

Health, Social Security and Housing Scrutiny Panel

Coordination of Services for Vulnerable Children Sub-Panel Review (S.R.6/2009)

Response from the Minister for Health and Social Services

1st October 2009

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Introduction

Following the delivery of the Williamson Report: Implementation Plan in January 2009, which was itself a response to the report commissioned by the Council of Ministers from Andrew Williamson entitled 'An Inquiry into Child Protection in Jersey' (June 2008), the Health, Social Security and Housing Scrutiny Panel set up a Sub-Panel to review these documents and to consider other relevant issues, as outlined in their terms of reference (see Appendix A).

Their report was presented to the States on 27th July 2009 and it is anticipated the Minister for Health and Social Services will formally lodge the Williamson Report: Implementation Plan for debate in mid to late November 2009.

The Minister for Health and Social Services is grateful for the work of the Sub-Panel and appreciates the efforts of the Sub-Panel in publishing its report in advance of formal consideration of the Williamson proposals, so as to further inform that debate.

The Minister feels that many of the Panel's recommendations are an endorsement of the plans she will be presenting and, even where essential funding is not currently available for specific proposals, she still supports the Panel in their desire to see them developed in the future.

The following is the Minister's formal response to the Scrutiny Report and outlines her views on how the key findings and recommendations in that report may impact on any of her likely proposals.

The Minister arranged for Andrew Williamson and Mike Taylor, Independent Chair of the Jersey Child Protection Committee, to be in Jersey for two days to work on the Williamson Implementation Plan – Moving Forward, and consequently has had the benefit of their endorsement of this, the Minister's response to the Scrutiny Report, to which they have contributed.

The following 'Key Findings' and 'Recommendations' are numbered and listed as they appear in the Sub-Panel Review report. The Minister's comments follow each item in bold type:

2. Key Findings

1. That the lack of one Minister being directly responsible in the role of 'Corporate Parent' has not afforded the function, the attention and drive that it required.

The Minister accepts her role as Corporate Parent, as described under the Williamson Implementation Plan.

2. There is an immediate need for a clear line of accountability, running to a single Minister, in order for the Island's services for vulnerable children to operate effectively.

The Minister agrees with this finding, and has delegated day to day responsibility for children's services to her Assistant Minister, Deputy Judith Martin.

3. The creation of a pan-Departmental Children's Plan is essential to the delivery of children's services, particularly those of a non-stigmatising nature.

The Minister agrees, but intends to extend this to an island-wide Children's Plan which will include all relevant charitable and voluntary organisations. This is identified as a recommendation of the Williamson Implementation Plan.

4. Difficulties in retaining frontline child protection staff are seriously impairing the Island's services for vulnerable children.

The Minister agrees that a shortage of appropriate levels of staffing will always have a negative impact on operations. She wishes to reassure the Scrutiny Panel that during recent periods of high vacancy levels, frontline child protection services have been prioritised within the overall staff numbers available. She is pleased to note that the number of qualified social work staff posts filled has now improved greatly, though this is no reason for complacency, and new ways to ensure effective recruitment and retention of staff continue to be explored in consultation with the Human Resources Department.

5. The internal management structure and operation of the Children's Service and the Children's Executive must be reviewed as a matter of urgency.

The management structure of the Children's Service and Children's Executive has already been reviewed by Williamson and also by Price Waterhouse Coopers (report commissioned by the Comptroller & Auditor General 'Department of Health and Social Services Structure and Organisation' April 2009). The PWC report supports the creation of a Children's Services Directorate, as recommended in the Williamson Implementation Plan.

6. The need for an external audit of Jersey's Child Protection Services has not been adequately met

The report by Andrew Williamson entitled 'An Inquiry into Child Protection in Jersey' – June 2008; and the report by Professor June Thoburn (Independent Chair of Jersey Child Protection Committee) entitled 'Annual Report to Ministers' – 25 October 2008; have both made a valuable contribution in this respect. In addition, the Minister is pleased to confirm that early discussions with the Scottish Social Work Inspection Agency have taken place to agree the delivery of a rolling programme of external inspection of children's services. This is, of course, dependent upon States approval of the necessary funding under the Williamson implementation Plan. The first inspection will be of child protection services.

7. Robust whistleblowing and advocacy procedures are vital to the safe and efficient operation of the Children's Service.

