

# STATES OF JERSEY

## Health, Social Security and Housing Panel Co-ordination of Services for Vulnerable Children Sub-Panel

**THURSDAY, 18th MARCH 2010**

**Panel:**

Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier (Vice Chairman)  
Connétable S.A. Yates of St. Martin  
Deputy D.J. De Sousa of St. Helier

**Witness:**

Mr. M. Taylor

[16:30]

**Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier (Vice Chairman):**

Hello, Mike. I do not know if this is the first scrutiny hearing you have been to?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

It is, yes.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

In which case I draw your attention to the notice in front of you which tells you about the terms on which you appear. It is not very onerous but I am duty bound to ask you to read it before you start.

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

That is fine, thank you.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

First to apologise on behalf of my Chairman, Alan Breckon, who cannot be here. He is called to England for a funeral, but the rest of my team is here: Constable Yates of St. Martin on your left, Deputy Debbie De Sousa and I am Geoff Southern, Deputy of St. Helier No. 2 and Vice-chair of this particular ... I suppose I get the easy job of the introductory question. Firstly I suppose just briefly how long you have been in the post, what do you see as your priorities in developing that post and where are we now compared to whenever it was you started?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

Right. I will cover that as briefly as I can. I took a post on 1st June 2009. My predecessor in the role was Professor June Thoburn who I think you all know and have all met on a previous occasion. Inherited from June I think an established Jersey Child Protection Committee with terms of reference well-formulated and to my huge

benefit the appointment of staff to the team, which I have to say in setting up the Committee a great deal of work fell to her without support staff in Jersey. So now within the team and appointed to the team are a Professional Officer who joined us, was appointed in March 2009, an Administrator appointed in May 2009 and a Child Protection Committee trainer who had been attached to Social Services moved over and joined the team as well. So we have got 3 full-time staff within the team, now accommodated at Overdale Hospital in the administration block there so we have got very good office accommodation and I think a strong team with a strong identity. The work that we have done I think has probably focused ... well maybe perhaps if I take you through just what the Committee has done as a whole and what the sub-committees have done and that will give you hopefully an overarching impression. The main Committee has 24 members who are the representatives of the agencies who have a child protection children's services responsibility within Jersey, so health, social services, education, voluntary sector, N.S.P.C.C. (National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children) are represented on the Committee and a range of police, probation, et cetera. So a range of services represented there. That committee takes the overall responsibility for the terms of reference and undertakes the role that the Committee is required to, to ensure really that services in Jersey are co-ordinated and work effectively to protect children from abuse. Linked with that is a responsibility to promote the needs and the means to protect children as well, so it is not just reactive, it is proactive as well. Finally then as a Committee, to comment on the effectiveness of local work to protect children in Jersey. The main engines who support that committee are the sub-committees who work to it, one of which is the Serious Case Review Sub-Committee which I know you may wish to pursue in some detail. That committee takes responsibility for all matters pertinent to particular inquiries, particular reviews of cases and decisions and recommendations to me about action in respect of serious case reviews, as well as responsibility for setting policy and procedures for the serious case review activity that the Committee undertakes. Another sub-committee is our E-Safety Sub-Committee and I think that probably best exemplifies us as a child protection committee looking forward and looking to protect as well as responding to immediate pressures and areas where we have concerns for safety. I speak in terms of E-Safety as someone who has good awareness as to how to use a laptop and how to use computer systems but who is not geared up in terms of, if you like, modern technology, iPhones, the whole gamut of material to which young people, particularly young children, are exposed. So what we have done on that committee is work to get an understanding of what exposure children and young people might be at risk in access to new technology and secondly work with providers. Perhaps just to give a live example, work that we did on retail awareness on E-Safety, so over the Christmas period the J.C.P.C. (Jersey Child Protection Committee) with partner agencies initiated contact with the providers of iPhones, laptops, et cetera to say: "Are you as purchasers of these things as adults aware of what safety protections you can put in in the use of these pieces of kit and equipment to protect your children?" There is a training sub-committee. One of the main or significant roles of the J.C.P.C. is to ensure that there is multi-agency and multi-disciplinary training, so that it is recognising that the work that we do is across all the agencies and to ensure that there is successful and effective training on child protection that goes across the agencies. I think there are 2 great benefits of that. The first is making sure that that training is in place but the second is bringing people together from the different agencies to experience that training together. So they see and learn from each other about what they are doing. The figures last year to which

