

STATES OF JERSEY

Education and Home Affairs Panel Political Education Sub-Panel

FRIDAY, 16th APRIL 2010

Panel:

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of St. Saviour (Chairman)
Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville
Deputy S. Pitman of St. Helier

Witness:

Deputy J.G. Reed of St. Ouen (Minister for Education, Sport and Culture)
Principal Youth Officer

In attendance:

Mrs. E. Liddiard (Scrutiny Officer)

[11:31]

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of St. Saviour (Chairman):

I would like to welcome you to the second session when we are going to look at political education with reference to the Youth Service. I am Roy Le Hérissier, the Chairman of the Panel, the Deputy of St. Saviour.

Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville:

Deputy Carolyn Labey.

Deputy S. Pitman of St. Helier:

Deputy Shona Pitman of St. Helier.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Deputy James Reed, Minister for Education, Sport and Culture.

Principal Youth Officer:

Principal Youth Officer.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Thank you. I am sorry for the slight delay. We have obviously had the broad picture presented to us in the last session so this time we are going to focus in on the Youth Service. I think you are both familiar with the witness statement so I do not have to repeat that.

The Deputy of Grouville:

Shall I kick off?

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Yes, I will now ask Deputy Labey to ask the first question.

The Deputy of Grouville:

I would like to ask what approach is taken to political education in the Youth Service?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

There are a number of areas that we focus on. First of all is about empowering young people to make their own informed decisions. The other is to encourage young people to be aware of what is going on around them, both locally and internationally, especially when it will impact on their lives. We also encourage our youth workers to assess the needs of our young people they work with and use the Youth Service curriculum to develop a youth work programme to address those needs, perhaps in a similar way as the P.S.H.E. (Personal, Social and Health and Education) curriculum is shaped, it needs to meet the needs of the individual. Finally it is all about what I would call more of an informal education, so whereas at school it is on a formal basis, this is more about our youth workers dealing with and addressing some of the more immediate needs that our young people may or may not have.

The Deputy of Grouville:

You said that you empower young people and make them aware. Would you like to expand how you go about empowering them and making them aware?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Maybe I will ask Shirley to expand on that.

Principal Youth Officer:

I have got a few visual aids and I will use them, and I can get copies of things for you if you want them after the meeting. But basically the youth work approach is very different from schools, as you would imagine. It is informal education and it is working with young people in their social time, in their own time, and they can vote with their feet to either come to a youth project, be involved in the Youth Service or not. So what we do is we work to a basic statement. This poster is all around Jersey in youth centres and in other places as well and these are the key elements of what youth work is about and empowering and involving, engaging young people, encouraging their participation in all sorts of things, providing personal social development opportunities, enabling them to become active citizens is core to youth work. So that is the first think I just wanted to get across. When you say about empowering them we look to build their confidence, we look to provide information on issues that are relevant to them or things that they are asking us. We look to help them make their own decisions, and it is that transition from being an adolescent and becoming an adult and being able to make your own decisions. A lot of youth work is having an informal education curriculum and using it. We work by stealth, if you like, with young people. Sometimes they do not realise what the youth workers might have in mind because we have to do it through activities, through fun opportunities, through informal discussions and we pick up on opportunities in the youth club in a sort of flexible way so if there happens to be something in the J.E.P. (*Jersey Evening Post*) we might pick up on that that night having a copy of the paper about, or there might be something in the national news or international news that we pick up on.

We use activities such as arts and crafts where we might do a big collage on a particular subject but all the time I think it is empowering them because they are becoming more informed about the world they live in and the issues that they face. There are formal things that we are doing to empower them as well. If I just go through a few of those. We try and get young people involved in the running of their youth project in all sorts of ways, so making decisions about the youth project. It might be decisions on what is going to happen in the next 6 months, it might be decisions about how we are going to spend this pot of money that we have raised, it might be decisions being involved in the youth project committee as a young person, involved in that way. It could also be we have a brighter buildings campaign which is a way of a group of young people looking at their youth centre and improving it so it is about them making decisions and working their way through this system of how they can improve that environment. We also have more formal things as I say, we have a youth bank now and it is just this holiday that a group of 15 young people aged 14 to 18 have been involved in doing training. We have some funding from Citibank Foundation and we have that group of young people who have done training to become a small committee that look at giving funds to other groups. So they have £10,000 a year and the applications will eventually come in and then they will decide on those applications. So it is empowering and giving them actual tangible things like that to do. We are also working through things like the Hear by Right standards. You might have heard of these. These were set up by the National Youth Agency in the U.K. (United Kingdom) and they are like an Investors in People type standard but this is about how you engage with young people, how you involve them, how you give them a voice. Jersey Youth Service has been working on these for 2 years; 2 years ago we had our annual conference based around youth participation and how we can improve engaging young people. So we are working to these and it is about self-assessment for each youth project and what they are doing to engage young people to involve them, to give them a say, a voice in their own youth project.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

