



Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny

Panel

Quarterly Public Hearing

Witness: The Minister for Children and Families

Friday, 22 November 2024

Panel:

Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central (Chair)

Connétable M. Labey of Grouville

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée of St. Helier South

Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade

Witnesses:

Connétable R.P. Vibert of St. Peter - The Minister for Children and Families

Deputy M.R. Ferey of St. Saviour - Assistant Minister for Children and Families

Mr. K. Posner - Interim Chief Officer for Children, Young People, Education and Skills

Ms. D. Marriott - Director of Children and Families

Mr. B. Sandeman - Head of Health Policy

Ms. A. Homer - Head of Finance Business Partnering

Mr. D. Bowring - Associate Director for Mental Health and Well-being

[14:03]

Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central (Chair):

So, thank you, everyone. Welcome to this quarterly hearing of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel. Today is 22nd November. I would like to draw everyone's attention to the following. The hearing will be filmed and streamed live. The recording and transcript will be published afterwards on the States Assembly website. All electronic devices, including mobile phones, should be switched to silent. So for anyone who comes up to the table, who comes up to

Speak, if they could state your name and role if you come up to speak at the table. So before we begin with introductions, I am Deputy Curtis, the Chair of the panel.

Connétable M. Labey of Grouville:

Connétable Mark Labey from the Parish of Grouville, Vice Chair.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée of St. Helier South:

Deputy Porée, panel member.

Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade:

Deputy Helen Miles, panel member.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Constable Richard Vibert, The Minister for Children and Families.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Deputy Malcolm Ferey, Assistant Minister for Children and Families.

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

Anne Homer, Head of Finance Business Partnering for C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills), including children and families.

Head of Health Policy but also leading on the Children and Civil Status Law work:

Ben Sandeman, Head of Health Policy but also leading on the children's prospects(?).

Interim Chief Officer for Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

I am Keith Posner, Interim Chief Officer for C.Y.P.E.S.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. Thanks, everyone. We have one and a half hours for this hearing. So just to start with some questions on the play strategy, Minister, could you provide an update on the current status of the play strategy, also regarding the provision of play spaces in St. Helier under the Bridging Island Plan?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Do you want me to take that, Richard?

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes, Malcolm. As I say, it is only recently that we have, in effect, taken responsibility for this. So it was shared between 3 Ministers and it was apparent that somebody needed to take responsibility. We have done so and I will ask Malcolm ... I am going to delegate responsibility to the play strategy to Malcolm, so I will ask Malcolm to speak.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Thank you. So yes, the Minister kindly took this piece of work on and then delegated it to me. So if you look at the budget, there was an amendment by Deputy Gardiner and then a further amendment by Deputy Doublet. One was to find a sum of money to get the play strategy into place and the second amendment to that amendment was to incorporate the work of the Jersey Youth Parliament into taking that play strategy forward. So we have produced our own amendment to include both of those provisions and to deliver a play strategy within existing budgets, so not having to find new money for a particular individual but to work with officers across our estate to be able to start to look at what a play strategy might look like for Jersey. So yesterday was Children's Day. The Connétable was there, a fantastic day. We had some really good speakers. What came across, of course, for us was the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 31, is fundamental to children having safe play spaces to be able to access. So a play strategy will look across the piece. What is the offer in Jersey? How can that offer be improved? What is the communication like for children and for parents to be able to have easy access to what is available? What can be improved and what new play spaces may need to be incorporated so that every child across the Island has simple access to play spaces? A big part of that work, of course, is going to be engaging with the Connétables and all the parishes to see what that offer might look like, but the important thing to remember is there is lots of really good provision across the Island. A lot of it is about communicating what that good offer is and how people can access it on their doorstep. So regardless of the play strategy, it is embedded in our work to ensure that children have a safe place to play.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

That is good to hear. I know you mentioned about finding the funds within the budget that you have already.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Yes.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

My next question is going to be on 22nd October in the Assembly delays were attributed to resourcing constraints within C.Y.P.E.S. So what has changed there?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

So, what has changed? I think sometimes when the budget is produced minds are focused by amendments, to be fair, and we have reconsidered it in light of that amendment. Because we have the play policy which has already been almost produced - it got to it being finalised but never quite signed off - that gives us a really good platform with which to start a play strategy. So a quarter of the work has been done, so really it is a piece of work which is oven ready and ready to move forward with. So yes, hearts and minds have changed in light of new evidence that comes into play, excuse the pun.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. So that is definitely continuing now; that is definitely in place and going ahead?

The Minister for Children and Families:

I would say that there was never any ... it never was not going to continue. I was surprised that there seemed to be this view that it was not continuing.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I think it may be to do with the work that had been done before seemed to come to a stop.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes, but there was never, certainly on our part, any decision that it was not going to continue. Clearly, splitting it in the Island Plan between 3 departments did not help because nobody really felt that it was theirs. But we certainly had not ever decided that we were not taking it forward. I think the latest solution - and it is still going into the Children and Young People's Plan, which is the overarching scheme - is the right place for it. We can manage it from there, and then we have the children's outcome board, is it?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Executive Committee.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Executive Committee, and we will report into that as progress is made. So you did ask questions about sports facilities within St. Helier. Certainly, one I am already aware of, the Springfield sports centre playground, which was built in 2014, is now 10 years old and needs refurbishment.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Would that be moved? Because it is right along a busy roadside.

The Minister for Children and Families:

I would need to ... clearly, it is not our play area, but what we have established is that there is funding for that to be refurbished. Now, I do not know, Malcolm, do you want to take a note of that and see, because it ...

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Because there is an open space area where it could be moved over to and at the moment it is right on a busy road where children breathe car fumes and so on.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

We can take that away and explore that.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes, so I am happy to do that. I must admit this came out in World Children's Day yesterday. Children were asking for more facilities in town because Millennium Park gets quite busy. I think Mark will be aware of this. I mentioned the lack of facilities in the east of the Island. We seem to have created a number in the west, in the centre, but there are few play facilities out in the east of the Island. I am not quite sure why there is that east-west divide.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

So all that will be considered as part of this plan?

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes. We have lost another one potentially, which you are aware of.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Potentially.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Let us hope that improves.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Then there is the Fort Regent play zone as well, and that is another area that will need to be looked at. I am not quite sure what the long-term plan is for that. It is certainly still used, so that is another area that needs looking at.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. Deputy Ferey already mentioned about the feedback from the Youth Parliament. Will that be with meetings with them and ...?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Absolutely so. That formed part of their end of term report and there was recommendations in that. Again, a person or people who pick up the play strategy, they will make sure they incorporate those recommendations and consider each of them in the overall strategy.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. You mentioned the previous play policy where quite a bit of work had been done. So can you confirm if this is going to be part of the plan and will it be published?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Yes, I think it never got quite to the point of being signed off, so that would be the first step, to finalise that play policy, to publish that and then to use that as the springboard towards developing a strategy.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

So all that work that has gone into it will be part of this?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Exactly.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes. The amendment does actually say, as long as the amendment is passed, that we are incorporating the policy and the recommendations from young people via the Youth Parliament. So we have that in the amendment.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

But, of course, the most important people in this ongoing discussion are young people themselves. So we will continue to engage and involve them in the strategy as well.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. I think it is my last main question on this. Given that other departments, such as Infrastructure and Environment, have contributed to playground redevelopment efforts, how are these efforts being managed to ensure a collaborative approach to the play provision?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Their buy-in is essential because although it has come under the Minister for Children and Families, we need to keep both of those ministries involved as the strategy is developed. So they are very much at the forefront of our thinking because without those 2 Ministers the strategy will never be grounded in reality. So it is important that we keep them both on board.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

You will work with them as well. What is the timeline for publishing supplementary planning guidance for developers on play space provision and how is compliance with this policy being monitored?

