

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES BY SENATOR  
P.F. ROUTIER**

**ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 20th JANUARY 2009**

**Question**

Will the Minister inform Members how many agreed Social Worker posts there have been, there are currently and there will be across all of the Social Services network and their allocation across the Children's Service, the Adult Social Work Team and the Special Needs Team for each of the years 2007, 2008 and 2009 ?

Would the Minister detail for each of the above years -

- (a) the number of vacancies in each of the three teams and the length of time they remained vacant?
- (b) the number of long term absences amongst staff in each of the three teams and the length of time staff have been off work?

**Answer**

The details requested by the Senator are provided in the following tabulated format. It should be noted that the data relates to full time equivalent (fte) Registered Social Worker posts.

**Number of agreed registered social worker posts:**

|                          | <b>2007</b> | <b>2008</b> | <b>2009</b> |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Children's Service       | 20          | 24          | 24          |
| Children's Executive     | 8.5         | 8.5         | 8.5         |
| Special Needs – Children | 2           | 2           | 3           |
| Special Needs - Adults   | 2           | 2           | 2           |
| Adult Services           | 10          | 11          | 11          |
| <b>Totals</b>            | <b>42.5</b> | <b>47.5</b> | <b>48.5</b> |

**Registered social worker vacancies:**

|                            | <b>2007</b> | <b>2008</b> | <b>2009</b> |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Children's Service         | 7           | 8           | 5           |
| Children's Executive       | 0           | 2           | 0           |
| Special Needs Service – Ch | 0           | 0           | 1           |
| Special Needs Service - Ad | 0           | 0           | 0           |
| Adult Services             | 2           | 2           | 0           |
| <b>Totals</b>              | <b>9</b>    | <b>12</b>   | <b>6</b>    |

Note: The Children's Service in particular continues to carry a high level of vacancies. Detailed data relating to the length of time individual posts have remained vacant is not currently available.

It is often necessary to advertise on the mainland in order to recruit suitably qualified and experienced workers in the relevant specialist fields and there is then the inevitable inertia of appointing the appropriate members of staff and then deploying them (often with their families, of course) to the Island. For this reason, a post will be vacant for between four to six months. This may appear to be a very long period of inertia but it is getting increasingly difficult to attract social workers to Jersey and therefore regrettably, in a number of very specific professional domains it can take between eight to twelve months to fill a substantive registered Social Worker post.

**Number and length of long term absences (over 20 working days per episode):**

|                            | <b>2007</b>               | <b>2008</b>               | <b>2009</b>              |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Children's Service         | 2 staff (51 days)         | 3 staff (195 days)        | 0                        |
| Children's Executive       | 1 staff (23 days)         | 0                         | 0                        |
| Special Needs Service – Ch | 0                         | 1 staff (27 days)         | 1 staff (11 days)        |
| Special Needs Service - Ad | 0                         | 2 staff (250 days)*       | 2 staff (14 days)        |
| Adult Services             | 2 staff (87 days)         | 2 staff (115 days)        | 1 staff (11 days)        |
|                            |                           |                           |                          |
| <b>Totals</b>              | <b>5 staff (161 days)</b> | <b>6 staff (587 days)</b> | <b>4 staff (36 days)</b> |

\* Within Adult Special Needs Social Work one member of staff's absence accounts for 221 of the 250 days of absence indicated. The member of staff cited here is working in another department fulfilling a different role).

As to Maternity Leave (which of course, is a form of absence), three members of staff from Children's Service were absent for periods of twelve months throughout 2007 and 2008 - and an additional member of staff was absent for six months in 2007.