huge credit must go to our training officer, I have to say, and to the courses that she has run very cost-effectively, there were over 800 people trained, different levels, different experiences, across Jersey in child protection activity. Another sub-committee is Procedures and Audit which may sound terribly dry and boring but the core of child protection work is the quality of the procedures to which people work on an inter-agency basis. It is knowing what to do when you receive a referral, how to respond, who else should be involved, what the process should be for evaluating, making a decision about registration of the procedures, what plans should be followed, effective communication. We are just in the process of re-drafting and re-issuing the multi-agency procedures and those are out for consultation, a very important driving force of the work of the Committee. Finally in terms of what I call the active committees there is one sub-committee which deals with safeguarding children living away from home and that is obviously and understandably significantly focused on the residential units and on children who are in the care of the States living away from home. But secondly one of the areas that I see as highly proactive was that over last summer we were struck by the activity in respect of the language schools in Jersey where children and young people come from various parts of Europe and stay for a period of time. We have liaised and worked up a profile with the language schools about the need to have police checks for people who are providing care for those children and housing those children.

**Deputy D.J. De Sousa of St. Helier:**

The host families.

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

The host families and providing references, social services checks and that they have child protection policies and procedures in place. Because wherever children are away from home and out of the immediate supervision of their parents the level of vulnerability can increase quite significantly. So the overarching role of the Child Protection Committee, the J.C.P.C. which I chair, is to ensure that all those groups have a clear work programme, are delivering it effectively and that it pulls together, both in the proactive sense of what do we anticipate are the issues, how do we understand the issues and are we working together effectively to help protect children and equally importantly have issues arisen by people's experience that cause problems.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Just before I go any further, I forgot to ask you at the beginning, we are a public hearing and we have a cameraman with us today. Do you mind being ...?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

That is not a problem. That is fine.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Debbie, do you want to kick off?

**Deputy D.J. De Sousa:**

Yes. In explaining about what you are chair of you said that there are 24 members of the main Committee and I have worked out there is roughly about 5 sub-committees that look at different things. So obviously you would look at your quota of people

that you have with all their different expertise and obviously fit those in with the sub-panel?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

Yes, if I might interject. The sub-committees are chaired by a member of the Jersey Child Protection Committee but the membership is made up of key people from the agencies who are not necessarily members of the J.C.P.C. so they will draw in expertise and skills in their capacity across the agencies but they are not formally J.C.P.C. members.

**Deputy D.J. De Sousa:**

What will be your role as Chairman of J.C.P.C., to oversee the work and what comes out of these sub-committees?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

The main role that I see is ensuring that the sub-committees are properly constituted, work effectively, have a clearly defined forward work programme and deliver on that. Secondly to make sure that there is integration, because a training committee can only deliver the training programmes that are required by the services in terms of their forward strategy and their training needs, so there has to be cross-communication between us, between the sub-committees to say: "Our understanding is we have a need for this form of training, this form of future development, these issues have arisen" so that there is good cross-communication between the committees.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

One of the problems, it seems to me, with particular training is getting the co-operation of often hard-pressed services who are desperate to get their workers on the coal face to take time out. Have you found that a problem with many of the groups you have got?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

The advice that I get is that that fluctuates and the frustrating thing is sometimes there is no clear rhyme or reason. It is not seasonal, it is sometimes reflective of demands upon services and they are feeling under pressure and therefore having said or hoped they would release someone it has proved they have not been able to. But I think part of our role is to keep pushing the fact that training is important, that it is available. The cost of that training certainly by my experience is not prohibitive, it is extremely good value in terms of what is provided.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

No, I am not suggesting it was, it is the question of sheer time when you are hard-pressed.

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

Yes, so parts I think of my role through the J.C.P.C. and through the relationship that we have with the Chief Officers is to remind them that it is a 2-way process, that we are reminding the management structure of the importance of the training, of the added value that it brings to their services and the value of it being cross-agency, that it is multi-disciplinary and multi-agency training and reinforcing in fact the requests coming up from underneath for that training.