What I was going to ask, building on what you said, you said about you may bring in the J.E.P. and we heard from Mr. Renouf how he does a problem-solving approach and then he builds up from there, I thought it was very well explained. But do they pick up on controversial issues like the child abuse inquiry and how do you deal with that when they come up and say, you know ...?

Principal Youth Officer:

Youth workers are trained in relationship building, in communication skills, in listening skills for young people and in group work so whatever topic would come up, it might be around a game of pool talking as we are doing something, it might be as you do an arts and crafts activity that you are talking about sexual health issues or you are talking about something that is on the local news, just informal discussions is one way of doing it. Where we want to do some more concentrated work often it becomes a project and we might be working with a specific group over a period of 6 weeks or we might take a group away on a residential or we might do some training. One of the things we have done very successfully is we offer young worker training. This is for 14 to 17 year-olds and it is aimed at members of the youth project that have shown an interest in what we do so we offer a training course, part of it is residential, and then they can become young workers. Usually they work in the junior youth clubs but sometimes they are working behind the coffee bar or doing other things. Some of

those young workers, once they hit 18, we have one who has gone away to university to do their professional qualification, or they are becoming adult volunteers or social workers so we are growing our own youth workers of the future.

The Deputy of Grouville:

What you are describing is youth work per se and the social skills and political skills but political with a small p. My question originally was about the political education of young people, political with a capital P.

Principal Youth Officer:

Well, as James said at the beginning and I have tried to say, we would pick up on political education as and when it came up. At the time of the elections we did some more structured stuff in that we developed a poster and a leaflet that went into all youth projects and we did have copies of the registration document because we wanted to show young people how ... some young people do not have the literacy skills to fill them in.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Who would help them fill that in or were they just given it?

Principal Youth Officer:

A pile of them would be on the coffee bar so it would be their choice if they were interested. These were on the coffee bar; we were not giving it to young people. These were in the youth centres.

Deputy S. Pitman:

If a young person asked the youth worker: "Can you help me fill this in?" would they be allowed?

Principal Youth Officer:

Yes, it was only the registration, so it was not focused on a particular person.

The Deputy of Grouville:

If they wanted to know about the political system, the reason why they are filling it out and what happens in the elections, for example if it is Senatorial followed by the Deputies, would there be somebody to explain it all to them?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Well, first of all I think as much as I would love to believe that all young children would be wanting to be going into the depth of detail that you ask for, I think in reality those individuals are perhaps few and far between and let us not forget that most of the young people have already gone through the education system. Now that is not to say that we should not be still in fact encouraging them and that in the same way that our youth workers are trained to deal with all sorts of different matters and subjects we would expect that they would, if they were not able perhaps necessarily to deal with the particular question that was raised that they would know of how that person could be provided with the information or necessary support that they needed. I think that is perhaps one of the keys to youth work. It is again a matter of meeting an individual's need rather than a group's need.

