

**QUESTION TO BE ASKED OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
COMMITTEE ON TUESDAY 4th MARCH 2003  
BY DEPUTY R. G. LE HÉRISSIER OF ST. SAVIOUR**

**Question**

With reference to the recent report on Children and Young People's Services, and more specifically to the health aspects contained in it, would the President indicate whether the follow-up action will identify where responsibility for the serious deficiencies lies, and if so, what action does the Committee propose to take?

**Answer**

The question refers to the report by Dr. Kathy Bull concerning the provision of services for children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The report makes it clear that the present inter-departmental structure is failing to deliver the degree of care and attention these young people need. The report was commissioned by three Committees, namely the Health and Social Services, Education, Sport and Culture and Home Affairs Committees. The three Committee Presidents met recently to discuss how best to address the problems identified in the report. It was agreed that the three Committees would need to work closely together and the following draft timetable was agreed and will be considered by the Committees at their next meetings:

The three Committees are to consider the report as it relates to the services which each Committee provides. The dates are as follows - Education, Sport and Culture Committee meet on the morning of the 5th March 2003. The Health and Social Services Committee will discuss the report on the afternoon of the same day. The Home Affairs Committee will meet on the 10th March 2003. Thereafter a joint meeting of the three Committees will be called to consider strategic goals and a timetable of action.

Since January of this year, 6 separate working groups, made up of senior officers from the various departments, have been set up to produce detailed action plans for immediate change and three phase planning around the long-term goal of integrating services. The action groups will report details of progress and issues to be addressed to the panel of Chief Officers of the departments that commissioned the work. The three Presidents will also meet on a monthly basis to review progress towards the production of a detailed strategy to be agreed by the three Committees and for which States approval will be sought, hopefully before the summer recess. This is a provisional timetable only at this stage as there is a great deal of complex work to be undertaken around the major changes proposed, and consultation with stakeholders, but the three Committees and their officers are committed to working together to achieve this timetable if at all possible.

The report identifies a significant range of shortcomings in state provision for children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The problems identified in the report cannot be regarded as anything other than serious; addressing them will require a clear commitment by the States. It must be noted that the three Committees concerned and their staff were all aware that failings existed within the service and regarded such failings as a serious matter. This is why the report was commissioned. Its findings do not represent the work of an externally driven investigation; the Committees and departments concerned invited the scrutiny. It is clear from reading the report that during its preparation the author received full and frank co-operation from all concerned. Its findings would not be so clear and comprehensive were this not the case. Staff who have been frank with the author in discussing difficulties they may have had in delivering the service are to be commended for their honesty.

As already stated, a draft timetable has been agreed by the three Presidents. The three Committees are to consider what action they may wish to take in responding to the issues raised by the report. Until the Committees concerned have determined their programme of action it is not possible to say whether they may wish to apportion responsibility. It is however a reasonable assumption that the Committees' priorities will be positive, constructive measures designed to provide high quality support and assistance to those children and families who may need it.