



Care of Children in Jersey Review Panel

Quarterly Hearing

Witness: The Minister for Children and Housing

Monday, 11th February 2019

Panel:

Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier (Chairman)

Deputy K.G. Pamplin of St. Saviour (Vice-Chairman)

Deputy T. Pointon of St. John

Deputy M.R. Higgins of St. Helier

Witnesses:

The Minister for Children and Housing

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills

Director, Children's Policy

Group Director, Children's Services

[14:01]

Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier (Chairman):

Thank you very much, and I would like to welcome you to this quarterly hearing with the Minister for Children and Housing, the Minister for Children, and remind people that this is available as a webcast, so you can download it. Welcome anyone who is watching online and welcome members of the public who have come in today to see what is going on. If we introduce ourselves briefly. I am Deputy Robert Ward, I am chairman of the Care of Children Panel.

Deputy T. Pointon of St. John:

I am Trevor Pointon. I am the Deputy of St. John and a member of the panel.

Deputy M.R. Higgins of St. Helier:

Deputy Mike Higgins, St. Helier 3 and 4, a member of the panel.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin of St. Saviour (Vice-Chairman):

Deputy Kevin Pamplin, and I am vice-chairman of this panel.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Senator Sam Mézec, Minister for Children.

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

Mark Rogers, Director General for Children, Young People, Education and Skills.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We have 2 officers who perhaps can introduce yourselves if you come to the table. That would be great, thank you. To start with, if we could just ask the Minister for an update; if the Minister could update the panel on the ongoing action that is being undertaken to respond to the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry recommendations.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

That is a very broad question, so I could probably provide you with a million different answers on that. There is a huge amount of ongoing work on pretty much every area. The recommendations covered lots of different topics, so there are some that do not immediately fall into my specific remit when it comes to the Children's Services side of things, like, for example, recommendation 7 on the "Jersey Way". There is ongoing work to do with the Public Services Ombudsman and that sort of thing. I am sure the issue of the dual role of the Bailiff will find itself before the Assembly at some point. In regards to other recommendations, the first recommendation was about introducing a Children's Commissioner. That was obviously done fairly soon after the Care Inquiry report came out, so we have been spending time since then to put the legislation together to enshrine that role in Jersey society. I believe that you have seen a copy of that legislation, or copies because it has been through different drafting stages. I have signed the order for that to go ahead, and so that debate will take place at some point in March. That legislation I think is a very good piece of legislation. It is quite unique for Jersey in that we have not had this sort of human rights defender role in Jersey before, and there was a lot of learning that took place to decide how we thought the role should exist in Jersey, what powers it ought to have. So this is a big moment for Jersey, something that I think we ought to be proud of, but obviously there is work to do to ensure that legislation is fit for purpose. I am sure you will be asking me a lot more about recruitment and retention. That was obviously a key recommendation from the Care Inquiry. I believe at the beginning of next month there will be a big recruitment drive, the "Let's Be Honest" campaign. It has been announced that there will be more in the pipeline in terms of expanding the offer we make to

people in terms of support when they come to work in our services and what training there is. I think the most substantial piece of work that is ongoing and will be ongoing for a long period of time is the improvement plan for Children's Services, so I chair the Strategic Improvement Board and then there is the Operational Improvement Board below that, which I think meets every month, and we meet every quarter. That is quite a hefty piece of work and is progressing, I will openly say slowly - too slowly for my liking - and we are monitoring the signs of what progress is being made, what is not working so well and where we need to focus our attentions on. That is quite a broad answer and I do not know if there is anything specific within the recommendations you want to go to.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Just going back to the legislation: what consultations have you had with the Children's Commissioner? Are there any disagreements between you on any of the issues or has she bought in totally?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

I am not aware of any disagreements. She has been involved very much throughout the whole process of this and I think that was a really clever decision made by the previous Government to appoint a Children's Commissioner and then come up with the legislation. So it has the Commissioner working in shadow form because the Commissioner could get to grips with the Island and what the job is outside of legislation and then have a heavy input into what the legislation looks like, whereas what we could have done is said we will come up with the legislation first and then appoint the role and risk being in the position in a few years' time when we realise the legislation does not quite work how a Commissioner would want it to work. So the Commissioner has been very heavily involved not just in going through the drafts and contributing and making suggestions but also in the learning that went on behind it. So we looked at equivalent positions, not just in the U.K. (United Kingdom) but also across Europe as well, so Scandinavia, the Children's Ombudsmen, were the officers we looked at as well. So very heavily involved and I think that has been a good piece of work to ensure that the legislation is as good as it could possibly be.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Do you think that everyone has got what they wanted from it in terms of the Council of Ministers, the Children's Commissioner and yourself?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

I think when it is published and people have a look at it there may well be bits and pieces in there that people may look at and wonder why X, Y and Z was not done differently and there may be different perspectives on that and that is healthy. That is a discussion we should have in terms of how far her powers go, what limits there could or should not be. Some may have questions about

the appointments or the dismissal process, because that has got to be something that is very robust in this as well, to ensure the independence of the role. I think it is a very good piece of legislation. I have read legislation before that has been incredibly dull and I did not find this one dull. I found it quite exciting to see the culmination of all the work that has gone on beforehand to get to this point, so it has my full support. It of course has the support of the Council of Ministers. The Council of Ministers were well sighted on it and contributed. As a body we all contributed to it and when comments were made about draft clauses they were then taken back and Ministers were consulted independently if they had questions about it and changes were made. It would be difficult to imagine where we could have done more behind this process but the Assembly will have its full say and I will be listening with an open mind to what they have got to say.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Going on to the Children's Rights Officer: what process is in place for the Children's Rights Officer to deal with complaints?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

The Children's Rights Officer is going to report directly to the Director of Children's Services. That role was a recommendation of the Care Inquiry. There may be some who get confused about what is the difference between what the Children's Commissioner and the Children's Rights Officer do, but I think there is a difference in the work that they will be doing to engage directly with children and young people who are looked after by the Government and have direct access to those in Children's Services to take things up and help not just with individual cases where that direct access may help find a solution quicker than going through other bureaucratic processes but also have the ability to make comments on processes when there is a problem so they can be more direct.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is the Children's Rights Officer?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think that distinction is quite important. The accountability line for that role, you have probably been asked this a number of times already, but with the targets, operating models and so on, just to be clear about the accountability line for the Children's Rights Officer will be with yourself?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

They report directly to the Group Director of Children's Services and as Minister I will be at the end of that process.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

How would a complaint then against a senior manager, i.e. a group director by a young person be addressed by the Children's Rights Officer?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Can you elaborate?

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Okay, so in terms of let us say a child has a complaint against a senior manager. We have an example here of a group director. How would that be addressed by the Children's Rights Officer?

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

Thank you. In the way that any other complaint will be picked up, so initially I would expect that the Children's Rights Officer would meet with and hear and understand the complaint that the child had made and then they would have to make some decisions ultimately about how that complaint needed investigating. Given that the arrangements that have just been confirmed with the chair that the C.R.O. (Children's Rights Officer) reports to the group director a different arrangement would clearly have to be made with the group director about whom the complaint has been made. Ultimately of course I am the group director's line manager and the chief executive is mine, so I would have some discretion about who the complaint to the Children's Rights Officer would be referring to in terms of the conduct of that complaint.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Have you got a set process involved because the system of complaints has been highly flawed and is totally inadequate? Have you put in a new system for dealing with complaints?