[11:45]

Deputy S. Pitman:

But part, I know it is a smaller part, of the role of the Youth Service is to provide and encourage political education and it is not doing what you have just said.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

It depends at what level. Again I think Shirley said the Youth Service and the youth clubs and facilities are there and designed to encourage young people to voluntarily come and participate and join in with other young people in a whole range of different activities. As such, the focus of the Youth Service is to meet those individuals' needs, and we have created a drop-in environment and so on and so forth. There are specific projects which Shirley has already mentioned, and perhaps more recently, the Y.E.S. (Youth Enquiry Service) project, which again, is specifically targeted to enable and encourage and allow young people with specific issues to find an access the right information. That is now linked through to Social Security, and it has been a great benefit, and recognised by everybody, I believe. What I am saying is that, although overall you have got this curriculum, this programme from which the youth workers are required, and are able to, access, they need to design a project and events that deal with the needs of the individuals that they are having to work with. Now, that would be different if it is in a youth club sort of facility, or out on the street with outreach work. That is where the flexibility comes in. There is not the ability to promote and preach, if you like, politics, because I think that there are other individuals and groups that are able to do that. We need to make sure that the awareness is there, and maintained, which is why the literature is made available, obviously, discussions around election time will be focussed on the particular needs or issues as they arise.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Is there not a need, as I spoke in the previous session, to allow the ... To give access to young people to politicians, in formal education, in a formal manner? For example, as you know, a few years ago, there was the question time organised at Grand Vaux, which was very successful.

Principal Youth Officer:

I think that is the sort of thing I have done in the past with groups of young people in the U.K., the question time. But it has got to come from the young people, and that is what we are doing at the moment, we are building groups of young people in projects. We have got a participation-active involvement framework that is in draft at the moment. But it is about building their confidence, building their skills, building their interest. If I can just say, as a little example, we had a group, as I say, doing this training. The lunchtime of the second day, when they had done a first day and they were in the second day of it ... We had also a group over from London, the youth forum from London over, who visited, as part of their week in Jersey. This group had been together 6 years (not all members, but some of them had been there 6 years) and the difference that group coming in (a mainly black group as well) so they were a bit of a culture shock to Jersey young people, and the group from London learning about Jersey. But the difference in confidence level of the group from London, because they had been involved for a while, they were involved in the youth forum, and they were involved in a similar youth bank type activity. I asked the youth workers who were working with the group, because I was there at the lunchtime ... after the London

group had gone, the aspirations of that Jersey group were changed. They were realising that they also could be more vocal on issues of interest to them. But it has got to come from them. We cannot ... we are working all the time at trying to grow that sort of feeling in our young people we work with. Just to finish that, the young people we work with (a) come to us out of choice, as I said before, but also (b) we are targeting a lot of young people who are not the ones who will be on the school council, who are not the achievers. We are working with young people who maybe need more time to get involved in that sort of thing.

Deputy S. Pitman:

You said that has to come from young people.

Principal Youth Officer:

With our encouragement.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Yes, with your encouragement and your education. Because the question time session that was organised came from the youth workers, and not the young people. So you think it should ...

Principal Youth Officer:

I think it should come the other way, really. But that is educating to realise that they have a voice, they have opinions. I will just show you this, as well. This is a youth work tool, if you like, that we provide in our part-time training (full-time workers know about it). It is levels of participation. By participation, it means, how we engage with young people. It is saying young people can be, when they are coming in, innocent to a youth project or to any other adult environment, could be manipulated. They do not know any better, and they could be manipulated into certain things. They can be there as tokenistic, for decoration. "Oh yes, we have young people coming to our meetings." But they are sitting there, they are never involved, they do not feel comfortable. But this is the bit that we are trying to get to, where they start to make decisions, are involved in adult decisions. But then they are consulted and informed, adults share decisions with young people, and eventually, moving up to where young people initiate and direct. We are on this bit of it now.

The Deputy of Grouville:

I still think what you are describing here is youth work.

Principal Youth Officer:

It is, that is what I am saying.

The Deputy of Grouville:

What we are trying to get at here, in this session, is political education, and I hear what you say, you feel it all ought to come from the young people. But who is making politics relative to those young people?

Principal Youth Officer:

I will give you an example.

The Deputy of Grouville:

Making the connection between the price of the Jersey Live ticket and the politics because of a decision that got taken in the States. Who is linking that up, making it relative?

Principal Youth Officer:

It will be youth workers, senior youth workers, in their projects, doing a display about whatever. If it is a display about the local elections, they might do something, you know, what is a senator? I am not out there in the field, but they will do what they can to keep young people informed. It is all in our youth work philosophy, if you like. Informing young people, but getting them to make their own decisions.

The Deputy of Grouville:

How many of your youth workers know about the political system in Jersey?

