

2.7 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of the Chief Minister regarding funding for the Prince's Trust:

Would the Chief Minister clarify where the States' funding for the Prince's Trust will be coming from and inform Members how, if at all, this will impact on States funding for other voluntary organisations?

Senator F.H. Walker (The Chief Minister):

The Prince's Trust will be obtaining funds from both the public and private sectors to support his programme in Jersey. The States' element of the funding is estimated at £122,000 a year for the duration of the programme, which will run from 2006 to 2011. The States' funding for the programme will be found within existing departmental budgets and it will therefore not have any additional resource implications for the States, nor will it have any impact on States' funding for other voluntary organisations. I am pleased that the Prince's Trust will be extending its range of activities in Jersey as it has a successful track record of working with disadvantaged young people. Their work is very much in line with the core objectives of several States departments including the Education, Sport and Culture Department and the Probation Service, and it is also in line with the objectives of the States' Strategic Plan.

2.7.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

I wonder if the Chief Minister understands that other voluntary organisations like the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and Family Nursing have had to take a gradually reducing amount of money from the States because of continuous cuts. Does he not think a very inconsistent picture is being put out? Secondly, in terms of the numbers that have been dealt with, could he state (and I realise the Minister might have been better placed to answer this) how much it is costing per person in terms of that £122,000?

Senator F.H. Walker:

I cannot give the answer to that latter question; the Deputy is quite right, but either I or the Education Minister can certainly find out. I have to say I am disappointed and amazed at the negativity involving this fantastic addition to the Island's social services [**Approbation**]. I can only assume the Deputy has not, as I have, met with the team of young people who went through the first 12-week course and seen the considerable value it added to the lives of young people with very numerous and very deep-rooted difficulties. I also assume he has not spoken to the representatives of the Youth Service who ran or were deeply involved in the running of the first course because their enthusiasm too was notable. I am astonished that this should be met with such negativity from wherever it comes. It is an extremely welcome and valuable addition to the care we offer young people who, in one form or another, are disadvantaged. We should be proud of it.

2.7.2 Deputy S. Pitman:

Well, I may be able to answer the Chief Minister's question as to why there is so much negativity. While I would not belittle the Prince's Trust, as I myself have been a

beneficiary. However, despite all his rhetoric that youth must be priority, why is it that the Council can support a project costing £42,000 a year out of the Youth Service budget reaching 30 young people when a youth service has been left running year on, year out, unable to sufficiently deliver its educational programmes for thousands of young people through lack of funding for frontline staff? This is not another expensive PR stunt for the Chief and his Ministers.

Senator F.H. Walker:

That is frankly a scurrilous suggestion. I had nothing to do personally, originally, with the setting up of the Prince's Trust. We were approached by the Prince's Trust who wanted to extend their operations into Jersey. To dismiss it as a PR stunt, frankly, all the Deputy does is convey her own total lack of understanding of what the Prince's Trust can and will do for our disadvantaged young people. I have also been informed during the course of the Deputy's question that an additional £240,000 has been added to the Youth Service budget.

2.7.3 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the Chief Minister not accept that notwithstanding the excellent work of the Prince's Trust that there is also excellent work under enormous financial constraints done day after day by people in the CAB, Family Nursing, ACET (AIDS Care, Education and Training) and bodies such as that, and can we assume that his fulsome praise is also directed to them?

Senator F.H. Walker:

Gladly and of course. The questions I have been answering have been specifically about the Prince's Trust, but I echo the Deputy's sentiments in that respect.

2.7.4 Deputy S. Pitman:

Does the Chief Minister not recognise that the Youth Service has been consistently understaffed for years? Why is the Council not supporting this? Does he not understand that the Youth Service does try to reach hard-to-reach young people but it cannot in its current situation? I ask where this £240,000 is going? Is it going to frontline staff, because that is where it is desperately needed and has been desperately needed for years?

Senator F.H. Walker:

I think the last part of the question is better directed to the Education Minister and, indeed, it is the Education Minister who has informed me about the additional funding that has been put into the Youth Service. I wonder if the Deputy has indeed taken that into account. Even so, to seek to suggest that the Island should not be supporting the excellent work of the Prince's Trust (that is the effect of the question) is to my mind irresponsible and fails to understand the needs of these young people and how the Prince's Trust, with its proven track record in the United Kingdom, a record of extreme success, is best situated and best capable of helping them.