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

The Government of Jersey have a States-wide, corporate wide, complaints policy, which is one approach that can be used. The Children's Rights Officer is presently talking to children and young people about the way that they would like to see complaints handled in the future, so we will get to the point where there is a combination of government policy and departmental policy, but the departmental policy is still subject to some further consideration, as the C.R.O. talks to children and young people about how they would envisage an optimal system working.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Okay, and the States new policy then? How independent is it, because one of the criticisms of the past system is it has not been independent and has not resulted in proper investigations.

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

So the new corporate policy is accompanied by a pretty large-scale recruitment of officials from across government who will be able to investigate complaints independently, so there is a much bigger pool of staff being created who can therefore look into complaints not made in connection with any part of the business that they are associated with and right now I think they are going through their training programme. One of the main improvements that has been made is there is a much bigger pool of people who get some proper professional training about how to investigate complaints.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Is there any outside oversight of that, people not just associated with the States?

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

I think that would be by exception, because the whole point of the complaints process is that you establish that line of independence in the first instance, so if there were circumstances whereby all the way up that line people were compromised because they were cited in the complaint then maybe some external expertise would be brought in at that point.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is this partly driven by the H.R. bullying report that came out some time ago, which was very critical of the way that incidents were being addressed in terms of investigations either not happening, or happening internally?

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

They are connected, but there are 2 separate strands here. There is the government's complaints structure, but there is also just last month the launch of a significantly revamped harassment and bullying policy and accompanying that a whistle blowing policy. So it is slightly pedantic, Chair, but to make the distinction between them.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, I understand that.

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

Your point about what was examined last year around bullying, that is what has driven the substantial revision and improvement of the harassment and bullying policy.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, that makes sense. I just wanted to clarify it, because these things are all so often interlinked.

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

Yes, and sometimes people have more than one issue that they are complaining about.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

What Deputy Higgins is talking about is specific complaints within specific areas linked to children.

[14:15]

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

We are going to lead on to the Jersey's Children First model, so I will kick it off by asking who is the lead officer for this, the Jersey's Children First model?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Julian Radcliffe.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

What was the process of his appointment to the chair ... being the lead officer?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

That is a good question. I do not know exactly how he came about that, because it was relatively early on in my term of office. What I know is that I was briefed on this relatively early, specifically by him. The piece of work, offering this training and support to people across the organisation, is pretty fundamental and the reasoning for having it stretches into lots of aspect of what the Care Inquiry spoke about, most importantly the culture and everybody in the government as an organisation understanding that they have to play a part in acting as a corporate parent, listening to or paying attention and noticing the signs that something may be up and that early help is needed, but also knowing where you can go, where the appropriate departments are or areas you might have to go to draw someone's attention to, to get that movement when that is necessary is a big piece of work and is important to do. After briefing myself there was then a wider briefing that had myself, the Minister for Education and the Minister for Health and Social Services. It is possible there may have been others there but certainly the 3 of us there and that training has begun. In the first instance it is focusing on those who are most closely working with children and working in the Children's Services. I think these figures are up-to-date, 612 people who have gone through that so far. Feedback has been positive and there has been a high engagement rate with that training

and we have been making sure that we are in touch with those that have been through the training so that we can hear their views on it and just be aware for what may need to accompany it or change with it as it gets rolled out to other parts of the organisation. That I certainly think is a positive thing and fits in with everything that we are trying to do here.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

What is his background and experience?

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

I can probably answer some of that. Susan Devlin can probably answer more. Julian is by training an educational psychologist, worked pretty extensively in education and children's services in England. Immediately before Jersey he was in Worcestershire. In Jersey he has responsibilities for a range of S.E.N. (Special Educational Needs) and disability services in the Department for Education so a pretty broad spectrum of experience and a background in educational psychology.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am sorry to interrupt, but this Children First training for 600 people, is that mainly in areas such as education or is it in direct Children's Services? Where has it been rolled out first? I am just trying to get a picture of where it is impacting first.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

On that point, who has gone through it so far, certainly those who are closest in contact with children through Children's Services and it is being rolled out, so we will stretch it to other places.

Group Director, Children's Services:

We anticipate that there will be around about 4,000 staff, and that is to reflect the whole of the children system, so any child who needs support, anyone who comes into contact with them as professionals or in a voluntary organisation needs to understand what we are doing. The practice framework is about everyone using consistent tools, understanding what their role is and how they can help, how they can signpost it, so it is about consistency. So the 600 are people from charities, some of the big ones, some of the small ones, F.N.H.C. (Family Nursing and Home Care), education, Children's Services. I think we might have had some folk from the Law Office in, so anybody who is likely to touch a child within the system should be going through the process, because it is about trying to make sure we can get in early and get a proportionate amount of time in to stop the problem escalating. That is partly, Deputy, your question about how come it was Julian. Julian and I co-sponsored a piece of work to develop this, so he was in Education with that much broader universal remit for children as opposed to me at Children's Services with targeted and vulnerable children. We worked on it together. It was something that came from a discussion with Senator Moore who

is not here today, when we were talking about how we get involved with families, how do we get a team around a child, how do we get consistency? Julian has then taken that on in a stronger lead role than myself because of that universal and his remit as Mark has expressed around inclusion in education, so he seemed the absolutely most appropriate person to draw people together to work on it.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just so I can get some sort of picture, I am a very practical person, if it is things such as looking for first signs of issues, ways to perhaps approach and address children who might have an issue, families who might have an issue, I can see how that applies in education, in charities. So is it taking a common approach that has got some sort of evidence base to it?

Group Director, Children's Services:

Yes, it is heavily borrowed from work that took place in England under the Common Assessment Framework but also in Scotland through the Getting it Right for Every Child model and that has been in place for 10 years. There has been lots of debate about that. They have a named person for every child. We have not gone down that road. We have gone for children who might need support. We have used some of the tools that are in use elsewhere, so there is a well-being wheel that looks at safe, health, nurture and I guess people are assessing all the time where somebody is on that wheel. There is a set of common questions that each member of staff should be thinking about, how is this child doing, what is getting in the way of their progress, what should they be doing. It really pushes all of us to have an ownership of what we can do. For me it is like good pastoral care for teachers in the way that we have seen that, and it builds on that kind of thing. It is about everyone doing that, and it brings together some of the common templates for assessment reports for instance, so that the report belongs to the child and you do not get a different thing, no matter where you go.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is there a resourcing implication of that?

Group Director, Children's Services:

There are certainly resourcing implications. I am sorry, I should not have jumped right in there, I beg your pardon. So the training is significant, as you can imagine, and we have put a couple of extra posts in there. I think once we get going there should not be, because we are all doing assessments just now and if we can stem the tide, if I can put it like that, at an earlier stage for children you stop children escalating through the system until they are at crisis point.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I understand the reason for that and agree, so the training itself would be, for example, in the workplace, be it a school or ...

Group Director, Children's Services:

It is on a multi-agency basis, so people are brought out ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So it would be specifically a training day, and all staff would they get access to that, so there would not be any problem in staff accessing it? So in schools, for example, would it be on an inset day? I know how difficult it is to get training in schools.

Group Director, Children's Services:

Some of the sessions are much shorter. There are some twilight sessions, because we do not just want to do teachers, because there is a richness of training together ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

No, I agree, but can I just say, then, and I think that is where I was heading, when you are having training, which is so important and needs resourcing, if you run twilight sessions then it is basically going to become almost compulsory training, so is there a mechanism by which people will get their time back or ...

Group Director, Children's Services:

Perhaps my example of a twilight session was not a very good one. It is about flexibility.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

No, I think it is quite important, because what tends to happen is, I believe, that when a new initiative is rolled out without appropriate resourcing it becomes reliant on the individual to get themselves access to it, and I do not think it should be, if we are genuinely going to make this a priority. It is just some reassurance around that.