Principal Youth Officer:

I do not know. I am learning as I go along, as well, about the political system. We are not experts; we are experts in youth work. What we will do is find the information out for ourselves, if young people are interested in that.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I think this is the point, though. I do understand that you want to focus on political education, and the importance that you place on it. But the Youth Service, I am afraid, Carolyn, is not designed, and it was never intended to, to promote, political education.

The Deputy of Grouville:

Well, it is. It has it in its curriculum.

Principal Youth Officer:

It is a small part of the curriculum.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I think that maybe we have different views. Political awareness is different from political education.

Principal Youth Officer:

Political with a small “p”.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

As such, the issues such as drugs, alcohol, and all the relevant things that we know that young people are faced with on a day to day basis, tend to, as I say, require greater priority than political education. Talking about your linkage, though, there are many examples. It is throughout the youth work and the Youth Service that it happens, but I am particularly aware of one most recently, which is the skateboard park at St. Johns. A prime example where young people say: “We require a facility.” They engage with the parish authorities, so they are aware of what the process is. They know that if money is going to be provided, there needs to be a parish assembly, and so on and so forth; they have discussions. These are individuals that are going to be using and benefiting from the skateboard park. They then have a discussion about: “Well, hang on a minute, if you are going to have to be involved in raising the money,

by the way, do you know how much this is going to cost?" What shape, size, scale, design, do you want? All of that is very much part and parcel of that increased awareness. It might not be what I call "in your face" political education, but it is, if you like, learning through life experiences, how you as an individual can be responsible. But equally, what rights you have, because those individuals can encourage their parents to go and vote in the parish assembly to support their project.

Deputy S. Pitman:

But it also goes back to the previous session, when we were talking about who takes the lead on this, and you have also talked about, in the previous session, about the lack of time that you have to deliver this. It talks, in your information that you gave us, about other agencies needing to supplement the work of schools, to actively engage young voters once they have left secondary education, but also during that education. Now, is there not an onus on the Youth Service to provide some of that education? Also, I would like to know, how much schools and the Youth Service are working with each other as part of an holistic approach to this subject?

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisssier:

That is a fair number of questions.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

First of all, our primary aim is to meet the needs of the individuals that come to look for, and enjoy and benefit from the Youth Service. We are not there to promote a particular issue, attitude or matter. We very much recognise that it is a voluntary participation exercise, and as such, we need to be there to provide the listening ear, to provide encouragement and guidance to deal with that. I am sorry, I forgot your second question.

Deputy S. Pitman:

My question is, how much do the schools and the Youth Services work together in delivering this education? I am not just talking about Youth Service out of schools, I am talking about where the Youth Service can also work in the schools, holding sessions, and is that better delivered by the Youth Service? Are there areas of the curriculum that are better delivered by the Youth Service, to take some of the burden off schools?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Two things: I think that, over a number of years it has been recognised that there needs to be a link between the schools and the Youth Service, and I think that happens. I am certainly aware that our youth workers are attending and linking in with the schools on a very regular basis, and promoting the services that we provide. Can it be improved? I am sure. There are always ways. I think that one of the particular areas that I am keen on, and we are looking at - perhaps it should have been sooner rather than later - is the idea of developing a meaningful youth forum, where young people are given a voice, and can engage with other agencies, whether it be politicians, whoever.

[12:00]

It is a challenge. I know that, previous to me becoming Minister for Education, Sport and Culture, much effort was made and a number of models were looked at. Some of those are quite resource hungry, I hasten to add, and I think that, at the moment, we are looking to see what we can do, recognising, not just money, but recognising the Jersey model and ensuring ... because I think with any youth forum, if it is going to be meaningful, and active in promoting and identifying the needs of the young people engaging with those other agencies, then it has to include the full breadth of our society. That is a serious challenge, because we are well aware ... and you talk about political education and accessing certain individuals, we all know that we have many of our youngsters that would not automatically set foot inside a youth club. Hence, the reason why we have developed our outreach type services. All of these things need to be put together, we need to - and I am sure over time we will - develop the stronger links. I think in discussions that we have had with regard to curriculum ...