**Connétable S.A. Yates of St. Martin:**

I am looking at my background material on J.C.P.C. It says it has 22 members and I am listening to your introduction and I am still trying to grapple with how this thing works because the Committee, the chairman, 22 people or 23 people, how do you get anything done? Now you have mentioned sub-committees. Who controls sub-committees and have you got a management committee? Could you explain that?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

Yes, sorry. Indeed I can and that is a very good prompt because the missing sub-committee that I did not refer to is in fact a Planning and Communication Sub-Committee which is the chairs of the sub-committees coming together under my chairmanship to ensure that the planning process is absolutely clear and the plans of each of the sub-committees is integrated and we have built communications into that because we think it is important that that understanding ... we have the capacity to give that public outward expression, about what we are doing, why we are doing it, why we think it benefits children and our engagement with the public profile as well, so that is why we are linked.

**The Connétable of St. Martin:**

At first glance it seems extremely complex. I am sure it probably is not in your eyes but for instance you have got sub-committees with presumably chairpersons, chairmen, and you have got the management or planning committee. For instance what happens when you get a possible serious case review where you have got various aspects of that serious case review where it might be dealing with several different sub-committees?

[16:45]

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

Right. The sub-committees would not be directly involved in a serious case review process other than the Serious Case Review Sub-Committee. The responsibility ... there is a serious case review that specialises in that area and whose responsibility is to evaluate, does this representation of a request or a request for a serious case review meet the requirements? How best do we respond to it? How do we establish a panel of ourselves to manage that process? I chair 2 sub-committees: one is the Planning and Communications and the other is the Serious Case Review Sub-Committee so I have executive responsibility directly for those.

**The Connétable of St. Martin:**

Could I ask just picking up on something you said, which again may be pause for thought, you say you have a committee but then you have other contributors who are not members?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

To the sub-committees. So the sub-committee chairs ...

**The Connétable of St. Martin:**

You have 22 members and a chairman and other co-opted or what?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

No, the sub-committees are made up ... they have their tasks, they have their terms of reference and the sub-committee chairs have identified the best people to deliver across agency who need not necessarily and quite often are not members of the J.C.P.C. I am trying to think of a live example. If a sub-committee on training is chaired by a member of the Jersey Child Protection Committee who indirectly through the Planning Sub-Committee reports to me in that context, but the membership of that are the key training leads from police, health, education, who have a responsibility for child protection chairing in those forums, in those agencies, but they are not members of the Jersey Child Protection Committee. There are 2 education members on the Jersey Child Protection Committee, neither of whom would necessarily be on the Training Sub-Committee, so it is the expertise that we get on to the sub-committees. The delivery of the plan and the performance of the Training Sub-Committee is the responsibility of the chair of that sub-committee reporting to the full Child Protection Committee.

**The Connétable of St. Martin:**

The full Child Protection Committee is how many?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

Is 24, chaired by myself. That includes me, so it gets the numbers closer together.

**The Connétable of St. Martin:**

Could you give us perhaps a bit more of the day-to-day operations? Could you sort of tell us about what happens at a typical meeting of the J.C.P.C.?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

Right. Yes, I mean there is formal business in the sense of review of minutes, matters arising and confirmation of any items of any other business. The core agenda items will be around the work programme of the sub-committees and our performance against those, so the chairs of the sub-committees will bring to the J.C.P.C. items that they consider need sign-off by the full Child Protection Committee. For example the Procedures and Audit Sub-Committee has been working for 4 months, 6 months on the procedures, 12 months even on the procedures. Those are nearly finalised, but they will then come to the full J.C.P.C. to be signed off so they have got the imprimatur of all the agencies and, if you like, their formal representatives concerned to sign those off. So that will come as a formal item of business for us to consider. The Committee will receive the annual training report and the annual training plan to confirm and sign off, so in a way it is getting the agencies at the most senior operative level within the Jersey Child Protection Committee to say: "We agree that piece of activity, we agree that initiative, we endorse what is happening."

**The Connétable of St. Martin:**

Yes. I am still overwhelmed with your number of Committee members. You must have difficulty to get decisions.