[14:15]

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

So if I take the strategy itself, the timeline is to produce within a year, and if we can publish any of those things beforehand, then we will do it. But ultimately we would look at completion within the year.

The Minister for Children and Families:

There are a number of things that we can take forward before the policy is produced. There are existing plans for some play areas. We need to look at them but there are things that we will be moving with anyway and also working with developers. Unfortunately, the first of the houses or the first major development again is in the west of the Island, so it is another play area in the west of the Island. But we have not forgotten the east.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Do you think that will be one of your first ones to be seen with development?

The Minister for Children and Families:

Well, I have already started the process. I have been with the developers and the builders and started to dialogue with the primary school. So the children will have input into that. We are then going to do something similar with the youth club with the older children. So yes, it will certainly be part of this strategy.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Which youth club is that?

The Minister for Children and Families:

It is St. Peter's Youth and Community Centre. The next one ... yes, so I think one of the next ones again is in the west, which is that St. Ouen has a development.

Interim Chief Officer for Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

Might I just come in? It is also just worth noting where you have asked previous questions about Le Squez and we have said that we would like to try and improve the outside play area for that, so we will be allocating money for that next year. But in terms of then what we can do in the interim before the site is more fully developed, I think some of the learning and consultation work through the play strategy could feed into projects like that as well.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. I just wanted to ask as well are there any proposed changes to planning permission rules that would allow certain play facilities to bypass procedures?

The Minister for Children and Families:

I think we do know that one of the play areas hit problems with one of the pieces of equipment they put in, which needed planning permission and which would not have been required in the U.K. (United Kingdom). I think that is something that we have tried to look at. The trouble is we cannot ... where do we draw the line with the strategy and whose responsibility is planning issues? So we are aware of that, or certainly I am aware of that issue, and if we can we will try to look at that.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. Thank you. I think that is ... over to you.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Yes. Thank you, Minister. I would like to move on to something that is quite close to my heart, which is the Move More toddler play sessions. Now, we as a panel understand that Jersey Sport takes this; it is potentially not in your remit. However, can you confirm what contact your department has had, if any, with Jersey Sport and the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding this decision?

The Minister for Children and Families:

Are you going to ... I know a little bit about it.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

If you start, I can ...

The Minister for Children and Families:

I think there was some contact but it was not from our area. We had contact about whether we had any funds available from the people previously running it on behalf of the Government. Now, we have absolutely nothing left in our budget for 2025. Even one of the larger charities that we support we have had to find funding through the Chief Minister for that. So we did not have the funding to continue or to allow them to continue. The decision to stop the funding, of course, was not ours and it was not within our area.

The Connétable of Grouville:

We understand.

The Minister for Children and Families:

So yes, there was contact but it was very much on the sort of periphery, if you understand what I mean. There was no discussions on the initial when sport actually advised them that they would no longer be funding that facility.

The Connétable of Grouville:

It is quite prevalent at the moment, obviously, with the closure of the aMaizin Maze and other facilities, so it is quite in the form. Can you advise the panel if there are any organisations receiving grant funding from the Government of Jersey that are required to provide similar services for toddlers or early years children?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

I cannot think of anything off the top of my head. The good news, though, I am sure the panel is aware that funding for that facility has been found for 2025.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Yes, we are aware of that.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

So the Chief Minister has ... but we do need to find a longer-term solution because we do not want it to exist from year to year. We want to find a permanent solution. So many people highlighted the negative impact it would have on their lives if that facility was to fold, so we are committed to making sure that it continues.

The Connétable of Grouville:

It is particularly prevalent in my parish because, as you already mentioned, the east of the Island has deficiencies in this. Move More have been providing facilities at my parish hall and the Gorey Common throughout the summers prior so it is a very valuable service. So we thank you for that.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Good. Thank you.

The Connétable of Grouville:

I think you have already answered one of my questions, question 7, about the funding for next year, so thank you.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

I think it comes to me now. We have some questions around the Corporate Parenting Board that I think we touched on at the last meeting. We have had minutes for 27th March and 1st August but we have not had them for 25th September. It does not appear that they have been published. So we were just hoping that you could advise the panel what was discussed at that Corporate Parenting Board and outline the current work plan.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

I think Donna can speak to that.

Director of Children and Families:

The last board meeting focused on ... we had a report from Jersey Cares on loving homes, the piece of work that they have done around that. We had a discussion about the dataset and a plan around the dashboard. We had an update to the board around the work they have been doing through the thematic work around the new board structure and the new subgroups. I am trying to think what else was there off the top of my head.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

I do not want to put you on the spot.

Director of Children and Families:

I cannot think what else there was. I think I provided a bit of an overview on some of the work we have been doing about missing and exploitation as well. That is off the top of my head. There is probably something else.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay. Thank you. We picked up from the 1st August minutes that the children in care council had not been established.

Director of Children and Families:

Yes. That is correct.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

So can you tell us whether that has been established now, please?

Director of Children and Families:

I think we had a plan last year that Jersey Cares was going to provide the children in care council but that was supposed to have been in place by June. It had not been established, really, and was not really making any progress. There was a decision that we should move that into C.Y.P.E.S. and under the Associate Director for Participation and try to re-establish it in a different way. So since we made that decision, which was late summer, just before that board meeting, we have set in place a programme, a plan, for what we needed to do. We had 3 participation events last month for young people and children where they came along. We have done work underneath that programme on the development of how to share the Bright Spots survey. We have done a Bright Spots survey that was done independently from the Government on all the children in care and care leavers about their experiences of care. So we have been working on how we are going to roll that out. We have started to roll that out with young people, the feedback, and started to work with them. There was some work with them about how to ... creating something around some of our care leaver offer and the development of our care leaver offer, which that group has been working on as well. That will be ready for draft consultation with the Corporate Parenting Board on 4th December, the next meeting. So we have made good progress.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Can I just ask you about the situation with Jersey Cares because Jersey Cares have been kind of commissioned to do this children in care council? How was the decision communicated to them that they would no longer be taking that forward?

Director of Children and Families:

There was an email and a conversation following that from the Chief Officer.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay. Has their grant been reduced at all?

Director of Children and Families:

Absolutely not. It has not affected any of their contracting, apart from saying given the difficulties we are having establishing the council and the lack of progress the request was to ask them to ... the decision was to move the council into another space and to ask them to focus more on advocacy, which we were not really delivering advocacy to a lot of children. We want to access more children

and make sure they are getting a better offer and a deeper offer. So their grant has not been affected in any way.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Thank you.

Director of Children and Families:

No reduction in anything for them but a request for them to drive their advocacy work harder.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

When it comes to the children in care council, at least Jersey Cares were kind of independent of Government. So is there potentially a conflict then about bringing that children in care council within the aegis of Government?

Director of Children and Families:

I do not think so, no. I think the decision to move that across was done ... has been put under the participation associate director. That director manages participation across loads of different areas of the Government and it is not made up ... we have created a subgroup, an included and respected subgroup, which sits under the board and that board is made up of partners across all different things. Jersey Cares as one of them has been asked to be part of that, but they have declined, but they have been asked to be part of that. That group includes some of our corporate parenting people that are arm's-length bodies in the Government in the law. It includes some Government officers. It includes people that are not in the Government. It is a multidisciplinary group that will drive the plan really about making that council come alive and engaging, how we engage children and young people. So it is very multidisciplinary. It is not one person.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

So I think what we are saying is are you satisfied that ...

Director of Children and Families:

I am.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

... the Government can be held to account for the services that they are providing ...

