

STATES OF JERSEY

Health, Social Services and Housing Scrutiny Panel The Co-ordination of Services for Vulnerable Children Sub-Panel

WEDNESDAY, 6th MAY 2009

Panel:

Senator A. Breckon (Chairman)
Deputy T.M. Pitman of St. Helier (Vice-Chairman)
Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of St. Saviour
Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier

Witnesses:

Mr. P. Dennett (Children's Executive Co-ordinator)
Mr. G. Blackwell (Youth Action Team Manager)

In attendance:

Mrs. C. Le Quesne (Scrutiny Officer)

Senator A. Breckon (Chairman):

My name is Alan Breckon and I am chairing this sub panel which is looking at the co-ordination of services for vulnerable children. The other Members: the Vice Chairman is Deputy Trevor Pitman, the other Members are Deputy Geoff Southern and Deputy Roy Le Hérissier. For the benefit of the tape, could I ask you if you could introduce yourselves and give us your title and maybe a little bit about the work that you do?

Mr. P. Dennett (Children's Executive Co-Ordinator):

I am Phil Dennett, I am Co-ordinator for Children's Executive. I was previously head of Children's Services, going back a few years but, following the Kathie Bull report where there was a recommendation to look at services on a multi-agency basis, the post of Co-ordinator Children's Executive was created and I was appointed to that post, initially on a secondment basis and then on a permanent basis. I have responsibility for residential children's homes, secure unit and ultimate

responsibility for the Youth Action Team, although Grant manages the team directly. Then on a multi-agency basis, I have responsibility for initiatives across all the agencies to try to look at work with young people: offending, challenging behaviour, emotional and physical difficulties. So I have been responsible to the corporate parent, the Ministers for Health and Social Services, Education, Sports and Culture and Home Affairs and their Chief Officers; although that has now changed, that structure, post-Williamson and I now have direct responsibility to the Chief Officer for Health and Social Services and the Minister for Health and Social Services. But my brief is still to work across the other agencies to try to look at creative multi-agency work with young people.

Senator A. Breckon:

Okay. Grant, would you like to tell us a bit about your title and what you do?

Mr. G. Blackwell (Youth Action Team Manager):

Okay. My name is Grant Blackwell, I manage the Youth Action Team. I was employed by Children's Executive to run this multi-agency team. We are based at the Bridge. We are a team of social workers, probation officers, police officers, at C.A.M.H.s (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) - that is a mental health nurse - and we liaise with the Probation Department and, increasingly, with the Youth Service. We were set up by essentially the Kathie Bull report to try and work pre-emptively, proactively, preventatively with young people but also to target those who are called E.B.D. (Educational and Behavioural Difficulties). So we are at both ends of the spectrum. We have been here 4 years. I think we have built up a team that works together and at the Bridge, which is very important; we are part of the community. I think the difference between the Youth Action Team and the Youth Offending Team in the U.K. (United Kingdom) is that we are part of the Bridge, we are part of other departments and we try to work more proactively and we welcome the opportunity to explain to yourselves what we do.

Senator A. Breckon:

Phil, can I start with you first on the Children's Executive. Can you explain to us how that has come

together, the various sections of that; maybe at a higher level and an officer level?

Mr. P. Dennett:

Yes. I mean, as I said, Kathie Bull came out with the idea - not the idea - introduced the concept of corporate parenting. Now, it was interpreted in Jersey in a very particular way of looking at 3 particular departments and, as I mentioned, Health and Social Services, Education, Sports and Culture, and Home Affairs. So those 3 Ministers were seen as the corporate parent with the chief officers working very closely with them. Now, for me, if you look at the concept of corporate parenting in the U.K., I think it is broadly that seeing it as a government, as a society, we are all responsible for dealing with young people and the challenges that they create. So it was, I think, a slightly different model within Jersey, going for the absolute 3 Ministers responsible. Now, I have to say, from my point of view, it proved difficult at that highest level; that issue about being responsible to 3 Ministers and, as it turned out, 4 chief officers. Because apart from those 3 chief officers there was also Brian Heath who I know has just been with you; so it was kind of 4 chief officers. So you can imagine it can be quite difficult having one boss sometimes but, in my opinion, I had kind of almost 7 bosses; sometimes with 7 different agendas. But, having said that, everybody has come to the table with the best possible thought of improving the lot of dealing with young people but it did prove a bit of a challenge. There was not one person ultimately responsible to be able to say: "This is where the buck stops" in a sense and I think over the last couple of years when we know there have been issues in lots of different areas I think that issue has come to the fore and, indeed, Williamson very particularly addressed that and said what was needed. We still needed the concept of corporate parenting about everybody being involved and recognising their agenda, however, you need lines of accountability to be very clear and we need to report to one Minister. So the current situation whereby I am reporting through to Mike Pollard, from my point of view, is far more clear. It still allows me to work across agencies but I am very clear who I am reporting to on that basis.

Senator A. Breckon:

Do you think that the departments have worked better together as a result of the Children's Executive?

Mr. P. Dennett:

I do. I do absolutely and I know it has maybe come in for some criticism but I think there are, both at a strategic level and at an operational level, there are things that have happened over the last few years which I know previously, having been in my position as head of Children's Services, you know, we were not getting people together. You know, the old: "Challenge the people to come out of their silos and to work creatively" you know, that has happened. You know, we have had Ministers round the same table, we have had chief officers, senior officers sitting round that table having sometimes very difficult discussions. But they have been round the table which is something which was not happening previously.

Senator A. Breckon:

At a political level, I mean, there have been suggestions about a Children's Minister and that sort of thing but, with a corporate parent, from your recollection when this was so, who takes responsibility or the lead for it then? I think it was Committee Presidents when it was still ...

Mr. P. Dennett:

Yes, it was from Committee Presidents and it was, from my point of view, clearly it was the 3 of them; it was 3 presidents of the committee, as you say which then ...

Senator A. Breckon:

Home Affairs, Education and Health, in effect.

Mr. P. Dennett:

Yes, so we had meetings. I mean, there were issues about the regularity of those meetings; how often they occurred or should have occurred but ...

Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier:

They did not occur very often, did they?

Mr. P. Dennett:

They did not occur very often at that level, they did not.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

It is remarkable that so few meetings took place, in fact.

Mr. P. Dennett:

Yes, I mean it was very difficult to try and, you know, get those meetings together; you know, 3 Ministers, 4 chief officers, X number of senior officers. They were very difficult to get together.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

But, nonetheless, you appear to have made some steps forward. Were you operating in the dark?