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

Well, I have to say to their credit I think their attendance is very good at Committee. Attendance is not a problem. We meet 6 times a year, it is planned, it is regular and it is a yearly cycle of meetings, so people know. I try to keep it to 2 hours because I

think that is sufficient for the meeting length. I may not always quite succeed but that is the intent. Some agencies will have more than one representative present on the Committee and that is because different areas of expertise, education services for example, there is someone from the education welfare services and there is someone from education management, because those 2 elements have a different contribution to make to the work of the Committee and to its deliberations.

**The Connétable of St. Martin:**

Thank you for that. I shall continue to observe this with interest.

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

Thank you.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Thank you, Silva. Can I take us on to serious case review?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

Yes, indeed.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

How are they initiated as a starting point and what is your role? What happens?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

Right. A serious case review can be requested under our present procedures by anyone who has a concern about the way a case has been managed or the response that has been given to a case where there has been a death of a child or issues of serious concern about injury or neglect or abuse. The filter for that ...

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Can I just clarify there? That is concerning about the behaviour of an authority or a body rather than a complaint about a child endangered or suffering harm?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

Yes, indeed. What we cannot deal with is an immediate expression of concern because that is an executive responsibility of the agencies in Jersey.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

But if for example I take it very simplistically it could be quite early on. I think there is serious damage happened to this child, I phoned up Social Services, they have done nothing about it, I appear to have been ignored. That could be 2 weeks later so I come to you.

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

Yes, okay, I understand. That would be information ... I am not trying to fob you off, but that would be information that we would hear but we cannot take an executive responsibility to intervene because that is not our function. I think with that sort of request and referral it would be probably down to my office or to me to follow that up with the agency concerned to say: "This person has approached us and expressed concern, what are you doing about it? Can you feed back to them because they clearly do not feel that proper action has been taken?" If there is an issue of, if you

like, complaint about the performance of an individual agency then each of them will have a proper established complaints procedure about: "I expected this to happen and it did not." Police, Social Services, Health, and there will be a route by which that should be investigated. Our role is where there are issues raised that are about the performance of agencies in the child protection process, either that they did not live up to the requirements of the procedures or the interagency co-operation and activity fell far short of what was expected and therefore children were not properly protected in the process.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

So your role is more about the procedures and people's or institutions' adherence to them rather than ... so you are talking about procedural glitches rather than ...

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

That is a key element, but there is a performance element as well about communication, or about did action flow that one would expect in these circumstances in this kind of case to happen, and if not why not? So we have a responsibility to commission a review of a performance where the performance fell short of what we as an overarching body would have expected in a particular case.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

How many such reviews do you conduct, do you expect and are underway at the moment?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

Right. Historically formal establishment of a sub-committee to manage the serious case review process was in June 2008 and that was established by Professor Thoburn as chair. Since that period there have been 7 referrals for a serious case review which have been assessed and deliberated on. Three of those referred were related to child deaths. We have a relationship with the Deputy Viscount whereby if there is a child death about which there are concerns that can be referred because we have a responsibility to review those circumstances and certainly if there were a death of a child in care it would be looked at in the system. Those child deaths were considered and held until after the full process of inquest had been gone through and causes were found to be natural, so there was nothing that required formal police investigation or our investigation, J.C.P.C. investigation. So there have been 7 cases overall, one case has been undertaken as a serious case review and is currently active in that process and due to be reported.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

One of the problems with any formal review is the length of time it takes to complete it. Rumination and investigations. How content are you that you are able to produce something which people can connect with the event and not think of it as a distant memory?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

That can be very difficult and I accept that point, but I would advise of course that our process is about learning lessons, not undertaking an investigation and it is not an inquiry, a formal inquiry, into performance in any disciplinary sense of the word. So it is about saying: "What procedures and processes were followed here? Were they

followed correctly? Was action taken to protect those children?” but it is historic and sometimes this can be looking back over a period of several years in a case. So the process of learning has to be aware that with the great benefit of hindsight whenever you do that kind of review you encapsulate a lot in a very tight report and that can come screaming out at you, so I think one has to acknowledge that. It is about lessons to be learned for the agencies concerned and for them to produce action plans that say: “This is how we are going to improve our performance in this area in future. We have understood that we did not meet our own high standards or we did not meet the requirements or that the guidance or the procedures have changed and we have not implemented them effectively, or that we lack the training. We have not done the training and development that we needed to get to that point of improving our practice.”