Director of Children and Families:

Yes.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

... to the children who are in the care of the Minister from a ...?

Director of Children and Families:

I am because we have a range of things that look at that. It is not only having an advocacy ... the care council is about trying to ... how do we engage children and young people who are in our care to be part of developing services and moving them forward and how do we help those children and young people really shape what it needs to look like and tell us what is not working right. So advocacy, those young people will be ... the things that are not working for them, through Jersey Cares they will have that advocate to advocate for them, to argue about what is not right, and individually look at their needs. So that will continue.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

So Jersey Cares have accepted the advocacy part of the role?

Director of Children and Families:

The advocacy is their contract, really. The children in care council is added on top.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Separate.

Director of Children and Families:

So the advocacy contract was always there. Adding the care council was an additional thing that was thought might help, but what has happened is for a variety of reasons I think it has been difficult to deliver that. We have not seen any progress for children and so that is ... it is not really about advocacy, that council, it is about how do those young people shape service development.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay. I understand.

Director of Children and Families:

So those 2 things we need to see really differently and I do not think that having a council that is run wherever will impact on advocacy.

The Minister for Children and Families:

I have to say I was shocked - I think it was in the June meeting - when Jersey Cares told us it would be another year before they could bring the children in care council into being. That was not acceptable.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Can I just get briefly clarification on that? So advocacy services for care leavers are not being brought in-house?

The Minister for Children and Families:

No, they are not.

Director of Children and Families:

So Jersey Cares provides advocacy for children in care and care leavers. That continues. That is their contract.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. I just wanted to make sure, yes.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Totally separate.

Director of Children and Families:

What we are talking about is just the children in care council, which is the development.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes, Barnardo's also provide advocacy to another set of young people.

Interim Chief Officer for Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

It is worth saying the advocacy part is the major part of their contract. Always has been from the start.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Do these different organisations have clarity on what their role is?

The Minister for Children and Families:

Absolutely.

Director of Children and Families:

They have a very significant contract, K.P.I.s (key performance indicators), yes.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Very clear what their ... yes.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. Sorry, Helen.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

No, not at all. You mentioned in the work you have been doing around Corporate Parenting Board as well about the care leavers' offer, and again we talked about that last time. Is there any update that you want to give us on the care leavers' offer since we spoke to you last?

Director of Children and Families:

Yes. We have had quite an extensive piece of work going on. It has been cross-agency. So we have had Jersey Cares, the children's cluster, C.L.S. (Customer and Local Services), lots of different parts of government working together, trying to make sense of the offer. What we think is lots of people are trying to do lots in lots of different spaces, and for young people that is probably a bit confusing. It is not that there is not a good offer, but probably everyone is doing it a little bit different. So we have been trying to bring that into one offer. So that is nearly done. I think everyone agrees what it needs to look like. We are just about ready to bring a draft to the Corporate Parenting Board in December, and I think what we are trying to do is get all of the agencies to say: "This is the care leavers' offer" so that we can get that built into a one-page summary that helps young people to see where you go for what. That work is quite well developed.

[14:30]

Deputy H.M. Miles:

So hopefully our next quarterly hearing then we will have some more on that.

Director of Children and Families:

Yes.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

That is lovely. Thank you.

Director of Children and Families:

It has been a good piece of work with some good progress.

The Minister for Children and Families:

I know it is into the future but I did have ... because this spans my role as Constable and Minister for Children and Families, I did have a bit of an update on the unit that is going to be built for care leavers for accommodation out at St. Peter. It was originally and it still is 4 maisonettes in a block, but they have now put a unit over the top of that, so it is actually 5 units. I do not know who will get the penthouse unit at the top. **[Laughter]** But I was pleased to see that they had ... it is a case of putting another unit over the top of it is not as expensive as building another unit. So we will have room for 5 young people.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Good. Lovely. Well, we look forward to catching up on that because I know it has been an issue of concern.

Director of Children and Families:

I think the care leavers' offer will be a good piece of work. I think the offer is quite a good one. I think perhaps it just needs a little bit more clarity.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Thank you. Again looking at the minutes, 27th March it said that there is an overview of statistics highlighting that there are still some children in residential care that will be better placed into foster homes and that the Jersey Foster Care Association questioned some of the long-term placement figures. Can you just clarify what those statistics and numbers are?

Director of Children and Families:

Which report are you in, sorry?

Deputy H.M. Miles:

March. We were in the March 2024 Corporate Parenting Board minutes.

Director of Children and Families:

Sorry, I am hesitating because I was not here then so I do not know those minutes.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay. What we are trying to get at was why there were some questions still about the long-term placement figures. I think there was some disagreement between the foster carers and ...

Director of Children and Families:

I cannot answer that particular question but if the Minister is happy for me to, I can provide you a bit of an overview about ...

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

I think that would be helpful.

Director of Children and Families:

So since April we have been working on quite an extensive piece of work about the whole of sufficiency, so to properly understand the children in our care, the care plans for them longer term and where we think their pathway will go, and also trying to understand the children we do not have in our care who we think might come in and also to try and do some trend analysis. So that piece of work has been going over several months and it is called a sufficiency strategy. It will lead to us having a strategy that enables us to say: "This is what we think is going to happen over the next 5 years. This is where we think the trends will run." So I think we have done that piece of work now quite extensively and that has now created the programme for the improvements around the residential estate and foster care and what we think ...

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, so there is some clarity around that now. That was ...

Director of Children and Families:

Yes. We would be confident ...

Deputy H.M. Miles:

... 6 months ago so it has been ... okay. Thank you.

Director of Children and Families:

Yes. We would be confident now. We have had a lot of analytical work done, a lot of benchmarking as well.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

That segues nicely when you talk about analytical work because the next question was really about the metrics and what metrics have been created for Jersey to measure our effectiveness to ensure that the long-term placement is stable and to create our own definition of suitable accommodation, et cetera, given the unique nature of Jersey.

Director of Children and Families:

So that analytical work, we have used some U.K. benchmarking, some individual children's care plan. We have overlaid the children in care population with what we know will become care leavers. So we have done a better projection and understanding young people are going to be coming through care and they are going to be there for a while, and that has helped us to develop the sufficiency plan and the loving homes programme that we have just built. That programme shows you the number of children and care leavers we will have in care over the next 5 years and it shows you what housing need we will have. So we have started work with providers and people like Andium housing to start to ... like the Minister was saying about the property in his jurisdiction, we are trying to look at that across the whole Island in terms of need and trying to think ...

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Have you got a definition of suitable accommodation for care leavers?

Director of Children and Families:

Suitable accommodation would be the same as you would apply, I suppose, in housing, in the regulation in Ofsted in the U.K.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

So what would that be for Jersey?

Director of Children and Families:

We would class ... if I am talking unsuitable, if young people are in prison, homeless, things like that would be unsuitable. Suitable accommodation would be if you are a child under 18, so not leaving care, those would be expected to be in registered provisions. You would expect them to be in a registered home or a registered provider or a registered carer. Over 18 it would be normal housing law but we would obviously with all care leavers ... I think that is the work we have been trying to do is to look properly about what we think need will be and trying to look at we need to develop a more comprehensive offer in the future that will help young people move through care into semi independence, still having a proper level of support so they are in suitable accommodation, and then when they move through that into care leaving on the other end. That is what we would be trying to do.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Helen, I have forgotten the name of the organisation where we had some concerns about young people, care leavers, being classed as suitably accommodated. Jersey ...

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Association for Youth and Friendship?

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes. Is that classed as suitable accommodation when someone is put up temporarily in Jersey Association for Youth and Friendship?