The Minister takes these issues very seriously. A new States Policy for Whistleblowing has been developed and implemented by the States Human Resources Department, which applies to all public sector staff and services. The development of appropriate advocacy services and procedures for children is a proposal in the Williamson Implementation Plan.

8. There is an immediate need for a thorough and impartial investigation of alleged unprofessional behaviour among the senior management of Social Services and other Departments, which impact upon its work.

The detail of these allegations – source and content – has not been made available to the Minister, despite a request to the Scrutiny Committee by the Minister herself and, separately, by the Chair of the Jersey Child Protection Committee. It is consequently impossible to assess the basis for them and the cost/benefit of any investigation. There have been a series of ‘reviews’ and inquiries in recent years focusing upon services to vulnerable children and none have raised issues of ‘unprofessional behaviour’.

9. Brig-Y-Don has a history of providing a positive setting and care for younger children.

The Minister agrees with the sentiment and intends that this fine tradition of providing an excellent caring environment for vulnerable children unable to live with their own families will continue in the refurbished and re-modelled Brig-y-Don building that is proposed within the Williamson Implementation Plan.

10. There is a need in Jersey for varied residential care for children. The restructuring of the Island’s care system to include only therapeutic residential units would overlook the needs of some looked-after children.

This is agreed and is recognised in the detail of the recommendations of the Williamson Implementation Plan.

11. Young people leaving care or custody are not receiving adequate support from the States.

The Minister recognises the challenge that care leavers are faced with as they move on to adult independence. Within the Williamson Implementation Plan there are a number of initiatives identified which will improve upon current services. Key amongst these is the conversion of the old Les Chenes building into six ‘supported living’ bedsits for care leavers. Much work has been done to develop this proposal and the Minister is currently seeking urgent funding from the Fiscal Stimulus Fund to develop this initiative and thus resolve deficits in the quality of accommodation currently available to this vulnerable group of young people.

12. Providing foster care is prohibitively expensive for many couples who may otherwise be interested in this valuable area of support. Further investigation and investment is required to ensure that the role of the foster carer is a financially viable one.

The Minister fully supports the Panel’s recommendation for the review of these important services and the development of a five year plan. However, she wishes to point out the success of the investment programme in

fostering and adoption which has attracted a substantial number of new carers into this demanding area. Annual recruitment campaigns continue to receive a positive response from the community. The Minister agrees that it is essential to ensure that foster care allowances are set at an appropriate level to cover the real cost of providing such care, and would point out that the local rates are actually in excess of 'UK London rates' to reflect the high cost of living in Jersey. Further, the Minister is aware that foster carers who are prepared to make a place for needy children in their homes and in their lives do so for reasons beyond money.

The Minister acknowledges that there is an issue of providing highly specialised placements through 'professional' fostering, where one carer would need to be available at all times, necessitating additional payments to make up for lost earnings. Formal administrative procedures for facilitating the development of these complex arrangements are being pursued with the relevant States Departments.

13. Further thought and investment are required to produce the kinds of flexible, innovative and responsive fostering schemes that will meet the needs of our looked-after children.

The Minister supports the Panel's recommendation for the review of these important services and the development of a five year plan.

14. The Youth Enquiry Service is successful, as is outreach youth work, but there is a need for more resources to fund these projects.

This is a matter for consideration by the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture.

15. There is a need to increase the current level of universal, non-stigmatising services for children in order to ensure early intervention and the aversion of crises in the lives of vulnerable children.

The Minister supports this proposal and a recommendation for a full review of these services and the delivery of an appropriate development plan is addressed in the Williamson Implementation Plan. The need to link this with the Children's Plan (3 above) must also be recognised.

16. The current shortage of school nurses is preventing problems with vulnerable children and their families from being identified at an early stage.

At this time, the Minister has not been provided with evidence from Family Nursing and Home Care that there is a shortfall in this area. Whilst the Minister is prepared to direct officers to look into this matter further, she wishes to observe that it seems unlikely to her that any such shortage is a critical issue in the early identification of vulnerable children when key staff including teachers, assistants, administrative staff and others are in daily contact with pupils. She will then be happy to consider any verified and costed proposals.

17. There is a need to establish more family centres and recruit more health visitors if the Island's vulnerable children are to benefit from multi-agency intervention at an early, preventative stage.

The Minister supports the principle and will ensure that the review, referenced at (15) above, will include these issues within its remit.