Deputy S. Pitman:

How are you promoting the Youth Service in schools, then? How are you promoting, and opening it up to young people?

Principal Youth Officer:

I will give you some examples. In all 4 state schools, we have got youth workers, a named youth worker that is linked to all 4 state schools. We also have youth workers ... those staff go into schools regularly, they go in at lunchtimes, they attend for specific things like P.S.H.E., but we have also got staff that run programmes in schools, like the "On 2 wheels" project, or they get involved in curriculum areas, it tends to be especially with the groups that are less engaged in school. So it is adding the informal education alternatives to the school programme, and we work very closely with schools. As I say, we are also developing links with d'Hautree House, with Hautlieu, with Highlands College. So we are developing those links. Recently, we have got a draft youth work in schools framework document that Youth Service have produced. It involved, John Thorp from Quennevais, as a head, looking at it. It is going to the senior management team at Education, Sport and Culture, and will go to the Minister. Then we will consult with all heads.

Deputy S. Pitman:

In that, I presume, you have identified parts of the school curriculum that would be best delivered by the Youth Service?

Principal Youth Officer:

Yes, in the P.S.H.E., we are invited into schools.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Does that include political education?

Principal Youth Officer:

I think life skills and other areas come in; whether what you would term political education comes into it, I am not sure. I think it is more, we are looking at ... like Vicky from the Y.E.S. project. That is about informing young people about all sorts of things. She goes into schools to talk about the Y.E.S. project, so young people are aware of it, and then can go to the Y.E.S. project at La Motte Street, to get information off computers, they can go on to the Y.E.S. website, they can talk to a

youth worker if they have got a particular personal issue they want to talk about, or access a counsellor. So that is one way. It is all about informing young people about what is out there for them, answering questions. But I think, all the time, with youth work, we listen to young people, what their needs are, what their ideas are, and that is where our day to day youth work comes from. We have ideas of what we would like to do, and that is where we have got the youth group curriculum, and I will give you one of these. It is based on "Every Child Matters" in the U.K.

Deputy S. Pitman:

How do you advertise specifically, or encourage young people to attend youth clubs?

Principal Youth Officer:

We have got posters everywhere about it, we have got leaflets about it, we have got ... we go into schools talking to young people about their local opportunities, we engage with young people in the streets, we have mobile projects that go out to young people. We have got all sorts of ways. What we need to do ... we have done a survey, asking young people what they thought of the Youth Service. But this was asking young people who are already using the Youth Service; that is important as well but what we are looking to do is to do a wider survey of the needs of young people in Jersey, a bit like the J.A.C.S. (Jersey Advisory & Conciliation Service) survey for adults, which we have put a couple of questions in last time, but it was not really successful because mostly adults were answering the questions. We want something aimed at young people, and we are going to work with schools to get that out through the schools, but get it out to other young people as well, who may not be attending school because they are in work, or whatever. But also work multi-agency, so this is going to be part of the Children and Young People's Plan. I think the Youth Service have a role within the Children and Young People's Plan, of making sure they engage with children and young people, through getting their voice.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Thank you for that. I think we have got to bring it back a bit, and this is the issue that is affecting Deputy Labey as well. But I wonder if I can ask Deputy Pitman if she can ask the last 2 questions, which are basically about the measurement of success in programmes.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Yes. I understand from the leaflet ... Obviously, you have run some schemes to encourage people to vote, one of them was your leaflets. How do you measure success on these initiatives? Did you get feedback, for example, from the leaflets distributed to young people in the last election?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

First of all, might I suggest that I think it is a challenge, whether you are trying to monitor who is voting or not, and the interest shown, whether it is with young people or with adults. I do not necessarily think anyone has got the correct answer to identifying, or linking effort (thinking about previous elections, to the effort that yourself and others put in, in encouraging and promoting the need to register and vote) to the outcome, which was the ticks or crosses in the ballot box. I think the same, unfortunately, applies to the Youth Service. We can only encourage the rights and responsibilities of the individual, that they feel able to engage, and have the

desire. I think that is the challenge, not only for the Youth Service, but for all of us, to develop that desire, whether it a young person or any adult, to engage and vote, recognising that it has meaning.