**The Connétable of St. Martin:**

On following up on something that was said in our last interview this afternoon, the words were said, and I hope I have got the words right: “The J.C.P.C. is an independent monitor for quality of service, all agencies concerning the protection of the child, a watchdog.” Is that correct? Are those words correct?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

Yes, I think they are. We are the watchdog that will pick up where agencies’ performance does not meet the expectations either of the States as a whole or there is performance that causes damage to children or does not mitigate damage to children.

**The Connétable of St. Martin:**

Could I ask following on again from that, if you are the watchdog how big are your teeth?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

Well, I think there is a great benefit in being independent and that means that the teeth are there to be bared when needs be and put into any forum that I think is appropriate to hear that, and that can be to relevant Chief Officers, it can be to the Minister with whom I have a reporting relationship.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Are you talking there about your independence or J.C.P.C.’s independence? Because J.C.P.C. is full of people who are involved in those services.

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

Yes, they are indeed, but I guess without putting a grand design on myself too much, I rise above that to say I am independent. If people bring me, through the J.C.P.C. process, information that I feel requires action, requires reporting or requires further investigation I can insist that that is initiated and that can be through access to, within Jersey’s structure, various people within the structure.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Can I just pop back to the serious case review in particular, can I ask where you get your legal advice from? Who do you go to for legal advice?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

The legal advice, we have access to a law officer from the Law Officer's Department for legal advice as a committee for the J.C.P.C. If ever I felt there were constraints on that or there was a conflict of interest I have access to a budget and could purchase independent legal advice if I felt that was beneficial.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

It is an old hobby horse of mine but is there not automatically a conflict, albeit limited in some senses, in that the Law Officer's Department would be giving legal advice to any of the formal bodies, Ministers, who might be responsible for the actions that you are investigating?

[17:00]

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

Yes, absolutely right and I think I have to make a judgment in the context of any elements of our work, is it right and proper to go to the law officers for advice and in doing so am I satisfied with the advice I am getting or is there a conflict of interest? To perhaps give a very live example we are currently undertaking a serious case review and there is engagement with the law officers in terms of they had an involvement with the case in question. I have been advised and taken advice from a law officer who has got no conflict of interest because he has never had any engagement with the case. If I felt there was a problem with that I would have gone for external legal advice, if I felt the need.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

I am surprised in that particular case you did not feel the need, because if the Law Office itself was involved in whatever was being investigated then it seems to me that that suddenly from within the same body is compromised. It is clear to me. It is your role that we have got ... it happens with scrutiny panels as well, that the Law Officer's Department is supposed to be our legal advisers, firstly, but they are legal advisers to the Ministers who we are investigating and holding to scrutiny. Quite frankly I do not think that works in any way, shape or form and I am a little surprised. Have you ever been to independent legal advisers?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

I have not felt the need to seek it but I guess I pray in aid the fact that I have worked in local government for 20 years in an English context, but had the benefit of their relationships with borough solicitors who fulfil that dual role very effectively and from whom I took advice on child care cases or from whom I took advice on other matters and who were advisers to the council. But I respected greatly their ability and I think they were the arch proponents of this. They accepted the fact that: "Hang on, I am compromised in this matter, you need to go to someone else within the function." The second point if I could is that I ... my public service experience of many years has taught me to be terribly careful about expenditure, and I am careful about expenditure. The J.C.P.C. has been allocated a very effective and proper budget but I am extremely cautious about where that is spent. I would want to take some convincing that expending on external legal advice under any circumstances other than by my judgment was a proper use of public money.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

I take your point.