Group Director, Children's Services:

In terms of the people who have been from schools just now that has tended to be the safeguarding leads and some of the head teachers, so they have been able to get out. I think you are right, though, in terms of how you then grow that and how we embed the model.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That would be something that I think we will come back to at some time. I do not want to take too long on it.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

How are you dealing with record keeping? A lot of Children's Services records are totally inadequate, with gaps in them, and a lot of statements made that do not seem to offer any proof. How are you going to make sure that they are sufficiently comprehensive enough that on an audit trail you can see if they are valid?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

We have our new recording system, Mosaic system, which is a departure from what existed previously and I understand from those who use it, it gets positive feedback. In terms of practically how that works, I do not use the system myself, but it has had positive feedback, from what I gather.

Group Director, Children's Services:

Yes, the new system is like night and day to the previous system. The previous system was SoftBox; it was not fit for purpose. It also sat alongside electronic recording of Word documents and the like and also paper files. Mosaic moves us on to try to collate the records in one place. Any record should be making clear what is a factual point and what is an analysis or an assessment. Factual accuracy is often much easier to argue about or say if something is right or wrong, whereas some people will not agree with a professional assessment and it may be that they do not agree with it, and that is fine. It should certainly look to record that. Some of the new paperwork absolutely makes it very clear that we should be seeking the child or the family's view about what is written about them. If that is an agreement, fine; if it is a disagreement that should also be recorded along with reasons why.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So to touch on Mosaic, it is like an essential database for all of the information that you have gathered?

Group Director, Children's Services:

Yes, it is a client record system, so a case file is an electronic file.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

You can now feed into that from schools, from hospitals, from social workers?

Group Director, Children's Services:

So there is the electronic capacity to do that. It is like going through a portal. We are still in the implementation phases of Mosaic. We only started the implementation in November 2017, so we have been building the system and some of the build just now is focused on performance reporting,

so we can get much better performance reporting, whereas before we really were counting things manually all the time, but we are now in a much better position.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Can I just add to that? When we have come together as the Improvement Board we have been made aware of gaps in this, so where information has not been shared appropriately, when quite clearly it ought to have been to help target better support to individual children, and when that is coming to light we are recognising it and doing what we can to deal with it. So making sure that information is as accurate as possible and acceptable by those who need it to be able to provide support to vulnerable young people is obviously incredibly important and we have recognised where there have been some gaps and we have tried to deal with them as quickly as possible when that happens. Things are, I think, getting better when you look at some of the systems that we knew about before that were just not good enough.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

One of these boards we have been invited to go along to. I cannot remember which one it is. It would be really interesting to go and see it, and thanks for the invitation.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

I think symbolically that is important, because that fits in with our broader aim on corporate parenting, where it is not just for the Minister, it is not just for the Government, it is for all of us and I think Scrutiny's input on that could potentially be very helpful. That is the rationale behind that invitation.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

Sorry to interrupt you there. Just trying to unravel the figures, you said roughly 612 people trained and then ...

The Minister for Children and Housing:

To December 2018, yes.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

Then the figure you estimated is about 4,000?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

So is there a timetable of a completion date being put in place, an implementation plan of when this will all be done and how it is all going to be worked? This rolls on to my next question, which is: how will the impact of the training be measured afterwards?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

I do not know exactly when the timetable is, because obviously people move in and out of the organisation, so there will come times where that will need to be restarted when there are people completely new to all of this.

[14:30]

Group Director, Children's Services:

We will be doing much of the training this year. As we move through the implementation we will find it will be much higher volume training, so we have got people right at the heart of the system going through longer and more intensive training and we will have a lot more people in the room.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It would be fair to say that not everyone will be receiving the same intensity of training as the 600 staff, so it is like a cascading process. Do you think that works?

Group Director, Children's Services:

I think it can work. I think what will be important is with turnover of staff, that as we get new people in we make sure they get the appropriate level of training and that there is also online resources, so we will be using the Virtual College and that will be mandatory for people in Children's Services.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Again, we come back to time, and will time be made available for those staff to do that, so it is not something that you have to do? Given that we have problems with recruitment and retention the last thing we want to do is to lump more responsibility on people's own time, because that is one of the drivers for people leaving a role. So I just want to make that point clear in Scrutiny now and we will come back to it probably.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes, and I think that is something that we need to be aware of and to be prepared to learn from. I am aware there are particular attempts to give training that do not necessarily work or put undue pressure on people that distracts from them being able to do the main job. We have got to be aware of that and try to be as accommodating as possible, and if I ever encounter any resistance in any

area for their staff going off to do this training then they will hear a very strict disapproval from me on that, because I think that is really important.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is good to hear.

The Deputy of St. John:

It is good to hear because I am wondering about mass training of courses of this description. In a sense we are ticking a box, are we not, this training and we will deliver it? How are we then measuring the effectiveness of this training? How are we measuring the improvements in well-being for children and young people? That is an essential part of delivering this training.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

How we are improving the well-being for children in Jersey will be measured in a whole host of different ways that will not uniquely be down to this training. We are not going to claim that this training is a fix all and will be directly attributable to that child's progress in this area. There will be some times when you simply will not know what did it. What we do know is that this makes a huge amount of sense to try to equip our workforce as well as possible to see those early signs, to do the right thing, to report what needs to be reported, to bring in whatever other agency is required and we are, through the Improvement Board, doing what we can at the moment to track progress that there is with vulnerable children's interactions with our services. I think there are still more discussions to be had about how we use that data and information we have got to more accurately track the progress we are making, because certainly from the statistics side of things we have seen so far, some of that is not immediately obvious, whether there is progress or whatever. There has got to be more thinking on that, but I am certainly keen that in the coming months we get to a stage where we can be open and transparent about where we are against particular indicators, so people know where things are going, where the strains are and where focus needs to be drawn to.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think the transparency is about the way that the training is being delivered and I consider this a really important issue, because the further away you get from the core training I think the more watered down that training becomes. You mentioned the Virtual College, for example. I will give you an example. I can remember doing online training to stop radicalisation. I really do not think it was particularly successful but there was no way for me to feed back that it was not particularly successful. I would be saying as a Scrutiny statement that we have to be very wary of those. We understand the pressures in terms of resourcing but if more resourcing is needed and we are going to take it seriously and the training needs to be better then I think that is the question that needs to

come back and we will certainly be willing to look at that in terms of what is needed. Just some concern over that area.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

That is helpful.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

Again going back to dates and action plans, this is something that I am always hot on. Do you have a specific publication date for the action plan arising from the review of fostering syllabuses at this stage?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

I do not. I have the review that we have got. Have you seen that?

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

No, I have not.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Okay. We may have to think about the appropriateness of sharing this at the right point. There is a whole host of recommendations that we have been given, lots of which cross departments and so I think we need a deeper think about how we respond to this properly, what political support there is to take on particular elements of the work in it. There are some things in there that anybody could have guessed would be recommended, the usual things to do with better communications around fostering, how people can go about doing it. Trying to empower people to believe in themselves that they would be good foster parents, when there are lots of people out there who would be brilliant at it but just do not have the confidence or do not have the knowledge of what it involves to do that. We have to think about what training we offer families to be in a position to be able to do that, including when there are children with specific needs that would need to be catered for. There are other elements like what we can do through housing, to make it easier for those to be able to provide a better home environment there, and there are tax and social security issues as well that need to be thought of. So at this point I am unsure exactly when that point will be but I am happy to facilitate a discussion with you to have that and so you know what is going on and can contribute in the appropriate way.

