

3.8 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the funding for the implementation of the Williamson Report:

I fear I know the answer. Will the Minister inform Members whether the funding for the implementation of the Williamson Report has been finally agreed and, if so, when was it agreed and will she inform Members what elements, if any, are in place for 2010 onwards?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Minister, I understand this is to be answered by Deputy Martin.

Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier (Assistant Minister for Health and Social Services – rapporteur):

Yes, I am pleased to confirm on behalf of the Minister for Health and Social Services and all of us at Health that £2.8 million has been granted in the cash limits for Health and Social Services in 2010 and this will be followed by additional investment of a further £200,000 in 2011 and another £300,000 in 2012. The Deputy and other Members will see from a statement that is to be read out by the Minister shortly that there are very many priorities already ready to go. We are bringing in Andrew Williamson as a transitional lead to make sure that this does start to happen in 2010. Basically, the Children's Plan, Court Advisory Services, monies for charities such as Brighter Futures and Millie's Contact Centre are all ready to go and we are asking Andrew Williamson again to look at the very, very important part of independent advocacy service and he will make that a priority and, hopefully, we will be introducing that in 2010.

3.8.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does the Assistant Minister not agree that finalising funding at this late date was unfortunate in that many of the recipients of projected funding in December are unaware what their January budget will be?

Deputy J.A. Martin:

Well, we are where we are. Health was ready to go and was trying to get the funding in May or June. I can see where the Deputy is coming from. He seems to have very much concern, like we do at Health, about Brighter Futures. Brighter Futures has always been told - and I have had personal contact with the person who runs Brighter Futures which is located at the Bridge - that please be patient but we were told they did have the money. Their own money would cover 2010 and there was not an urgency. We only found out quite late that there was an urgency but they are in the funding for 2010 to carry on their much-needed work. When Mr. Williamson is here, he will need to look at all these charities - any duplication, how we are getting into all the vulnerable families - and this is work that has got to be done.

3.8.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

I have 2 questions. One, the Assistant Minister referred to some £3.3 million in total when the original budget for Williamson was £5.6 million. What has happened to the remaining £2.3 million? Where is it and when is it, if anywhere? Secondly, will she specifically put her full backing behind low level interventions like Brighter Futures from Williamson and from our own report into vulnerable children which suggested that it was essential work even though it comes a long way down the pecking order and is not only restricted to vulnerable children but is non-stigmatising and tries to get

a broad base of families in order to put in early intervention to prevent major difficulties later on?

Deputy J.A. Martin:

For the original funding... and the Deputy will remember that there was a recommendation that we have social workers up to layman compliance, but even the Scrutiny Panel on Vulnerable Children said this may not be the time. We need to get what we are doing right first before we increase. The Deputy asked will I give my full support. Well, the Deputy does know me. Of course, we want early intervention and advocacy. Just today, we are interviewing for the Board of Governors for Greenfields which are going to go into the children's homes. Yes, the Bridge, Brighter Futures, Grands Vaux; all work with families - early intervention - but we need to do much more of it. I fully support this and I hope that is what the Deputy wants to hear, and I am not the only one, but we need to get moving now and this is why I think we have a fantastic opportunity. We have got a transitional lead coming in who will hit the ground running. We do not need to teach him to suck eggs and he will be getting on with the work starting January 2010.