18. Jersey's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are critically understaffed and are unable to adequately treat what, anecdotally, appear to be large numbers of children and young people in need of help.

The Minister recognises the good work undertaken by CAMHS and confirms her intention to continue to seek resources to develop the service in line with the recommendations of the Young Minds Report (June 2006). The Minister confirms that under the Williamson Implementation Plan there is a substantial programme of development aimed at putting in place appropriate additional resources.

19. The Jersey Child Protection Committee needs to raise its profile with the public as a transparent, independent body with which people are encouraged to engage in a positive, proactive manner.

The Minister is pleased to confirm that with the recent appointment of two dedicated officers to support the work of the JCPC, steady progress is being made in this respect.

20. The existence and powers of the Jersey Child Protection Committee need to be recognised in Statute in order for it to effectively discharge its duties.

The Minister will be seeking advice from the Independent Chair of the Jersey Child Protection Committee on this issue.

21. There is a need for a children's voluntary sector forum to share information, best practice and procedure, and to enable the 'third sector' to have a common voice. A representative of the voluntary sector forum should sit on the Jersey Child Protection Committee.

The Minister supports the proposal for a voluntary sector forum. Representation on the JCPC of any such forum, however, is a matter for the Independent Chair.

22. Existing family support centres and the voluntary sector are in need of more direct funding from the States in order to meet demand for high-value, community based services.

The Minister understands the principle of what is being proposed and will ensure that the review, referenced at (15) above, will include these issues within its remit.

23. A vocational qualification in family support work would be of benefit to all providers of services for vulnerable children.

All Family Support Workers and Residential Child Care Officers employed by the Minister and currently working within the Children's Service and the Children's Executive Service are required to possess the nationally recognised qualification for that type of work, the 'NVQ3 in Working with Children and Families'. The Minister would be pleased to see this requirement broadened to other providers of such services. Further the Minister sees it as essential to promote on going professional development

and regular performance review to ensure that further training and development needs are identified and met.

24. Staff shortages and retention will need to be addressed before any meaningful change can be made to the Emergency Duty system.

The Minister is pleased to confirm that the high levels of staff shortages experienced over the last two years appears to be improving significantly. As outlined in the Williamson report, she firmly believes that this very difficult and vulnerable area of service, operating as it does ‘out of hours’ and currently without any meaningful backup, needs to be enhanced and improved as soon as possible. The Minister is pleased to report that interim arrangements to support foster carers in particular are in development.

25. In-school social workers play an important role in the services that Jersey provides for its vulnerable children. The four States-run secondary schools require full-time social workers to take on the substantial workload involved in case referrals.

The Minister believes that this could be true if the service was to be properly resourced and expanded to include fee paying schools and special schools (D’Hautree House), as there are vulnerable children to be found in all educational settings. Unfortunately, under the Kathy Bull recommendations, the number of social workers required to effectively staff this service (as confirmed by the Scrutiny Panel) was reduced from four to two, and no adequate provision was made for the management support and oversight that might have made the proposal viable. The Minister will direct officers to work with ESC to look into this matter further and to come forward with appropriately costed proposals.

26. Effective communication with the public concerning the child welfare and protection work undertaken by the States and the many other agencies involved would help to increase knowledge of and access to services.

The Minister supports the Panel’s view. The Minister is aware that the Jersey Child Protection Committee will play a key role in this. She is pleased to note that with the recent appointment of a new Chair and Professional Officer the JCPC is now well placed to raise awareness to ensure that members of the community not only understand the work undertaken by States and voluntary sector organisations, but also that they understand the contribution they can make to protecting Jersey’s children as parents and good neighbours.

27. The establishment of a Jersey Court Advisory Service (JCAS) would improve the representation of vulnerable children in Jersey’s courts and would alleviate the strain of court-related casework under which the Children’s and Probation Services currently find themselves.

Plans to put this service in place are already well advanced between the different agencies. Assuming agreement to the required funding under the Williamson Implementation Plan, this service development should be implemented within a relatively short timescale.

28. The implications of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child need to be analysed by those with direct knowledge and experience, and then be ratified by the States of Jersey.

The Minister fully supports the Panel's view and will direct her officers to work with the Chief Minister's and Law Officers' Departments to progress this matter.

29. More States funding is necessary if the Jersey Family Mediation Service is to expand in response to growing demand.

This is agreed and is recognised in the detail of the recommendations of the Williamson Implementation Plan.

