



Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Government Review 2022 - 2025

Children's remit only

Witness: The Minister for Children and Education

Friday, 22nd October 2021

Panel:

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

Senator T.A. Vallois

Witnesses:

Deputy S.M. Wickenden of St. Helier, The Minister for Children and Education

Connétable R. Vibert, of St. Peter, Assistant Minister for Children and Education

Mr. M. Owers, Director, Safeguarding and Care

Ms. A. Homer, Head of Finance and Business Partnering

Ms. S. Devlin, Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning

Ms. K. Roberts, Senior Policy Officer, S.P.P.P. (1)

Ms. M. Moffat, Senior Policy Officer, S.P.P.P. (2)

[10:00]

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

Welcome to the quarterly hearing for the Minister with the children's remit on the Government Plan from the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel. I will start with some introductions. I am Deputy Rob Ward and I chair the panel.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Senator Tracey Vallois, member of the panel.

The Minister for Children and Education:

Deputy Scott Wickenden, Minister for Children and Education.

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

Constable Richard Vibert, Assistant to the Minister.

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

Mark Owers, director of Safeguarding and Care.

Head of Finance and Business Partnering:

Anne Homer, head of Finance and Business Partnering.

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

Susan Devlin, group director of Integrated Services and Commissioning in the department.

Senior Policy Officer, S.P.P.P. (1):

Kate Roberts, senior policy officer in S.P.P.P. (Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance).

Senior Policy Officer, S.P.P.P. (2):

Michelle Moffat, senior policy officer also in S.P.P.P.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

If we start off with some general questions. Minister, can you confirm the amount of departmental base budget that you hold responsibility for, in particular, if you can, with regards the children's remit?

The Minister for Children and Education:

For the children's remit we have a departmental budget set out. From this year it is £34,541,000 and proposed in the next Government Plan, if approved, would be £35,357,000.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So this year's is £35,307,000?

The Minister for Children and Education:

357.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I was going to ask you about last year's one, so that is £34.540,00 from last year.

The Minister for Children and Education:

Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Great, that has answered another question. Can you break it down into the various services that fall under your remit?

The Minister for Children and Education:

I could ask Anne to break it down seeing as it is ...

Head of Finance and Business Partnering:

We sent that by email and I did not print it.

The Minister for Children and Education:

Do you want to go to another question and we will go back to that one?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We can do that, it is not a problem.

Head of Finance and Business Partnering:

Between Children Services and I.S.C. (Integrated Services and Commissioning) last year was £24.4 million and I.S.C. was £4.9 million.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Sorry, I.S.C., this is a public hearing so ...

Head of Finance and Business Partnering:

Sorry, Integrated Services and Commissioning. It is 2 directorates there. Last year it was £24.5 million versus £5 million, essentially. This year it is roughly £12 million for Integrated Services and Commissioning, because we brought in some other services into that situation, and about £24 million, £25 million for Children's, but I do have that. I will look it up and send it round again. We sent that separately.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just an interesting point from that answer, the Integrated Services and Commissioning is separate from Children's Services; what sort of services are separate that you provide? This is a public hearing. I think sometimes the public would like to know what is happening with the money, where those distinctions are.

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

I have responsibility for some strategic and business enablement services, so business support like commissioning the office, quality assurance, performance, governance, those kind of things. In relation to service delivery I have some of integrated services. I have responsibility for early help, and that includes the Government's service for early help, which is family and community support services, which is significantly funded by the Government Plan. I also have responsibility for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and, temporarily, the Youth Service is sitting with me while one of the other directors is on sick leave. I have the Youth Service operationally just now as well.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Sorry, the budget was £24 million in Children's Services and about £12 million for I.S.C.

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

If I may add, the children's service that I am responsible for is only children's social care. So the £24 million is for children's social care. We have renamed it children's social care. It was only ever children's social care, which includes child protection, children in care, children in need and care leavers, as well as all of the services around the children who live in the care of the Minister; for example, fostering, adoption and residential care. In the past, agencies have made a referral to something called the children's service but it was only ever high end, which is why we now have early help services sitting alongside the social care service.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Do you think that is clearer for people needing help?

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

Just to say that I should have also been explicit that I also have responsibility for the Children and Families Hub, which is a new front door. That has been in place since March 2020. That is an earlier point of entry than M.A.S.H. (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub), as Mark outlined there. People went into M.A.S.H. for referrals, now it is a much more upstream place, so that is the single point of entry for support for children experiencing some difficulties.

The Minister for Children and Education:

We work very closely with charities and other services, certainly the families hub, who know where services should be referred. Is it clear to the public? To the public there are the services like the Children and Families Hub that you go to that then triages and helps you get to the services that we provide, wherever they may be.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

In terms of funding I think it is important to get a separation to where budget is and what it is being spent on. I am sure we can get some more detail. A couple of more things quickly. Minister, what funding pressures face this service under your remit? How are they being addressed by the Government Plan?

The Minister for Children and Education:

Our funding pressures are in areas such as having appropriate and enough services within the homes and children care. We are doing things such as a sufficiency strategy and of course we have staff accommodating issues that we struggle with.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Sorry you said “sufficiency”?

The Minister for Children and Education:

Sufficiency.

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

So within the statutory framework, certainly in England, and one that we are looking to introduce as part of the new children’s law here, we want to be able to annually publish what we need to meet demand and need. Understanding exactly how many children we have with what particular needs, so what type of services do they need and do we have those services or are there gaps and what are our plans to fill those gaps. Specifically, in relation to residential care at the moment, in 2019 we closed Brig-Y-Don and we gave up at that time 6 bedrooms. But with the unprecedented pressures that families have experienced over the last 18 months to do with COVID particularly, which in many households has exacerbated some of the challenges they face around domestic abuse and substance abuse, et cetera, we now do not have enough residential children’s homes and placements. As part of the Government Plan we are wanting to bring in more foster carers and we recognise foster care is difficult here because of the cost of living and accommodation, so we do have funding for intensive foster care where we pay foster carers to work full time for us, whether they have a child in placement or not. But we do need extra foster carers because we need to ensure when children come together we have choice, that being the choice of foster care or residential care. But most children in care will do better in foster care.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

In terms of the pressures, those front line pressures, which I think are the ones we are most interested in, how would you characterise how the Government Plan deals with those front line pressures and where the Children's Service is right now?

The Minister for Children and Education:

In the Government Plan of course we have funding allocated to try and improve areas as such. The pressures do not necessarily come just from the funding. It is more along the lines of do we have enough placements; we do not have enough residential care facilities; getting people to be involved in the fostering system is one of the problems. The funding is there for us to do it. It is about getting the resources that we require to deliver.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

You believe that funding is adequate in this Government Plan for you to deliver the children's service that you want to?

The Minister for Children and Education:

I think the funding is there to help us get to the place we want to at the moment. Obviously we need to work on whether pressures will go up or go down but right now it gives us the capacity that we would currently need, if we could get all the other ducks lined up, shall I say.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

One more question about sources of income. What other sources of income do the department have? How may they change during the Government Plan period?

The Minister for Children and Education:

We do have such things as room hire for groups, things like the Bridge, with charities that we give funding but generally our income is small. It is about £127,000 in the way of income because we generally provide a service that is free rather than a service that we ask people to pay for.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Just a follow-up in terms of contingency. You are talking about number of changes in children's lives that you might possibly not foresee. Is there a contingency within the budget to meet the potential demand and, if not, how would you address that situation?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It is hard to put contingency in what is a very tight Government Plan where there are pressures across the whole of the Island in every single department. You cannot ask for money that you do not need just in case, but we do have ... obviously in Treasury there are funds that if we did require to go and look for more money we would go and put an application into the Treasury Department with a business case to say this is why we need the money. That can go and ask other departments whether there are underspends and they are not going to spend money in the year that it has been allocated or it could be looking for other reserves that are around.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Just the point you are making about pressure on budgets across the piece. In terms of needs assessment, whether that is a strategic needs assessment about the Children's Service and then regular assessment about the pressures and demands, how is that carried out within the department to ensure you have the right numbers?