Mr. P. Dennett:

I would not say in the dark, because I mean the structure was the corporate parents - so the Ministers and the chief officers - beneath that was the group which they called the Children's Executive. So that was made up of senior officers from across the departments: so Mario Lundy from Education, Marnie Baudains, Tony la Sueur from Health and Social Services, Carolyn Coverley, the psychiatrist, the prison governor. So people at a very senior level, operationally very close as well. So I reported to them and we met on a monthly basis. So for me, that is where my strategic lead and direction was coming from. So I think, you know, that is my example of people coming together and you are right, the political corporate parent group never met as much as I would have liked but the Children's Executive did meet on a monthly basis.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Obviously, you got on with things and have adopted this, if you like, preventative approach so that you

are on the borderline between the criminal system and the social work system, as it were. You are largely social-based. To what extent do you notice the interface between the criminal system and the social work, so the caring system, because I think you are sitting right on the edge of that?

Mr. P. Dennett:

Yes. What we clearly had to do was to be able to meet the challenge of both those issues. Now, when I first came in, we had a residential care system which was creaking a bit. We had a secure unit which was at the old Les Chênes Greenfields which absolutely was not fit for purpose from a building point of view and Kathie Bull was very clear about that, that something needed to be done about that and the issue, as you rightly to say, about working on a preventative basis with young people. Now it was my job to ensure that we just did not concentrate in one of those areas. We had to build a new secure unit, which we did, and Andrew Williamson was lavish in his praise of the building that we designed and created. We had to look at the Children's Homes and we began a process of reviewing and making recommendations as to how they would be created and then alongside that we created the Youth Action Team, and as Grant rightly said that, is about dealing with young offenders in front of the court but it absolutely has a clear remit about prevention. So we did not create a Youth Offending Team as in the U.K., we created a Youth Action Team so they would deal with offenders and they had a clear remit about prevention. Alongside that, we developed within the schools, what we called multi-agency support teams, M.A.S.T. - we came up with letters for everything as they do in the world. Well, M.A.S.T. which was about creating support in the 4 State secondary schools. So, on top of the normal pastoral support in school, there is education welfare link, school psychological support. Now, what we wanted was the icing on the cake and that was to place a social worker in each of the 4 secondary schools. Now that has not come to fruition, but that has been about recruitment of social work in Jersey which we know are some of the bigger issues. But where we were able to appoint a social worker in Le Rocquier School the feedback was first class about the impact that had within the school and within the support of the young people. But we have still got that bigger issue about recruiting social workers.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

The difference that that makes, for example?

Mr. P. Dennett:

Well, for example, the social work role, and I was very clear when we worked with the staff about saying, we are putting a social worker in the school, not to be a counsellor because there is already a school counsellor, not to be the normal pastoral support because that is already there, and what we do not want is a social worker involved with families where they do not need to be. I mean, I believe the social workers have a role but families have a right to get on with their lives without Social Services. So that role was to be involved where it was absolutely necessary. So if there were issues within the school of a kind of child protection or kind of concern at that level, that they would have a social worker on site who would, hopefully - well not hopefully - who would make the process quicker than a normal referral through to Social Services which might take, you know, a couple of days to get through, but also very actively, the social worker in the school can help to deal with things and clarify issues where within the school they might be thinking: "Oh, you know, this is child protection, you know", it is up on the ceiling somewhere in the sense of importance, but the social worker in there can both work with the staff, the young people and the families to keep things, you know, at an appropriate level and to make that instant assessment about this needs to go to a different level or not. The feedback from Le Rocquier was absolutely first class on that; the social worker was involved in staff training, those kind of issues.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier of St. Saviour:

Thank you. Deputy Southern has raised the issue of the interface between the criminal justice system and Social Services and it has been put to us that had Kathie Bull been developed further we might, for example, particularly with children who were on the cusp or who are in need of the criminal justice system, we might have a move to something like the Scottish model. Did your group look at this or were you trying to make existing resources just work more effectively, or were you trying to, for want of a better term, re-conceptualise how we approach those issues?

Mr. P. Dennett:

I think what was very clear coming out of the Kathie Bull report was that the plan that was put together post Kathie Bull was not the one that we ended up with, and there was issues about funding. Now we know, you know, I live in the real world, I know we are living in a States system and the financial picture is not great now so we have to cut our cloth accordingly. Going back to the Kathie Bull bit, I mean, I was disappointed, I was an officer involved at the time and we had come up with a comprehensive plan to the tune of whatever it was, £X million in order to deliver what needed to be delivered in Jersey. It came back to us with very clear: "You have got £700,000." Now, I do not know where that figure came from but that is the figure that we were told. Myself and Mike Cutland from Probation and Mario Lundy from Education then locked ourselves in a room for 2 days and redid the plan on the basis of £700,000. Now I think we got it to about £900,000 or something, if my memory serves me right, and that is the figure we eventually got. But, again if my memory serves me right and I am not clear on this, I think it is about a third of what was originally asked for. So we never ended up with what was set out in the full Kathie Bull report and I know Grant could talk more on this later, but the Youth Action Team, for instance, was a much bigger, wider, more creative service with lots of different other staff. We eventually cut different bits from it and said: "Okay", I appointed Grant and said: "Here is what you could have had, but here is what you have got and you have got to make the team work on that basis." The team was stretched. I think it was originally something like 14, 15 staff and it has ended up much less than that, has it not? So that was the reality of the Kathie Bull situation. Now, there is the issue about the Scottish system, you know, a more civil route to dealing with young people and I think within Children's Executive there is different thoughts about that as to whether the Scottish system is the right one or the English type system or the Jersey type system because we do have the Parish Hall system here which you could argue is similar to the Scottish system of keeping things out of the criminal justice system, you know, working at Parish level. So, you know, the Parish Hall system has been praised on that kind of basis. So, there are different issues around that.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Sorry, just quickly following up, of course what the Parish system does not do, it does not say, for example: "This child needs to be in secure care or in care. But they do not need the stigma of a criminal

offence to put them in that care.” It cannot do that, it just operates as a diversionary system, does it not?

Mr. P. Dennett:

It does. I mean, there is also ... I mean, the other route into secure care is now that there is a welfare route into secure care, but that is through the Royal Court and the plimsoll line for that is very high and quite rightly so, so a social worker can go to the Royal Court and ask for a secure welfare order where the youngster is, you know, putting themselves at risk, persistently absconding, et cetera, et cetera. But that plimsoll line is very high so there is a welfare route to there as well. But you are right, the Parish Hall system can not do that.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Okay, I am just wondering if we could ... I mean part of the issue has been the Youth Action Team, I just wondered if you want to ... feel it is appropriate to come in there and say: “This is what we are doing.”