The Deputy of St. John:

In the discussions about fostering has there been any consideration getting to the fostering stage of parents at the J.C.G. (Jersey College for Girls) who would be taking in foreign students as initially

boarders but ... not boarders, but initially on the same basis as St. Brelade College, but in the long-term I gather would need to become foster carers?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Surely not.

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

So there are 2 things in there. So it is specifics around private fostering, home stay or whatever and we have got to spend a little bit of time making sure we are clear on that. I just want to say something else about the fostering service review quickly. So this was a review of the service as opposed to the strategy for fostering, so to speak, so I think it is important to make that distinction. However, in terms of what comes out of this review, we have already started to make sure that the key recommendations filter into this efficiency strategy, which is about the direction of travel that fostering needs to go into in the longer term. In terms of timescales, which is the question that you were asking, so the internal process is in the department at the moment as we go through those findings and develop a wider strategy on that, including just today before we came here, we have reviewed the draft strategy. We have looked at a programme initiation document to take the key elements of it forward. There has been some briefing clearly on the ministerial side about that work and we will be intending to take that I think through a formal process of adoption over the coming months, but we need to do a bit more background work on it just before we feel confident about taking it into, say for example, more ministerial discussions, because some of this is about the extent to which we need to disinvest from some things in order to invest in other things, in other words off-Island we prefer to disinvest from that and invest into more on-Island support. So we have just got a little bit more work to do. I think going into probably later into spring, very early into summer we will be in a really good position to be updating much more extensively on where fostering and adoption are going.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Do you have the number of fosterers that we require? Is that too simplistic a question?

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

So part of the combination of art and science around this is trying to get a pretty good forecasting fix on what we would need.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is why I asked that question.

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

It is less straightforward, in the sense that it is not just projecting forward from the here and now, because we want to change some of the models that we offer. So, for example, in this particular review of the service there was a recommendation about developing intensive fostering, which I guess is shorthand, you could say, for the much more specialised end of fostering. So what I am trying to say to you is we are not just forecasting out from now as if we were doing the same now in 5 or 10 years' time as to how many carers we need. We are looking to diversify the model as well, but the sufficiency strategy is all about trying to get the best data possible and make the best possible projections around that. We need to do that forecast.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So is there a number?

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

Not a fixed number yet, and some of that is to do with the further modelling, so we need to do some financial modelling, for example. If we are to provide more on-Island intensive foster care, more specialised, and therefore reduce the reliance on off-Island placements we just need to do the sums, the history of that, how many families that would be.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I recognise that any number depends on population and so on, but it would be interesting in terms of a range, and we could use it for Scrutiny to get us a practical answer, I think.

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

I think we could get some headline numbers for you, as long as you do not hold us hard and fast at this stage.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, and we would understand that.

Group Director, Children's Services:

Just a point on the numbers question. It is not as straightforward as saying that we have 5 children and we need 5 foster carers. It is about matching and placing and lining up skills with needs.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, I understand that.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

What I was going to say is, it was one of the most powerful days in the Care Inquiry that basically the fostering system is basically said not to be working at all and needed to be completely redesigned, the impact of that obviously if that is the case and that is why the time it is taking. Can you give us any indication from the review that that is the case, that the whole system needs to be redesigned?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

The word that is used is “reboot”.

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

Some of it is qualitative, not just quantitative as well, so I think some of the experiences that foster carers, past and present, have had needs to be improved in terms of, for example, that we had again a conversation earlier today out-of-hours support, for example. Hitherto it has been the case that if you needed some help after 5.00 p.m., or 6.00 p.m. or whatever the time is over the weekend, you would dial into the out-of-hours number which is, to all intents and purposes, a generic response, whereas we have been talking about the importance of developing a tailored response, potentially slightly developing in terms of the numbers of staff we have in fostering and adoption so that we can run a bespoke fostering out-of-hours helpline. So this is some of the qualitative things, that numbers would otherwise mask, but we know that foster carers will tell us still that sometimes you just cannot get the right person on the phone and if you could it would be much easier to resolve the issue that might have emerged that day or that weekend.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

That is really curious because that tags into a certain other piece of work that I am doing on another panel with mental health. This is curious. There is a culture on the Island that Jersey seems to only work certain hours and we are talking health, children, everything. Is there not an argument here that this could all be linked up and integrated and learning from the Department for Health, who are saying similar things; that people cannot get hold of somebody at certain hours? It just seems to be logical.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes, and as a constituency representative I have been in the situation where I have had calls from people late on a Friday evening or something like that and who have rushed around trying to get support and find it incredibly difficult to find it. I can think of an instance where I had to call the ambulance for somebody, basically, when having had what was happening occurred at another time that would not have been necessary. We should not think of these things in cost terms but in that instance it probably cost more to the public than it would have been to have service, so that consideration about how we provide service is not just in this area, but frankly across the whole

range of areas and is something that we have got to think about. I would certainly be one to say that I would want more of that to be accessible as is most convenient and necessary for people that would need that service. Obviously that is not a simple thing to do and it would be quite resource-intensive as well, but it is a discussion that we need to be having because Islanders lives, at what point you hit a crisis or need some support for something it is not the same as what people's ordinary working hours may be.

[14:45]

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Going on to costs, it is an ideal time because ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think you have got a \$10,000 question so to speak, which I think is the key to all of it.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

We want to know how the Minister will ensure that provision in the plans for children and young people is given the funding required for the Government plan?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

That is the \$10,000 question and so that is a good question, but I am very pleased to answer it. We had last week the first meeting as Council of Ministers to discuss how we move forward on putting the Government Plan together, bearing in mind that the process this time will be different to what it has looked like previously because we are combining raising revenue as well as spending, whereas previously the 2 have been dealt with separately, which can be very frustrating. There is going to be a lot of work over the next few months and some very, I anticipate, lively meetings with Ministers getting together to ... in some instances they may well be competing for particular pots of money to deliver on particular political ambitions. I feel that we are in as good a place as we could possibly be right now for these discussions because we have a Chief Minister who is 100 per cent committed to dealing with these issues, so that is helpful to have. We have relatively new appointments in particular positions in the government, some of which have been controversial among the public, but the good thing about those appointments is that we have people on the civil service side who have experienced these sorts of things elsewhere. We have a decision from the States Assembly to have putting children first as our number one priority in our Strategic Plan. It would be political madness to vote to make putting children our top priority in the Strategic Plan and then follow it up with a Government Plan that does not attempt to live up to that promise. So, politically, I think we are in a good position. As Minister, I will be around that table arguing to the ends of the earth to get the resources we need to deliver on these ambitions. Up to now, when we have been sat round the

Council of Ministers' table talking about this piece of work or that piece of work, I have never felt a hint of resistance from any of my colleagues so far because I feel like my colleagues understand why this is important. For many of them, you know, they are running their departments and will have political areas of interest that do not always cross over to what we are talking about today but I have found a deep sense of understanding from those Ministers in understanding that this is the most important piece of work our Island will be doing for many years to come getting this right. So, I feel like we are in a very good starting position there but we cannot get complacent. A lot of this will depend on getting the resourcing right and I am ready to shout as loud as I can from whatever platform necessary to get that.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Okay, I am pleased to hear that. But will you tell us what you have been doing working with the third sector? For example, as a panel, we went to see Brighter Futures and I must admit I was impressed, and I am sure all my colleagues were impressed, with what we saw on the ground. What talks are you having with them about financing because I know in the past they have not got the resources they have sought from the Government?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes. I have met them as well and I have met lots of other agencies that are doing particular pieces of work that the States is commissioning them to do and providing funding for it. I do not think that it is right to ... let me phrase this right. I think that when those third sector bodies are providing important work that we want and need them to be providing then we have to have as good a relationship as possible with them and not take them for granted. You will know, from my record in the previous Assembly, that I was not happy when particular funding arrangements were changed with other bodies; Primary Nursing Home Care was one example that myself and some of my colleagues spoke a lot about at the time. But those discussions have to be ongoing to make sure that not only are we giving the most appropriate amounts of funding but that the work that is being done is being done by the right people and being done to the right standards that we want. Sometimes those discussions may be difficult but we do have to have those discussions. I do not know if Mark wants to add anything on that. We have discussed some of this recently.