30. Jersey needs more secure accommodation for children and young people, as well as a greater degree of flexibility in the ways in which this provision can be used.

The Minister recognises the need for her officers to work with those from Home Affairs to look at the current provision offered by both the Greenfields Secure Unit and Young Offenders Institute. She is not currently convinced that 'extra' accommodation is necessarily required but feels it may be a case of making better (and more flexible) use of the provision that is currently available.

31. The Youth Action Team (YAT) has done some excellent intervention and support work with young people in and outside the criminal justice system.

The Minister fully supports the Panel's view and thanks the Panel for recognising this.

32. While the document *Williamson Report: Implementation Plan* provides a baseline for improvements to the Island's services for vulnerable children, it does not address all the salient issues because Andrew Williamson's *An Inquiry into Child Protection in Jersey*, on which the Implementation Plan is based, does not constitute an exhaustive investigation of Jersey's child protection services.

The Minister accepts the comment about the 'breadth' of Andrew Williamson's inquiry but also notes both the response to his report and the separate work undertaken by Professor Thoburn. This complements the Williamson findings and has been taken into account in the Williamson Implementation Plan. The Minister firmly believes that there is an urgent need to make decisions and move forward on the service improvements defined in the Plan.

3. Recommendations

COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY

1. The Health, Social Services and Housing Panel will bring a proposition to the States within the next three months to set up a Committee of Inquiry to investigate the allegations of misconduct and incompetence within Management at Health and Social Services and other relevant services.

Comment

The Minister notes the content of the Proposition now lodged. She considers that only when the detail of these allegations is before her will she be in a position to judge on the merits of the need for any investigation of these up to and including a Committee of Inquiry. The assessment of validity of any allegations must take into account the source, supporting evidence and be tested in the context of the numerous reviews and inquiries into Health and Social Services in recent years. The Minister is also anxious to avoid any delay in implementing the senior management restructure of Children's Services and is keen to ensure managers can concentrate upon effective service delivery during this projected period of major change.

Both the Minister and the Independent Chair of the Jersey Child Protection Committee have written to the Scrutiny Panel asking for details of the allegations so that the Minister can take informed advice on whether she needs to take urgent action to ensure that the services for which she is responsible are safe and of an appropriate standard. The Minister is disappointed to note that the Panel has decided not to divulge the details of the allegation to the JCPC Chair. The Minister herself still awaits a reply to her request from the Panel.

STAFFING

The Minister for Health and Social Services should ensure the following –

2. That Jersey's Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are allocated the following staff increases:
 - i) 1 Psychiatrist
 - ii) 2 Clinical Psychologists
 - iii) 2 Family Therapists
 - iv) 2 Cognitive Behavioural Therapists

Accepted

The Minister recognises the good work undertaken by CAMHS and confirms her intention to continue to seek resources to develop the service in line with the recommendations of the Young Minds Report (June 2006). The Minister notes that under the Williamson Implementation Plan there is a substantial programme of development aimed at putting in place additional resources as follows:

- 1 Clinical Psychologist for Infants
- 1 Counselling Psychologist
- 1 Child Psychotherapist
- 1 Family Therapist
- 1 Drama/Art Therapist
- 1 Consultant Clinical Psychologist for Learning Disability & Challenging Behaviour
- 1 Consultant Clinical Psychologist
- 1 Child Clinical Psychologist in Neurodevelopment & Paediatrics

Additionally, the identified need for services to support survivors of abuse have been noted and additional funds to set up appropriate services for

both children and adults have been sought under the Historic Child Abuse Inquiry – this will provide the additional Child Psychiatrist post identified above by the Scrutiny Panel.

3. That Family Nursing & Home Care receive specific funding to provide an additional two School Nurses.

Comment

The Minister's priority is to receive the endorsement of the States Assembly to the Williamson Implementation Plan, which, having originally been prepared more than a year ago, has been reviewed with the assistance of the Chair of the JCPC and Andrew Williamson to ensure that it reflects current priorities. She sees this as a first, crucial step towards improving outcomes for vulnerable children, recognising that services in this area have for too long been deprived of any significant investment. Regarding this proposal the Minister refers back to her comment under 16 above.