Mr. G. Blackwell:

Yes, that would be good. Given the brief for the panel that I had, I did prepare some written information which, you know, there is one for each of you to take away and look at, so that should take you through a journey through the world of Youth Action Team from our original principles, our roles, what we hope to achieve, the numbers of young people we work with and also who we work with, which is very important. Very importantly we are a multi-agency team and I think in Jersey that was new and a big sea change. So, for example, every Monday at the Bridge the team meet and we look at all the cases that are coming through to the Parish Hall and all those through to the Youth Court and the Royal Court. So, all the agencies are there and now the Youth Service have joined in, we have got the data protection of that sorted and we totally share all the information about the young person. So we look at them holistically and try to balance their justice and welfare needs. What this means is, hopefully, a more efficient use of resources, we are not contradicting each other, we are working together wherever possible and ultimately the outcome is better for the young person. So I think that has been a big help

and I hope that has come through. In terms of the past 3 years, the numbers of young people ... at the moment there is a blip and there is obviously a big interest in young people and youth justice issues, but overall in 3 years the courts have noticed a decrease in numbers of young people coming through to the courts, also with the Parish Halls. For instance, we particularly targeted take and drive aways, 4 years ago there were a lot scooters and motor cycles being stolen, very inconvenient, expensive and dangerous. We set up the Motocross Project and those figures have dropped and we would know now who was stealing motor cycles and we would be very quickly on their case. So it is targeting particular things that we can make a difference. Critically, our vision statement, and have we not all got to have one, said we would involve the Community of Jersey, but 8 people on their own cannot deal with welfare and justice issues, so wherever we have had help that has made a big difference. For instance, running the Motocross Project we totally rely on that group of people to support us, both in sponsorship, in working together and in allowing us to use the land and people get an opportunity there to do something they would not normally do and it is not a flash in the pan, it is still running after 3 years. I think if we have got the wrong issue that I would put up my hand, we were a little undersold, I think, that we could certainly do more work with the media and put forward the positive stuff that does happen with young people. Critically, listening to them and we do a lot of that. In any one month we would have up to 400 at least contacts with young people individually or in groups and they tell us things, particularly when we go around residential, we learn a lot about them. It is what their needs are and what helps to divert them from crime and antisocial behaviour. I think we need to listen more and respond accordingly. The big issue is activity is what I am hearing from both staff and young people, it seems to do ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Affordable activities is one of the ...

Senator A. Breckon:

Do you produce ... thank you for producing that document as well. We will certainly include that in our evidence.

Mr. G. Blackwell:

Okay.

Senator A. Breckon:

Do you produce an annual report to anybody or is it just the agencies and the others that you are working with?

Mr. G. Blackwell:

It is generally we have been in the other agencies' reports. We do have a full set of procedures and a training plan, an annual plan and I am due to report on that, and it will be our first annual report. In that I hope to sort of highlight the outcomes and the positive events that have happened in young people's lives. We are, as I am sure you are aware, dealing with a very small number of people. They have a very high profile. At any one time we work with between 60 and 70, it has never really gone above that in 4 years. If you are looking at Jersey, obviously they are not the whole story, but if we compile a list between the agencies it would not really hit 3 figures out of the whole population.

Senator A. Breckon:

You work sort of around the clock so you are available sort of evenings and weekends to assist where it matters?

Mr. G. Blackwell:

We are increasingly linking in with residential services to try and offer that. We have a police officer who works with us, which has been so important in effective working, obviously she works flexibly. The Motocross Project runs on Saturdays, at weekends. The residentials we run have covered some holidays and weekends. With the resourcing that we have got we do our best to cover out-of-hours, but that is an issue and we cover issues such as appropriate adult work which is going into Youth Custody when young people are arrested, we act as appropriate adults and last month we had nearly 40 callouts, I

think, and 8 Special Courts. There were 4 normal Youth Courts and 8 Special ones, which we have ... there was one this morning when we have to ... if you have got young people we have to go to court with them. So I would say we are quite busy, we have had a busy month. It is quietening down. But linking in with other agencies, yes, a more 24/7 would be good thing to aim to.

Senator A. Breckon:

Can you just give us 2 questions arising from that? What sort of age groups are you mainly working with and the second question is what sort of parental involvement or support is there with young people?

Mr. G. Blackwell:

Our technical age range is 10 to the 18th birthday, so age of criminal responsibility. All the issues we have peak at 14 and a half to 15. Most of the issues are boys; it is generally a ratio of 5 to 1. Having said that, at the moment from the meeting that we had last week as a response to the sort of crisis in youth justice with 12 young people that were targeted, 7 of them were girls and that is unusual, that would not normally be the case. So, from that we try to target the work that we do and use resources as efficiently as we can.

Deputy T.M. Pitman of St. Helier:

I am probably bound to ask this question with my background, but just what you touched on earlier, that the Youth Action Team was intended to be much larger. The decision not to have a professional youth worker or someone from Youth Service at the start, was that a political decision or was that down to funding?

Mr. P. Dennett:

It was down to resources. I mean, I sat down at the time with the multi-agency group which ... the Children's Executive, Shirley Costigan, as Head of Youth Service joined that group and Shirley was very committed to recognising the importance of Youth Services, as we all were, but there were resource issues all round. Now, the position that we have now been able to move to is that there are very clear

links there with Youth Service and Youth Action Team. They attend your meetings and the joint working now is very positive with Youth Service. But it has taken time, but it has been low resources and you are absolutely right, as I said earlier, the team would have had designated youth workers within the team if the funding would have been available right at the start.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Although you say that now that multi-agency approach is much enhanced and improved, is there restrictions that you have not got a youth professional on the team? Is he party to all the information or does he have to step out of meetings?

Mr. G. Blackwell:

No, we managed to resolve that after quite a period of negotiation and contact with Data Protection Officer. There are sensitivities, the rest of the agencies are statutory and have a clear duty to exchange information. The Youth Service does not; it is a voluntary group, so handling of information has to be very, very carefully done. So it was several months in negotiation before we could convincingly allow a senior youth representative into the team. But that has been resolved because we are discussing the prevention of crime and antisocial behaviour and the ability to assess risk to people in the community, and that gives us a remit to discuss cases with the strictest conditions of confidentiality. I have to say that in 4 years we have been operational, we have not had an issue of confidentiality from the team, which I have to hand to colleagues is a real success because we handle the most sensitive of information from police records, child protection, health, police, the whole range, education, within the team. So we are hyper-careful over that. But it does empower you to make decisions about young people and, as you said earlier, to work effectively with families and parents are a huge issue. Working with parents is good, but by definition often the young people we work with have very difficult family backgrounds and are not getting on with their parents and are sometimes not even safe in the parental home. So we have a range from being able to do family work, we work with colleagues in the Bridge, we do family support for family parenting sessions, all the way through to having to assess a young person as not being safe to live with their family. So you can deal with that in the same week.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

One other point. Is there any danger that you, or both, repeat work? Are you taking work that maybe Youth Service are doing or how much do you make sure that dovetails and fits in together?