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

Indeed. So probably to reinforce as much as add, I think, there are 3 points for me. So the first one was to be really clear as a department, as well as a government, that our understanding of need is as good as it can be and then we prioritise those things that most need improvement. I know that - and even listening to myself - sounds a bit like sort of process, does it not? But it is a really important process to understand where you are starting from, what the evidence is telling you about our families most need help with. That is the first one. The second one is then, if you understand that

politically you have made some decisions about which areas to prioritise - mental health, whatever - then you are looking to see what the most effective interventions are. So I come back to one of the points that you have played to us about the training. We need to also be much better at making sure we understand which things we do that are likely to have the best impacts on those families, and those children and young people in them, and make sure that we are doing them. When the Minister is being careful in how he phrases things it is because we do not want to give a message that people have been doing a bad job. But we might need to be saying, at some point in the near future, that we need to change some of the interventions we are making to different ones because they are ones that work better or they are more appropriate to the needs that we are presently seeing. Then I think the third bit of all of this, for me, is keeping an open mind about who is best placed to deliver on those things. So the voluntary and community sector has a wealth of experience and I have found it in other places - I know they are not Jersey - that I have worked that just sometimes there is a bit of a view about whether the voluntary and community sectors are up to it. We need to have a much more constructive partnership, I think, right across those people who work with us on children's issues; to be open minded about who can do the best job. I think sometimes who might be developed to do the best job as well because it is not necessarily a case of capability it is more a case of readiness. So those are the things that I will keep in mind: look at the need, look at the best intervention and keep an open mind about who is best to do it.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Open mind in terms of not dismissing an idea because it is the voluntary sector and they cannot do it. Yes, okay.

The Deputy of St. John:

It would make sense not to dismiss it because the Island has relied upon the voluntary sector so heavily over many, many years. I mean we find that with the introduction of care registration, for example, some voluntary organisations in adult services are now considering leaving the sector simply because it is costing them more than they are earning. If that relationship is to remain then funding of the voluntary sector from central sources needs to be addressed.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

I agree with that but just to add another philosophical angle to it. I also strongly believe in public services and perhaps here, but certainly in other places, there have been instances where, in times of austerity, the third sector has had to pick up on stuff that ought to be done by public services. We should not shy away from the fact that there are jobs that we ought to be doing and we should not be giving work to particular organisations as a way of justifying efficiencies or cuts and we should be doing things. I think the services and support should be provided by those who are best able to, whether that is voluntary or public sector.

The Deputy of St. John:

Yes. Last time we met, in private on that occasion, we were apprised of the training being given to social workers in relation to systemic practice. We have just been talking about children in care, foster care. For those foster parents for those children who are supported, social workers will need to up their game, as it were. I am wondering where we are in relation to that practice training.

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

Again, Susan Devlin, the Minister or I, I am sure, could say some words. Susan is on the programme so maybe she is the best person to give you an update on where we are with it.

Group Director, Children's Services:

I think we also did mention it at the last public hearing; we did touch on this subject. The systemic training has run from last spring and has almost concluded for most of our practitioners. I went, along with colleagues, on the 6 days senior leadership course which finished in December. The senior leaders did not have an assignment to do related to that work. The importance of having the training at different levels in the organisation is about supporting the approach so that people do not feel they are on their own battling away trying to do something. The training has taken place in London at the Centre for Systemic Social Work, which is the initiative by what is called the Tri-borough of London Authorities. People went there. It is quite a challenging course. I think, for some people, they would have explicitly been grappling with some of the theories and some of the ideas probably since they were out of college or university so it is about getting back to thinking in theory about what is effective. We have lost some people along that journey, for a variety of different reasons. But folk who were on the course, I think we have got one. For a few people there are 2 days left and then there is their final assignment. People have done one assignment halfway through and this is the final one to get the accreditation. Where we are, as a service, I think is in a position of kind of saying: "Okay, how was that? What has that meant for us as a service?" You will be aware of the turnover we have in staff so trying to get something embedded right across the staff group is fairly challenging. We are also entering into some work with S.C.I.E. (Social Care Institute for Excellence) to look at how we really focus on practice. I think in terms of any improvement sustainability within the service we have got to invest in our staff; we have got to help them grow their skills, grow their knowledge, get back in touch with that and feel professional, confident and articulate about it. So the work with S.C.I.E., which is just kicking off, I think we have to look at the systemic practice and future of that alongside what we are going to do with S.C.I.E. I think for people to go to London for a day was a pretty big challenge. People obviously have got personal lives; they were getting up at 4.30 a.m., travelling, getting the Red Eye and then it is an intense day. It is not one of those days that you can sit and drift off for an hour.

The Deputy of St. John:

The last time we spoke I believe a couple of people had dropped out. Has that become stable?

Group Director, Children's Services:

Some people have dropped out. I was trying to get the accurate figures last week and I had hoped to have them today. I do not have them, I am sorry about that. We have had a drop out on each of the courses. So we have had the practitioners' course; the supervisory course, so senior practitioners and team managers going on that; and the third course was the senior leadership, which is about helping embed it. We have lost some people. I do not have the accurate figures, I am sorry, Deputy.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Would it not have been an idea to send them the night before and put them in a hotel?

Group Director, Children's Services:

Well, we had a meeting halfway through when it was becoming apparent folk were really struggling. Some people did avail themselves of that but for other people, they could not do that because of their personal circumstances, their family situations; that did not help them. But yes, we did think about that.

The Deputy of St. John:

Is it possible to write to us to tell us what the drop-out rates were?

Group Director, Children's Services:

Yes, certainly.

The Deputy of St. John:

Thank you.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Before we move on to another area can I just ask the question? I was encouraged by what you said about the resources, apart from everything else. Obviously, the figure is going to be in the Medium Term Financial Plan, with regard to the one that is coming in. So you have got a very short window here to gather all the data, not only for what your own service is providing but also the third sector. How soon are you going to be able to get that information together?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

We do not have Medium Term Financial Plans anymore, it is the Government Plan. The last time I saw it was when we were looking at dates for a debate in the States which is, I think, October/November time.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

So you have pushed it back from the original proposal?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Okay.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

As well as Ministers coming together to decide some of that, we are talking about having opportunities for all States Members to have some input into that process as well, which obviously was not done at previous times. So we are in the very early stages of that.