4. That the management structure in Social Services be rationalised by the removal of one tier of management.

Comment

The Minister has considered carefully the outcomes of the PricewaterhouseCoopers review of management arrangements within Health and Social Services (Department of Health and Social Services Structure and Organisation April 2009), which was commissioned by the Comptroller and Auditor General. The Minister will act in accordance with the recommendations arising from this thorough and detailed review. The PWC report supports the creation of a separate Directorate of Children's Services as described in the Williamson Implementation Plan.

5. All management posts are revised in a Social Services structure which must be subject to job re-evaluation. The new posts must be advertised and applied for in accordance with human resource policies.

Comment

The Williamson Report recommends the creation of a separate Directorate of Children's Services which would bring together the services provided by Health and Social Services relevant to children under one management structure. As indicated above, the Minister intends to implement this proposal. Any changes made will, of course, be consistent with States human resources policies.

6. In the context of the shortage of professional staff generally and the difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff, individual incentive packages must be developed to ensure success in a very competitive market.

Accepted

The Minister accepts this proposal and can confirm that officers are already working with the States Human Resources Department to enhance Health and Social Services' ability to recruit and retain staff in this demanding area of practice.

7. That Management structures and training are put in place so that managers are enabled to provide effective supervision and support to front-line staff.

Accepted

The Minister accepts this recommendation and confirms that work on arrangements to ensure robust levels of supervision and support is on-going.

The Minister for Health and Social Services with the Minister for Education Sport and Culture should ensure the following -

8. That Social Workers are allocated to all four States Secondary Schools to work with Multi Agency Support Teams (MASTs) and thereby reduce pressure on central services and community agencies.

Comment

The principle of this recommendation is accepted but implementation would require two new posts and the provision of effective management and supervision for this group as a whole. The Minister observes that there is no such service in fee paying schools and D’Hautree House where vulnerable children are also to be found. The Minister would prefer to commission a cost/benefit analysis of the current service and link this, in the context of the evolving Children’s Plan, with decisions on the deployment/workplace of children’s social services’ staff.

The Minister for Health and Social Services, together with the Bailiff, should ensure the following -

9. That a Jersey Court Advisory Service is set up and equipped with four appropriately qualified staff and establishes links and working relationships with the Jersey Family Law Association and the Jersey Family Mediation Service.

Accepted

The Williamson Report recommends the creation of this much needed service and the Children’s, Probation, and Court Services have agreed a detailed implementation plan that can be achieved within a short time scale.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

10. That direct States funding should be guaranteed over the next five years (but reviewed after two years) for the following Charitable and Voluntary organisations to receive funding for child and family support work.

Comment

The Minister is generally supportive of this proposal. Funding of Brig-y-Don, the Jersey Family Mediation Service and Milli’s Contact Centre are all included and supported in the Williamson Implementation Plan proposals. The Minister is, however, aware that both NSPCC and Brighter Futures provide services which are complimentary to States provided statutory services and feels that it is entirely legitimate that the funding arrangements for these services should be different.

The NSPCC derives sufficient financial support to provide the whole of it’s locally based service (Pathways) from its strong local fundraising presence, donations given in Jersey being dedicated solely to that provision. However, if the Scrutiny Panel is proposing that the successful Pathways

model should also be developed elsewhere on the Island, then the Minister believes that additional States funding should certainly be considered.

In relation to Brighter Futures (services based at The Bridge), the Panel will be aware that ensuring sustainable funding for this service was proposed in the original Williamson Implementation Plan. However, funding constraints and an understanding that charitable funding was secure until the end of 2010, led to the temporary withdrawal of that proposal. This was deemed appropriate in light of the support for a full review of family support services by NSPCC under Recommendation 6 of the Williamson Implementation Plan. The Minister has recently visited this provision and has confirmed her understanding of the funding needs which exist. She has committed herself to seeking to ensure that appropriate States funding is provided.

Increased Funding for the Jersey Child Care Trust and the Youth Enquiry Service is a matter for the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture.

11. That Organisations receiving funding should operate to a Service Level Agreement and be subject to Annual Financial and Reporting structure.

Accepted

The Minister confirms that it is standard practice within her Department to require a comprehensive SLA with each partner organisation which receives funds for provision of services. These SLAs, and the associated financial arrangements and agreed performance measures, are reviewed annually.

