation 8 of the Scrutiny Panel Report (Health, Social Services and Housing S.R.6/2009) into the Co-ordination of Services for Vulnerable Children, which recommended that Social Workers be allocated to all 4 States Secondary schools, has been implemented and, if not, why not?

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

Yes, to answer the Senator's question, there was a report from Kathie Bull and then the recommendation from Williamson and then a report from Scrutiny - which the Senator chaired - to make sure these recommendations were implemented and there has been a social worker in the 4 States Secondary schools since 2009.

3.5.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does the Minister know whether the presence of a social worker in each of the schools has been continuous and does she know whether there have been times when there has been no social worker in place?

Deputy J.A. Martin:

At one of the schools at the moment there is continued maternity leave and that has been hard to cover because of the way the structure of the multi-agency team is made up; we are working with a school counsellor, educational psychologist and educational welfare. The terms for the Multi-Agency Support Team was to promote inclusion and have positive outcomes for young people and have emphasis on identifying early intervention. It is working very well in some schools. There has been a review just completed. Unfortunately, it is so near completion I do not have all the outcomes yet but as soon as I do we will recommend that they will come to the House.

3.5.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

A supplementary, if I may? Will the Assistant Minister bring to the House year-by-year a list of when those social workers were in place and when they were not?

Deputy J.A. Martin:

Yes, that can be easily done. Also, on top of just the 4 schools, the social workers - or the teams - now go into the alternative curriculum, d'Hautree House, and, very recently, Victoria College and Beaulieu. There is a need and we just need to make sure the need is right. As the Deputy said, covering these social workers is a completely different job from the other social workers and we have been finding it hard to cover if they have been off. I can get the dates for the Deputy and hopefully the report will look at the whole team that is working to have early intervention in our schools for the children.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

I have every confidence the Assistant Minister will do.

3.5.3 Senator A. Breckon:

Is the Minister aware that putting resources into this area prevents problems escalating to a more critical level and putting greater strain on Social Services?

Deputy J.A. Martin:

I could not agree more with the Senator and that is what we must make sure we are getting right. The Education team sees the majority of our children over x amount of weeks a year

and I have asked, along with the Assistant Minister for Education, Sport and Culture when we started this term, to look at can they start going into primary schools where they identify an 11 or 12 year-old who has got emotional and behavioural problems, and they do now. I absolutely agree with the Senator, more of this should be done but we have got to get it right and is it a social worker, is it somebody else? The team should be working with all the children that are identified. I absolutely agree with the Senator's sentiment.