

4.4 Deputy R.J. Renouf of St. Ouen of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the referral of young adult wheelchair users to the facility provided by Les Amis at Maison Allo:

What assessment has the Minister made of the importance of short breaks as part of a care package for young adult wheelchair users and in relation to such people's carers, and for what reason does his department not refer young adult wheelchair users to the facility provided by Les Amis at Maison Allo?

Senator A.K.F. Green (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

As part of any assessment of need in respect of a young adult wheelchair user consideration is given as to what informal support is offered to the young adult, i.e. their carers, at home. The more support that is provided the greater the need for short breaks and respite to give the carers a break and to avoid burnout. I visited Maison Allo about 6 weeks ago with Senator Routier. It is an excellent registered facility to take young adults, 18 to 21, for respite. It has 4 beds and caters for one wheelchair user. We have referred - or signposted would be a better description for 18 year-olds because they can choose where they go - recently 2 people to Maison Allo. Both declined, which is a shame because it is an excellent facility, but one preferred to have more support at home and the other one chose an alternative facility.

4.4.1 The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Is the Minister really saying that in the past few months only 2 people have been referred to that facility? Because we are hearing from Maison Allo that that bed for which the public are paying has not been used since it was opened. Surely there are more people needing that facility. Can the Minister say why others are not being referred and accepting that post?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

Young adults receive an allowance based on the assessment from Income Support on long-term care and it is for them to determine where they wish to partake in services. I will say again that I thought the facilities at Maison Allo were excellent and it would be a shame not to use the facilities. For that reason, 6 weeks ago I asked senior officers to make sure that people understood the facility was available, but you cannot make people use a facility.

4.4.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does the Minister accept that the provision and the facilitating of respite care is an essential ingredient to the proper wraparound care for members of our society who require respite care? Is it not the case that the mechanism for delivering respite care is not functioning properly?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

The latter part of the question: there is always room for improvement but people have different needs. Some require short breaks during the day, others require overnight and even longer periods away from home. I would agree with the Deputy, though, that respite care is absolutely essential both for the wellbeing of the carer and of the person who has the disability, and to that end we always regard the facilities to be important. But again, if the facilities are there and we signpost them and people do not take them up, I cannot do much about that.

4.4.3 The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Is the failure to take up the facilities because the families or these young adults are being moved into the long-term care scheme and does this not show that the long-term care scheme is an inadequate mechanism to deliver this essential respite facility?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

I could not agree with the Deputy less. I nearly said “more” but I could not agree with him at all. The days of one size fits all and we will decide what is good for your young person that you are caring for have gone. The long-term care scheme is there to give people appropriate funding to choose how to support their family appropriately. I absolutely think it is the right way to go and I do not think it is appropriate ... I think it is doing an excellent job.