

## **2.14 The Deputy of St. John of the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture regarding support for young carers within the community:**

Would the Minister confirm whether there are children within our schools who are carers within their families? If so, will he advise how many children are known to have this responsibility outside of the classroom? What school support, if any, is at hand to help these young people in this position?

### **The Deputy of St. Ouen (The Minister for Education, Sport & Culture):**

We know that there are indeed a number of young people in our schools who act as carers within their families. Schools provide as much support as they can. Exact numbers are hard to determine, because many young people choose not to share their circumstances with us. This presents a particular challenge for those responsible for pastoral care within each of our schools. The situations of individual carers are unique and the support needs to be tailored to help each student. All young carers are offered support with attendance and homework issues to alleviate the demands placed upon them. Schools also liaise closely with all outside agencies, especially St. John Ambulance and a local charity called Support for Young Carers. Furthermore there are now community social workers in each States secondary school, who co-ordinate and monitor the support given to those in need, including the young carers. Thank you.

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

I am pleased to hear the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture. I was pleased to speak to him just before the Assembly this morning when he confirmed that reviews are ongoing. These young people, and I am sure the Minister will agree, are unsung heroes among their fellows [**Approbation**] within their schools. I am not going to go in great depth, but I needed to raise the profile of this, so the young people and the schools can put things in place to make sure we are doing that much more for these families. Thank you.

### **2.14.1 Deputy A.E. Jeune of St. Brelade:**

Is the Minister aware that Soroptimists International in Jersey set up J.A.C.I. (The Jersey Association of Carers Incorporated) many years ago? Three or 4 years ago it identified that there were a number of young carers in the Island who were unrecognised. They have been doing a lot of work, in particular with Le Rocquier School who have been excellent in the way they have dealt with it and they would like to do further better work with other schools. So would he enhance the other schools to do the work that Le Rocquier has been doing with the Young Carers Association? Similarly, does he have the same understanding as I have that Health and Social Services were to introduce 3 social workers to work with this group, I believe, last September?

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

Much work is already being done. I recognise the efforts of many organisations and individuals, whether it be in the State system or outside. I fully support the need to provide the necessary care and support, not only to the young carers, but also their families. The social workers are in place within the schools and they are there not only to support the young carers but all individuals who require support.

### **2.14.2 Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour:**

How is this support publicised to the student body? As the Minister will be aware that if not proactively explained to students such support might not be claimed. How is this support publicised to the student body?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

The first point of contact for any child is the form teacher. They are well aware of the support and the provision of services available to the young people. We also have a multi-agency support team that again are linked to each individual secondary school. They provide this wrap-around care that the individuals and the families need.

**2.14.3 Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Obviously my information is 2 years out of date, but could the Minister clarify whether the Youth Service is still involved in that multi-agency approach, because often we did pick up a lot of such cases? I have to say there is nothing worse than seeing a 10 year-old who sounds like a 35 year-old, because of the work they are undertaking. I congratulate him on the social worker move.

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

As the name implies it is a multi-agency approach and all those agencies are involved in providing the necessary support on an individual basis.

**2.14.4 Deputy M. Tadier:**

Does the Minister acknowledge the negative impacts on the affected pupils that it can have on their work and on their punctuality? Does he think it is satisfactory that children, often at primary school age, are put in this position of being carers? How does he think that the proposed across the board cuts and future cuts will affect vulnerable families in this particular case?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

As a member of the Children's Policy Group both myself, the Minister for Health and Social Services and indeed the Minister for Home Affairs are absolutely committed to providing the right type of support for all young people. The Deputy will see that as we develop the Children and Young Persons Plan these issues will be picked up and funds will be prioritised to ensure that the right form of support is provided.

**2.14.5 The Deputy of St. John:**

I would like to thank those Members who have spoken on this one and put questions. The final question I would like to put is about respite for these young people; given they take on an awful lot of responsibility, what is in place, i.e. for holidays or to give them downtime when they can go and enjoy life as young people should be enjoying it?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

I am not aware of all the support, but I do know that a particular local charity group called Support for Young Carers provides funding for age appropriate activities for the young carers. A recent activity weekend was planned in London for some of these youngsters.

**The Bailiff:**

We come next to a question which the Deputy of St. Martin will ask the Chief Minister. Deputy.