The Minister for Children and Education:

Everyone works very closely within their departments and they work with Anne here to go and talk about what their pressures are, what their services cost, and the departments work together to go and put together what could be normally very tight budgets to try and see where we can get that money. Is that correct, Anne?

Head of Finance and Business Partnering:

Yes, that is correct. I think also it is worth saying that these are comparatively small volumes with very variable needs and a demand-led budget who get unders as well as overs. The first thing we do is manage between the 2 and we would only go for further bottom-line funding if it was systemically under pressure. At the moment, these services, on the whole, are managing within their bottom line although there is natural variability. Very small numbers. One child might be costing a huge amount of money and another not so much but still needs some input. Next year it might reverse because children grow and develop. We look to make sure the bottom line is coping first before seeking additional funding.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

That is fine, that makes sense. Just for ease of reference, Minister, page 188 of the Government Plan main document not the annexe, we are going to venture into the realm of the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry and recommendation 5, in particular, which was the children's policy and legislative programme. The mid-year review notes the programme was delayed and provides no target date for completion. Are you able to provide us with a rationale for this and further details on the aims achieved to date?

The Minister for Children and Education:

Of course pressures in delivering on many projects across the last 18 months, certainly in policy areas, has been pushed back due to COVID and changes in the legislation and policy we have had over that difficult time. But I can give you an update. Of course if we go to recommendation 5, one of them was to establish a Commissioner for Children and Young People. We do have the Children's Commissioner and that has all been set up for a while now so that part of it has been completed. We repealed the legal defence of reasonable chastisement of the child. From Friday, 24th April 2020 Jersey became the first place in the British Isles to ban smacking of children. We got that through and that is up to date on that area.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That was brought by a Back-Bencher, was it not?

The Minister for Children and Education:

The legislation was requested by a Back-Bencher and it was brought forward. The work was done through the policy office. Prohibit discrimination in tenancy arrangements against families and children. The family friendly policies have been dealt with through Social Security so we have more maternity leave and the likes. The family friendly work was done through Deputy Judy Martin, the Minister for Social Security. Family friendly policy on child allowance entitlement. We changed the Employment (Jersey) Law 2003 incorporating for employment. We introduced new family legislation from 28th June 2020. We have gone through and we have delivered on that recommendation. Then there is the draft Children and Young People Law, so we have been working on the draft Children and Young People Law quite intensively. It has come back to the Council of Ministers a number of times where the Joint Council of Ministers have raised some concerns that need to be looked at. The Attorney General and the Law Officers wanted to look more in detail at the policy itself.

[10:15]

That has gone back to them now. We brought it back to the Council of Ministers on Tuesday this week where there was another area of concern regarding housing, which is being looked at right now. We agreed that once that change had been made through the Law Officers' Department and policy that I would have the authority to approve lodging, which we hope to be done before the end of the year. You, as a Scrutiny Panel, have a brief on where we are with that on 8th November, I believe.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

That is a very extensive answer, so thank you. In terms of the actual legislation though, I am trying to understand the rationale for the £400,000 that is being proposed for this particular area, which is

on page 188, which is under recommendation 5. It is the case that the legislation will be finalised. What is that £400,000 going towards in 2022?

The Minister for Children and Education:

I am sure that is going to be policy work but I can ask Michelle if you could ...

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

If I may?

The Minister for Children and Education:

It is 108, recommendation 5.

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

The legislation is an important part of changing the culture in the way in which we work in Jersey. But the culture change piece across multi-agencies in the Island in terms of new ways of working will require significant investment in terms of training and development. The law shift, for example, the new ways in which we work together to protect children, the way in which we roll out again and strengthen the Jersey children first practice model, the way in which everybody understands the continuum of need. Previously we trained over £5,000 people in the Jersey children first practice model, which included colleagues from Education and others. That is part of that money.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is that a legislative programme?

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

It is the implementation of it.

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

I wonder if I can help. The list of those things under the children's change programme was P.108, that came right in the wake of the Care Inquiry. I believe it was contingency money at that time. There were a range of things that also included additional law officer time and money going into the Law Office to look at some of the changes and some of the additional work as a direct result of the Care Inquiry. Those things were then brought forward into the first Government Plan of this Government to consolidate that because that had been non-recurring funding out of contingency. This essentially gave a recurring and business as usual. There were some posts in there, both in terms of policy. We had a new director of children's policy post and also some additionally into the Law Office, if that is any help.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

That budget in particular is for those areas, so it is not just policy and legislation development but there is much more to that £400,000 budget. Okay, just to understand exactly where the money is going; our role, ask the questions.

The Minister for Children and Education:

The last part is the draft children convention of rights, which we call the due regard law, that legislation has been written and it is going to come on 16th November, and we are going to be lodging it in December. That is an important piece before the next Assembly is constituted after the elections, to make sure that everything that we do in law change or law draft or new laws starts with a child rights impact assessment, putting how the effect on children in everything that the next Assembly will do at the very outset.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Just in terms, you mentioned in your first answer about how COVID-19 had impacted the policy work. How much has it impacted, I suppose, coming to fruition of the legislation and the policy, in this particular area?

The Minister for Children and Education:

I am fairly new at this position over the last 18 months; can I pass over to the policy officers to let you know how they feel that it has been?

Senior Policy Officer, S.P.P.P. (2):

The experience of responding to the pandemic meant that policy officers within our department were deployed to do COVID policy work for varying lengths of time. That has produced a knock-on both in policy officers returning to their substantive posts in the areas of children's legislative development. I think there has also been a knock-on in the demands within the law drafting area because they have had an enormous amount of legislation to proceed with. We have approximately an 18-month delay that had been experienced in some of these key pieces that have been described; the children and young people's legislation and the children convention of rights legislation that will be coming forward shortly.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Finally, Minister, in terms of the funding that was in the Government Plan for 2021, so would have been this year, how has COVID impacted that budget? Has it been moved in other areas in order to deal with COVID or has it been kept within the areas specifically required and therefore has it meant that you need more money going forward or less?

The Minister for Children and Education:

There has definitely been looking at whether we have been able to spend the money that was allocated for 2021. Recruitment pressures on being able to recruit at this difficult time right now have meant that we have not been able to move forward in some areas. Obviously again there are problems with construction and sites and the like. There have been requests for underspends that we will not spend money in 2021 to be used in other areas such as the hospital, I believe, Anne.

Head of Finance and Business Partnering:

We need to look after ourselves first. Where we are is that we have not given any base budget back recurrently. We have not been able to spend all of it, for the reasons described, and we have also had additional dedicated COVID funding for a COVID recovery piece and the well-being. We have had £995,000, a quite decent chunk, into the Integrated Services and Commissioning services to do recovery work and we have also had a continuing programme of schools recovery in a separate part of the field. So we have had a good couple of million additional COVID recovery resources, but the growth programme has not been reduced recurrently. We will have some budget that we will not have used by the end of this year and that will help us with the incidental operational COVID costs, things like extra cleaning. At the moment we are trying to work out whether we need a little bit of extra money at the year end or whether those underspends on the growth will help us with the additional operational COVID costs, particularly things like cleaning, but that will come back through the normal process.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just to be clear there, any underspends will not be going back to the central pot or will they be going to things like the hospital? Because there seems to be a slight ...

The Minister for Children and Education:

No, the capital side of things, sorry, will go into things like the hospital.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Which capital spends do you think may be underspent, that may go back?

Head of Finance and Business Partnering:

It was done very early in the year. There as a Ministerial Decision in February, I think ...

Senator T.A. Vallois:

No, in May. R.105.

Head of Finance and Business Partnering:

I did all the working for it.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Was it the R.105 where it was about £18 million? But some of that is coming back from the hospital decision, is it not?

The Minister for Children and Education:

It will, yes.

Head of Finance and Business Partnering:

Into later years.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

About £12.7 million is coming back from that £18 million?