12. That annual training grants of £10,000 each are made available for specialist training for children and family related matters to the following agencies:
- a. Family Nursing & Home Care for Health Visitor training
 - b. Jersey Child Protection Committee
 - c. Jersey Childcare Trust
 - d. The Bridge

Comment

The Minister agrees that funds sufficient to ensure robust training for staff members is an important element for any service, including those voluntary and charitable services funded by the States. The Minister confirms that the training needs of Family Nursing and Home Care are considered within the SLA which Health and Social Services has with that organisation. Similarly, if funding is granted to Brighter Futures / The Bridge (see 10 above) then training needs will be taken into account within the development of their SLA.

Regarding the Jersey Child Protection Committee, the Minister is pleased to confirm that Health and Social Services already funds the employment of a full time, dedicated Child Protection Training Co-ordinator. The Minister is also pleased to advise that the Jersey Foster Care Association has a wide and substantial range of training opportunities available to its members.

Arrangements with the Jersey Child Care Trust are a matter for the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Minister for Health and Social Services and the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture should ensure the following –

13. That a review of the Children (Jersey) Law 2002 is undertaken to ensure that it provides adequately for all aspects of child protection, safety and care with any changes required included within the Law Drafting programme for 2010.

Accepted

The Minister supports raising this with the relevant authorities in the Law Officer's Department and will commit her officers to contributing to the review. She believes that independent bodies such as the Jersey Child Protection Committee and the outcome of external inspection will contribute greatly to this work.

14. That a more proactive approach be taken in supporting families and children with efforts being targeted towards providing non-stigmatising services and early interventions using a coordinated approach which includes all agencies.

Accepted

The Minister supports the development of services to ensure early, preventative action and is committed to the undertaking of a 'scoping project' across all these critical areas, so as to deliver an appropriate development plan (Recommendation 6 of the Williamson Implementation Plan). This will need to be in the context of the evolving Children's Plan. However, she would wish to make it clear that urgent investment is also required in statutory services.

15. That the existing Fostering and Adoption Services are reviewed and a five-year plan produced in line with current best practice in other jurisdictions, and that an assessment is made of likely future requirements for Jersey, including funding, and the need for varied fostering provision.

Accepted

The Minister celebrates the success achieved by Fostering and Adoption Jersey in recruiting and training additional mainstream carers who are appropriately funded and supported. She agrees that now is a good time to take stock and plan for the next phase of development, including 'professional foster carers'. This work will contribute to the Children's Plan.

16. That two more centres such as the Bridge and NSPCC Pathways (that provide a non-stigmatised family focussed approach, accommodating a number of agencies) are replicated to support families in the urban Parishes.

Comment

As previously stated under (10) and (14) above, Recommendation 6 of the Williamson Implementation Plan proposes that a comprehensive review is undertaken of the full range of community based family support services in Jersey, wherever and however provided, in order to identify all relevant existing resources and to facilitate the design of a framework to deliver a co-ordinated island approach.

The Minister recognises that such a review, undertaken by an external, impartial, body with the relevant skills and knowledge base, is a necessary precursor to any decision making regarding the further development and support of organisations such as The Bridge and NSPCC Pathways, and will help to ensure that scarce resources are effectively targeted to provide maximum value for money and the greatest possible positive impact upon vulnerable children and families.

The Council of Ministers should ensure –

17. That a robust, independent and non-threatening whistleblowing process is put in place for both staff and clients.

Accepted

The Minister supports this recommendation, and can confirm that a new Whistleblowing Policy for staff has already been developed and implemented, as set out in Recommendation 9 of the Williamson Implementation Plan. Further, the Minister will wish to consult with the Independent Chair of the JCPC to explore how robust complaint and whistleblowing policies for users of child protection services can be put in place.

18. That financial provision is made to ensure the availability of adequately resourced Advocacy services to assist children and families as required or requested.

Accepted

The Minister recognises the crucial importance of such a service in ensuring the safety of children and their contribution to all decisions concerning them. She supports the recommendation of the development of Child Advocacy and Independent Visitor services for children in care contained in the Williamson Implementation Plan. She would, at this stage, prefer to commission an analysis of the contribution which is already being made or could be developed through services such as the Youth Enquiry Service (YES) and the Jersey Care Leavers Association (JCLA) and the scope of the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer. The option of establishing a discrete voluntary organisation to fulfil this remit and funded through a Service Level Agreement needs to be further explored within this context.

19. That the necessary consultation process is undertaken so that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child can be ratified.

