

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
BY DEPUTY J.M. MAÇON OF ST. SAVIOUR  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 10TH OCTOBER 2017**

**Question**

Given the praise of the Probation Service by the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry in R.59/2017 and the recommendation of the Inquiry that the high standards and best practice of that service should be shared with other services which care for children, what, if anything, has the Minister done to facilitate the implementation of this recommendation and how will his Department demonstrate that this has occurred and will continue to occur on an ongoing basis?

**Answer**

The Independent Jersey Care Inquiry made explicit in its report that there were areas for improvement across the whole system (all departments and services) with no room for complacency. Key to sustainable improvement is the need for services and organisations to work across their organisational boundaries to remove silo working in the system in order that children are supported to improve outcomes.

The Report referred to the progress made by the Probation Service in recruiting staff and suggested that others, including Children's Services, could learn from this.

It should be noted that while there are similarities within the Probation Service and Children's Social Work, such as qualification requirements, there are also differences in terms and conditions which may make a significant difference in recruiting and retaining staff. Both Probation and Children's Social Work have endeavoured to use a trainee system to 'grow our own' professionally qualified staff. This has in terms of conversion been a challenge in children's social work. While a significant number of potential applicants wanted to become social workers, very few of them were able to make the commitment to go off-island to study and carry out placements. In addition, Community and Social Services had only the funding and full-time equivalent headcount on establishment for two posts at any one time.

Probation staff are paid at a different salary grade to social workers in children's services. Staff are paid at Civil Service Grade 11, while social workers in Children's Social Work are paid at Civil Service Grade 10 – this applies to both newly qualified staff and very experienced and long-standing social workers. In Children's Services, Senior Practitioners are paid at Civil Service Grade 11. However, this is a role that must be applied for ie it is not a matter of progression and involves the holding of a smaller more intense complex caseload along with some supervisory and mentoring roles. Over a period of time, staff have left children's social work to take up posts within the probation service.

In recognition of staff in the probation service regularly working outside core business hours, staff receive 'additional' annual leave days due to the application of an approach described as 'annualised hours', amounting to an additional five days per annum around which the service continues to deliver its operational requirements. This approach stops the service having to accommodate requests for time off in lieu (TOIL) throughout the course of the year. This is not currently available to Children's Social Work staff.

In addition, all staff in Children's Social Work are expected to participate in an out of hours standby and on-call rota. This is carried out in addition to their daily operational duties. It is exceptional in other jurisdictions for social work staff to routinely participate in such a rota as there is usually an emergency out of hours duty service in place. This is an additional task for staff working in Jersey.

The Director of Children's Social Work is actively involved with partners, including the Probation Service, in developing the on-island social work degree. It is hoped that this course will be available in Jersey in

partnership with Highlands College and a UK university in the autumn of 2018 offering placements to 12 students. Resource has been identified in contingency money towards set up costs and student fees for this course. However, there remains significant work to be done on a funding and support structure for students in order that they 'convert' to the States of Jersey as professionally qualified social workers. In the meantime, the service is funding and supporting three members of staff to undertake their professional social work degrees while retained in employment. To fully exploit an on-island degree course, the 'right' students must be supported – some of whom will require financial assistance to undertake the course. The options will be scoped and costed fully for consideration.