Mr. G. Blackwell:

Well, because we are now working together much more effectively, our latest Crabbé experience, had a youth worker working with us. So that was taking 10 of Jersey's more challenging young men away and that was with the help ... Crabbé is a Youth Service provision and we had a youth worker working with us who are able to bring activities that we cannot offer. The challenge to young people is there and also an exchange of information because the Youth Service do pick up a lot of information from working with young people in clubs and the streets and that helps us enormously. So, no, that is a very fair question, but I really do not feel we are duplicating resources at the moment. We have joint team meetings, joint planning and the beauty of being what the agency is, we do avoid doing 2 things with the same person.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Can I come on to perhaps a wider issue? You are obviously involved in that mixture of social work and criminal justice work. How effective is Jersey in preventing the criminalisation of young people? In a bigger picture, what is your thing for it?

Mr. G. Blackwell:

Starting from the basis; it is a highly policed society. There are a lot of policemen per head of population, if you add the States and Honoraries together and there is a network of information, so there is a lot of monitoring of young people. Who is misbehaving, when, where, how, is quickly known on Jersey. The Parish Halls deal with, I think, more than 300 young people a year, so often you could identify issues starting at the Parish Hall level, initially. We try wherever we can to intervene with that with voluntary supervision, in terms of identifying crime in areas. At all stages we try to intervene

preventatively to stop the young person going through the youth justice system. Intervene at Parish Hall proactively, Youth Court we have increasingly asked for bound overs from the court instead of probation orders. We have a representative who goes to the Youth Court with a probation officer every week. We always have had a good relationship with the Youth Panel, critically they understand what we do, they trust what we do, that we do what we say we do which is very important. So we offer a range of services to the court from bound overs to bail support, if we think the young person could be supported at a residential centre or custody we will offer that. Obviously those packages of support are labour-intensive and at the moment, again, I would say we have been fairly busy. But for every one person who ends up either in remand in Greenfields or in La Moye, there are 2 or 3 we are probably keeping out. But that is not resource-neutral. Throughout the life of the team, the old saying is: "Resources follow risk" and where you have high profile young people, that is what people want to see, they want to see you responding to that, and I think there is always a pressure to draw us away from the more preventative and voluntary side of the work and that is an issue.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Okay, thank you. Back to both of you, I wonder if I could broaden the question even further and ask you whether you are happy - this is a leading question - are you happy with the findings on the Williamson and the recommendations of the Williamson Report? We really need to know that, not because we want to pin you down, but clearly people said the Bull Report was good in many respects, but was never either resourced or it was never as broad in its remit, particularly in terms of, say, the criminal justice systems, people had somehow expected it to be. So, similarly with Williamson, we really need to know from you, particularly when we look at things like the Looked After Children Report to try and broaden the perspective. Is it fit for purpose and is it really going to lead us, not to the new Jerusalem perhaps, but it is really going to be a secure foundation for several years to come?

Mr. P. Dennett:

Yes, I mean, I think that it is. I mean, I think you are right in your comment there at the end. We are not going to cure this and we all know that. We are not going to solve youth crime, we are not going to

stop young people having difficulties within the families. All we have got to have are comprehensive services that can deal with that. Now I felt very confident being manager of part of the service which has been heavily criticised when Andrew Williamson was coming in, I knew, hand on heart, that Andrew Williamson would come in and say: "Okay, you can do this, you can do that, but generally there is good services here and there is good staff and there are staff who are here to try and work creatively with young people." I do believe that and I think Andrew Williamson clearly said that. But he has come out with a blue print with if we had the right investment, that we can move services forward. So whether that is residential care, whether that is creative preventative services, intensive support teams, fostering, all of that, but it needs investment and we are all clear about that. Now, my concern as to where we are with Williamson, having been one of the senior officers who drew up the Implementation Plan, that the financial situation, again the situation is kicking in and I have got little alarm bells ringing, you know, if you want me to be very honest, about, you know, here we go Kathie Bull again. You know, we asked for the report, we have got a report, there is a price tag and now we are saying: "Well, we will have to take that bit out and we will have to take that bit out" and there are things, I am sure you are aware, social work, Laming compliance, for instance, to ensure we have got enough social workers.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

How important is that recommendation which is tagged on so that it may ...

Mr. P. Dennett:

It was tagged on, it was not part of the Williamson Recommendation which, when we were told the new figures, we had to say: "Well, that bit has got to come out because it was not part of Williamson." I understand that, but it was the same time as the Baby P situation in the U.K. We all know social work: I have managed it for years, it is a risk business, every day of the week we make decisions about children, about babies, about teenagers, should they be in homes, should they not be at home? Now, just throwing staff at it is not always the answer, it is about good structure, good supervision, all of that, but if you have not got the numbers of social workers in the first place, people are working under stress with big caseloads and that is where mistakes can happen. Now we will never say there will never be a Baby

P situation in Jersey, we do not know, but I think if we have not got enough social workers to be dealing with that then it is an issue we need to get our heads around.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

So you would consider it still to be an important issue?

Mr. P. Dennett:

Personally, I would.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

I mean, June Thoburn was talking about if you are not specialising in child protection, as it were, then if you are doing a wider remit, if you have got a geographical base, for example, to do your social work, then perhaps the stresses are less than this intense child protection issues, you know, it must be very, very, very demanding. That is where you might have some flexibility if you were organised differently.

Mr. P. Dennett:

Yes, I mean, it is demanding but it also builds up expertise and I think if, you know, from the way I manage the services over here, we have a Child Protection Team and you build up staff. It is a tough area of work, you are absolutely right, you know, and the flipside of it, people get worn down and that is you, as a manager, being able to work with that and spot that. But the other side of it is so you build up a tremendous knowledge, tremendous expertise. When you walk into a family and they are talking about this as a baby situation and if you look at, you know, the reports coming out about the Baby P situation with a lot of the staff who were dealing with that situation were agency staff, they were not experienced in that kind of area. So we do need to build up expertise in this area and we have got very experienced, very good workers in that area. So, you know, there is the geographical safe way of managing it, but I know, I mean, I have worked in the U.K. in, say, Bristol where you split up geographically. In Jersey, you know, if I was asking a volunteer: "Well, I will take St. John, thank you very much", you know, or ... so the geographical bit is a little bit of a ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Generic, rather than ...

