

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES BY DEPUTY
R.G. LE HÉRISSEUR OF ST. SAVIOUR**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 2nd DECEMBER 2008

Question

Do the Minister and his Assistant Minister consider that the Howard League is an organisation with liberal leanings and if so, how has this view influenced their acceptance or otherwise of the League's recent report?

Answer

The Howard League for Penal Reform was founded in 1866 and has been a leading campaigner for penal reform in the United Kingdom since that time. It is an independent organisation and accepts no grant or any support from any government. The cost of the Howard League's Review of the Jersey Youth Justice System, which was published a few days ago now, was borne entirely by the Howard League.

The Assistant Minister and I believe that the Howard League is a liberal and progressive organisation – but this view is an entirely subjective one and other States Members are free to make their own judgements. For our part, we welcome any contribution from any organisation which is likely to make Jersey's youth justice system more effective and fair to all concerned.

Suffice to say, the Howard League report – 'Jersey Review - A review of the Jersey youth justice system' puts forward a range of recommendations, many of which resonate entirely with the Andrew Williamson Inquiry recommendations. These specific recommendations (the recommendations which resonate with the Andrew Williamson recommendations) have already been accepted by us. Other recommendations – for example, the recommendation that the age of criminal responsibility be raised to 14 years - requires very significant debate across the Island.

My Assistant Minister is on record as welcoming the generality of the Howard League's recommendations. However, neither the Assistant Minister nor myself believe that we should import wholesale on to the Island recommendations from a body – no matter how independent – which is based on the mainland. Many of the recommendations of the Howard League need to be discussed in the context of the values, practices and laws which have shaped the youth justice system here in Jersey for many, many years.

I can further advise the Deputy that my colleague, the Minister for Home Affairs, is to lead the Council of Ministers' consideration of the Howard League's recommendations. Needless to say, the Assistant Minister and I will be contributing insofar as certain sections of the Howard League review concern services which we have responsibilities for.