

STATES OF JERSEY



BRIGHTER FUTURES: FUNDING FOR 2010 AND BEYOND

Lodged au Greffe on 8th December 2009
by Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

- (a) to request the Minister for Health and Social Services to ensure that £150,000 of the additional £2,800,000 voted to the Health and Social Services Department in the Annual Business Plan 2010 for 'Support to Vulnerable children (Williamson)' is allocated to the charitable organisation known as 'Brighter Futures' to enable it to continue to operate in 2010; and
- (b) to further request the Minister to ensure that on-going funding at this level for 'Brighter Futures' is included in the future estimates of the Health and Social Services Department when these are submitted to the Minister for Treasury and Resources as part of the Annual Business Plan processes for 2011 and 2012.

DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER

REPORT

On a recent visit to The Bridge in connection with my latest scrutiny investigation I was asked by the management of The Bridge to seek confirmation that funding for “Brighter Futures” had been agreed and was in place for the coming year.

I was firstly surprised that the management of The Bridge and Brighter Futures had not been informed what their funding position was so close to the start of the next financial year. On starting to ask what and where the funding, if any, was, I was further shocked to find that Education, Sport and Culture (E,S&C), Health and Social Services (H&SS) and the Treasury initially could not identify where the responsibility lay for the funding and whether it had been agreed. A casual enquiry of the Minister for Treasury and Resources suggested that the bid for funding for Brighter Futures may not have been successful.

Eventually, an e-mail was received stating the following from the Treasury –

“Dear Deputy Southern

We do not know what “Brighter Futures” is, but I can confirm there is no specific additional funding for an initiative of this name in the 2010 Business Plan.”

This was followed soon after by this e-mail from H&SS dated 2nd December –

“Brighter Futures is one of the services delivered from The Bridge.

H&SS is intending to fund this programme with recurrent funding from the £2.8m allocation for the Williamson Implementation Plan. It is yet to be finalised, but Brighter Futures should receive the circa £80k to enable them to continue their programme.”

Given the tentative nature of this funding at this late date, I have lodged this proposition –

- to secure immediate commitment from the departments concerned;
- to debate the level of funding required;
- to secure funding for coming years.

“Brighter Futures”

Housed within The Bridge, Brighter Futures relies entirely on charitable donations to fund its ‘Journey Into Well-Being’ family support programme, which helps vulnerable parents (who have often been referred by States services) to tackle their problems and improve the life chances of their children through an extensive array of therapeutic interventions.

The inestimable value of Brighter Futures’ work has been well evidenced in feedback from both professionals and clients, yet the financial support that would allow the charity to continue to operate is increasingly scarce.

Wendy Hurford, founder of Brighter Futures, has summarised the situation in the following terms –

“Lloyds TSB have given me funding for a member of staff for three years. I have an anonymous trust who has given me funding for two years. We did the Rotary Walk to raise £3,000 to run the crèche. I mean, we are just... we have to raise £150,000 a year to run the charity...

That is what it costs us, basically. We have done that and we will continue to do it for as long as we have to but, of course, every year it becomes more and more difficult because you are not new. When you are new you go to the first trust; they give you £45,000 but you cannot go back to them.”¹

The case for support

Contained in the Chairman’s Statement of S.R.6/2009 – Co-ordination of Services for Vulnerable Children – are the following statements –

..... there needs to be a positive way forward. Indeed, the *States Strategic Plan 2009-2014 (P52/2009)* recently approved by the States of Jersey has, at section 9, the following:

9. Enhance Support Services to Vulnerable Children, Families and Others at Risk whilst the majority of Islanders take pride in their independence and self determination, we recognise that some sections of our community need support to improve their life-chances and access the same opportunities available to others.

Understanding child and family characteristics, parenting practices, family structures and influences in the wider community and social environment is vital for the development of policy and the provisions of services to families. Our Aim is to work with local families to reduce the number of young people leaving school with poor skills, qualifications and low expectations and to reduce personal and social problems in later life. One priority will be immediately implement the recommendations of the Williamson review of children’s services.

I would suggest that this is NOT enough, we need to do more than Williamson.

The Report goes on: **Why We Must Do This**

Children fare badly when their families face multiple disadvantages – poor parenting, poor physical or mental health, substance and alcohol misuse, domestic violence, learning disabilities, crime and financial stress. If we are to tackle the challenges faced by disadvantaged families, we need to address the root causes and consequences.

I would agree with this on the evidence I have seen, however, it really does need to translate into effective action now.

¹ *Coordination of Services for Vulnerable Children, Health, Social Security and Housing Scrutiny Sub-Panel Review, p.66*

S.R.6/2009 contains the following key findings and recommendations –

Key Findings

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

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

Recommendations

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Minister for Health and Social Services, together with the Minister for Treasury and Resources, should ensure the following –

10. That direct States funding should be guaranteed over the next five years (but reviewed after two years) for the following Charitable and Voluntary organisations to receive funding for child and family support work. [Sections 7.17-7.20; 7.31-7.38; 8.3-8.15]

Charitable and Voluntary Organisations that should receive States funding annually		
a.	The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)	£300,000
b.	Brig-Y-Don	£250,000
c.	Brighter Futures	£150,000
d.	The Jersey Childcare Trust	£100,000
e.	Jersey Family Mediation Service	£60,000
f.	Youth Enquiry Service (YES)	£50,000
g.	Milli's (supporting children in divorce and separation proceedings)	£10,000

14 That a more proactive approach be taken in supporting families and children with efforts being targeted towards providing non-stigmatising services and early interventions using a coordinated approach which includes all agencies. [Sections 7.31-7.74]

Financial and manpower implications

There are no additional financial implications as this proposition merely refers to the actual allocation of funds that have already been voted by the States. There is no staffing impact.