The Minister for Children and Education:

Yes, we were told as long as the hospital funding got allocated it would come back in that way. But you asked whether things had been moved and I thought I would be as honest as I can. There were some decisions.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am just trying to sort out what capital projects that applies to which will now be happening again because the money is still there when it was taken away before.

The Minister for Children and Education:

I am just trying to work out. It was across C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills) was it not?

Head of Finance and Business Partnering:

It was £2.3 million; there is a whole list. But it comes back later.

The Minister for Children and Education:

It has not slowed down any programmes because it was stuff that we were not being able to spend anyway. It is not like it has stopped or slowed down anything that was not already in a place where we were not going to be able to spend it.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I mean being able to do it in the future is quite important. If you lose that money you will not be able to.

The Minister for Children and Education:

No, we are not losing the money. I would not have agreed to it.

Head of Finance and Business Partnering:

It is back in the programme so we have been tracking that to make sure that it has not accidentally got lost or anything. It has come back into the programme.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

I hope nothing gets accidentally lost, but you never know. Just to finish off this area in particular, the recommendation 5 of this particular Care Inquiry area, was it included in the review of the youth justice system to inform subsequent priorities for policy and legislative development. Considering the crossover with other remits - so Home Affairs, and I believe the Chief Minister - how is the crossover being effectively managed to align priorities for effective and timely delivery of the key milestones for a youth justice strategy?

The Minister for Children and Education:

The policy work is going ahead at the moment.

Senior Policy Officer, S.P.P.P. (1):

We have someone seconded in from probation, I believe, working in our policy space who is consulting quite widely. I have had quite a lot of input as far as things like how best interests of the child that we have incorporated into the children's law might work in the justice space. We have also had, for example, including for children with the health and development need in the new law; we are looking at children who might be starting to show offending profiles and things and seeing them as children first. It kind of ties in with the trauma-informed approach in terms of what has happened to the child rather than seeing a child as bad in some ways because there has been adverse childhood experiences. We have done quite a lot of work with the policy officer and I believe that he has also been doing it elsewhere in other ... it is a real thematic thing, is it not? But that is one thing that S.P.P.P. has been doing better now it has been centralised, is that there is much more a read across between different areas. It has helped us work thematically.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

The domestic abuse law would have been involved in that area, and the likes?

Senior Policy Officer, S.P.P.P. (1):

Absolutely, yes.

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

The Attorney General has been convening a group to look at some of the current challenges we have with a small number of young people that are involved in a disproportionate level of antisocial behaviour and youth crime. We have been looking at whether we need to bring forward, alongside the youth justice strategy, any additional powers. We will perhaps come on to talk about the new intensive support service, which is entirely designed to support these children that do have a number of adverse childhood experiences, which is resulting in behaviour and that is having an impact on our society.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

When are we expecting to see a strategy finalised? Next year?

The Minister for Children and Education:

The strategy really is a part of a whole lot of different pieces of work. There is the intensive youth support work that is going on here, that is trying to help out in the area that right now what is going on. The working group that the Attorney General has set up is a multi-agency look at what we can do and what leaders should there be and how do we do youth justice in an appropriate way that supports the child and gives them the best opportunities. I have almost a standing item when I meet regularly with the Children's Commissioner and we talk about youth justice and the challenges there from her meeting the children on the front line and speaking to them. These services are continuing to do work with these children as well. It is a multi-agency piece of work.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

We are not going to have a strategy that we can see or ...?

The Minister for Children and Education:

We will.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

That is what I was asking about. When will we expect to see that?

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

I do not think that is very far away. We would have liked to have had it by now. What we have then done is relook at some of that in light of some of the service delivery and operational pressures that have been reported, as you will be aware. We are looking to take that into account. Mark has talked

about do we need some additional amendments into some of the legislation. That has slowed us a little bit. If it is not done by the end of this year it will be early next year.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Can I just ask from that, in terms of being able to, I suppose, put your money where your mouth is type of argument - that is the easiest way to put it - is being able to measure the impact that a youth service strategy might have. How would you measure or identify measuring things like early intervention, which you have other areas that you have funding for in the Government Plan, impacting on the youth justice strategy? How would you measure that and then show that to the public? I know we have the performance framework but would you have to add things in there to show that so the public know where their money is going and it is making an effect?

The Minister for Children and Education:

We can say right now that the early intervention work that we have been doing over the last number of years is already showing statistically that there are less children at the age of around 12 and 13 that are being involved in the justice system compared to other year groups.

[10:30]

We are already seeing a trend go down due to the early intervention work that we are doing which means that there are less children at a younger age that are offending and reoffending. We have the statistics over where we have been on children that are involved in the justice system and will be able to see those figures go down. That is going to be our baseline to start seeing where this work is having the fruits of its labour. There needs to be better reporting within the police that they are already working on about not just arrests but there is talk about making sure that we are identifying that when words of advice are given what that is about and how many times it happens before those arrests so we can identify and understand where the problems are and get there before there is an arrest so we can start dealing with their anti-social behaviour.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Just a follow-up to that: are the honoraries being involved in this discussion as well?

The Minister for Children and Education:

Yes. Probation, honoraries, everybody. It is a multi-agency group for everyone that touches the lives of children within a justice and support system.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

What is that strategy going to be called? I think if you were listening to this at the moment you would think there is an enormous amount of different things going on and it is not clear as to how they are all going to mould together. The strategy is a youth services strategy that will bring together all of the different branches, growing branches, of the service and make sense of it?

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

The focus is about youth justice, so about those children on the periphery and involved in offending behaviour. That is the focus, yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Specific groups, okay, that makes more sense. In terms of corporate parenting and the role of the Corporate Parenting Board, I just want to ask a quick question on that. We understand that as a result of COVID-19 again this policy work has been impacted and the aspirations of the youth service strategy ... which is the youth justice strategy that you are talking about there, is it? Okay, it has pinned back. What is the position at the moment in terms of corporate parenting within not just the Corporate Parenting Board but within Government?

The Minister for Children and Education:

Corporate parenting ... can I start with the Corporate Parenting Board. Of course there were long delays that were created through COVID and then obviously the insecurity over the ministerial portfolio that chairs the Corporate Parenting Board. There has been a lot of disruption across those changes that have happened. We have now been meeting with the Corporate Parenting Board. One of the things that have come out of that is about training for corporate parenting, which is about young care leavers. The name of the board now is ...

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

Care ambassadors.

The Minister for Children and Education:

... care ambassadors, who are going to be organising corporate parenting training that they design and they are going to be taking that to ourselves as Ministers, the E.L.T (Executive Leadership Team), the Council of Ministers in that area. Do I feel like there is enough understanding of corporate parenting and the roles and responsibilities across government? No. No, but we have identified that. We talked about it at the last C.O.M. (Council of Ministers) and we are going to be speaking to E.L.T. ourselves, and there is a bit piece that is going on to try to re-highlight that. COVID has created an area where we have been trying to focus on so many different areas of the Island we need to go back - and I think, Mark, you agree - and do some more training and highlight that. Yes, there is more to be done but we are working on it now. I have set up, after the last Corporate

Parenting Board something called a gold team for corporate parenting, because I do not want corporate parenting to be a footnote at the end of somebody's meeting agenda, I want it to be a dedicated function.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

You just said, E.L.T., just again ...?

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Executive Leadership Team.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just for the public, thank you very much. Can I just ask then, do you think ... I mean, corporate parenting is about everyone in the public service, including ourselves, being a corporate parent. So why have we not ... it is a pretty simple concept really. What pushback do you get from C.O.M. with that? When you mention the other areas of legislative changes, the U.N.C.R.C. (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) incorporation and the other things, what pushback are you getting from C.O.M.? Why is this not happening quicker if it is ...