Principal Youth Officer:

I do not think we can say how successful that was. I have got a vague feeling we might have kept some sort of tally on how many young people seemed to take the forms away, or fill in the forms, but that is about all. We do not know whether they gave them in at the parish hall or not. Again, we can collect some information about what we are doing, and other stuff, it is harder to collect. All of our youth projects collect statistics, and it is not just number crunching. We also collect information about what subjects have been covered that evening in the programme. We have a management information system that does that. The Y.E.S. project collects their information in a slightly different way, and they have collected information, and I can tell you that most of their information that they are giving out is to do with social security and housing, and employment, so that is what they are concentrating on. The age range that uses the Y.E.S. project, mostly, is the 16-17 year-olds. It is for 14 to 25s, but it is that 16-17 year-old age range that are using the Y.E.S. project and getting what they want, and they come back for more. They get support, because they are right next to Social Security, they get support to go there. Projects like the Prince's Trust are keeping statistics about their young people that they are working with, that are the unemployed, are not in education, have maybe left care, might have been involved in crime. That is the target group they are working with, and they track those young people, in a way, looking where ... if they have got a job when they leave the programme, are they still in work at a year later, because they keep in touch with the young people. So we have got statistics around the success of that programme, and it is very successful. We keep certain information about how well we are doing. We get young people to evaluate certain projects that we do, residential have an evaluation, we do it in an informal way, it is in a user-friendly way for young people. A lot of what we have to do has to be in a way that will engage young people.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

The question was directed at the political education aspects, and in a way, the Minister said, the ultimate test is, how many votes? But of course, the ultimate test could be: "Did you understand what I was saying, or does it make sense to you?" Then the person can go away and think about it. Would it be a fair summation, given the sort of exchanges that have occurred, that you find this political education thing a bit hard to handle ...

Principal Youth Officer:

No.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

... and that there is a certain reluctance ... and it came through in some of the school replies, it has to be said, and I can see why. There is a certain reluctance to not cross the boundary into political indoctrination, and you want to be very careful, and you are dealing with young people who are hard to reach. They do not engage with official institutions easily, a lot of them, which is okay, that is their prerogative. Would that be a fair summation of your position?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

No. I am sorry, Roy, and again, I really do question the thought that political education should be above all else.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

No, no, I do not think we are saying that.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

We explained how we focus our efforts, whether it is at schools, or in the Youth Service, and we are aiming to deal with the needs of individuals. Now, the needs of individuals will not necessarily be, or are dealt with, by providing political education. The needs of the individuals are much more basic, in many respects, than that. As we have identified in the Youth Enquiry Service. Yes, we need to deal with, and improve, the links between the schools and the Youth Service. But with regard to political education, we need to be ensuring that our young people get the same benefits that members of the general public do. If there is an issue, and I am not suggesting that there is not, of engaging more people in the electoral process, it is a matter that we need to look at. Yes, we can do what we can within the education system but it has also got to be driven by dealing with the issues to a local population, because it is the peers of those young people, it is the parents, it is the extended family, and their associates and their work colleagues, that ultimately will, if you like, promote that interest that I think we are all seeking to get engaged in.

The Deputy of Grouville:

Can I just take you up on that? You have used that word “promote”. You have just used it for the extended family to promote. The extended family does not include the Youth Service, because when Shona asked you, about half an hour ago, about getting politicians into the youth clubs, because it is apparent that the youth workers, a lot of them - Shirley admitted it herself - do not know about our political system.

Principal Youth Officer:

I said, if they do not know, they will find out.

The Deputy of Grouville:

But when it was put to you about bringing politicians into youth clubs, whatever their ilk, you said, it is not our job, and I wrote this down: “To promote and preach.”

[12:15]

So, now you are saying that it is up to the extended family to promote it, the Youth Service is the extended family. You cannot have it both ways.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

There is a difference, sorry, Carolyn. Can I just pick up on that, because I might lose the question. There is a difference between promoting in the second comment I made, and promoting and preaching, which is totally different. If States Members choose to access and involve themselves with young people, we would, in general, say to those individuals: “Please come on down.” In fact, and in reality, we have got many politicians that are actively involved in supporting youth work across this island. Point one, right? So it is not a case of not allowing access; they have got absolute

access, but they acknowledge that these young people are there not to be preached at, not to be taught, because that is an issue that is dealt with in their education system. They are there to engage with their friends and associates within an informal environment, because they have many other choices.

