

#### **4.4 Deputy D.J. De Sousa of the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture regarding the allocation of free nursery places:**

Will the Minister please inform Members if any discrepancies exist within the allocation of the free nursery places due to a child's date of birth and, if so, what steps he will take to address this issue?

#### **Deputy J.G. Reed of St. Ouen (The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture):**

I am not aware of any discrepancies in the allocation of free nursery places due to a child's date of birth. It is an established policy that any child who reaches his or her 4th birthday in the academic years starting 1st September is eligible for consideration for a place in a States nursery. If Deputy De Sousa has any concerns about a specific case or cases relating to a States nursery then I would welcome her to contact either myself personally or the department in order that this may be investigated.

#### **4.4.1 Deputy D.J. De Sousa:**

If nobody wants to ask a question, I will follow up with a supplementary. I have been approached by several people, and children are missing out on nursery places due to when they are born because they do not fall within that year's criteria. Will the Minister please work and address this?

#### **The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

There is always going to be the issue of whatever date you pick, that there will be individuals that will fall outside of that particular date; indeed, have their birthday the day before that date. It is a difficult issue, it is, as I say, an established policy that is consistent with the education on our Island, and other islands follow similar principles. I will say, though, to Deputy De Sousa that recently a working party has been appointed by the Early Years and Childcare Partnership to carry out a review on some aspects of nursery provision in the Island. The working party is currently surveying stakeholders for their views and will consider whether changes should be made to the criteria during the coming year, and I certainly would extend again that invitation for Deputy De Sousa to speak directly to me.