

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY DEPUTY J.A. HILTON OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 2nd FEBRUARY 2016**

Question

Can the Minister advise whether the bi-annual review of the Children's Service was carried out in 2015, in line with what was agreed in the Williamson Implementation Plan 2009, and if not, why not?

Answer

After the follow-up inspection of Children's Services in September 2013 by the Scottish Care Inspectorate there was no formal review in 2015. There is review activity planned for 2016.

In 2014, through the work of Scrutiny, the publication of Serious Case Reviews and Rapid Improvement Events, a number of concerns were identified. These were significant and required urgent action across a number of operational areas. This meant that internal resources were prioritised in responding to these concerns and in mitigating risk for vulnerable service users rather than commissioning an external review.

A series of measures have therefore been taken over the last year in Children's Services. These have included:

- recruiting interim experienced senior managers with experience of improving and transforming services
- progressing a number of new permanent senior appointments to provide strong professional leadership across Children's Services
- restructuring the service to begin to effectively target need and demand
- strengthening management oversight with regular supervision of staff
- identifying a number of 'legacy' cases, which required remedial action, including statutory intervention in the form of increased court work and care orders being sought
- operational restructure and prioritisation of resources to respond to the significant increase in the number of looked after children and children on the child protection register who require a multi-agency child protection plan
- commencing a tender process for a new IT system, which will provide a client index system and business reporting functionality
- a training and development programme for staff.

The States of Jersey has committed to investing £5.5million in 2016 to address the issues identified in the service. The investment will facilitate the recruitment of staff at all levels to increase capacity, develop the fostering service, increase staff in the residential service, provide knowledge and skills training, and fund specialist placements.

A Sustainable Improvement Plan is now in place, with senior officers reporting to, and being held accountable by, the Children's Services Improvement Board chaired by the Chief Minister.