Accepted

The Minister fully supports this recommendation and will direct her officers to work with the Chief Minister's and Law Officers' Departments to progress this matter.

The Minister for Health and Social Services should ensure -

20. That a "Children's Plan" for Jersey is developed to achieve coordinated, inclusive and effective delivery of services to support vulnerable children and families.

Accepted

This is a proposal as set out under Recommendation 8 of the Williamson Implementation Plan and work will begin immediately to commission sections of the Plan based upon an identified UK ‘best practice’ version.

21. That a transparent and independent interview and reporting process is put in place for looked-after children exiting the care system and that follow-up procedures are in place to ensure that any findings and recommendations are acted upon.

Accepted

The Minister believes that the development and appointment of a local Independent Reviewing Officer and support services (Recommendation 4 of the Williamson Implementation Plan) will ensure that resources are available to undertake these vital tasks.

22. That the capacity in Children’s Homes is maintained at an appropriate level and modernised to meet the needs of the young residents and comply with standards and best practice in other jurisdictions.

Accepted

Detailed proposals to achieve this are set out within Recommendation 7 of the Williamson Implementation Plan.

23. That as a matter of urgency CAMHS is provided with a therapeutic unit for the delivery of specialised care.

Comment

The Minister is not clear on the specific details of this proposal and looks forward to receiving details as to the background of this recommendation from the Scrutiny Panel. However, she would wish to point out that significant new resources for CAMHS have already been supported as identified in recommendation 2 above. These will have significant impact upon the quality, range and accessibility of mental health services available for children and young people.

24. That a local Independent Reviewing Officer is appointed to monitor and review the effectiveness of children’s services and their compliance with local policies, procedures and best practice.

Accepted

Detailed proposals to achieve this are set out under Recommendation 4 of the Williamson implementation Plan.

25. That annual external inspections should investigate and report on the practices, policies and procedures of safeguarding of children and other matters such as specific “case reviews”.

Accepted

Detailed proposals to achieve this are set out under Recommendation 3 of the Williamson implementation Plan. A contract is already drafted with the Scottish Social Work Inspection Agency and will be confirmed now that cash limits have been agreed. Inspection will commence as soon as possible and the first inspection will be of child protection services.

26. The establishment of a “Voluntary Sector Forum” (to coordinate and publicise the work of the voluntary agency sector) is recognised and facilitated and that a representative from that group is allocated a place on the Jersey Child Protection Committee.

Comment

The Minister accepts this recommendation in principle, but is mindful that previous attempts to establish such a forum have met with limited success, despite the best efforts of key third sector agencies. Representation on the JCPC of any such forum, however, is a matter for the Independent Chair, to whom this recommendation will be directed.

27. That the Jersey Child Protection Committee is renamed the “Safeguarding of Children Committee”, which would more clearly represent its role and function to the wider community.

Comment

The Minister will raise this issue with the Independent Chair of the Jersey Child Protection Committee so that this Committee can form an opinion on the appropriateness of a change of name and advise the Minister accordingly.

28. That the Jersey Child Protection Committee is established in Law to ensure that it has the necessary authority to ensure its recommendations are acted upon.

Comment

The Minister will seek the advice of the Chair of the Jersey Child Protection Committee on this issue.

29. That the Jersey Child Protection Committee’s independence is clearly established and that work is undertaken to raise its public profile and the public’s awareness of its role and responsibilities.

Accepted

Work to establish independence and raise the profile of the JCPC is on-going. The appointment of external Independent Chairs has and will continue to considerably assist this process.

30. That an urgent review of staff recruitment and retention policies is undertaken and that exit interviews are provided to those leaving the service with reasons being recorded and acted upon.

Accepted

The Minister confirms that her Department works within the States recruitment and retention policies, including the conducting of exit interviews. The review of these policies is a matter for the States Human Resources Department.

31. That a Service Level Agreement is reached with the Brig-Y-Don Trustees and Management that draws upon its areas of expertise.

Accepted

A Service Level Agreement with Brig-y-Don is being developed between the two parties, alongside a draft lease which will cover all necessary arrangements for the refurbishment of the building and the establishing of

a modern residential service which respects the Brig-y-Don tradition of high standards of care. The Minister is pleased to confirm that all those Brig-y-Don staff who wished to transfer to Health and Social Services are now successfully operating within children's residential care settings

32. That the Minister for Health and Social Services must be the Minister responsible for the role of Corporate Parent but should liaise with the Ministers for Education, Sport and Culture and Home Affairs.