Director of Children and Families:

It might be in the legal terminology perhaps. I would need to check that for you.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Are you aware of us having any young people in the ...?

Director of Children and Families:

You might have a young person that does not want to be living where they are living and moves in and out of ...

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes, that could be the only circumstances.

Director of Children and Families:

... different bits of the system.

The Minister for Children and Families:

I was not aware of any children that were housed by the Jersey Association for Youth and Friendship.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Will you be able to check that and perhaps come back to us?

Director of Children and Families:

Yes, absolutely. I mean children, young people, once they get beyond the age of us being able to assert where they live, they will make choices about how they move in and out of accommodation. It is more challenging to be able to determine everything. I think you would try to make them make the best suitable housing choices. Certainly, we have had a lot of involvement in trying to support young people to have good accommodation. It would certainly be something we would drive quite hard at.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay. Thank you. I will hand you over to Deputy Porée now.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Thank you. I am going to be asking some questions about the cost of living. So, Minister, in your last public quarterly hearing with the panel you stated that the new rented dwelling licensing scheme aims to improve housing conditions and that this will have a positive impact on children. Can you please provide us with more details about the scheme and how this will specifically benefit families with children and how the scheme will also address housing quality issues?

The Minister for Children and Families:

Right. The rented dwelling licensing scheme was opened in May and that is part of the Government's work to improve the standards of rental accommodation. But, of course, that is a scheme that covers everyone, not just care leavers or ... A code of practice has been published so that everyone can see the standards that are expected to see in Jersey rental homes. So through that, there is ... yes, there is a code of practice. Of course, we are not responsible for monitoring that code of practice. That is with the Minister for Housing. So I am sure he can provide greater detail of the scheme.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Would you as a Minister be able ... are you in conversations at all with the Minister for Housing on how this will affect the families with children or ...?

The Minister for Children and Families:

Well, other than the fact that this is intended to improve standards for families and for those ... housing for children and young people, they ... I believe we have this as a topic for the Children's Outcome Executive Committee at some stage. That is the way by which we would get feedback. But I have not been in any specific conversations with the Minister for Housing.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

You may be able to provide us with further ...

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

... once you go through those meetings.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Thank you. Okay. So, Minister, in your view how will the transition to the living wage impact families currently on minimum wage and are there additional measures being considered to support families still facing financial hardship?

The Minister for Children and Families:

Well, I would hope that a movement to the living wage would improve the standards for any family where their income is currently on the minimum wage. Is it going to solve every problem? Well, no, it is not. Again, the theme that came through again yesterday was about cheaper food and housing. I think some housing costs have reduced, but cheaper food is ... virtually all our food is imported. It would be very difficult for the Government to make food cheaper. So there are other ... as you know, we have introduced the school meals and, of course, for some families those are free of charge. There is a support scheme for businesses linked to that move to the living wage. But we are in a cost of living crisis. I do not know what additional measures are available through C.L.S. but that would be the mechanism by which families would be supported.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Would you say that that could possibly be reviewed in the future if you find there are a number of families that still will not benefit enough from the living wage?

The Minister for Children and Families:

I think that is something that, yes, we could ... we are very aware of this cost of living crisis. There has also been a public health initiative. Malcolm, you might know more about it. It is a voucher scheme.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Yes. The charitable sector still has a large part to play in supporting people who are on lower incomes. Every year there is a joint Jersey charities Christmas appeal where anyone who is feeling hardship can go and get, particularly if you have children, toy vouchers, but electricity or heating vouchers and food vouchers. So all of those things can be spent in local stores and it covers everybody but it is particularly aimed, obviously, at children at Christmastime. It happens every year. Every year the demand increases. That scheme is open now so people can go to Citizens Advice or parish halls and get access to that scheme.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Okay. Just going slightly deeper into the cost of living crisis, more specifically about the food banks, are there any specific measures that have been planned or put in place to support families who are currently relying on food banks?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Do you want me to answer that, Richard?

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes. I think we can do a joint ... I can add to this. I have 2 roles here, really. Yes, I have one as the Minister for Children, but I spoke to the *Evening Post* the other day about the fact that parishes some years ago, the welfare was moved centrally into government, which was the right thing, but we are back there now supporting that gap. In the last 2 years I have paid out more in support through funds we have in the parish than we had done in the previous 10 years. So I have no doubts about that crisis and it is not just food. It is people who cannot afford carpets, to get a second-hand bike for their child, clothes, shoes. Those are all things that are now coming back into a scheme that effectively was supposed to have disappeared well over a decade ago. But now we are back into that role and I do not think anybody is ... no, you will not hear any complaints. I think the paper was surprised that that was the case, and the reason is that anything that is done is confidential so, of course, nobody ever knows that it is happening. So it is not just the third sector, the parishes are in there. I can say that one initiative we have started is that we have started our own group.

[14:45]

It involves myself, the rector of the parish, representatives from the third sector, so that in the parish we are trying to locate those people that need help. Because we know about the ones that come to us. For every one that comes to us, there will be 9 others that have not. So we have just formed that group and had our first meeting about 10 days ago.

The Connétable of Grouville:

If I may, Chair, I would like to concur with what the Minister has said from a parochial point of view. That is happening and is going to be progressing in years to come, and I can concur with the Minister.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Specifically, you asked about food and the food bank provision. So a new initiative which has just been opened in Minden Place in the Salvation Army is the pantry store. It is different to ordinary food banks, if you like, because ordinary food banks are food for free, which is a limited supply and limited quality, to be fair to the food banks, because they are just trying to do the right thing by people. The difference with the pantry store is people pay for the food that they get at a vastly

reduced sum. So £10 would buy you £50 worth of food, but the food is supermarket quality and supermarket range within the size of the shop that they have. That is a really good initiative. The Chief Minister again put some funds into that to make sure that it started on time. Coupled with that, front of house there is some accommodation behind the Salvation Army which is available for children, ideally with families. So there are 3 little cottages that have just been completely refurbished and they are ready to accept people who need that emergency housing. So the Salvation Army offers a fantastic provision but it is accepting that ... I think a lot of the food banks originally were set up as a reactive thing, what can we do to help people, which is great. That will continue. The pantry store is set up to think how can we make the provision a better experience for people? Because for a lot of people it must be really difficult to ask for that help the first time. With the pantry store you are going into a shop; you are spending money; you are just getting vastly better value for money.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Thank you for sharing that with us. I was very privileged to come to the opening and it is great. I appreciate you mentioned that the Government did come with some financial support to the organisation. Could you please be a bit more specific and tell us if there is any partnership between the Government and these initiatives or any other charity organisations?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

So the Salvation Army is obviously a faith group that stands on its own financially. It really wants to do that. Of course, it needs support. It needs support to get going, but it is a national network.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

So you would not be a direct partnership between the Government and this particular organisation?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

There certainly was ... sorry to interrupt. There was a direct partnership to get it going, but like a lot of these initiatives, they are designed to stand on their own 2 feet. Of course, if for whatever reason they needed extra funding, we would look at that as an additional one-off. But I think the whole idea, because there is money through the business, it is a more sustainable model. It is a way that people can buy with dignity, and I think that is a nicer way to give a food bank provision. So we certainly want to ensure that it continues.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Thank you for that. I do hope they get the support from the Government because, as you said, they are doing an amazing job.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

They are.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Especially with the accommodation at the back.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Yes, it is brilliant, is it not?