[15:00]

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

So is the existing Medium Term Financial Plan being carried forward then until you come up with a new plan?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

We are still in the final year of the previous Medium Term Financial Plan; that was to the end of this year.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think we asked a question before about how those limitations might affect issues in 2019 and might do damage to any plans going forward.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

As you are aware, I have that same frustration as well.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes. Can I ask a question about funding which concerns us? I understand that funding the Children's Plan will be met from core allocations of individual departments. How will you ensure that

the Children's Plan is getting sufficient priority by each department involved, especially in respect of any business plans that feed into the Government Plan? Because you are relying upon other Ministers to have the same priority - and I am not saying they will not - but perhaps they will not. As soon as you lose control of the purse strings, perhaps I can say, it is going to be a difficult challenge.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Okay, yes, I see where you are coming from. We had our first meeting of the board that is driving the Children's Plan the other day. It was the first meeting so it was unlike what the rest of the meetings going forward will be; that will have representation from people from the different government departments. I think it is acknowledged that one of the reasons that the previous Children's Plan did not work was because it did not have the right funding arrangement behind it and also the governance behind it was not strong enough. That is a lesson we have had to learn for this time round to ensure that, in driving it forward, it is not the obsession of one Minister who can occasionally lose battles on it and then things fall away as a result of that. The group that will be driving this forward has representation from across the Government, as an organisation. So as well as me, as Minister, pushing for it, in other areas there are other Ministers that have direct impact on some of our ambitions in the Children's Plan; the Minister for Education being quite a key example there. So we will be pushing for that together. It is not quite as simple as saying: "We have a Children's Plan and here is some funding for it" because it has aspirations in it that are quite broad and stretch over different areas as well. There will be work streams that go on that would be going on even if we did not have a Children's Plan but would still, you would hope, be making life better for children in one way or another. So one of our aspirations is for children to grow up in a place that is safe. The Home Affairs and Justice Department will be doing all sorts of bits and pieces of work, that they ought to be doing anyway, but with the added focus of the Children's Plan alongside it helps put it into context. So it is not quite as simple as saying: "Here is a pot of money for that plan" because of all the work streams it will intertwine with.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So in a way you need the advocacy of each department which will ensure that the priorities filter through.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Everyone needs to be an advocate for it. So this will be published when it is ready. We are in the process of finding a date to do a launch event for that which we are hoping will include children and young people themselves because we have engaged with them a lot in this process. Some of it has just been very entertaining; the unique ways that they have had to put their points across to us. So it has to be everybody's focus, not just mine.

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

Can I give you an illustration of how I think it is going to work, for example?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I would like a practical example, it gives me a focus.

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

I will give you a practical example. The Minister chaired the first board last week and while it was a set-up meeting, so quite a lot of what was input was describing how did we get here and what is this plan and what we are supposed to do with it, a very practical example. So - crikey, Home Affairs and Justice or Justice and Home Affairs, whichever way around that is - the Prison Governor was there as one of the representatives of that department and he asked the question, I have heard round this table, that certain agencies are delivering parenting support. For example, Brighter Futures was there in fact and I think it was probably P.P.P. (Public-Private Partnership) that was being referred to: "As Prison Governor, I am really interested, now that I am part of this group for the first time sitting down with other agencies with the same interest about families, what can we do for our inmates who, while incarcerated, have limited or no access to their families but when they come out, almost certainly, if they have families, will re-engage with them? What can we do to help them learn some better parenting skills?" It was particularly a conversation about adult males in the criminal justice system and that is a really good illustration of the starting point that we have reached. So here is a plan, it has got pretty broad buy-in and there is a multi-partner group wrapped around it. The very first thing we can do is not pool all the money, for example, but say there are connections that can now be made that just were not previously being made. It is really simple stuff to begin with.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes. I suppose my concern is just that I have so often seen, you know, there is another initiative, go and get on with it but there is no extra money to do it, there is another initiative. It simply does not work; it does not have the impact that you want. I go back to the Children First model and that is why we have to be so specific about the training. It has given responsibility to a department to say: "Okay, we have cascaded it but most of the staff do not have a clue how to use it." The impact, therefore, is not as great and the money is wasted. I think it is that concern.

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

Two observations on that as well, without taking too much time going backwards. The first one to make is if the Children's Partnership is worth its salt then ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is that on a board score?

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

Yes. Then it will hold fast to some priorities. It will not chop and change even, dare I say it, across administrations. So the training programme for Jersey Children's First model should just run and run and run and it should be improved year-on-year by the evaluations that come in. The second is about: is it any good? So at this stage it has been rolled out for the first time, the first 600 or so have been on the course. Three things I would say about that: firstly, we have invited delegate feedback; just literally say is the course any good, how is it going and what would you improve; what should be different, and that will inform the next iteration of the programme. But secondly, there is an expectation that we build conversations into people's supervision. I know "supervision" is a word that is not used in every bit of Children's Services but nonetheless those conversations you have about how you are doing in your job should include: "If you have been on this training are you using this training?" Then the third bit, for me, is we will have quality assurance processes like audits where we look, say, at children who have been put into the early help system, had support, in other words, to help them with their emerging difficulties and say what do those cases tell us; what does that auditing of those cases tell us about the impact of this new training and this deployment. We are in the early stages of having a sort of evaluation framework around that. So I am agreeing with you and I think my advice to a Minister would always be that - I do not need to give to this Minister because he already is in the right place with this - it is a really important initiative and we have to keep at it because only then does it get embedded until people see it as a custom in practice.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes. I just think it is very healthy for us to question, put the warnings there and learn from what has gone previously. No, that is good.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

I think the fact that this board is not just made up of government representatives but has people from the voluntary sector as well is something that will help us, sat around that table, hold one another to account. Because if they are experiencing the consequences of something that is not going right in public services, they can tell that to us in a very frank way and tell us how it is affecting them, and we will not really have an excuse, will we, to say: "Oh, well, we are not doing something. Well, you are feeling the consequences of it. Well, tough luck" because that is not good enough. I think the make-up of that is quite helpful for ensuring stuff does not fall off the edge and that we continue to feel pressure to do the right thing.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

The next question could take up the rest of this hearing but I will ask you to be really brief.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Good luck.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

The legislative transformation programme, which is a nightmare of a word to say so we will slow down when we say it, which is: can you give a very brief overview of where we are and what we should expect perhaps in the next few weeks and months?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Okay. So, here it is, published at the end of last year. One thing that was pointed out in the Care Inquiry report was that a lot of our legislation on children and anything that affects them, there are areas where there is legislation that is out of date; that is not working; that is simply not fit for purpose in 2019. We are going to have to undertake significant work in overhauling lots of that but we also have to bear in mind that there are pieces of legislation that are so comprehensive and fundamental that it will be a huge piece of work to create new legislation to replace it; that may take several years to do; that we need to be doing stuff in the short-term to amend the legislation we have already got to try and get rid of some of the worst bits until we are in a position to overhaul it properly. Listening to myself talk, I do not think that was a good description of where we are. We have different phases that we are looking at to look at different parts of our children's legislation. We are in phase one and there will be a different phase in each year. In phase one, as we are now in, we will be looking at things like, the obvious example would be the Children's Commissioner of Law, so that is a big piece of work that we will debate in the coming weeks. Areas like corporal punishment. Obviously, the States has made a decision on that so we are going to have to respond to that and do the appropriate legislation work there. The really exciting one for me is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child where we have decided that we will, in the first instance, adopt a due regard model that will put a requirement on government departments to have due regard to the principles in the U.N.C.R.C. (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) when going about their work. That is new to Jersey and really exciting and will hopefully have a good impact in changing our culture. There are other pieces as well. I know the Minister for Education is really keen to look at our Education Law, which is quite old now as well. The Care Inquiry said that a lot of attention had been given or attention had been given to economic based legislation as opposed to social legislation and that we had fallen behind there. I would be astounded if anyone disagreed with that observation. It is quite obviously true when you look at areas like maternity leave where we have been, for a long time, significantly behind the U.K. So this, as a piece of work, is us setting the pathway to changing that and saying: "We accept that a lot of our legislation is not good enough; we have to do something about it and here is our plan for dealing with some of the biggest and most important parts of that." I look at it and think that it is very ambitious, and having served a term in

the Assembly previously and knowing how long it takes for legislation to go through there, I anticipate that this is going to keep us exceptionally busy in that time. But we will be in a much better place for looking after children and young people in Jersey if we have got the statutory underpinning that is fit for purpose.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