The Deputy of Grouville:

Minister, you will have somebody in to do a pancake demonstration; it is up to those individuals if they want to watch or not, or engage. What is the difference between having politicians in to speak about local politics, what the youth workers possibly do not know, and if anyone has got any questions as to how the system works? Up to the individuals if they access it. Surely that is not promoting and preaching?

Principal Youth Officer:

I think that is the other way around, though. I think it is if young people say: "Can we find out about what is going on in the States? Can we find out about how you become a ... like the young man who became a Deputy?" But they do not.

The Deputy of Grouville:

Why do they not?

Principal Youth Officer:

Maybe it is how the States is promoted, maybe it is ...

The Deputy of Grouville:

Maybe it is how the Youth Service is promoting it.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

That is not for us to judge. We know what provision of service we are offering. If there is evidence to suggest that the Youth Service is somehow failing our young people because we are not properly promoting political education in that particular area, then, fine, we will be quite willing to see and consider the evidence that you produce. Because we are here - and I do believe it, although we have had exchanges, which is normal - we are both here to see that whatever service we provide, and in this case, obviously, we are looking at general political awareness. But we want to do what we can. We are certainly open to any thoughts, ideas and suggestions that you may have, that can benefit our young people.

Deputy S. Pitman:

You provide for year 5s, a visit to the ... this is going on to schools, year 5s have access to ... Teachers take them to the States Chamber, and they have a debate. Scrutiny come into a school once or twice a year (I cannot recall how many times). Also a hustings was organised for young people at Hautlieu. So you, the Education Department, are taking a lead on those specifics for schools, for pupils. Why not that approach for Youth Services? How do the young people know how to ask: "Can I access a politician?"

Principal Youth Officer:

I think I have tried to explain - and James has mentioned it - that we are trying to develop that, grow that feeling in young people, and we are working towards some

sort of youth forum, youth voice. It is a structured way of involving young people at that level.

Deputy S. Pitman:

That is coming from youth workers?

Principal Youth Officer:

Yes, that is coming from the Youth Service.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Why not direct access, organised by youth workers?

Principal Youth Officer:

That might come in time. But the other thing James touched on: I would just like to say that all the youth projects have involvement from their local Constables, local Deputies, there are invites to people to come into the youth centre, we have open evenings, we have the Minister coming around and visiting youth projects, talking to young people, 2 Assistant Ministers as well. But we do not want to be too happy about it, either. It is about politicians coming in to find out about what is going on in the youth centres. Young people, through presentations, and at St. Peter, say, the A.G.M. (Annual General Meeting) there, young people giving presentations at the A.G.M. about what they are doing. A group of young people had designed their mobile ... and been working with engineers and people to get their mobile bus project on the road. They had fundraised for it and they gave a very impressive presentation to the local community, parents, the youth workers were there, I was there, the Minister was there, the local Constable.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

There are opportunities, there are.

Principal Youth Officer:

I am trying to say, it is about a drip, drip effect of getting young people engaged. It is about going up that ladder. Once they ... sort of ... you can work a little bit harder. But if they are ... some of the young people we work with, who are thinking about ... they are hungry, it is about Maslow's hierarchy of needs. If they are hungry, and they are coming in hungry to our youth project, we have got to sort that out, before we can work with them on political education. It is what is interesting to them.

Deputy S. Pitman:

What are the plans for next year's election? What preparations, what initiatives will the Youth Service be ...?

Principal Youth Officer:

We will be doing what we have done before, working with 16 year-olds, 17 year-olds, who have not registered, to encourage people to be aware of their rights to register to vote. We will look at doing those sort of ... not just around the election time, but those events which bring people in about an issue that young people are worried about. In the same way as John mentioned, or Cliff mentioned, about the young people who had an issue with transport. They had brought in people about that. We can do that in the Youth Service as well, and have a question time or event like that.

The Deputy of Grouville:

Who will be explaining how to vote, or handing out those forms, or having them on the side? Who will be explaining to vote for who and why?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

No one will, no one.