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

I think that is great. Thank you. So, Minister, what role do you envision for the Youth Service playing in supporting children impacted by poverty, especially to those who may not be able to access traditional youth services?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Yes. So I think it is important to remember the Youth Service is a universal offer. It is across the Island. It is open and accessible to all young people, regardless of their physical or whatever disability they have. It is an inexpensive way for children to get an enjoyable evening. There is a small charge of £1 to £1.50 and that just makes sure that children have some buy-in. But there is provision to review that if there are individual young people that would find that a struggle. But as we are talking about the cost of living, one thing about the Youth Service is it is the early radar for young people who are obviously in poverty. So what the Youth Service can do is be the eyes and ears for those young people, and if somebody is identified as needing extra support, they can signpost them to additional services that might be able to help them and might be able to give them that bit of advice that they need or may be able to engage further with them if needed. So yes, it is a great, fun place to be. The Minister and I went the other week and looked at the inclusion project at St. Peter and engaged with those young people, did some archery and some cooking hot chocolate outside. It is a great, fun evening. But behind all that there are youth workers who are making sure they are looking at what young people might need and pointing them in the right direction if they need to.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

It would be the ...

The Minister for Children and Families:

You have the outreach workers as well. The outreach workers are looking after those children who do not wish to become part of the youth clubs and engage with the Youth Service. But, in effect,

they are engaging with the Youth Service through those outreach workers. They play a very important part.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

How do they identify themselves, the outreach workers?

The Minister for Children and Families:

They have cards, do they not, that show they are part of the Youth Service?

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Especially to those youngsters who are more isolated.

Director of Children and Families:

They wear jerseys.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

But we cannot leave this piece without mentioning that the new youth centre in St. Helier will be a great way to reach out to people across the parish and hopefully offer it at very low cost or even free. So they are going to have that facility.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

When will that be opened?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

We are hoping that that is going to be within 2028. That is probably ambitious, but the whole point is once we are through the budget next week that money is earmarked and there is an oversight body which is set up to start driving that project through.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

You mentioned the town youth club. I just wanted to mention Le Squez youth club and the fact that that was ready to go. It has been put on hold. We know that St. Clement is an area of particular ...

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

It is.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

I am just trying to square the fact that as Minister and Assistant Minister for youth services you are prioritising the town youth service over the St. Clement youth service.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

I am really glad to answer that.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

I just want to understand that, please.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

No, I am really happy that you have raised that point, Deputy Miles, because I visited the site yesterday with the Minister for Infrastructure. We looked at both the youth facility and the school. The youth facility is still an amazing facility. Yes, it does need some remedial works. It is not perfect. It is starting to show its age. Similar to what we are doing in St. Helier, it is a really well-developed area, so I think the youth centre looks older because everything around it is so much newer and shinier. But the regeneration is not by any means ready to go. There are no plans that have been submitted. It is not an oven-ready project. But what we do have, there was some money earmarked initially which is still there but we have pushed that back to 2028. But what we will do in the interim is we will spend some money on that facility to improve the overall look and flow of the building within a reasonably tight budget. It is safe. The project continues. It is incredibly well used because of the regeneration in the area, but we have to look at what is now the main focus. St. Helier has no youth facility at all. It has a growing population there. We have to address that now. But as soon as we know that that project is well on to its way, we can start to seriously look at bringing the Le Squez project back on to the table. I have seen the plans yesterday. They are really good plans, but we are talking about another £9 million. That money will be found in stages commencing in 2028. It is competing demands.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay. Thank you for that answer.

The Minister for Children and Families:

I think you do have to really think about St. Helier, and potentially it is around 1,600 children, is it not, with no facility at the moment.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

2028 sounds like a long time away at the moment, so we have to consider the meantime.

The Minister for Children and Families:

It will come quickly, but there is no facility and we have to fill that gap. The town youth centre was first raised in 2018. Money was allocated and then that money was used for another project. So ...

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

That must not happen again, I suppose, in order to achieve goals.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes. I do understand why there is questions about Le Squez but there is an existing facility there. We are not ignoring it. We are going to try and do some remedial work around the outside of it.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

There are some quick wins that we can do there.

The Minister for Children and Families:

So it is not forgotten about.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Thank you.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Thank you for that. So, Minister, in our last hearing you advised that you had a personal involvement in setting up a community support group within your parish that would be helping families in hardship conditions or situations.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Could you please describe how you see the difference between the responsibilities of central government, the parish and the third sector for supporting families in hardship?

The Minister for Children and Families:

We touched on this earlier, did we not? A responsibility that was removed from us is quite clearly still required and there are gaps in ... there are people in real hardship who, yes, they get income support, but I had someone come to us and it was passed through to me for an electricity bill. They had previously been funded through another third party and they have now stopped supporting the payment of electricity. I do not know why but it is not just this one person. Interestingly, that led to a whole thing about food and then health. But where do you draw the lines? I just do not know where you do draw the lines. Because we speak to the third party organisations, certainly food banks and that type of thing, and there is even a question to help people whether in some cases

food parcels might be picked up and brought to the parish hall for people to collect rather than ... because there is this stigma of going to the food banks and that is certainly something that I do not have a problem with. It is far less likely for someone to think you are picking up a food bank if you are popping into the parish hall office than if you are collecting it from the organisers themselves. But I do not know where those lines are, I really do not know now, because the need for all these facilities has grown.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

So would you say there is still some room for co-ordination between the different ...?

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes. We have set up our own group and that is the idea of it. As I say, confidentiality is always a key thing and so you do not tend to publicise that you are doing these things. I think we are already seeing the ... we have somebody there who is from one of the third party organisations, so we are already seeing instances where we will introduce people, particularly for the food banks, I think. Yes, we have a good relationship with the third parties. We have a good relationship with C.L.S., but they have specific rules around what payments they can make. Sometimes payments cannot be made immediately. There is a gap between when ... that is where the parish will play a part.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

One of the things that tends to come to our attention is the lack of information about what different services are doing, and that is going to be my next question to you. In terms of making support services more accessible, how does your department plan to raise awareness among families about available resources, in particular to those who might not typically seek help through the regular channels where we put our information?

The Minister for Children and Families:

Our support workers would provide that information, yes.

Director of Children and Families:

Before statutory services, before direct children's social care, there is the Children and Families Hub, which is like the port, the place that people can go to get help, support, advice, signposting about where to get the help they need.

[15:00]

So a lot of agencies use that hub. They are a font of a lot of information. They will sign families on to the right websites and the right organisations to help them, whether that is C.L.S. or whether that

is a charity or other things. They are doing that a lot. They capture a lot of the population that have more needs, I guess, in that space.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

That is important rather than just having that awareness being raised at one particular point is having different departments all sharing that information to reach ...

Director of Children and Families:

We got some work on top of that we have been trying to look at in terms of when I suppose families are more into the children's social care and that space, about developing our website material around that, the work for things like the care leavers' offer, to try to make those things clearer. I think it is really important, and to try to signpost people the right way. We have work to do in that space. I think we can see that.

Interim Chief Officer for Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

It is probably also worth saying, although not under this Minister's portfolio but within the department, there is obviously schools and schools are very well versed at working with families and young people and spotting signs and knowing where to go in terms of how to resolve issues. But I think you make a very good point about clarity of information and we can always get better at that.

The Minister for Children and Families:

I think we see the same things throughout our preschool. The staff there are very good at providing that information to families that they realise need that. Again, that is clearly something that is increasing. We have the same as the schools, slightly younger children but exactly the same.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Thank you.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

All right. I just wanted to ask a couple of questions following on from that. So if people want information from the Children and Families Hub, and I know I have asked this before, they need to go to La Motte Street, do they?

Director of Children and Families:

There is a phone number people can ring. We are not in La Motte Street now. We have moved to the new building.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Oh, right. Okay.

Director of Children and Families:

Children's social care moved in there last week, along with the Education Department. So we are all in there together, which I think will be ...