Mr. P. Dennett:

Yes.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Can I just take ... also Williamson is a very demanding timescale, a very demanding load, I mean, we are running with, I do not know, a third under social workers, are we not? Currently it is massively under resourced in that sense and under staffed. How do you feel about the timescales put in there, you know, can we get those senior social workers in place and up and running in the timescale?

Mr. P. Dennett:

Well, I think, if anything, you have got to come up with a plan, you know, post Kathie Bull, you know, the setting up of Y.A.T. (Youth Action Team), we came out with a plan and some targets, most of the targets we hit, some we did not. I think we had to be very clear and say with Williamson: "Here is a plan that can happen." Now, clearly they have been delayed because the States debate has been delayed, and I can understand the politics behind that, but, you know, the clock is ticking and we were looking for this year already to have brought some of those things in. Now, one of the exciting developments for me is the Intensive Support Team and we were talking about this team being available ... sorry, somebody just asked about 24/7 service, so this service to be available as and when needed to be very creative. So if Grant, within his team, identified a young person and family at crisis point, we would have an Intensive Support Team to come on and, if necessary, to be in that home and to be working very creatively with that young person and the family. That was one of the first things to come on board; we need it and we need it now, but it has been delayed now pending the States debate. So there is a lot in there, the timescale is rather tight, but, you know, I believe we can deliver.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

On one of the issues that directly concerns you, Phil, and it has been highlighted by this Family X case which is confronting the States at the moment, it seems that while a lot of people said: “Oh, we must ream up residential care”, it seemed to be almost a rationalisation decision, in other words, simply we can troop the Children’s Homes we can close one and then we can thereby more efficiently and more effectively run the remainder. But it was never argued, or never publicly argued, what we need is to move to a more therapeutic community type model. You were involved in residential care, why were we not presented before Williamson with a very clear alternative to what you described in your earlier comments as this creaking model that we work with?

Mr. P. Dennett:

Well, I mean, when I say “creaking” I want to be clear in my wording because ... my background is residential care and before managing Children’s Service I was head of Heathfield for many years and although I describe it as “creaking” again it was providing good care and again, within the current climate, I do get a little bit, you know, upset about charges thrown at - I mean charge with a small “c” - at residential care saying it was never any good. Well, I know the many years I managed Heathfield we worked with some very challenging young people and did it very effectively. Now, the reason I say “creaking” or I said “creaking” was, you know, we looked at secure and said we needed to do something about that to bring it, to modernise it, and for me that was the first piece of the jigsaw. We then were looking at the Children’s Homes and we were very clear, we needed smaller, more focused work with those young people. If you look at the model in the U.K., they went from big 60 to 70 bed children’s homes to smaller 15 bedded and now they operate on 4 to 5 bedded. Now, we had moved to the 10, 12 bedded units back in the 1980s and we had run that kind of model. Now what we have said, and I did report, we have said we needed to move to the next stage of looking at smaller ... now people call them therapeutic units, but I have kind of discussions what do people mean by that, you know, people sometimes see it as floppy therapy going on, you know. Basic good care with young people can be described as therapeutic. What we have on top of that is good professionals coming in, you know, whether they are psychiatric support, psychological support, other therapies, where you need the

fundamental bit about the smaller children's home, very well staffed, very well trained staff. Now, the variance of Greenfields was the first stage of that and we were ready to move to the other bit, when of course 2 years ago everything else kicked off in different areas which delayed all of that; nothing could be moved, nothing could happen while the Haut de la Garenne issues, the issues about Mr. Bellwood at Greenfields and what he was saying; everything stopped. Then Andrew Williamson came in and said: "You now need to move to A, B, and C", and I was very clear that we were heading in that direction anyway.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

One of the things, and we have got a proposition, for example, about advocacy services. One of the arguments about Jersey is that there are not the proper checks and balances in the system and we are all, it appears, to blame from the politicians downwards. You know, either we have not taken an interest or whatever, there are not the proper checks and balances in the system. But it is not only a question of checks and balances, it is a question of creating, you know, an environment and this report looks at the Danish system quite a lot, does it not? So, on the one hand you have got to have more monitoring and inspection of staff but on the other, it appears, you have got to place a lot more trust in staff and you have got to confront issues like allegedly that homes are not sort of almost simulated families, you know, and that staff have become quite frightened of close physical contact and all these issues. How on earth do you get more reform from within the system, and a lot of it coming from the mouths of staff, you know, we want them and indeed the children, the occupants of your Homes.

Mr. P. Dennett:

Yes, it is a very, you know, difficult situation and currently, I have to say, everything that has gone on in the last couple of years makes that even harder. You know, we have got staff dealing with very difficult situations and as I, you know, had contact with Greenfields this morning; there is a young person in there aged 15-year-old, extremely challenging, big, physical, and he has stated openly to staff in the last couple of days: "I want to get to La Moye and I am going to do everything to get there. If that means smashing up staff ..." and I think the panel visited Greenfields recently.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Yes, yes, we did.

Mr. P. Dennett:

“Smashing up staff, smashing up the building, I will do it until you send me to La Moye.” So this is the situation and staff are turning round trying to make a professional judgment in the context of everything that has gone on, you know, can they lay a hand on the child to stop? Can they put him in his room if he needs to because that is the safest place for him and the other young people there? All these issues are very real for staff and, as you have seen, trying to do that under the context of improving services and ensuring checks and balances. Now, within the Greenfields bit, we have always had a Board of Visitors, independent Board of Visitors who have been there for many years, who have visited, they visit independently, they visit unannounced, they meet every 2 months, they prepare reports, reports to go to the Jersey Child Protection Committee. Now, we are wanting to broaden that so they look at other children’s homes as well. So there are checks and balances in the system, but, you know, we are asking staff to do a very complex job and, I have to say, you know, morale is not great. It has been a very difficult couple of years for people and we, our job as managers, is to say: “Come on, you know, you are doing a tough job, but we have got to lift and raise that morale.” But it is a tough time for staff, yes.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Obviously that report that Roy is referring to is quoting, I think, it says that any service is only as good as the staff and the training, et cetera. How difficult is it now to get the staff that you require? Obviously there is a part of Williamson which refers to recruitment and training, how difficult is it going to be for you to recruit those staff and do we have to go locally or are you going to have to go out?