The Minister for Children and Education:

I am not getting pushback from C.O.M., I just feel that everyone is trying to get on with their work and I wish that some of the areas that they were looking at were specifically saying : "This bit is for the children." I feel sometimes that they just look at C.Y.P.E.S. like people look at an I.T. (information technology) department and say: "You are supposed to look after our I.T." and the likes. There seems to be this kind of ... I feel it since I have come in that a lot of the other departments are looking at what they are doing but not saying: "Hang on a second, there is a piece of work here that affects children; let us put some priority on it."

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Even though the commitment to put children first is for all departments. That seems a contradiction.

The Minister for Children and Education:

Chair, all I can tell you is how I feel since I have walked in.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Does that not call into question the OneGov programme and the whole trying to bring it together?

The Minister for Children and Education:

The OneGov programme is all about trying to work together to try to deliver. We are talking about the corporate parenting bit. Of course when we get the children and young people all through that defines corporate parenting and has a schedule that there is a corporate parenting ...

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Is it not a shame that you need to have a law to get people to think: "Right, I am doing this piece of policy; how does it affect children?" Fundamentally, bringing in the OneGov was the point in bringing these things together.

The Minister for Children and Education:

Senator, I can only tell you that is how I feel as well.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Okay, frustrated.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Do you think it was a failing to not have a child rights impact assessment of the Government Plan?

The Minister for Children and Education:

I think the due regard law will fix that next time round. I do not think one child rights impact assessment would work for the Government Plan seeing as it is multi-faceted in such a large way.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

I do not think you can defend that, Minister. Sorry, but there was a children's rights impact assessment for the Island Plan. There was a children's rights impact assessment for the Island Plan and that covers a multitude of things. Surely the Government Plan, the amount of money we are spending should have a C.R.I.A. (children's rights impact assessment).

The Minister for Children and Education:

I think it should have more C.R.I.A.s in it.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay, just moving on to questions on recommendation 7, the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry Citizen Panel, not using any acronyms there. The panel notes that a number of the projects do not come directly under your remit. However what discussions, if any, do you have with the Chief Minister in order to bring forward important work around that area of the Care Inquiry? For example, perhaps the public service ombudsman and how important that would be for Children's Services. That is probably a bad example but an example nonetheless.

The Minister for Children and Education:

So what discussions do I have with the Chief Minister on things like the ombudsman, even if it does not fall under my remit?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, those areas of the Care Inquiry that talk about the Jersey Way, which refer to ... it is very difficult for us because they are under the Chief Minister's remit. However, they talk about children, they talk about children's services, they talk about the impact on children and what we are asking ...

The Minister for Children and Education:

We are expecting the work to come back about the ombudsman; is that correct? The discussions I have is when they come to C.O.M. and they are an agenda item. That is when they will generally be discussed in that manner and I can input in that but I will hand over to Michelle.

Senior Policy Officer, S.P.P.P. (2):

I am advised that the legislative drafting instructions for the public sector ombudsman have been progressed and legislative drafting should commence shortly. There was a public consultation on the policy model for the ombudsman, which I believe was undertaken previously. Having not been directly involved, I am unable to provide more information but that could be relayed to the panel subsequently if that would be of use.

The Minister for Children and Education:

What will happen is when it does come back I will be consulted in that manner, but we have to wait for the drafting and the law instructions to come back.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It is just the previous 2 Ministers for Children and Education seem to have responsibility for work on the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry, they were on the Citizens' Panel. Is that your responsibility?

The Minister for Children and Education:

I do not believe my responsibility is on the ... I meet with the Citizens' Panel to talk about some of the areas and I have met with them a few times now on different aspects of the delivery of parts of what they are interested in, but my responsibility I am not aware is directly with the Citizens' Panel.

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

On your behalf, Minister, I meet with the Citizens' Panel. In terms of Children's Day, for example, this year we did a lot of work together with the panel. The Citizens' Panel, I think, is coming to an end shortly.

Senior Policy Officer, S.P.P.P. (2):

Yes, shortly. The Citizens' Panel is due to conclude its period of specified work before the end of this year, date to be confirmed. I am unable to give a precise date at the moment. We were looking at a date that has turned out to be Remembrance Sunday. That will transition into work with a wider survivor group where they are forming a peer-led network and we have commissioned a voluntary sector organisation this year to scope both independent advocacy and an appropriate network for survivors in the community. That report is due to come back to our department at the end of this year but we are already seeing some very flourishing signs of self-organisation within that community supported by ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I suppose that is ... sorry, just so my question is clear. Which ministerial portfolio does that fall into? One of the things from the Care Inquiry was the fact that there was no advocacy for survivors, there was a real shortage of it. We know the issues that arose; survivors from the Care Inquiry did not believe they had any sort of redress and there was no pathway for them. I am pleased to hear what you are saying and that is very positive that those advocacy groups are growing. We have met with the Citizens' Panel as well. Who has the ministerial oversight for that?

The Minister for Children and Education:

I think there are different Ministers on different parts of what the panel are looking into. When I met them last time it was around the legacy. One thing they made clear to me is that they were upset last time about the politicisation of their work by previous Ministers. They like to work on their own and then come to the Minister with their recommendations, depending who the Minister is, and speak to the Minister directly with: "This is what we have come up with and this is what we would like your support with" rather than being politicised in the way that they work.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

In what way? Sorry, I do not understand what you mean by that. You mean in terms of just the connection with the ministerial post?

The Minister for Children and Education:

I think the work they want to do on their own, not with politics involved in it because it is a very sensitive area that they are working in.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So do you mean there will not be a ministerial oversight of the work they are doing, there will not be a Minister responsible for the work?

The Minister for Children and Education:

Oversight, I do not think that is what is required for them. They need to get on with their work and then they come to the Minister and say: "This is what we would like you to do."

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It is the Minister that is implementing, so the oversight is the implementation of the work they are doing?

The Minister for Children and Education:

Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is that you?

The Minister for Children and Education:

In some aspects, in some areas.

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

Minister, if I may? It sits within the Chief Minister's overall remit because there are a number of elements of government that need to be involved. For example, the survivors are adults, adult services are delivered by Health and Community Services, and the £1 million in terms of the trauma network, trauma sits with the Health and Community Services. There are, of course, elements for learning in respect of what we do and that is why I meet with the Citizens' Panel in the way in which we think about Children's Day. It is really important that the Government of Jersey see this as a government responsibility and it does not sit with any one Minister outside of the Chief Minister's office.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I absolutely understand that and we are back to this notion of corporate parenting, are we not?

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

We are.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

But unless there is some sort of person to go to who can implement, it can get watered down and it is nobody's responsibility, which is, I think, one of the issues that was raised in the Care Inquiry itself that suddenly nobody had responsibility. Is it the Chief Minister that ultimately has responsibility for the success of those things?

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

On behalf of it being a government-wide responsibility for both Ministers and officers, it sits with the Chief Minister.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay. The mid-year review notes the programme was delayed. What was the rationale for the delay in some of the programmes around that work in recommendation 7, or would that be ...

The Minister for Children and Education:

I would say that would be one for the Chief Minister as an overall oversight. Some of the areas that we have been responsible for the delays have been because ... so the work, there were 2 different groups that needed to get together and start coming up with a joint plan, which they did amazingly with their recommendations. Children's Day has been going on. There was no delay apart from we would have loved to have done more if it was not for COVID.

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

The panel were very pleased with the work we did on Children's Day.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

We will move on to another area: care leavers entitlement. Can you please outline the reasons why this programme has been delayed as per, again, the mid-year review update?

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

Certainly in terms of the way in which we are leading on this work, there have not been any delays. We are now currently supporting 78 care leavers. The care leaver offer was launched at the beginning of last year as an entry level offer. We recognised it was only the start of this journey for the Government.