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

So where is that now?

Director of Children and Families:

In Cyril Le Marquand.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Oh, right, okay. So they are actually there now.

Director of Children and Families:

Yes, we moved last ...

Interim Chief Officer for Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

Monday we moved there.

Director of Children and Families:

This Monday, yes, so only just moved, yes. It is the first week.

Interim Chief Officer for Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

It has been a long week.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

That will be interesting to see that.

Director of Children and Families:

Yes, and that will help to join up because you will have ...

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Not at Eagle House anymore either.

Interim Chief Officer for Children, Young People, Education and Skills:

We still have a presence. It will change over time.

Director of Children and Families:

We have, yes. We still have a bit of a presence. We still have C.A.M.H.S. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) in La Motte Street as well, so there is still work to do to get everyone where we are eventually going to be. But we will have C.L.S. there at Cyril Le Marquand so it will be much more joined up. You will start to have a lot more of the organisation in one place. People will have more of one place to come to, which will be helpful, I think.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

That is good. I just wondered as well, you were saying, Minister, that you will let people collect their food from food banks at the Parish Hall if they are feeling ...

The Minister for Children and Families:

We would allow them, if the food banks are happy to deliver them to us.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

So that does happen sometimes?

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes. We were making that arrangement for someone this week, in fact.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

But I wondered if that happens in other parishes.

The Minister for Children and Families:

I do not know. They may not have had the ... a lot of the issues depend on the make-up of your parish. There are certain parishes which seem relatively unaffected. Yes, I do, but there are some where there is not necessarily paying ... they are not seeing the request for hardship funds and whatever, but it could be to do with demographics.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

This seems to be a growing problem, though, does it not?

The Minister for Children and Families:

It is a growing problem. I think both Mark and I, and I know the Constable of St. Ouen has got similar volumes to me of requests. We work quite closely. Strangely enough we work closely with the church as well because they have got a trust which has hardship funds, and thankfully they have a

different set of rules to us. Between the 2 of us we can normally accommodate anybody who has a request.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

That is good. I want to ask some questions now about the leadership change in C.Y.P.E.S. Minister, with recent changes in leadership at C.Y.P.E.S., how do you envision this impacting on your areas of responsibility?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

I can answer that, if you would like me to.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes, Malcom is from S.E.B. (States Employment Board) so Malcolm has a good insight.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Obviously, when the portfolios were split, the directorate was split as well; so Education and Lifelong Learning and Directorate of Children and Families. Obviously, it is hard for me to go into too much detail about personnel, but if I can talk strategically. There will be a third directorate for improvement which will incorporate additional services and support functions that currently sit under the chief officer and the Education directorates. The chief social worker and the director of Children and Families has not changed. We also have an acting chief officer of C.Y.P.E.S., who is in the room. That is the way it is structured at the moment. We also spoke earlier about the new government building and the more opportunities that there are for people who have often worked in the same organisation and have never seen each other, never interacted, to work more collaboratively, to work closer together. That is the way it is structured at the moment. Those are the people that we have got in place at the moment. Like I say, beyond that, we are getting into personnel issues of which I would not like to go too far into.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Just also wondering about the statutory responsibilities of the chief officer, because there is a long list, is there not, of statutory responsibilities under the Children and Young People's Law. Presumably that continues under the acting chief officer.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

That continues, yes.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

But I am just wondering how that is going to be managed during any further transitions about roles.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Again, like any change, we will come back to it in the future to make sure that all those parts that the portfolio covers are being properly managed. If there is a need to move things around, we will conduct a full review in the future.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I know you have already mentioned how things are at the moment, but with restructuring of the C.Y.P.E.S. Department - so further restructuring also under discussion - can you advise the panel of this restructuring and will this address the continuity of leadership and service provisions? Can you tell us about any more changes that are ongoing?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

At the moment there are no further changes planned. We do not envisage that the changes will have any impact on front line service, which is the most important thing at the end of the day, or on staff management and staff morale, which is also additionally as important. If that situation changes then we would need to revisit it but at the moment we cannot foresee any issues.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Would you be able to outline for the panel what is the timeline for appointing a new permanent chief officer for C.Y.P.E.S.?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Again, we are getting into personnel issues. We have an interim in place. At the moment I would not want to comment any further on what the timeline is.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

That would come under personnel issues?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Because at the end of the day, we need to make sure that the right people are in post and there is a proper appraisal process done before we need to understand what the timeline is for making those positions permanent.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Right. Could you clarify the implications of the reported savings of £160,000 per year following the departure of the last chief officer?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Whenever there is a change in leadership it is a flatter management structure. There will be savings produced. There is also a cost initially produced, because when people are taking voluntary redundancy they receive payoffs. Those payoffs, of course, are one-year costs. The savings continue into the future. Yes, we have made savings in our department, as have a number of departments, because, as we have discussed before, the overall target for payroll savings is £15 million. The way we plan to do that is to be looking at grade 11 and above and seeing where we can make those savings. Grade 11 and below are not currently being considered, but if any individual who is at any grade wants to be considered, we will look at each on a case-by-case basis. But particularly for this department, and across the piece, it is about flatter management structures, and that is how those savings are produced.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

If this £160,000 per year savings is going to continue into the future, presumably that means that the workload is spread among fewer people.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Exactly. That is it.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

And they have more responsibilities.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Yes, and more opportunities to delegate. It is how we can work better and smarter and all those things.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Right, and hopefully those people will be well supported.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Of course. Whenever we make any of these changes, we want to make sure that it is the right thing, people feel valued, and people feel that they can cope with the work that they are given, and that they are the right people to be doing those roles.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Would there be any reassessment of how this is in practice?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Of course. As I said earlier, it is an ongoing evolution. When we make these savings, we have got to make sure that front line is not affected, and that staff are properly supported. Yes, it is an ongoing process.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. A slightly different question now. Minister, the panel notes that a Council of Ministers amendment to the budget includes an exchange of expenditure from Children and Families to Education and Lifelong Learning. Please can you outline the rationale for this change?

The Minister for Children and Families:

It is a book entry, to be honest. There was work done initially on the split between Education and Children. Further work has established that, in fact, it was necessary to move a sum of money between Children and Families and Education and Lifelong Learning so that, in effect, the budgets and the amount of money available were actually aligned. There are no changes to the responsibilities of each department. It is very much just a book adjustment to correct that situation.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

So this will not mean that something that would have been done by Children and Families is not going to be.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

No, it was a miscalculation in the first instance when the split was done. It does not mean that work will move from one department or another. It also does not mean that something that was due to be done will not be done. It is just to ensure the money is actually with the correct department.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Right, thank you.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

I think my question is probably going to be answered by Deputy Labey as well because it is about zero-hours contracts. The panel wrote after the last hearing about the role of zero-hours contracts across C.Y.P.E.S. and it was noted that there is no central system for recording or reporting the hours worked for zero-hours contracts or bank workers across C.Y.P.E.S. I think we were just looking for an explanation about why there is not a system to manage that.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

If I can just talk over the top of that first. We are mindful that legislation changed recently whereby anyone who is on a zero-hours contract can ask for a change in their terms and conditions if they

are not working zero hours work. Zero-hours contracts are incredibly important to our part of the service, not least because lots of people who work in our service are working second jobs. In fact, very few who are on zero-hours contract it is their sole post. But even among those people, it can very often suit their circumstances because they want to work those ephemeral hours or they want to work in evenings or whatever. But what I have got for you are some numbers and the numbers are split for people who are on a zero-hours contract and have worked in the last 12 months, because those are the most accurate figures. Under Children's Social Care unique zero-hours contracts, there are 27 people. In Youth Services, there are 89 people, which is unique.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Which is understandable.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Yes, of course. Exactly. But people who have a permanent role as well as a zero-hours contract: in Children's Social Services there are 31 and again in young people's service again 75, and that is because of the nature of the work. We do have that data, but we will always have a grip on who is on a zero-hours contract and whether it remains appropriate for the role that they are doing.