Mr. P. Dennett:

There is 2 parts to each other, I would say. There are the issues about our staff in residential care and secure, that amazingly we have not struggled too much in that area. Now, as I say, despite morale being

low and the attacks the staff have come under, you know, we have managed to recruit in that area. Training is good, we look at, you know, talking about restraint and things like that, we train staff and we provide N.V.Q. (National Vocational Qualifications) for all staff now. All staff in our sector are N.V.Q. trained. So, we have not done too badly in that area and all those staff are local, we are very clear on that. The more complex area is the issue of qualified social workers working at Social Services H.Q. (Headquarters) where there is, you know, a ticking time bomb here of trying to recruit staff. It has been very difficult here; now it is mirrored across the U.K., this is not just a Jersey situation, recruitment into social work and, again talking frankly, you know, I have got kids and if I sat at home at the moment and you saw all the stuff on the news about Baby P and social workers and managers being named, shamed, you know, why would you advise your kids to go into social work at the moment? There is that issue that social work has got to get its head round to say: "How do we protect staff in a complex area, but how do you say to young people leaving university, 'This is a good profession to come into'?" Now I do not pretend to sit here and say I have got all the answers to that.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

One lead on question from that, if we are investing in training staff to get those social work qualifications, do you think there is anything to be gained by trying to build in at the end of that training a contract so at least we know we have got those people for 3 years, 2 years or whatever?

Mr. P. Dennett:

Again we already do that, Trevor, and we have invested in our own local staff and given them opportunities to train as qualified social workers to go to university. You can do it on a part-distance learning bit, so they can do some of their training in-house here; they go to university in the U.K., they do placements in the U.K. and we tie them to a contract. Having said that, it is extremely difficult to enforce that, you know, and I have been in situations where we have got the staff qualified and then at the end of it, 6 months later, they have gone off to the U.K. and we then try through our States H.R. (Human Resources) process to say: "Right, the financial penalty is this" and we have not managed it. We have absolutely not managed it. Now, the rights and wrongs of that I am not quite sure. So, it is

what we do but it is trying to hold people to it. But I have to say that has been in a couple of cases. The vast majority of some of the staff that we have now got as qualified social workers have come up through the system, have been qualified here and have turned into good social workers and they are ones we have retained. The difficulties we have had is bringing people in from the U.K. who have either come to Jersey and not settled, you know, there are all complex issues about settling on Jersey, cost of living, and the big factor that we had was that staff would come over and would be entitled to a rent subsidy which made the cost of living just about bearable, that rent subsidy has been taken away. So we now have got social workers who are, you know, used to be ... you know, I came over here 20 years ago and I was financially far better off coming here than I was working in the U.K. It is not the case any more. Authorities in the U.K. are getting their heads round the recruitment situation by offering very good financial packages to social workers, so we are not competing.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Commonwealth social works.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

So quite a key area then?

Mr. P. Dennett:

Yes, absolutely.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Then I will come to Grant and ask him his views on Williamson. Just to follow up, I mean, you see all these U.K. cases, it is always young social workers or young police officers involved in the front line in taking these enormously difficult decisions, which of course, begs the question, what has happened to the older and more experienced? Have they all gone into management to do sort of more and more monitoring of their younger staff?

Mr. P. Dennett:

I mean, the issue of social work, and if you read the findings of Baby P and Victoria Climbié and all those kind of reports is that a decision in social work should never be made in isolation. The social work profession and some people outside it kind of are not quite aware, it is all done towards supervision. The term “supervision” in social work is not: “I will just come watch you do your job”, it is basically decisions are checked so we would ... if you were working to me, Roy, your caseload we would discuss formally once a month; we would check decisions. I would be talking through to my line manager on that kind of basis. So, while you might see a younger social worker at the coal face, all the way up, managers, team managers as might be termed in the report about Baby P, that team manager is very close to practice. They are not the manager in an office somewhere who never sees what is going on; they are very close, very involved in that case discussion. But it is inevitable, these people then, you know, get experienced, get promoted, they are going to go through the ranks on that kind of basis.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Okay, thank you. I will ask Grant what he thinks of the Williamson Report?

Mr. G. Blackwell:

I think, you know, overall terms welcome. We definitely need the resources. I think the effect it has on the Youth Action Team, the history of the resourcing is we have taken on a lot of the child protection work. I would like to work more proactively and preventatively but we take on the whole case. So the social workers I have in the team at the moment have the same kind of caseload as they would if they were working at La Chance(?) or Maison Le Pape and we take on the whole body. At times that has put us under pressure and I would rather be working, as I say, more proactively with young people at an earlier stage that we can identify there are issues. It has pulled ... the mantra is: “Resource the most risk” and once they are in the team whether they are Parish Hall or all the way through to secure accommodation and custody, they are a young person and we cannot walk away. Our threshold of involvement is total; we do not have a line because they are already known to us through the youth justice system. So a case could come in to a field team and I could say: “That falls beneath our level of

assessment of need and risk.” But we do not have that because we are working with them anyway. So we take on the whole case. That has been an issue for us.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Can I just take you on to, Phil, back to this move from larger bedded units to smaller bed units, (a) that is resource hungry, I would have thought. You can only ... 4, 5 and 6 sort of teens in there, that is a problem. But also it depends on big initiatives, maintaining initiatives in fostering numbers. Now, it has been put to me that there might be a question about the fostering numbers; we have been very successful for the past few years, numbers have gone up and that has enabled us to get more variety and more appropriate placements, but that might be coming to an end. How do you see this?

Mr. P. Dennett:

Yes, I mean, I think you are right to raise that and I think it is an issue which there is a little bit of we do not know, and we have got to test this. You are right, small children’s homes are resource hungry. If I am running a children’s home for 10 young people and 5 young people, the staffing is the same. You know, you do not reduce the staff by half. So the staffing is the same. We have got to believe that fostering is the best option for young people in most cases, although, as I say, I do believe in good residential care, my background is that and some young people are not going to be appropriately placed in foster care; they do not want another family, so you will still need good residential care. But foster care for young people above the age ... we should not have children in residential care below the age of 11 for a start off. Sorry, we should not have people in residential care below the age of 11. Foster care should cover all those baby up to 11 years old. Now, we should ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Should?

Mr. P. Dennett:

Sorry, it was unclear.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Is that a realistic aim? Is that real?