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

Not making any comment on lawyers' charges at all.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Jersey lawyers in particular. **[Laughter]** Well, neither will I then. Again one of the issues and you have talked about a very important role ... hang on, I will not leave this law officers thing behind because it is one of these things just to see it being done and seeing to be done. Just the idea that there is no conflict and is there a perception of potential conflict I believe must be taken quite seriously especially in the case of child abuse where obviously emotions and feelings and events run deep and feelings run high. Is that something that goes into the pot?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

I do hear the point and I have to I think ... part of my independence and part of my engagement with the States of Jersey is to get as good a handle as I can on those processes and make judgments about the most effective means to deliver and meet our responsibilities as a committee. I think one of those is making a judgment on the source of the legal advice and the quality of the legal advice that we are getting. I feel confident to that but not arrogant about it.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

To a certain extent I know you are an external body to the States but for example if I go to the Law Officer's Department and say: "I want some legal advice on this particular issue and this Minister's decision to do this" if that Minister has already received advice from the Law Officer's Department all I will get back is the answer: "I can neither tell you whether any legal advice has been sought or whether I gave any and if you ask me the right question which is similar enough to the Minister's question itself so that my answer must be the same, I will say that to you" and then you know you have got the right question: "But if I give you any advice whatsoever you have got the wrong question and that is not what the Minister asked me." Do you see that? Immediate conflict. I want legal advice but I get stonewalled. When I get stonewalled it is because the Minister has already received some advice therefore I cannot have any.

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

That is a situation I have not yet experienced and were I to do so I suspect my judgment would be that I need to look elsewhere then and I am not constrained from doing so. I think the great benefit is that no one as yet and I do not believe there will be, has said to me: "If you find yourself in that kind of quandary you must stick with the Law Officers because there is no other option." I do have other options on behalf of the J.C.P.C. and I would readily take those if I felt that those constraints were being applied too vigorously to me.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

I have gone to independent advice. Do not do it. Can I just talk about something perhaps a bit lighter? Again you are involved in obviously very serious cases and the need to raise the public profile. I mean for example I had our officer look at your website and he found it eventually. It does not exactly say it ... it is dull.

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

Yes. I am acknowledging the point. It is work in progress. We are new to this. We are new to the establishment of a website. We do think it is one of the most important points of engagement for public and for young people and particularly for young people and therefore we are working on developing that site and investing in developing it. The staff in the office have been trained in terms of how to manage a website and all the facets that I love to delegate to other people because I certainly cannot do that myself. But secondly the safety committee are widening or looking at their remit to say: "How do we get engagement with children and young people so that we get feedback about the messages we are putting out, so that we have a relationship with children and young people, an active relationship?" The best means to do that I would suggest is through a website and through interactive technology and Facebook pages and whatever. That is about credibility in that process. That is part of our work programme this year to develop that. Secondly I think is to make sure that the information is on there so that things like the terms of reference of the Committee, the sub-committees, the published *Serious Case Review* will go on the website. So that people ... it gives a definition about who you are, what you are doing and you are putting your material up there for people to comment on.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

But for example I am looking at this particular document and on page 1 it says: "Raising a concern, who to contact" and then goes on: "If you wish to raise a concern about the immediate safety or welfare of a child please do not contact us." I want to see that equivalent that says: "However, to put a complaint about the behaviour of a body and what they have done or not done then please do contact us." I have clearly got a negative there and where is the corresponding simple statement of: "This is how to raise a complaint with us about ... and this is what we can deal with." That needs to be there if it is going to work.

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

I agree, and point well made and very well taken I think about getting stronger definition about who we are, what we do, how to access us and making that a strong interactive process as well.

**Deputy D.J. De Sousa:**

Yes, I have got a couple of questions. Initially you ran through and told us about meetings and that they are minuted. Are any of your meetings public? Are any of the minutes uploaded so that public have access to anything?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

Right. The meetings are not public. It is a good point about whether we should open up to a public forum on a regular basis and my initial response to that would be yes, that would be a positive thing to do and the minutes are held by the agencies concerned because there are items of confidential nature referred to within them. But I do think that the J.C.P.C. should seriously consider a public forum, probably based around an annual report which I am due to produce within the 12-month period and will be producing in June, for the opportunity for people to ask questions about what we have been doing and how we have been doing it.