[15:15]

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Thank you. Is there any plan at all to review the use of zero-hours contracts across your departments?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

I think it is an ongoing process. It is something that we continue to look at to make sure that they are appropriate. I think particularly in our department, and perhaps in Health, we run on that backup of zero-hour contracts.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

I think the director told us last time that there was some plan to reduce the zero-hour contracts in Children's Social Care. We are just wondering how many you were going to reduce that by.

Director of Children and Families:

It is not necessarily about reducing them per se. What we are trying to do is understand the ones that are still being used. What we know is, from the work we have done, we have got a lot of people that have got a zero-hours contract that have not worked with us for a year. What we are saying is we do not want to keep those open if people are not actually active. The work we are doing is to

review that, and we know that quite a high proportion of them are in that space, and a high proportion of what is in Children's Social Care is really in residential space, because that is the same thing about out-of-hours working.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

If somebody has got a zero-hours contract, will they drop off your list, as it were, after a set period of time if they have not worked for you?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

That is right.

Director of Children and Families:

That is the work we are doing to review them at the moment, is to say they have not been used for a really long time, they are not being active, so we will look to end those contracts if they are not being in place for a long time.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Then you would renew them if you needed to bring that in again?

Director of Children and Families:

Yes, or if they want to stay and they carry on working, that would be different. But this is about trying to say we do not want contracts running that are not being used.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, thank you.

Director of Children and Families:

It is quite high, actually. It is really quite significant.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Just before we leave that area, on the States Employment Board we get a monthly dashboard across the whole of the States, and we have a dashboard particularly for zero-hours contracts so that we can manage them and again make sure that they are appropriate.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

You can drill down into departments?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Yes.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, thank you. I will hand you over to the Connétable now.

The Connétable of Grouville:

I was expecting to answer that, I do not know ... **[Laughter]**

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

You called me Deputy Labey, that is ...

Deputy H.M. Miles:

I am so sorry.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

I knew who you meant.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Over to me. Minister, please can you provide the panel an update on the progress of the Children and Civil Status Law, please?

The Minister for Children and Families:

This is the consequential amendments. Strangely enough, I answered a question in the States on this in the last session here.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes, we noted some of the changes, did we not? Just a general update.

The Minister for Children and Families:

The work on this is well advanced. As I covered in my question the other day, 11 additional pieces of legislation have been found that require amendments, and that is the one thing that might impact our ability to lodge something by the end of this year. I think we are still hoping to do that. There is a slight - and I think Ben might be able to explain this better than I can - problem with some of the Social Security regulations. That is correct, is it not?

Head of Health Policy:

I would not have said a problem.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Not a problem, but ...

Head of Health Policy:

There is lodged, as you will be aware, the Social Security regulations that deal with death grants and parental allowance and the extension of that. The terminology in those Regulations we cannot amend by consequential Regulations because it is not on the statute book yet. All that has caused is the drafters to prepare 2 sets of amendments, one if the Regulations do not pass through the Assembly on 10th December, and one if they do. We have those already prepared, so we just pick option A, option B, dependent upon the outcome of that debate. But we still envisage lodging those consequential amendments before the end of the year.

The Connétable of Grouville:

We were hoping, Minister, perhaps we might be able to have sight of those 11 extra amendments, if that would be possible. Not here, obviously, but could we have sight of those?

Head of Health Policy:

We can send you a draft of the consequential Regulations, that is no problem. I think the 11, they were identified quite a while ago, so they have been well worked into the consequential Regulations.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Can you clarify how many of the 44 will be lodged for consideration by the Assembly and how many could be dealt with through Ministerial Orders?

Head of Health Policy:

The way the primary law is set up is none of the ... I think maybe there is one in there that amends an order that you could do by a Ministerial Order, if you wanted. That is around amending another order.

The Minister for Children and Families:

There is only one that falls into that category.

Head of Health Policy:

Off the top of my head, yes. I think it is around the adoption particulars. Part of what we are trying to do, as the panel knows, is change the particulars around adoption and birth so that the certificates resemble each other as much as possible to remove any stigma around a child having an adoption certificate as opposed to a birth certificate. Then the parental order certificate that we plan to introduce as a result of the Children and Civil Status Law, again, the particulars, which is the fields

that must be recorded on that certificate, all accord with adoption and birth as much as possible so that to the untrained eye they will look very, very similar.

The Connétable of Grouville:

The other issue that we have spoken about as a team, and indeed we have discussed with Ben on quite a few occasions, is that awful word “illegitimacy”. What steps are being taken to address issues related to this word in Jersey’s law?

Head of Health Policy:

There are 2 things, and there are 2 steps here. The first is L.O.D. (Law Officers’ Department) have given further consideration as to how to provide absolute legal certainty around the amendments relating to legitimacy driven by the Children and Civil Status Law. Following that consideration, it has been advised that we develop a small primary amendment law to deal with amendments in relation to legitimacy. We are going to do that. That involves dragging some of what was going to be in the consequential regulations out of them and putting them in a primary amendment law to be lodged very early next year. With primary law, you have the additional step of Ministry of Justice approval, Privy Council. There is a live conversation currently with law officers and Ministry of Justice, and the result of those conversations is that that is not going to impact on the bigger milestone of bringing in an Appointed Day Act in mid-2025, which was our timescale anyway. That is the first step in terms of legitimacy. The second step, which is in the Chief Minister’s remit, because that is the Minister who has responsibility for the legitimacy laws, but I have spoken to the officer this morning, is a widespread review of the concept of legitimacy in Jersey law. The commitment was that that review would be undertaken before the end of this term; that review is well advanced. That review will be completed before the end of this term. That will outline what steps have to be taken or what has to be considered to just remove the entire concept from Jersey law. That work is, I have to say, under way and well advanced as well.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Good. Thank you. I am sure I will speak on behalf of the panel to say that if ever there was a stigma surrounding any word, it is that word. We are very grateful for the work that you are doing.

Head of Health Policy:

I think the positive in that is we are finding actually ... the status is outdated. I will make no bones about that. But the effect of it, we are not finding much. Most of it has had the teeth knocked out of it over the years. The amendments to the Wills and Successions Law about a decade ago that put illegitimate and legitimate children on equal footing was, I think, the last big one. The review is finding that there is not much left that we have to think about before we take forward the work and the decision to just remove the concept.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Excellent, thank you. Finally from me, it is all about the timeline, Minister. You advised the Assembly that the timeframe for lodging the consequential amendments would be the end of this year or early 2025. Are you able to provide a more specific update on that timeframe today?

The Minister for Children and Families:

I think we are absolutely still aiming for the end of this year, but the 11 additional pieces of legislation obviously raise a question as whether potentially there could be a delay, but the intention is still to do it by the end of this year. I cannot be clearer on that because you simply do not know whether that could happen at the moment. We do not think it will, but it could.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Thank you. Thank you, Minister.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

I am going to be asking a few sets of questions around C.A.M.H.S. In the public hearing for the budget review, which took place on 16th October, it was noted that the current mental health and well-being strategy for C.A.M.H.S. has come to an end. Can you please advise the panel what key outcomes or successes from this strategy would you like to carry forward into the next stage?

The Minister for Children and Families:

If I can, I will ask Darren Bowring to come forward to the table.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Darren, if you could please just state your name and role.