[10:45]

Since the start of this year we have seen an increase of 27 per cent in the care leavers we are supporting and from March last year to the end of last year, we saw over 100 per cent increase in the number of care leavers that we were supporting. Seventy-eight care leavers, given that we only have 76 children in care at the moment, is a significant number; 42 per cent of those are in employment and education, 85 per cent are in stable accommodation, 42 per cent are accessing income support and 29.5 per cent are actively accessing Back to Work services. We work very closely with C.L.S. (Customer and Local Services). We, as a partnership, an operational partnership, as we approach the 2-year anniversary of the care leavers offer being launched, have just undertaken a collective self-assessment using a self-assessment tool that is used by 152 local authorities in England to look at the care leaving services. That report will be published. We are just finalising that so at the next scrutiny we will be able to discuss the detail of that. It is deliberately a multi-department, multi-agency self-assessment where we are able to look at things like access to adult mental services, the suitability and access to housing provided by Andium as well as other government expectations.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Thank you. The panel previously made an amendment to the last Government Plan that efficiencies should not be made around this area and this was accepted by the Assembly. Can you please outline why an efficiency saving of £330,000, which includes the care leaver's entitlement, was provided in the mid-year report?

Head of Finance and Business Partnering:

I think that is just because that was the title originally on that saving. The result of the amendment to the Government Plan, P.130, was that the £100,000 was put in reserves for us to access if we needed it and the £330,000 as a whole came out of the services, but in fact we did not take anything from care leavers. We took the other 2 items from where they were meant to come from, which was £180,000 that we had for the antenatal services in P.82 and was not needed because we had a separate allocation that covers it. A little bit of intensive fostering because we did not have the numbers and that £100,000 remains in central reserves untouched but we just realigned all our budgets to cover it at this point. It remains in reserve for us to call down if we need it. At the moment ...

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Okay, so it is just because it is purely in the title then?

Head of Finance and Business Partnering:

Yes.

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

Within social care, so within that £24 million pot of money last year ... sorry, this year we have undertaken a zero-based budgeting exercise where we have rebuilt the budget and we have adequate funding for the care leaving support that we need to give to young people. Of course, care leavers are adults and the budget that we have is not the entirety of the Government's commitment to care leavers. For example, some of the budget is adult mental health services, some of the budget is domestic abuse services, some of the budget is for higher education and access to college and university. Our budget is much more around the support of personal advisers. We have 5 personal advisers to support care leavers and the care leaving team, and the way in which we are able to essentially escort them around government to help them get through some of the bureaucracy. Over time that will be reduced but, of course, where we are at at the moment, this is a very new way of working for the Government.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

I know historically, particularly with income support, the promotion of what the entitlement is and people knowing where to go and what they are entitled to. Are we actively promoting that?

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

The fact that we have had such a significant increase ... so March last year we were only supporting 35 care leavers, we are now supporting 78. In terms of those that have come forward and we have documentary evidence that we have approached every single care leaver that we have been able to ascertain both from our computer records and from our paper files, which we have had for decades and approach them directly to let them know about the offer and some of those will come forward if they need it in due course. But to be really clear in terms of how ambitious we are being, we have someone who is on the other side of the world, who is slightly older than 25, who is a care leaver of Jersey who is wanting to access university provision in their home country. We are actively working with them to enable them to do that. We are going far and beyond just considering those that are turning up to La Motte Street.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

That is very good to hear. Keep up the good work.

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

In terms of discussions and interaction with the advocacy organisations, whether that is the promotion or the funding of this, how does that work and do you see it improving or do you think it is sufficient as it is?

The Minister for Children and Education:

Operational, I am going to hand back over to you.

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

We have 2 independent advocacy contracts, which Susan's department oversee. We have an independent advocacy contract with Barnardo's and that is a renewal of their contract recently, which used to only be for children subject to child protection proceedings but now includes children in need to recognise that we are wanting to bring support further down the continuum of need. Jersey Care provides advocacy for children in care and for care leavers. Both of those services have been running for a number of years. Jersey Care, for example, has been up and running formally since 2019 but before that was also operational with Brightly and as well as the service having a responsibility to refer and signpost. So it is our duty or responsibility to tell young people that they can access independent advocacy and we have updated our case management systems to be able to draw down the extent to which we have done that in 100 per cent of the cases. It is also the independent advocacy services' responsibility to market their services. That is what the Government buys from them. It is not just our responsibility, it is a service delivery's responsibility to make their services available and recognisable.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I ask a question in regards trends? What trends have you noticed about applications for the fund? For example, it might be at the start of the academic year or around Christmas. If you have a fund over the year, when you are dealing with people's real lives it may not be a nice even spread of when these applications are made. Are you identifying any trends of higher pressure on applications in other years that may help you with funding and whether you need to ask for extra funding, for example?

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

We have significantly increased our capacity and capability in informatics, again under Susan's area, and it is only 18 months old so it is difficult to talk about trends at this point. We are agile enough and while there is a set criteria ... we have an exceptions panel where we are able to deal with applications, if you like, or assess need in an agile and speedy way. It has been complicated by COVID so some of our care leavers who have successfully gone to university, for example, the way in which we have been able to respond to their needs, where they have needed both on-Island and off-Island accommodation, our current systems and legislation does not enable us to do that very

easily. So we are, at the moment, using sensible and appropriate workarounds, which is at the discretion of the accounting officer. Mark Rogers is the director general of the department. We always approach it with a “can do” attitude. So we have a care leaver, for example, who needs accommodation in both home town, university town, and here. We are working hard to enable that to happen.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Just in terms of the endowment fund, we note again in the mid-year review that the work to develop this, and its operating model to support care leavers, was to resume in the second half of 2021. Now we are kind of almost at the end of 2021, just an idea of the progress of this. It would be useful to know.

The Minister for Children and Education:

We are in the second half. Michelle.

Senior Policy Officer, S.P.P.P. (2):

We took a paper very recently to C.O.M. and so we have agreement that we will progress towards an appropriate procurement process being undertaken with regard to setting up a fund. The fund will be benefiting both care leavers in the legal definition, up to the age of 25, and older care leavers who have had experience of care in Jersey. As others have described, they may not be living in the Island any more but we are still their corporate parent. This is a fund that has been released through the soon sale of the Aviemore site, next to the former Haut Le Garenne Children’s Home. So it is seen as a Care Inquiry legacy project and we will have a reasonably substantial envelope of money that is going to be purposed exactly to target some of the needs and wants experienced by our care leavers to assist them and to improve their outcomes. We are in the middle of the policy work at the moment to scope exactly how that will be targeted and exactly what the operating model will be, and there should be some news in the next couple of months.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Fantastic, thank you very much.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay, I want to ask some questions about the children in need and early help provision. The project was listed as complete in the mid-year review. Can you provide further details of what has been completed and how the funding is allocated for future years? That is again, on page 188, of the Government Plan, that table. I think it is £1.76 million for the next 4 years.

The Minister for Children and Education:

So the project that we say was complete was the design and the strategy for the early years. Now we are going into implementation of getting that moving forward. We have had an initial recruitment drive; we have had 13 new appointments that have been made to build the family and community support services. We have a further 11 posts that need to be filled and we are doing a second recruitment drive, which has commenced already. That is where we are. We have designed the plan. If you want to know more in detail about what that looks like Susan will be able to help you out.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Have the project's aims been sufficiently met and what are the tangible benefits that have been received as a result?

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

It is fairly early days. As the Minister said, the bit that is complete is the project work to design the service. We did that on a multi-agency basis. Some of our big target outcomes were around getting children and families who started to struggle some help very early on. We developed the practice framework that supports that work, a team around the child approach, lead worker, making sure there was consistency, a quick response, clarity about where to get services, so hence the Children and Families Hub. We knew, though, we were coming from a very low base in terms of what was around. There was some early help around Jersey, both in the third and charitable sector, and there was some help within schools and education that had been funded initially by the contingency monies of P.18, I think. So we have built on that. We also built on some of the previous investment in P.82 for children with complex needs. It was about getting in early: early identification, proportionate and timely support and an attempt to stop problems escalating, so working together on a multi-agency basis to stop things progressing to a point of significant need or crisis where they may need a referral to M.A.S.H. for safeguarding issues or into children's safeguarding and social care services. What we have is about 240 referrals coming into the hub on a monthly basis. That is an average; there are peaks and troughs in there. We are seeing people looking for support. We are getting good feedback. It is very early days yet, with only the first 12 to 18 months of that and we have a number of posts still to recruit to.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So if we ask the question, what you are saying is the money previously, which I cannot remember the figure, was there to design it, put the structure down on paper and now you are implementing it. So how far along is it?