Mr. P. Dennett:

Well, I mean, we have got to deliver that. You know, we have got to try to deliver that. If we cannot, I think we have got to get our heads round what that means in Jersey. Now the issue about fostering in Jersey that we have always had the issue with is have we thrown enough money into it? You know, in the U.K. they went to professional foster care where you paid people good money to stay at home first of all without any kids, and then you move on from that. Now we have never thrown enough money at it until the last few years when, as you said, there has been investment in that and we have placed, you know, children for permanency or adoption, fostering in those areas. Now, the question is can we now deliver to ensure that all those under 10 or 11 year-olds are all in foster care, can we deliver remand foster care, for instance, to ensure that those coming from the courts, rather than going to Greenfields, they could be with specialised foster carers who would look after remand. Now, the issue in Jersey, we have never thrown money at it so we are now, but there are other socio-economic factors in Jersey which might preclude us from getting those foster carers. For instance, have people got enough spare rooms in their house? We all know the housing situation. In the U.K. the profile of a family who might come forward might have a spare room. We know that that profile in Jersey is not necessarily the same. So we need to test, is that the situation? Are families going to be coming forward who have spare rooms where they can take on young people? So, my answer is a little bit: "I do not know", but we have got to have residential services, which we have currently that can mop that up. But I think if we get to the situation where the next recruitment drive does not bring us the foster carers that we need, we have got to ask ourselves what that means.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

In the meantime the facility that we do have and have had for a number of years dealing with younger children in particular, but also providing a fostering and vetting service, Brig-y-Don, has that closed

down? It is to close down?

Mr. P. Dennett:

It is to close down, yes. There have been discussions with their committee and Health and Social Services Committee on that basis. I mean, my understanding of what was needed, the building was falling apart; there needed to be huge ... hundreds of thousands of pounds in investment.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Nonetheless, I am still shocked that the refurbishment was in Williamson and here we are, what is it, 3 months later and that has all gone by the window. That seems to me something has gone wrong there.

Mr. P. Dennett:

I have been involved in some of those discussions but not all of them, but from my point of view now, what I am being asked to do is to utilise the skill base ... I mean, it has been clear that there is Brig-y-Don, the building and Brig-y-Don, the service and the staff and the young people in there, now from my point of view, the young people who are currently there, there is a plan for all of them to move from Brig-y-Don, you know. The staff group, I am being asked to see which of those staff want to be made redundant, some do, some are coming to the end of their careers, other staff want to come and join our service. So it is about using those staff and the money that goes with them, within my part of the service. So, I am going to be meeting with all their staff, saying: "Which areas are you particularly interested in working in?" and using that expertise so we are neither losing Brig-y-Don the building, or Brig-y-Don the staff and the young people are going to be catered for within the wider services.

Senator A. Breckon:

Can I ask you to comment on something about the age of the young people who you have dealings with? The Howard League, and there is a suggestion about age of criminality moving from 10 to 14, and also we have met with some of the young people in different places and they have said there is perhaps some tension and lines drawn at 15, 16, 17, 18 and even 21 as to what might happen to them

and where they might end up or how they are treated. Would you like to comment on that?

Mr. P. Dennett:

Yes. I mean, if we take the issue of disposal, first of all, for the courts because I think that that has been very clear what Williamson said, you know, there needed to be clarity about if young people of a certain age came before the court and want to be sentenced, where is it that they are going to go to. Now I am very clear in my thought process on that. We need Greenfields to be a place where young people can go on a welfare basis, remanded from the court, or indeed sentenced from the court if the law changes on that basis, and the young people in that provision should be of a school age. They should not be 17, 18 or above because we can have youngsters as young as 10 in there, now it is very unusual, but criminally you could have a young person at the age of 10, but also on a welfare basis, we might have a young person placed there because a 11, 12 year-old girl, complex issues, drink, promiscuity, you know, they could be placed there with a much older male, now there are issues around that. Now, from say 10, 11, 12 through to 16, I think that is manageable, if you are talking about young people ... or young men or young women who are then 17, 18, that is complex to try and manage. So I am very clear in my thought process on that. Greenfields should be for young people of school age. We then have a Young Offenders' Institution at La Moye who, I believe, should be for that age group 16 through to 18 on that basis. Now, currently they deal up to 21. Now my understanding of the rationale behind 21, it is an historical issue of the age of majority. The age of majority used to be 21 therefore the Young Offenders' Institution dealt with youngsters up to 21. That is no longer the case and it is my own personal opinion is that at above 18 young people there could then move to the adult prison and I think then we could look at the facilities up there for 16 to 18 year-olds and create a male and a female situation. Because currently, you would be aware that a 15, 16 year-old sentenced female up has to go on to the women's wing, which cannot be right. But if we were able to ... young people at Greenfields of school age, a young offenders' institution to deal with that 16 to 18, and those above in the adult prison, would be my personal view on the appropriateness of the sexes.

Senator A. Breckon:

How would you deal with a 15 year-old male who was sentenced who currently goes to La Moye?

Mr. P. Dennett:

That young person would go to Greenfields, in my opinion. I say, the cut-off would be leaving at school age. Now, however, having said all of that, I think in Jersey we have got to be able to build some flexibility into the system and I know a number of people have said this, but I would see ... that is how a structure could be set up. However, there is a panel, made up of, say, the Prison Governor, Joe Kennedy who is manager of Residential Secure Services, and some kind of independent who would be able to meet and say: "Look, within that, currently we have a 17 year-old ..." and I know this occurred at some point last year, a 17 year-old who was sentenced to La Moye who had a mild learning difficulty and it was absolutely inappropriate that he was there and if we had some flexibility we could say: "Look, he could come to Greenfields." Equally, as I sit here this morning and just described the 15 year-old to you, I think we should have some flexibility that says: "Look, equally he could go the other way", but they would be situations in extreme rather than the norm. The other question which you touched on, Alan, was the age of criminal responsibility and again the Howard League came over with very particular thoughts on that. I mean, they are a pressure group and it is not just Jersey they are talking about, they would like to see similar things in the U.K. and again there are differences of opinions in Jersey as to, you know, should it be 10, should it be 12, should it be 16 and everybody quotes Scandinavian systems about, you know, they have this and they have that. You know, my answer to some of that is that also in Scandinavia they have huge social services which mop up a lot of the issues which might be faced with those young people. They also have tax rates of 50 to 60 per cent as the fund which pays for huge services. Now, for me, the question is on that basis, Jersey to get its head around, you know, what do we want from our services, can we resource them effectively on the revenue that we have got? But the issue of age of criminal responsibility, you know, you get different answers from people. I personally do not believe in just raising the criminal age of responsibility to 14, 15, 16, you are going to solve the issues because the young people will still be creating the issues, you will still be trying to deal with them, it will just be out of the criminal justice system. Now, that might be better, but you are not going to solve the problems. You start off some system, whether it is criminal or welfare, to

deal with that. Now, you know, I have a 10 year-old son and the thought of, you know ... I know he is responsible but, you know, criminal responsible seems terribly young when you are dealing with 10 year-olds of your own. However, you know, I do not believe the same when we set it at 16 is appropriate either. You know, 12 might be appropriate. But that is for Jersey to kind of get its head around, really.