How is it going to be affected by proposed changes required for Brexit?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

That is a good question. I have visions in my head of all of the mess that is going on in the U.K. associated with Brexit. That throws an uncertainty on everything that we are doing, as an Island, that I personally find very unwelcome and regret the situation that we are in. I have not been actively involved in Brexit preparation work, as obviously other Ministers have taken a lead on that. I am confident that the position we are in, as a Government, in dealing with whatever the consequences of Brexit are, we are in probably as good a position as we possibly could be, which means that the disruption that there might be to other pieces of work, not just Children's but other departments as well, is probably as mitigated as it could possibly be. It is a risk that affects everything that we do as a Government but I think that we are in as good a place as we could be to deal with whatever that outcome may well end up being.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Sorry, I am going to go back. Have you had any analysis of why the settlement scheme worked for young people? I am very pleased we are not charging them to be here anymore, which I know that we agreed on that one, whether that needs register may be difficult for some families when children are involved and are reliant upon adults who perhaps either struggle with that system, or there may be coercive relationships, for example. Is that something that you think might be worth looking at?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

That is something that those specific questions, while I may have given them private consideration, have not featured in meetings we have had to discuss that but I think that would be a very wise thing to do. I will raise that with my officers and the Minister for External Relations. The Minister for External Relations, by the way, is very much invested in the work that we are doing in this area as well; I know it matters to him so I can approach him to have that discussion.

[15:15]

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Following up on actions and recommendations, can you tell us what progress has been made in reviewing the operating model of Greenfields?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is it not Les Chêne now?

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

I hope the name change is not trying to cover up its failures.

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

Just for clarification, Chairman, Les Chêne is the alternative provision that is made for those with additional needs. Greenfields is separate.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

So it is still Greenfields?

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

It is still Greenfields, yes. Thank you.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

There is a review that is being carried out at the moment and they are due to provide a draft report to us by the end of this month. At this point I cannot completely pre-empt what is going to be in there but certainly we will be looking at the types of provision that there currently is, how appropriate that is in terms of best practice and what we know about that sort of model now. We will have to consider what those recommendations say, what is the right thing to do? But we will get a draft report towards the end of February on that.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Can I just ask: can you just confirm for me that we are still not using Greenfields through the courts for keeping people detained early now, of the prisoners?

Group Director, Children's Services:

Yes.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

But, again, is it appropriate to have children in a prison?

Group Director, Children's Services:

I would say that it is not a prison. The law changed the end of 2016, so we are now able to provide Greenfields as a place for children remanded in custody or serving a custodial sentence. There is a placement panel that meets after a young person is either remanded or sentenced. Since we have had that law no one has gone into the adult prison, La Moya, they have all come into Greenfields, so that is small numbers. I think one of the fundamentals of the review of Greenfields must drive at the heart of, what do we want Greenfields to be in terms of the ethos? The children who are remanded or sentenced and are serving their sentence at Greenfields are considered looked-after children, so with the Minister who has the statutory responsibilities and duties to those children.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is under 18, is it not?

Group Director, Children's Services:

Yes, you can go just above 18.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I was just going to ask, what happens at the 18? Because if a young person is in the middle of a sentence, near the end of their sentence at 18, will there be some common sense and not put them into an adult prison, which would be incredibly damaging?

Group Director, Children's Services:

The short answer is, yes. We have also checked it out with the Care Commission, Greenfields will come under the remit and the regulatory framework of the Care Commission. What we would have to think about there is: who else, if anyone, is in Greenfields at the time and manage any risk there? But it would seem, as you said, it would certainly go against common sense if somebody has served 9 months and for the last month go to La Moya; that would be absolutely counterproductive. We know that children and young people do not do well in adult custodial establishments. There is some facility for a little bit of flex; we probably would not take somebody at 18 who is about to serve a 3-year sentence but that would be a different kettle of fish.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

What about the mixing because in the past you have mixed children who have been on remand or are serving a sentence mixed in with other children and it is totally inappropriate for them to be mixed together? It is a relatively small institution, how do you segregate, in one sense, the 2 parties?

Group Director, Children's Services:

I think there are some jurisdictions where children who are in secure care for welfare or protection grounds can be placed with children who are in there for offending. I think we know that those children who offended or who are involved in offending are likely to have had care and protection issues at an earlier stage; that is quite well known from research. There are jurisdictions that do that; that is one of the things that we are looking at as part of the review. Can we do it? We obviously also do not want segregation to be taking place; we know that has been one of the difficulties of the past. We also are mindful that when you have a very small number, you have got to think about how you help socialisation for young people. It is a very small number, certainly in the time that I have been in Jersey, over 3½ years ...

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

But obviously with Heathfield, as an example, there was a mix of children who had offended or were offending, they were there with children who were just put into the care of the Children's Service and what happened was the offenders taught the new ones how to do certain things and they got to be offending. There has to be a balance here and I would like to know, how you are dealing with that and how soon you will have a policy that we can look at?

Group Director, Children's Services:

I think children are children first and last. It is very rare that they have one specific issue. I think some of that is about how we manage units to ensure safety and also to manage relationships within that. Jersey is a very small jurisdiction and some of the young people know each other if they have been in there. But we are also talking about very small numbers. In 3½ years we have had one or 2 children placed at Greenfields at any one time; I think it has been a handful of days when we have had any more than 2 people, so it is a small number of people. As I have said, there are other jurisdictions that have secure care for children and deal with their assessed needs, whether it is offending or care and protection. Of course, you have to have risk assessment and risk management to make sure that that is safe but that is also about us managing that.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Could I ask for our next meeting if you can table a paper on Greenfields, how it operates at the moment and the changes you are planning on doing and details for the number of people?

Group Director, Children's Services:

The number of people ...

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Who are in Greenfields over the last, say, period of time; how many are there at the moment and so on, so we can understand how the institution is working?

Group Director, Children's Services:

Yes, I think in relation to information in the public domain we would need to be wary of potential identification, so that might have to be reported as less than 5 in a public forum.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

That is fine but, as I say, we would like to understand the integration of the 2 different parts.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Could you or the panel write to us just to confirm exactly what it is you are after and we can deal with it that way?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, I was going to say, I think that might be the better way to do it, okay. Because we understand the need for not ...

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Anonymity.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Anonymity; that is the word I am searching for. I am trying to keep my eye on the time and the question thing as well.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Yes, I know, I am going to move on to the next one.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Go on.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

What is being done to better describe the role of the corporate parent in Jersey?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

We have invited people to join our corporate parenting board, one of those who has been invited is sat opposite me. That board will be made up of myself, the Minister for Education, the Minister for Health and Social Services, chair of the Scrutiny Committee, a representative from the Comate des Constables, chair of the Children's Strategic Partnership Board, representatives from the Children in Care Council, the group director for Children's Services, the group director for Education, the

group director for Skills, people from the voluntary and community sector and we may have a think about that to decide if there is anyone else that may be appropriate on that. We have to put a corporate parenting strategy together and work out how we get that culture change across, not just the government but the Island as a whole as well. You will notice throughout this meeting I have been a bit cagey about timelines; part of that has been because on the housing side we have not met all of our deadlines and I want to try and be as realistic as possible. At this point I am not sure what the timeline for achieving some of that is because it is still in the early stages with putting these people together. I think our first meeting is on 5th March, so we have not come together yet.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Apologies, Kevin, I just jumped in on Kevin, sorry.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I do not know if you are suggesting the open votes, except I have not received anything yet.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Right, a letter is due to go out, if that is not already in receipt.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay, that is fine, okay.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Okay, yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay, I am just trying to keep track of one more.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Do you want to come? It is ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes. I think it would be a very good idea for Scrutiny. I think that having Scrutiny there, I think is a really important thing.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

That is the point, is that it is about all of us and understanding what role we play in it. This committee obviously has to hold me to account and those of us involved in providing for children and Children's

Services but understanding what role we all play in it and how we can interact with one another is all part of this journey.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Sorry, Kevin, you wanted to ...