Principal Youth Officer:

We will not do that, we will not.

The Deputy of Grouville:

Before you lose your temper, not vote for particular people, vote for who? Vote for Senatorials, vote in the Deputies, vote in what elections? By-elections? And why, why should they vote?

Principal Youth Officer:

As I said before, individual youth projects have done displays at the last elections about that. Our whole purpose is about informing young people and helping them make decisions, so that is what we will do.

The Deputy of Grouville:

So there will be people within the Youth Service to explain: "These are the registration forms on the side," and if they come up to the youth worker to have it explained to them, how the political system works and why they should vote ...

Principal Youth Officer:

What we are trying to do is create curriculum material, if you like, to help our youth workers, because some of our youth workers are volunteers, some of them are sessional workers. We have one professional worker in each youth project, so that professional worker may be involved in a briefing from some of our senior youth workers who may be more informed about that than others. We will discuss it as a team, sometimes have a working group. So if we have got sexual health issues, and we want to work on a certain part of the programme around that, then, if it is delivered in one youth project and it is successful, we might bring it back to the Jersey Youth Service meetings and have it delivered elsewhere. We have curriculum packs on those sorts of things. What you are saying, and what you took out of context, really, before, was ... I do not think we are experts in politics, and I do not think we are experts in how the States of Jersey works. We have to be careful of not being ... with young people, as I said, they can be manipulated and you have to be careful not to talk about politics with a big "P", not to talk about religion with a big "R". You have to keep your own personal views and ideas to yourself as a youth worker. You are working with young people, groups of young people who you want to inform, but not influence in a political or religious way. There are certain things ...

The Deputy of Grouville:

I think it was to inform them is what we are talking about here, political education, informing them on that. We are not saying: "You have got to go and vote for Terry Le Sueur.

Principal Youth Officer:

That is where we have to be careful, and there is a sensitivity about that, especially at election times. So we have to have some ...

The Deputy of Grouville:

That is what we have been asking about. I think it is you that have taken it out of context.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisssier:

I think we have had some very interesting issues, and clearly it has enabled us to clarify our thinking, if not to agree. We will go away and think about your views. We thank you for your presentation and your great enthusiasm, and we have one very short last question.

Deputy S. Pitman:

This is specifically a question for the Principal Youth Officer. What is your view on what needs to be ... what areas do you think the Youth Service could take on, with regard to political education, that schools cannot take on board?

Principal Youth Officer:

I think, getting involved in the Children and Young People's Plan, and giving young people a voice through that. James mentioned youth forum, I think that is a role for the Youth Service, because schools might have school councils, but they are individually, and we are looking for an Island-wide, democratic process, probably, involving young people and giving them a platform to have a voice on issues that affect them. It would give them a chance to make some decisions about what they want to talk to politicians about. That is something that we, as a Youth Service, are going to be looking at, and we are looking to get that off the ground.

Deputy S. Pitman:

I presume that the Minister and yourself will be discussing this during the review of the P.S.H.E.?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Absolutely. As I said before, as we have done in the past, we will take into account any findings and recommendations you may choose to make, and consider them in the further development of our curriculum. I would just say that I do believe you are brave to review this particular subject, because, as much as you are focusing on political education for young people, I think that many of the issues we have discussed this morning are relevant to all members of the public, and we do not seem to be able to solve those. I am not suggesting that we cannot educate and improve the understanding of our young people, but there is perhaps, a bigger issue that needs to be looked at.

The Deputy of Grouville:

Training the trainers.

Deputy S. Pitman:

That is where you start, if we are all moaning about the lack of voting, well, that is where you start, you start with young people.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Absolutely. I cannot remember when the year 5 was introduced, but that in itself, I think, will show itself in time.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

I think you have raised some valid views here, and we have certainly had a very interesting discussion, and obviously, there are different views about how you present the subject, where you put the boundaries, and so forth, which we are going to have to look at. I have this terrible suspicion, apropos Deputy Reed's view, if politics was edgier in Jersey and more exciting and all that, people would come out to vote. But anyway, that is a personal view. I shall put a line under it, I thank you again. I thank you very much for attending, it has been a very interesting session. We wish you well in this review, we hope some of our views will count. Thank you.

[12:30]