

22.11.01

7 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of the Minister for Children and Education regarding third improvement notice issued against Greenfields (OQ.112/2022):

Yes, I just wanted to make that clear. Following the third improvement notice issued against Greenfields in the space of a year, will the Minister indicate whether she is reconsidering the previously accepted recommendation made by the Independent Children's Homes Association, that the facility should be closed as a secure home and repurposed as a family therapeutic centre?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Before I answer this question, I would like to check with the Deputy. I have delegated responsibility for Greenfields and for Children's Services to my Assistant Minister, Connétable Vibert. Would Deputy Mézec be content that this answer be provided by the Connétable, although I accept I remain ultimately responsible.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I am afraid I would not. Having been in her position before, I think there are elements that the whole Council of Ministers would need to consider with this. So it would not fall to an Assistant Minister, I would like it to be the Minister.

The Bailiff:

Very well, thank you. If I can just clarify the position, is that generally speaking anyone with Ministerial responsibility can answer a question unless the questioner specifies it must be answered by the Minister. In this case that has been specified, but that would be the default position.

Deputy I. Gardiner (The Minister for Children and Education):

No problem, I will try to answer with as many details as possible because I have delegated full responsibilities. I would like to start my answer that I have found 2 reports, one from 2019 which followed the independent review of Greenfields. The previous Council of Ministers agreed to retain Greenfields as a small secure children's home, as the Deputy probably will know following his time in office of the previous Government at that time. The review mentioned by Deputy Mézec, if I understand it correctly, it is made by the Independent Children's Home Association and was a review of all Island children's homes, including to date a review in August 2020 of Greenfields, secure children's homes. So 10 specific recommendations were made for the future operation of the home as a secure home. So recommendation 3 of the report talked of a repurposing of the home, describing this as a resource centre with a potential of 8 beds with outreach and multi-agency support. Further, in response to recommendation 24 of the need to retain secure care, the Government response was: "The secure children's home will be developed into a resource centre serving both the needs of the children and young people in a secure and non-secure setting with a therapeutic and trauma-informed operating model."

[10:45]

I am supportive of the need to provide therapeutic care, and I am also aware that we need to find a solution of a small amount of secure provision if it will be required on the Island.

4.7.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

The Minister referred in her answer to the decision made in 2019 when I was the Minister for Children and Housing. I should clarify that that position was taken by the Council of Ministers

against what I had asked them to accept; I wanted this full recommendation accepted. So can the Minister confirm from her answer, which sounds like she is accepting the part of the recommendation which suggests having a centre set up to provide therapeutic support for children and their families, can she confirm whether that is with the aim of it being delivered at Greenfields, which is what the recommendation originally got at, and when she said about the possibility of maintaining some secure unit provision, would that be at Greenfields or would that be somewhere else?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I thank the Deputy for his clarification; I was not aware. Part of my strategy is really to prevent children recurring and going to secure care. It is to provide to build alternatives in the community and intensive support in the community. So the therapeutic children's home is part of the strategy as an intensive support service for young people. I am sure the Deputy is aware that we have in the Government Plan ring-fenced funds to acquire the residential therapeutic home. Also, as the Deputy suggested, we are just looking where and how it will be provided. I found planning applications to different redevelopments that were withdrawn, so from my perspective the work is underway. We need to find the way to provide this as quickly as possible.

The Bailiff:

A final supplementary, I suppose, Deputy.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Is a final supplementary allowed if there were no supplementary questions?

The Bailiff:

One moment. Yes, I am sorry to give and then take away, Deputy, but the reality of it is, that the Minister is quite correct, the normal process is that if there had been no other Members asking supplementary questions, there is no supplementary question for you to come back with. That has been the practice, I now recall very clearly. **[Laughter]**