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

No, it is all right, you have answered most of the questions so I will just ask, somebody messaged me on Facebook the other day, there is a lot of talk about hunger, children living in poverty, not being able to eat. What, to the best of your knowledge, is the reality of that and if it is the case, what are we going to do to alleviate children in poverty and not being able to eat?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes. The Income Distribution Survey from 2014 and 2015, which, if you have not read, I implore you to read because it is a really helpful report, said ... I am recalling this off the top of my head but I think it was something along the lines of a third of households with children were in relative low income, so that is the Jersey equivalent of poverty. There was a 54-ish per cent of single-parent families were living in relative low income, which I said at the time was a statistic that should shame us, that it is not right in a wealthy island that that exists. There has obviously been time since that report came out and myself and I will say Reform Jersey colleague, so obviously I am not speaking in that capacity today but we have been pushing for funding to be allocated to the Statistics Unit so that they can do an early Income Distribution Survey because we think it is such an important piece of work. We should not have to wait 5 years for the next one, so we have been pushing for that. I think there was some progress but I will have to double-check the specifics of that. I would like us to get a better picture of where we are now, bearing in mind all of the changes and, in some instances, cuts there were in the last term to see where that has put people. I, round the Council of Ministers' table, was one of those who pushed for reducing income inequality to be one of our headline priorities in the Strategic Plan. Because, and I have made this point at the weekend, the basic promise of democracy is that life should be getting better for all of us, not worse. Where there are trends where people are seeing their earning capacity or the quality of their housing or this and that that is getting worse, we have to identify what those are and come up with tangible policies to reverse those trends and start making things better. There are lots of things you could do, for that a lot of the people who are living in poverty are working, so that is an issue of low wages. Now, what can we do there? My views on the minimum wage are well known there and insecure work as well. What can be done in terms of enhanced parental leave, so people feel like they can make the right decisions to support their children when they are first born without worrying about the state of their career or the income they may have potentially lost otherwise? That is a discussion that the States will have at some point in the near future. There is a whole host of things, it is not easy but I

think the members of this panel will certainly know that it is one of my priorities to push in whatever ways I can for policies that will help improve that for those who are most vulnerable.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

I think it goes back to your point earlier about collaborating with your fellow Ministers when you are looking for funding streams. Just for example, free milk at schools, having conversations with the Minister for Education and saying: “Is that something or do we need to look at that again?” Or sitting with the Minister for Health and Social Services and going: “How can we ensure people are getting free fruit at certain places?” Do you think there is an obvious ...

The Minister for Children and Housing:

The point you have just made about fruit, I know that the Minister for Education is particularly interested in looking at what can be done to provide more nutritional and easier-to-access food at schools; that is more something that she is focusing on than I am. The fact that we have made it a strategic priority means that around that Council of Ministers’ table it is all of our responsibilities to push there. The Minister for Social Security, for example, will have a considerable involvement in providing for some of the poorest people in our society, whether that is through the income support system or whatever. That work will be difficult because some of it will be about money. I am someone that does not like the idea of token gestures that may make us feel good when for a lot of people out there what they need is more money in their pockets.

[15:30]

The previous Government would talk about Pupil-Premium areas, how that was a great example of reducing inequality and it is like, well, it is great for schools to have more funding when they have got children who are vulnerable or from poor backgrounds there. But sometimes a bit of money in their parents’ pockets would help them because they could afford more nutritional meals, they could afford ... although they could be less stressed at home because they know the rent is taken care of and that sort of thing. We can talk about what the Government can do in terms of a service provision but money in pockets is important and I do not think we can lose sight of that.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Time is short now, so I am going to ask for some very short answers.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Okay.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

The Ombudsman scheme published a sector on this and when do you expect it to be in place?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

We are hoping to debate the law in early 2020.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Why so late?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

That is the timeline that I have been given. I have not been actively involved in that specific work but I know that there is work going on at the moment. Public consultation is going to be launched in March and I think consultation is already going on with key stakeholders but the timeline that we have is for the law to be debated early next year.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Okay. Next one, what improvements have been made to the services for survivors of abuse?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Do you want to chip in on this one?

Director General, Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

I will try.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

So we can take it that there has not been much ...

The Minister for Children and Housing:

We are putting round 2 of the abuse redress scheme together, so ...

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Your compensation you are talking about.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

For foster parents or ...

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes, so that has been agreed by the Government. There are still some discussions that are being undertaken with representatives of abuse survivors. Because what we want to do is make sure that this scheme works for them and that it is able to provide not just monetary compensation but support, whether that is therapeutic support or what have you in the best way possible for them, as opposed to the previous scheme that was very lawyer-intensive in terms of amounts of money that went to particular places and less flexibility for those people who have particular needs. There will be some people who, for quite obvious reasons, will not want to engage with the Government of Jersey and would prefer for something to be facilitated independently and we have got to be able to help them do that.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Okay. We were wondering what they had done on the first scheme where, again, there was supposed to be therapeutic and other services provided. What has been done in that?

Male Speaker:

I do not have the numbers to hand but we can let you know the uptake on the therapeutic scheme from the first redress and I can write to you and give you that breakdown; it is not a problem.

The Deputy of St. John:

Yes, that would be useful, thank you.

Male Speaker:

Yes.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Again, if you can also tell us whether the voluntary sector have been included in the development of those services.

Male Speaker:

In the development of which services?

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Therapeutic services and others for abuse survivors, it is not just the States.

Male Speaker:

Okay, so we can do that as part of that first redress scheme. Can I just add before the clock goes?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, please do.

Male Speaker:

Is that as part of the recommendation around legacy we have been working with a number of people who have been poorly served by services historically and they have, as well as working on different aspects of the legacy, been talking to Health and Community Service colleagues around trauma-informed pathways and how we can improve in that domain. There is an ongoing piece of work around that, which has colleagues in Health and Community Services working on that. That may well include voluntary sector, as well as public services. That is a piece of work that is in flight and it has the right people around the table, so I just wanted to say ...

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Okay, I am pleased to hear that because we are inviting some abuse survivors to come into the States in 2 weeks' time and tell us how they are getting on and various other things.

Male Speaker:

Good, okay.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Finally, can we ask what progress is being made in archiving the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry evidence and public domain material from the inquiry?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

The cataloguing process is due to be completed by the end of this year. We know that there have been some difficulties along the way in getting there and inconsistencies in how some of the material was provided in the first place. Sorry, I am just consulting my notes here. Yes, there are inconsistent reductions, which meant there were concerns about particular documents where they could be cross-referenced with information that was available elsewhere to undo what the reduction had done there, which had the potential to cause concern for some victims and survivors and obviously we have got to be very careful with that.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Also, protecting certain abusers as well.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

That is potential as well. That has, I think, been difficult to deal with but that piece of work is due to be completed by the end of the year.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

I comment about protecting abusers; it does not need to go too far because some of those people still have not been held to account.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay. I think we have reached ... we are about 5 minutes over. Thank you very much for your time and thanks for your answers and I am sure we will come back to as much as possible. Thanks very much. Thank you to everybody who attended.

[15:36]