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

In relation to where it says the project is complete, the 1.7 is almost entirely around staffing costs and services that we are commissioning, so we are commissioning additional health visitor, we have done some work around school ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So you have the project structure and now this money is about putting the people in place to implement that structure?

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

This is service delivery, the 1.7 is service delivery, right at that early end. Where it describes the project, it is the project-type work that led to the design and the specification in the model.

[11:00]

Senator T.A. Vallois:

You mentioned that you started off from a low baseline and so a significant amount of work being done to get to this point. In terms of your K.P.I.s (key performance indicators) or your performance and how that leads from the service delivery here of this particular area and then up through into what we call the golden thread of the Jersey Performance Framework, are there things that you need to change in terms of your K.P.I.s from that piece of work that you have done or to introduce any new ones to ensure that we can measure the impact that this is having?

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

Yes, so the performance framework that we are getting to is a work in progress and we have been able to link in to use Mosaic. That is being used by Children's Social Care, so there is an early help module comes with that, which will allow us to measure performance to get much better information and data. On an individual basis, we are using consistent tools about outcomes for children, so we are doing that on an individual basis and then wanting to try to, I suppose, scale that up so that at some point we are able to say 90 per cent of children were safer than they were before, they are healthier than they were before and doing better at school. We have recently employed an analyst who can help us with that, but we have been working on that across the partnership. So this has been a really good example of the third sector and the Government working together, but it is work in progress, Senator. If it would be helpful, because I do not have all the detail to the front of my mind, we can send over a list of some of the indicators, if that would be helpful.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

No, that would be helpful. Yes, thank you.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am conscious of time; we have got a lot to get through. Can I just ask, there is £1.76 million over the next 4 years, and I know that is an estimate when it comes to the Government Plan and the next 4 years. Is that virtually always all staffing?

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

Pretty much. For instance, we are commissioning a training course for our family partnership workers. They used to be called family support workers. We wanted to call them family partnership workers because it was about doing what it says on the tin, so we have commissioned training for 60 staff, so we are spending some money on that. We are also commissioning, as I said, from the third sector, like Family Nursing & Homecare, Brighter Futures, substance misuse and H.C.S. (Health and Community Services), so it is a combination, but a big chunk of the £1.7 million is staff.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Shall we move on to the questions regards ... there is integrated services and commissioning. One of the things, there is further detail regarding the areas that will be impacted by the spending reduction of £56,000 in 2022. There is a non-spend reduction detailed, after we talk about that, in integrated services and commissioning, which says: "It will rebase budgets to best manage priorities and make the best use of resources, further reduce G.P. (Government Plan) 20 growth and limit the planned improvements in early intervention and therapeutic provision to looked-after children." At the same time as we are talking about this early intervention, there is a spend reduction of £56,000. Can you give us some details on that spend reduction?

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

I think the comment made earlier about how the saving is described is not quite down to the complete detail. When I was looking at an efficiency in my area, I looked right across the totality of my budget, I looked at the investment coming in, so I was able to ... and there are 2 savings, I think, that Scrutiny had highlighted, so there is £56,000 and then £224,000. What I looked at was some of the budgets where we had no spend over the last couple of years and where spend would no longer go against that. For instance, we had a budget that was supporting some training in terms of social workers. We have now got the on-Island social work degree, but that is not clear in there.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

No, it is not clear.

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

What I also did was because we have got the C.A.M.H.S. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) coming in, where there is early intervention elements around that I have looked to make

sure that we have absolutely squeezed the money as best as possible. If I can give you an example of that, we have early intervention money for C.A.M.H.S. and early intervention money for more generic children in need. What we have then done is streamlined some of our referral processes, so people who now refer to C.A.M.H.S. from January via the Children and Families Hub, we will have a C.A.M.H.S. practitioner in there, so we will reduce the kind of hurdles that people go through. We have tried to make efficiencies in that regard and it has no impact on services.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So it has no impact?

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

No impact on services.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So £56,000 and £224,000 has been taken out of the budget, it has no impact on services and it is a spending reduction on areas that you were not spending?

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

Yes, and we have streamlined as well in terms of efficiency.

The Minister for Children and Education:

Or we have streamlined because we have made it more efficient and it does not need to go through so many hoops, but instead of putting £5,000 for this and £2,000 for that and £500 for this, we have lumped it together within the services and said £56,000.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay, so you can say that it will not have any impact on provision of care for looked-after children?

The Minister for Children and Education:

Yes.

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

Yes, and when we come on to C.A.M.H.S. we will be able to talk about some of the increase in relation to looked-after children as we develop those therapeutic offers.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Can I just follow up on that?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, of course. Please do.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

I understand under this Government Plan we have got an additional option D for efficiencies or rebalancing, whichever word you want to use. The savings on the non-staff, how do you manage that against the option D that is now there? There is a significant sum that has not been able to be identified and so what it states in the Government Plan is that that would have to potentially come from non-staff, inflation pressures and all those particular areas.

The Minister for Children and Education:

I do not know if I will do this justice, but there has been a pot of money in Treasury. Well, Anne, please, to save me stumbling over this.

Head of Finance and Business Partnering:

So Treasury maintain a reserve for non-pay inflation based on R.P.I. (Retail Prices Index). C.Y.P.E.S. as a department has not had a non-pay inflation allocation for a long time, so we were not expecting it, we were not planning for it. We were planning without it and we were planning ... what we do is we set zero-based budgeting, saying: "How much money do we need?" which includes the amount we think our non-pay will cost. So it has not really affected us because we were not expecting it and we were not planning for it. We made our budget with the expectation of what we needed is the long and the short of it. It does affect other departments, but not particularly us.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

So the zero-based budgeting, you have done that in the C.Y.P.E.S.?

Head of Finance and Business Partnering:

We have done it in these services.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

The non-pay inflation, you are saying that has not been allocated to C.Y.P.E.S. or whichever departments they were historically?

Head of Finance and Business Partnering:

Education.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

I am just trying to get my head around the foresight of putting in a sum or not having an allocation for non-pay inflation when we have got issues like oil prices, gas prices, cost of living, inflation, all those areas. Will that not just take you back to point A? You are going to have to redo all this work and then go: "It is going to cost us more money because the resources will cost more."

Head of Finance and Business Partnering:

We do do that on an annual basis and we put our requests into the Government Plan process every year and then on the Treasury side they decide how best to fund that. What they have done this year is they have used the inflation reserve to fund some of the business cases, is what they are saying, which, with the best foresight we have, have included the non-pay impacts, but if it goes hyper-inflation, we will have to adjust next year as well if we have a real problem. Where it is really showing at the moment is the capital programme, Senator.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

For example, residential homes or particular areas where you have children that you need to look after, there is an increase in electricity costs coming up and there is a significant increase in gas prices. We know those now. Would there be envisaged any amendment to the Government Plan to make sure that those services are not having to now take money out of different areas that they were expecting to spend on a particular project to pay for that inflation?

Head of Finance and Business Partnering:

Not at this point. If we experience a lack of sufficiency on our bottom line budget, then we will of course go back to contingency and say we are stuck.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

So you will have to make a business case to that central reserve?

Head of Finance and Business Partnering:

Yes.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Okay, thank you.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Shall I move on to C.A.M.H.S. redesign?

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

C.A.M.H.S. service redesign. Minister, can you update the panel on the progress of identifying and evaluating the new roles within the service? Head of Health and Well-being is one of the posts, for example.

