

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE
BY DEPUTY J.H. YOUNG OF ST. BRELADE
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 3rd JUNE 2014**

Question

Will the Minister inform the Assembly of Education, Sport and Culture Department's policy in respect of the services which are presently available for separated families and provide details of the professional support, funding and facilities provided by the Department to Milli's Child Centre at Bel Royal School?

What urgent action, if any, is the Minister taking to ensure this vital service is able to continue at the end of June 2014 when Milli's is due to close?

Answer

As one of the three Ministers responsible for the strategic framework for children and young people in Jersey, I agree with the policies set out within the framework. In this connection, the Department for Education, Sport and Culture works with partner agencies, including the Health & Social Services and Home Affairs departments, to ensure that every child of school age receives education appropriate to their age, ability and aptitude.

It is recognised that Milli's Child Centre offers a neutral environment where children of separated families can spend time with one or both parents, and sometimes other family members. This generally takes place outside school hours and at weekends, and in this connection the ESC Department has been able to help by making Bel Royal School available for the association to use as a base for its activities. Earlier this year the ESC Department was informed that Milli's was looking for alternative premises, and the department contacted the association to establish whether it could be of assistance. To meet the association's objectives, the department was advised that this facility would ideally need to be in a central location and to include a small number of meeting rooms, together with a play area and parking. The department identified several potential premises, including a primary school in the St. Helier area, and it was informed in March that the association was 'delighted' to have been offered these alternative premises. Neither the department nor the school had been informed that Milli's is due to close, nor have they been asked to provide further assistance.

Education, Sport and Culture does not provide direct professional support or funding to Milli's Child Centre, and I understand that the primary responsibility for this area properly rests with the Minister for Health and Social Services, who has responsibility inter alia for the Children's Service.

I was not aware that Milli's was about to close and will discuss this issue with the other Ministers on the Children's Policy Group.