Accepted

The Minister agrees with this recommendation and confirms that, on a day to day basis, this responsibility is delegated to her Assistant Minister, Deputy Judith Martin.

33. That a review of the role, overlap and function of the Children's Service Department, Children's Executive Service, its Board and the relationships with other children's services is undertaken to ensure clear accountability, responsibility and management structures to deliver effective services.

Comment

Detailed proposals to achieve this are set out under Recommendation 8 of the Williamson implementation Plan. Work has already commenced and a report has been delivered by PricewaterhouseCoopers (as noted in 4 above) which includes verification of proposals within the Plan for a new Organisational Structure which includes a Children's Directorate.

The Minister for Health and Social Services together with the Ministers for Housing, Education, Sport and Culture; and Social Security should ensure -

34. That care leavers' support is continued up to 25 years of age and that provision is made to ensure that those individuals are supported to find: adequate housing, work, relevant training, advice and access to health or welfare services.

Accepted

The Minister supports raising this with the relevant Ministers in Housing, Education Sport and Culture and Social Security and will commit her officers to contributing to any agreed actions necessitated by those discussions.

The Minister for Health and Social Services, together with the Ministers for Home Affairs, Housing and Social Security, should ensure that -

35. Young people leaving custody are provided with adequate housing, work, relevant training, advice and access to health or welfare services so that they are less likely to re-offend and find themselves back in the Criminal Justice System.

Accepted

The Minister supports raising this with the relevant Ministers in Home Affairs, Housing, and Education, Sport and Culture and will commit her officers to contributing to any agreed actions necessitated by those discussions. She recognises the important contribution which Health and Social Services, working with other departments, needs to make to preparing young care leavers for independence and work.

36. That some six-bedded units are provided for young people who need specialised support to provide semi-independent living prior to leaving the care or custody systems.

Accepted

This is accepted. Detailed proposals suggesting changes for these young people are set out within Recommendation 7 of the Williamson Implementation Plan, and subsequent actions by Health and Social Services have led to a firm proposal to the Fiscal Stimulus Fund for financial resources to facilitate the conversion of the old ‘Les Chenes’ farmhouse building into a six-bedded unit to support semi-independent living for care leavers.

The Minister for Health and Social Services, together with the Minister for Home Affairs, should ensure the following -

37. That video link facilities are established between all courts and custodial centres so that attendance at court is not always required and the costs and difficulties associated with the transport and holding of prisoners can be avoided.

Accepted

In relation to the Greenfield’s Secure Unit, this is already a proposal set out under Recommendation 10 of the Williamson implementation Plan. Any resources required by HMP La Moye to achieve the same outcome would, however, need to be addressed by the Minister for Home Affairs.

38. That an urgent review is undertaken on the suitability of accommodation and the policies relating to those under 21 years of age who are on; a care remand, sentenced, held on remand or awaiting sentence.

Comment

The Minister believes there is an urgent need for a full overhaul of youth justice arrangements and has recently approved a proposal for a comprehensive review. She will shortly be consulting with the Ministers for Home Affairs and Education, Sport & Culture to seek their support for this proposal and the commitment of their officers to supporting this work and contributing to the development of clear policy options for Jersey.

**Deputy Anne Pryke
Minister for Health and Social Services**

**Deputy Judith Martin
Assistant Minister for Children**

1st October 2009

APPENDIX A

TERMS OF REFERENCE

REVIEW OF THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN

1. To review the structures of governance and accountability within Jersey's proposed child protection services.
2. To assess the role of the voluntary agencies in the provision of services for vulnerable children.
3. To assess whether the recommendations of Andrew Williamson's *An Inquiry into Child Protection in Jersey* reflect the best of modern practice and are suitable for a small jurisdiction.
4. To review the phasing and finance of the implementation of Andrew Williamson's recommendations.
5. To assess the importance of compliance with Lord Laming's recommendations to the delivery of services for vulnerable children.
6. To consider any lessons learnt from *Review of the Principles, Practices and Provision for Children and Young People with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties and Disorders in the Island of Jersey* (K Bull) and its implementation, and the relevance of *Jersey Review* (Howard League for Penal Reform).
7. To consider any other relevant matters that may arise during the course of the review.