The Minister for Children and Education:

The C.A.M.H.S. detailed redesign model was signed off - I think it was the draft Children and Young People Mental Health Strategy, if I am correct - in October 2021, so the beginning of this month, 9th October 2021. The proposal is to significantly increase the C.A.M.H.S. F.T. (full-time) from 28 to 64, but we are looking for the recruitment now, so it is about trying to increase our ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So that is an increase in F.T. posts?

The Minister for Children and Education:

F.T. posts from 28 to 64. That is what we are looking to do now. We are getting everything ready and set up in C.A.M.H.S. so that next year we can do the full recruitment drive and start getting the people that we need to deliver the service that was set up in the draft Children and Young People Mental Health Strategy that has been signed off.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So the new roles are from the New Year, if you can recruit people?

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

Yes. Many of them are ... sorry, I know you mentioned the Head of Health and Well-being. That person is in post and has been for a few months now.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

What consultation has there been directly with young people in order to develop the new service specification and what was the format of that? How did you undertake that with young people? Was it targeted in a particular way?

The Minister for Children and Education:

We have spoken to Mind Jersey, Youthful Minds. Susan.

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

A variety of ways. We have questionnaires; we have done some survey work; we have done some focus groups; we have done some individual conversations. We have been involved in that with Mind Jersey through Youthful Minds doing a lot of stuff, along with also the Youth Service, so we have tried to get a broad spectrum of that. The co-production or the working together with the stakeholders on the C.A.M.H.S. review and redesign has been pretty good. We have involved hundreds of people in that and young people and children and their families have been a significant part, a really important part. They have told us lots of things, good and bad.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

The redesign has had £1.75 million allocated in 2022. How will that be apportioned, that funding, briefly, to the redesign of the service?

The Minister for Children and Education:

Susan.

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

Thank you, Minister. Again, mainly on staffing roles. We want to redesign the service. It has been quite clear that we are a very small service that is being pulled in many different directions. We want to get upstream in terms of support, so we will be creating an early intervention team, which will also be working on a multi-agency basis, linking up a lot of support that is already in place in schools and supplementing that.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is that people ... sorry, we keep hearing these terms. This is a public hearing and I think sometimes when we talk about going upstream and multi-agency intervention and blah blah blah, what I would like to hear, what people would like to hear, is how many more people will be directly dealing with children? How much shorter will the waiting list be? How much better will the allocation be of genuine help, not just the initial triage help to say: "Yes, this child has issues we have to deal with. There are problems and they need support" but then they wait another 6 months or another year or another 2 years for genuine help. How much quicker is that going to be following this redesign?

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

We already have a duty and assessment team in place just in the last few months. We have been able to put that in place because of the funding through COVID monies. That has allowed us to do that. You will be well aware that there has been a significant increase in referrals, I think directly as a result of COVID. What we are now seeing is people being assessed and starting to receive treatment. They are assessed within about 4 days now. There is a distinction to be made in the C.A.M.H.S. numbers between referrals for C.A.M.H.S., the specialist mental health service, and

referrals for assessment around neurodevelopmental issues, so autism, A.D.H.D. (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) et cetera.

[11:15]

The Minister mentioned that we are increasing to just shy of 64 posts. We are under 30 just now, so there is an extra 35 posts. We will have 11 duty and assessment teams, so they will be doing short-term work, initial triage, and then where people need a longer-term therapy or treatment, they will move into specialist C.A.M.H.S. We are increasing that to 30 posts, so they will do things around, for example, eating disorders, which is a big issue, family therapy and the like. They will also offer a service to looked-after children. Early intervention, when I say “getting upstream”, I mean getting in before the crisis has taken hold or where the family is near breakdown. We have struggled to do that before now. I relate that to my comments on Early Help. We know that if we can get in early, start working with the child, the young person, the family, we are likely to have better outcomes. We will have a team there of 12 F.T. equivalents.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That was a very long answer. Thank you.

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

Apologies.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

No, it is not that. It is just I think what people want to know is that you can be diagnosed in 4 days as needing help, but then you wait 6 months before anything happens. Is that going to be a shorter time?

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

I do not think you do now.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is that going to be a shorter time?

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

When are we going to see that time shortening so that ... as much as anything, that is the early intervention that I see as important. We know there is something there. If it is dealt with early on, tools can be applied, young people can go through the help that they need and come out the other end and move forward. At the moment I think we are waiting so long that more damage is being done. It is great, 28 to 64 posts. Are they all directly dealing with those inadequacies that we have uncovered in the past in our service or are they going to gather statistics on it and so on and so forth?

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

The point of the redesign is to improve the service and transform the service. It is to increase positive outcomes for children and families. The way we will measure that ... and we will have to measure it, so we do need some staff to do quality assurance.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, I get that, but will it bring down those times?

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes. What is your target for those times to be brought down?

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

I think they are in the business case. I do not have them straight off the top of my head.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Neither do I.

The Minister for Children and Education:

But we are already seeing with the duty and assessment team a reduction in the length of time to access therapies. The neurodevelopmental waiting list remains quite long and people have banded that about in terms of the length of months, whether that has been 18 months, then down to 12. We are now sitting at 4 months with that. That is not good enough, but we have bought services to try and get into that, so it is coming down. It needs to be better.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am sure you understand those are the tangibles that we are asking about and those are the ones that are really important to people.

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

Absolutely.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

If you feel your child needs a ... because once there is a diagnosis of autism or dyslexia or any of the other neurological differences, I would call them, then obviously you can move forward and that is the important thing. That is what I want to ask about. If you want to say something, just come on.

The Minister for Children and Education:

Just to say there are 9 staff in for quality assurance, but that is the really important bit as well as we go forward, going on to make sure that the services we are delivering are dealing with things in the appropriate way and that we are learning every day from what is going on.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We have concerns, I think, about where the 64 posts are going to come from, given the issues of recruitment, but I think that is perhaps for another day.

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

There are a range of posts. Some are professionally qualified. We are expanding. Unless we need a nurse, we are having a C.A.M.H.S. practitioner, which could be a nurse, which could be a therapist, which could be a social worker, so we are trying to expand the pool that we will be fishing in, but we also have support workers, which I think is really important, particularly at an early intervention point of view, so we are trying to deal with that.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am sorry, I have to ask the question now. One of the spend reductions is the removal of a social worker role in children's safeguarding and care. That saves £50,000. If we are recruiting on one side but then taking away on another side, is that not counterintuitive?

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

They are different roles.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I know they are, but they are within a service which is multi-agency and cross-agency and multi-disciplinary and you may go upstream and come across ...

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

Minister, if I may.

The Minister for Children and Education:

Yes, please go.

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

You might say it is counterintuitive, but we are talking about kind of developing services. In the past in social care one of the answers was to throw more social workers at it. What we have done as part of our service redesign is we have taken around 10 social workers out of our head count and we have increased the number of family support workers. They stay on the Island longer. The family support staff often are local and they are able to provide more continuity of care and direct work to support families to help with many of the practical tasks. So while we are able to take out social workers from social care, we are seeing less children in social care because they are now in Early Help. One of the key indicators in terms of Early Help is we have less pressure on our service because of Susan's Early Help service.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

But I am just saying, within it, it does say this slightly increases caseload and reduces capacity across the team.

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

It does not, because of the way in which we have redesigned the service, so our case ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Then it should not be in the Government Plan. That is the statement that is in there.

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

It might have been at the time, but in terms of what we have seen as part of the service redesign, which we anticipated or hoped, was that caseloads are averaging 13 children per social worker. If you look at any average in England, that is massively below.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay, so that statement of slightly increased caseload and reduced capacity across the team is inaccurate?

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

It is always a risk.

Head of Finance and Business Partnering:

It was a risk, not a fact. I think what has happened is the risk section of the submission has been concatenated as an issue. It is not an issue.

The Minister for Children and Education:

The good news is it is not causing a problem.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So that is inaccurate?

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

It is not causing us a problem.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So that statement in the Government Plan we can disregard, can we?