**Deputy D.J. De Sousa:**

What about financial statement? Do you have to deliver a budget?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

We have a budget allocated to us. I have to ... the reporting officer for that is the Chief Executive, Health and Social Services so I have a relationship with that service for the accountancy function. The allocation of that budget is down to me and to the J.C.P.C. and how we disburse that money and move the money within the codes, but final accountability we get support with budget monitoring and budget control, final accountability rests with me in terms of the profile of the expenditure. Accountability to the States, because I am not a States employee, has to rest with the Chief Executive, Health and Social Services for performance against that budget.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Okay. I notice here that you involve the voluntary sector to a large scale, the third sector as it is increasingly called nowadays, and yet you do not appear to have anybody on your 22-strong main body?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

There are 2. There is a national representative from N.S.P.C.C., Philip Durban who is a regional director for N.S.P.C.C. and Nola Hopkins who is the manager of Pathways is also a member and chairs the E- Safety Sub-Committee.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Given the increasing reliance on the third sector, the voluntary sector, as I see it, in that base level preventative work, should they not have greater representation?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

I hear the point and one of the things we commissioned ourselves to look at and engage with the sector is how do we identify the who? It is quite easy in statutory agencies to find a representative or to ask them to nominate someone. We are in discussion and we are promoting the development of a forum of the third sector, voluntary sector agencies, who work with children and we want to support that initiative and then engage with it for someone from that forum to be a member of the Committee in due course. It does not exist at the moment, so it is something that I experienced elsewhere and have seen great benefit from.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Okay. Secondly we referred previously to how big are your teeth. One of the recommendations that came from our original review on vulnerable children was that the J.C.P.C. is established in law and has the necessary authority to ensure its recommendations are acted upon. Does that meet with your approval or is that something that is potentially useful to you?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

My hesitation is the one about how long that process can take, about getting recognised in statute which means redrafting and a change in the law. I have undertaken to look at that position and initiate it in the knowledge that I understand it could take several years in terms of legislative change to go through due process. I am conscious I do not want the J.C.P.C., if you like, to see that as a be all and end all.

All this is diversionary. What I want to do is make an assessment about we are established by an act of committee, we have got ministerial endorsement. Is that sufficient to deliver what we want as a committee and does it give us enough status and enough teeth? If not, is a legislative change the best way to achieve that and over what time scale? If there is a legislative change being proposed in the next one, 2, 3 years could we just hang on to the coat tails of that in respect to children's legislation or would be it be a discrete activity that we would have to promote and progress? So I am certainly not minded against it, I am just conscious I think of wanting to do the cost benefit analysis.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

My motivation is some would call cynical, I do not know why, but actually it comes back to the key word "funding." If you are a statutory body then you tend to get hacked at less than if you are a voluntary body, if you are not a statutory body and the temptation is: "We will cut there because we know we have to do this because it is statutory. This is voluntary, effectively" and in particular in current times has anybody talked to you directly about the 3 key words "comprehensive spending review" and are you in their sights?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

I am aware there is a comprehensive spending review taking place and we as a committee will need to keep a wary and weather eye on that in terms of the implications of any decisions of service that might impact on our capacity to respond to children who are at risk of abuse. Our base budget was allocated to us through Williamson implementation monies and is sound.

[17:15]

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

When you say it is sound, how much?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

£270,000 which covers staffing costs, the services of the Committee and the activities of the Committee over a financial year. I am content with that. I think that is ... I would always like more, I would like to invest more in this, but as things stand I think that is a sound base budget for this financial year and I would make the strongest representations, and again perhaps from my independent baring of teeth, if there were any moves to reduce that while being accountable for the value for money. I have to deliver, J.C.P.C. staff have to deliver £270,000 plus in my view, value for money services to the community and particularly to children in any financial year and we will represent that.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Yes. Talking to Professor Thoburn early last year she was very much of the opinion that prior to her arrival, and she was not blowing her own trumpet, this was a rather moribund body that really was not doing its function. I think she kick-started it off and then handed it on to you. How much progress have you made? Put it this way, what is most satisfying that you have achieved already and then you can look at the 3 years of June and you, and what is still the priority to get this body functioning the way it should be as you see it?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