Associate Director for Mental Health and Well-being:

Darren Bowring, Associate Director for Mental Health and Well-being in C.A.M.H.S. The Children and Young People's Emotional Well-being and Mental Health Strategy is continuing until 2025, so it has not concluded. What we have concluded efficiently and early is implementing everything that was included in that strategy. It was a significant piece of work that went wider than C.A.M.H.S. and involved lots of changes around education as well. The most successful thing that we have done from that is increased the staffing in C.A.M.H.S. from 17, at the time the strategy was introduced, to 74 currently. We have redesigned the C.A.M.H.S. service from a single service into a number of individual services such as a C.A.M.H.S. duty and assessment service, which was a brand new service in the strategy, which has enabled children to be assessed once they are referred really quickly. A really pleasing piece of data was in October this year, C.A.M.H.S. completed initial

assessments on the most general of referrals, within 21 days completed the whole assessment. That is really quick. We have an early intervention service, we have that duty service, specialist C.A.M.H.S., and we have a neurodevelopmental service that was introduced as part of a strategy. We have wholly staffed services now responding to some of the capacity challenges that we have had, given the significant rise in referrals for neurodevelopmental assessments and mental health work. The vast majority of the strategy is in place. What we aim to do early next year with our commissioning colleagues is to formally review the implementation. They will be reviewing the implementation and the impact, which will then support us as we begin to consider a strategy that is required from 2026 onwards, which will follow this.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Thank you so much for such a good insight. I was trying to follow up with my question to see what you have or not responded. I think you have responded to some of them. I am going to jump a little bit here and I am going to ask you if you can advise the panel of what specific improvements are being considered to actually make sure that this transition is seamless.

Associate Director for Mental Health and Well-being:

The transition?

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Sorry, I should have started the question a bit earlier. The transition, sorry, from the young people from C.A.M.H.S. into Adult Mental Health Services.

Associate Director for Mental Health and Well-being:

We have a very good and working-well process that all children aged 17½ are put forward for transition; so that process starts then. We have a monthly meeting between C.A.M.H.S. and our Adult Mental Health colleagues, which involves psychiatrists and psychologists, to discuss all of those young people in transition, and we agree transition plans with them. C.A.M.H.S. are currently recruiting a healthcare assistant who will have a specific focus on care navigation and transition, so there will be an additional layer to support young people between the 2 services. Adult Mental Health also have a number of posts to support that, and are also recruiting for a number of key clinical posts, which will help, because I think the volume of referrals to C.A.M.H.S. is also now putting pressure on the volume of transitions we are making to Adult Services.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Can I ask a quick question, the age of 17½ - obviously they would normally transition into adults at 18 - is 17½ a bit late?

[15:30]

Associate Director for Mental Health and Well-being:

The clinical team will be working with young people, so there will be a number of young people with plans to conclude the work from C.A.M.H.S. It will not be everybody who gets to 17½ that will be transitioning. There is also a number of young people that we will try to be flexible with in terms of that pathway. I think currently we have 88 young people over the age of 18 still open to our C.A.M.H.S. service. A number of those are open because the input they are receiving, be that therapy, is progressing well, they are receiving good support and we think it is in their interest to continue the work that they are doing with their familiar staff. I would hope we see a flexible approach.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Even though the policy is 17½?

Associate Director for Mental Health and Well-being:

There is no hard cut-off at 18, and I think our figures indicate that we have never done that.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Thank you very much. Can you please advise us if you see any specific role for C.A.M.H.S. that would play in supporting individuals with complex needs and may require extended support after the age of 18?

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes, maybe not just to Adult Mental Health Services, but to more support in other areas.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Could C.A.M.H.S. be a part of that service?

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Do you look at the person holistically and see what they might need?

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Sort of transition into Adult Social Care or ...?

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes.

Director of Children and Families:

Are you happy for me to pick that up? I think that is a different thing. If it is a child and it is a mental health issue or a well-being issue, then it would sit in C.A.M.H.S. I guess if that child had more comprehensive needs, which were across disability and other more complex issues, it would be likely that that child often was having a social care package or maybe a C.A.M.H.S. package. We should be looking at the care plan for the child, for the young person, and that should then direct: do we need Adult Social Care, do we need Adult Mental Health, what is the later care plan going to be and the ongoing support needed?

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Presumably that would start earlier than 17½.

Director of Children and Families:

Yes, so if you are a child with complex needs, it would be much earlier.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Lovely, thank you.

Director of Children and Families:

Because you would be thinking about is there a care or complex need in the future.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

We have just gone past our time, but there is one more question. I do not know if we have got time. This one is just about online safety, and it is just a short question. Minister, could you update the panel on the multi-agency online safety campaign supported by the N.S.P.C.C. (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) Jersey and the Jersey Safeguarding Partnership Board, including the role of C.Y.P.E.S. in the campaign?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

So the Minister and I went to that conference.

The Minister for Children and Families:

We attended, yes. We did go to the ... it was an excellent ... yes, you are quite right. We attended the conference that they held, it was absolutely excellent. We fully support the Real Life Campaign launched at the conference. It is a multi-agency campaign which is support from, as you said, N.S.P.C.C. and the Safeguarding Partnership in Jersey and it aims to bring together all those working with children aged 9 to 11 in the Island. That obviously includes ourselves and people working within C.Y.P.E.S. I do not know if there is any other ... we are keeping children safe in

schools but that is very much ... although we have got an awareness of that, that is in the realm of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning. I do not know if there is anything else that you have got, Donna?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

I think the overriding objective from the conference was that online safety, we cannot just leave it to children and blame them when it goes wrong. We have got to take ... I know, but that is what happens in the real world. We heard some really powerful stories about people whose lives have got wrapped up in some ... so obviously we have got to take responsibility, but we have also got to give people the tools to make sure that their young people are safe when they are online. The Minister and I met after that conference with one of the people who is heading up that project, and we are going to be taking that work forward together.

The Minister for Children and Families:

It is interesting. We heard yesterday, this was at the World Children's Day conference from the representative from the U.N. (United Nations), that they do not support the idea of the Australian legislation that they are proposing.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

This is the mobile phone ban?

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes, which attempts to ban children from social media and block them. That is probably unworkable. Of course, it removes any of the benefits, perhaps, from social media, because there are benefits as well as downsides. The other thing, of course, it is likely to do is just drive them to use underground platforms that are developed, and that is even worse because we would have no control over those.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

So it is better to teach young people to use those applications safely.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

You mentioned about taking the work forward with somebody from the organisation. That will be some work done within C.Y.P.E.S. around this area?

Director of Children and Families:

That is the Safeguarding Children Partnership, so it is a broader thing. It is across all of the agencies working together that some of the ongoing learning development, the training programme will run in that partnership way, so it is available to all organisations rather than one. It is a much bigger thing.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, so that will be within the Safeguarding Partnership Board area. Just the last little bit, are there any plans for further campaigns on other online safety topics or not?

Director of Children and Families:

Part of that work, they will continue to drive forward that knowledge and understanding across the partnership, so that agencies are aware. That would include a continuing development rather than ...

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

So there may be more coming up.

Director of Children and Families:

... necessarily a big campaign. It will be more about embedding.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

It is a change in culture, and we have got to embed that everywhere.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

That is where we will probably see it, within the Safeguarding Partnership Board?

Director of Children and Families:

Yes, it is definitely the right space for it to sit in, because it will hit a much larger group of organisations across Government and outside, which is what you want, really. And schools, because every partnership is at that board, part of that partnership.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I think that is it. I think we are done.

The Connétable of Grouville:

We got to the end.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Thank you very much.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Thank you very much, everybody. We can bring the hearing to an end.

[15:37]