The Minister for Children and Education:

At the time when we were doing the Government Plan, that was within the risk profile when we were looking at the efficiencies of that. It went into the Government Plan. Fortunately, it is not the case.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So that could be removed from the Government Plan quite accurately?

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

Indeed.

The Minister for Children and Education:

Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So it is not accurate, that statement?

The Minister for Children and Education:

These things happen when you print things 6 months ago and things change, Chair.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Well, let us hope that in 6 months' time the Government Plan remains accurate.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Shall we move on to the next part?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We have only got about 6 minutes left, I am afraid.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Yes, I will try to ... short sharp questions. Youth and people intensive support, which is I believe one of the additional investments, £400,000. What are you spending it on?

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

We identified a resource of £943,000, just shy of £1 million, which will be realigned and allocated to the services, but that left an annual £585,000 recurring to be found, so that additional money helps with the overall cost of circa £1.3 million for the way in which we anticipate the multi-disciplinary team to cost. Within that, so we are moving some of the family support staff that we have already got in the social care service, because we already have what we would call services support children who might be at risk of coming into the care of the Minister, as well as putting some of our existing social work support that are in the current budget into the service, because they are already working with these children. We expect the service to work with, at any one time, about 15 young people and they will not be a case held in the service. Over and above the £1.3 million that we identified within C.Y.P.E.S. we were also going to have additional benefit from partner agencies who are already agreeing to place their own staff into the service. For example, we are in conversations with the Probation Service, who have identified at least 2 staff from their budget that are already working with children but not in an integrated way that can come and sit in this team. The additional money is important for the business support, the performance management, the quality assurance, some additional staff, but we are going to get much more in this service than the £1.3 million actual spend because that we will get from other partners, including the police, for example.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

So just to clarify, because it does say in the little snippet in the Government Plan - I do not know what I would call it, an image thing - that is the wraparound support that you are talking about there, so a variety of different staff coming in from different areas totalling 18 to 20 F.T. employees.

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

That is correct, yes.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

So this £400,000 is for ...

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

It is a contribution.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

... circa 6 to 8 F.T.

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

That is correct.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

This is just from the Government Plan, so I am just confirming that that is ...

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

Yes. So we were able to redesign some of our service and reallocate existing budget to the service, but we needed some additional funding to top it up. On top of that, we will get additional resources from partner agencies.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

So the £1.3 million that you referred to, where is that sitting, if I pick up the Government Plan and say: "Where is the £1.3 million"?

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

So it sits a little bit in C.A.M.H.S., it sits a little bit in social care, it sits a little bit in Education and then there is the plus, the £400,000 additional amount. What we are trying to do in the way in which we design services now is try to get, through a zero-based budget exercise, what is it we need and then how do we make the money work for us. Obviously we need to make sure that is a transparent process, but in doing so we are able to run much more efficient and effective services that are integrated.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

It is just making sure there is no double counting as well.

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It does seem to give a very specific use for this money in the Government Plan: “Investment to enable the development of an integrated intensive support service for young people considered to be most vulnerable at risk. This service is positioned as an alternative to care and to assist in a return home or to positively stabilise the circumstances for those already in care and prevent placements off-Island.”

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

That is correct.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So this is targeted towards those young people who are at major risk.

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

Highest end.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So that £400,000 is specifically for that area?

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

It is, yes, and those young people tend to be known to social care. They tend to be excluded from school and they tend to be known to the police.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is it enough money to do that?

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

Yes, we think so.

Group Director, Integrated Services and Commissioning:

The £400,000 is part of a bigger budget. The service costs about £1.4 million.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Sorry, just coming back in here.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

No, go ahead.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

The seriousness of the situation and the complexity of the situation for young people who face those issues will come with a significant cost.

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

It will, but it is less about the money. It is more about the way in which we work together as agencies, which historically we have not been as good as we will be in the future.

The Minister for Children and Education:

It all fits together with things like early intervention to try to stop this from happening in the future as well, so it is all about wrapping around, trying to stop this from happening, having the service, what you have got right now, for the children that have been failed in the past.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes. It is just a question of tracking that money.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Yes. Just from that point of view, because I think it is really important for the public to understand in really layman terms: "We are spending this much money" and £400,000 can sometimes be a drop in the ocean for particularly high-risk children, but looking at the youth service strategy, you have got the C.A.M.H.S. redesign, so it is kind of saying: "Okay, what does that mean to me as a taxpayer on the street and how do I know that it is being done effectively?" It is that kind of how you join that up so that people see that tangible benefit.

The Minister for Children and Education:

Like I say, when we talk about things, like already we can see things. When we talked about the Care Inquiry report, we were talking about abuse in care homes. Now we are talking about having the right level of support. Things are changing with the way that we are doing better services. As we are working along we are saying we should do more early on, so we are not having children later on in life that need intensive support and care, so how we make sure that we are triaging, we are looking at things appropriately, we are putting the services in place for early intervention. While we are dealing with children that we have found in the past that we did not have these early intervention services, we need to do something now to make sure that we can intensively help them, because they are more needed now than if we would have got them earlier, so how do we do that the best way we possibly can? That is how we have been designing the services across this department, around there.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

But in terms of that kind of understanding and that measurement I think is really important and like you were talking about before, quality assurance and analysts and things to make sure that we are getting the bang for our buck I suppose is the best way to explain it. But the high-risk side of things, how does that interact with things like the safeguarding? I would imagine the Safeguarding Partnership Board will be aware of particularly high-risk children. That multi-agency disciplinary kind of working together, there is a lot of boards, but it is ...

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

There are a number of products, if you like, out there. We are looking at, for example, something called Value in Care, which has been piloted and tested by Norfolk and by Hertfordshire, for example. Essentially it looks at the relationship between need, delivery and outcome and then spend, so you are able to quantify. If a young person's needs ... if they score 100 and someone else might score 80, you then are able to say that the person who scores 100 has a greater need and will need more of an input. You are then able to show that they got that input and then able to show what that outcome is. So the way in which, as a department, in the future we are able to show that cause and effect and then how much it cost is absolutely where we need to get to. But there, of course, is a broader point in relation to how the Government, across all of their departments, demonstrate to taxpayers what the cost of something is, what you buy for it and what difference it makes.

[11:30]

Senator T.A. Vallois:

So it is similar to a form of value added in Education then, that progress of ...

Director, Safeguarding and Care:

Yes, it is like a progress set or whatever, you are able to quantify progress over time, the relationship between the score in pounds.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Okay, thank you.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am conscious of time, but one final question which I would like to ask. The C.A.M.H.S. project, there is £2 million put aside for the north of St. Helier youth centre. This was agreed about 3 years ago. When are we building it and where is it going?

The Minister for Children and Education:

I have no idea, Chair. At the moment everyone is fighting for sites. Since I have come on board and been the Minister ... I do not know what previous Ministers were doing, but since I have come on board there has been a whole lot of changes. There has been the amendment now that has gone into the Island Plan, we have got propositions that have gone through the States that I have supported as well that said that we should not be allocating any sites until we do the school site, which is going on right now. I have no idea at the moment. There are so many pressures for sites that everyone wants either for social housing, for housing, for schools and the like that I have come across my ... we need to find the site for the school, we need to get through the bridging Island Plan. I know it should be in there. I am as frustrated as you are, Chairman, but I cannot tell you right now where it is.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I do not think you are as frustrated as me, if I am honest, and I think you would probably accept that.

The Minister for Children and Education:

Well, I am slightly less frustrated than you are, Chair.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, but also I think we are running out of time. We will come back to that.

The Minister for Children and Education:

We will do it another ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We will talk about it more in terms of the Education sites when it comes to the Education remit. Unless there is anything else you want to ask, because we have gone through the time really, or if there is anything you want to ask the panel or you want to say at the end. Briefly, he says.

The Minister for Children and Education:

No. I would just say thank you very much for this hearing. It has been really helpful. Thank you to the officers.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

With that, we will call the hearing to an end, 5 minutes late but we got there.

[11:32]