Senator A. Breckon:

Can I ask a general question perhaps of you both here? There is a view been expressed to us that perhaps we are getting interventions but we are getting them sometimes at a crisis level without a reference from the court or brought to somebody's attention. Do you think we should perhaps try and get down to a lower level for some interventions to make a difference to young people and families and we are not getting there yet?

Mr. G. Blackwell:

I vote yes, as I have said now, we are concentrating on the high risk young people because that is where the demands on the service are and I would like to work earlier with young people, particularly at the sort of secondary transfer age when you can perhaps predict the problems that are arriving in secondary school and work with the families at that point. Everybody says; "If you are going to make a difference, the earlier you can start the better." I mean, if you go right back to the work that Bridge does, the very early work with babies and under 5, it is so important. The bonding with parents and their children, you can see it is good work and I think more of that is important. So, yes, I would like to work earlier with young people and that is particularly through the schools. I mean, we do attend the M.A.S.T. meetings, but we go through all young people that are being problematic in the school, but because of our resources we will be targeting the half dozen most difficult. But you can see who is coming up behind them and, at the moment, we just do not have the bodies to work with those young people and their families. The schools do remarkably well to keep the numbers in that they do; they work very hard. I have to say that once issues do come through education is a major factor that we have to deal with when young people are simply not in school and not receiving education, they are excluded and that is a big

gap to try and fill.

Senator A. Breckon:

It is difficult to engage young people at that stage, is it, do you think?

Mr. G. Blackwell:

It is hard, yes. You can do it, but it is very hard work. You have to listen hard and you have to deliver what you say you are going to do as well. Again, the resources for that, I think, are important.

Senator A. Breckon:

Phil, would you like to comment on that?

Mr. P. Dennett:

Yes, I mean, I think, you know, we have to recognise that there is work going on, as Grant said, there is good preventative work going on. As I say, I mention the M.A.S.T. initiatives in the schools, as Grant said, at the Bridge there is parenting going in. There is a lot going in, you know, and alongside our universal services, as we call them, as Trevor knows, in Youth Service. That is good preventative work. They are not all angelic kids in the Youth Service. They are dealing with a whole range of society there. So there is good stuff going on, it is about getting to that point of saying: "When does this become an issue where more complex support is being needed?" Grant is right, I believe if we had had got the Y.A.T. service which we wanted right from the start, Grant would have been able to concentrate on the presented problems in court while also having a more creative preventative service. But we have got what we can deal with at the moment and it is primarily to try to deal with those young people in the court and doing some good preventative work as well. But more could be done, there can always be more in this area.

Senator A. Breckon:

Can I just ask, Grant, is there an emphasis put on the clients' view of the services provided? Do you get

any feedback from kids who are saying: “You are getting on my nerves”, or: “Thanks for that”, or they have moved on or ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

They are definitely saying: “You are getting on my nerves”. Almost definitely.

Mr. G. Blackwell:

We get an awful lot of first hand client feedback in sessions that we do, both in the groups and the individual work. We do something called team-talk, which is a very good tool that we use for having sessions with young people and that records a lot of feedback about their attitudes. But we do have to do, with inspection coming up next year, I want to get more feedback from parents and young people about how they have perceived the service, what we have done and what we have not done for them, and that is a real priority to formalise that now. I sat in on a session with a young person yesterday as part of the workers’ training and you do get a lot of insight and fascinating feedback. When you take a person through their antecedents, about why they offend and their attitudes and you can see that the work can be done, but the main thing is education and getting their mindset changed earlier and thinking through the issues. Personal, social, health education in schools is vital and we are training up our staff to be able to do that because that is what often young people lack is social skills. That is a big issue. Just popping back to the initial point about the Williamson Report, Williamson said he wants to see Y.A.T. kind of stay and perhaps expand, certainly exist and I had obviously concerns about Williamson is that not the agency role may be challenged, particularly if we change management and go back into another service, but I would want to see the multi-agency work stay and I think that would be very important.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Just one other point, what are the qualifications that you demand for your staff?

Mr. G. Blackwell:

It is a broad church. We start out with, to do a social work role in the team, you have got to be a

qualified social worker, registered both with the G.S.C.C. (General Social Care Council) in England and also with the Health Service in Jersey. So the 4 of us who are social workers are qualified and registered. The probation officers who liaise with us, they are all qualified social workers. The support workers are N.V.Q. trained. The Youth Service have an intensive training programme; they are well prepared. The police officer is very experienced and appraised annually, as we all are. There is a big emphasis on training in the team, we have got an extensive training plan for the team, the service and individuals. Training is absolutely essential. A couple of social workers we have got are being trained in sex offending work. They will be the only 2 qualified people on the Island to deal with young sex offenders because that is a niche role that we need to have. Another one of my colleagues is going to be the first youth offending worker trained in the Island as well. So it is absolutely essential. The mental health nurse is obviously registered as well. So it is a well qualified team; they are all well versed in safeguarding and child protection. I have a senior practitioner who came from child protection team, so her role is just absolutely vital in the team. So, the bottom line is the welfare of the child is paramount and their safety and I am convinced that we have a high standard of that in the team.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

What level does the N.V.Q. go in to support?

Mr. G. Blackwell:

It is N.V.Q. 3 at the moment, but both the support workers are going on to other training; very keen to keep them motivated and involved in the team and to train, if they want to go and do their Diploma in Social Work to be fully backed in that. We have not had a problem recruiting; we are a niche team. If you are interested in youth justice, there is a market, if you like, of people who want to work in the team. So we have not had a recruitment problem. That is not to say we would not have it in the future, but at the moment definitely we get quite a lot of people expressing interest to work with us as volunteers or people randomly writing in for work. So there is a lot of interest in working with challenging young people.

Senator A. Breckon:

Finally, is there anything you would like to say to us, perhaps where we have missed or something that we touched on that you would like to come back to?

Mr. P. Dennett:

I think we have covered all of the issues. I would just say that I welcome the political interest, really. I mean, I think, as you said, with the Children's Executive we moved to a position ... there were frustrations about the political relationship. I think we have got a tremendous opportunity and it has been a difficult couple of years, but I as a manager feel supported by politicians and it is good for our staff to know that we are coming here today and that the Scrutiny Panel is interested and has a view on these issues. So, I just welcome your comments.

Senator A. Breckon:

Following today, there might be discussed ... this is part of a process, not the end of it, so there might be some follow up from that so somebody might get back to you, Carol or somebody else, just to ask for some further information on perhaps something that we have touched on, as we deliberate. But with that, I would just thank you for your time today and thank you also for the report you have prepared as well, which I trust you will leave with us and if there is anything we will get back to you and thank you for that anyway.

Mr. P. Dennett:

Thank you.

Mr. G. Blackwell:

Thank you.