Right. I think the most satisfying is we held a day conference in December where we did ... the sub-committees did a review of the work they had done in the year which I have taken over in June and came forward with highlights of what they have achieved and what their forward plan and programme was, and I felt that was a very positive energised statement of activity, of what we have done and this is what we are going to be doing next year and an understanding of its importance to the community and particularly to children and a very strong child focus. I got a real buzz out of that. I think secondly, if I can have 2, we are now being asked for our opinion and to contribute to processes. For an example, I was ... an invitation that I readily accepted to be involved in the recruitment of the Independent Board of Visitors for the residential child care establishments, seeing it as another independent scrutiny and another independent eye but which contributed to child protection in those facilities. So I think our profile has risen to the point of it is not something that you can ignore. We are active, we are generative and we are taking action. The third one, because I will always try and take 3, is about the work that was done on E-safety. I just think to engage with an issue that a lot of people were not aware of or were not attuned to about the vulnerability of children and young people with access to computers, to iPhones was a major investment and an encouraging investment because we, and I acknowledge the work of certainly my Professional Officer in this regard, but the whole team, because it had a training components as well, so Jan did some work on it as well, that was forward thinking, that was proactive, and it got our profile raised and people saw it as a force positive rather than just responding to the: "Gosh, is it not awful? You come in when things are bad." In future I think the coming 12 months and beyond have got to be a concentration on what is the quality of the service being provided to children in Jersey, both in proactive, my language, terms? How good are we as a child protection engine in making sure that there is investment in protecting children, not just responding to indicators and signs of abuse? So that is the initiative, the programme, to get those 2 things in a good balance, so that what we have learned from the experience is being turned into active engagement with agencies and with organisations so that they are all thinking about protecting children and listening? I do think the key to child protection is not merely listening but hearing what children say and acting on it.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Absolutely.

**The Connétable of St. Martin:**

Just listening to that with great interest, I have got a question prompt here which concerns family Q in Sheffield. Now the question I want to ask you now really is I recognise a statement of improvement over the last recent years in what you have just said. Where are we in comparison to the work of local safeguarding boards of children in the U.K. (United Kingdom)? Where are we? Are we playing catch-up or are way ahead or ...? Give us an absolutely fundamental honest appraisal, please.

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

If we were in the States I would want to plead the Fifth Amendment. That is a very difficult one. You have got 154 local authorities in England and you have therefore got 154 different representations of performance of local children safeguarding boards

and performance of child protection activity in those authorities, the measurement of which will stand scrutiny to a certain point. Where are we? I think we are moving towards having greater concentration on safeguarding as well as on child protection. I think we are moving ... my aspiration is that we will move from being a child protection committee which may have elements of reactive and this is what children's social services do, to a stronger safeguarding committee which is about prevention and about investment and about awareness across all agencies and voluntary sector so that there is a multi-agency engagement, because that is our role and function. I am not ducking the question. I would not want to get into a league table ...

**The Connétable of St. Martin:**

No, no. I realise it was a ...

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

The other point I would make in that context is that those Local Safeguarding Children Boards who have recently had a hugely difficult time because they have had to comment and report on horrendous activities, on deaths and serious elements of neglect, you can never predict in child protection when the circumstance will hit where you work. I have had to handle serious case reviews as a line manager in local authorities and certainly the 2 instances in my direct experience that I dealt with were a huge surprise. The indicators and the predictors were not present in either of those circumstances.

**The Connétable of St. Martin:**

I would be interested to know the difference. I have got my own ideas of the difference but I have taken the point that you made, safeguarding rather than protection, to get in before rather than afterwards and are you telling us that this is a policy, a written policy of your present organisation?

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

It is part of our terms of reference and our purpose to protect and safeguard and my intention would be to be quite generous with that definition of safeguard in our terms of reference. However I think one of the things ... and picking up on one of your earlier deliberations where you referred recommendation to the J.C.P.C. to consider its title and should we become a safeguarding board, I am sympathetic to that recommendation and would want to give it very serious consideration during this next 12 months and come back with a formal response to that. I cannot sign up for the Committee but my feeling is to be positive towards that because I think it gives us a significantly different public profile, which I think is important in the work that we do and what we are trying to achieve in the coming months.

**The Connétable of St. Martin:**

Thank you for that.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

At that point, unless there is anything else, thank you for your contribution and thanks for your time.

**Mr. M. Taylor:**

Not at all. Thank you.

[17:24]