

# STATES OF JERSEY



## VALERIE BAND HOUSE: THERAPEUTIC WORKSHOP

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Lodged au Greffe on 18th May 2011  
by Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier

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STATES GREFFE

## **PROPOSITION**

**THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –**

to request the Minister for Health and Social Services not to proceed with the closure of the occupational therapy services provided at the workshop at Valerie Band House until current clients and equipment can be transferred to a new workshop at Acorn Enterprises, Howard Davis Farm.

DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER

## REPORT

Valerie Band House is a therapeutic workshop which designs and fabricates windows, doors, tables, shutters or in fact almost anything made of wood. These are often unique designs custom built to fit individual situations. They also have a renovation service for furniture etc.

The workshop is staffed by independent living mental health patients, currently limited to 8 because of health and safety considerations. Many of the clients have been engaged in this therapeutic employment scheme for several years. They have become highly skilled in the use of machinery within the workshop and they manufacture products to a high standard.

The staff are paid a therapeutic wage of £2 per hour and were, until recently, working 5 mornings per week. This has been reduced to 3 mornings per week because of the retirement of the occupational therapist who undertook the supervisory role. The current manager of the shop is a community occupational therapy technician who divides his time between the workshop and his community work. No back up is provided within the Occupational Therapy department for annual leave or other time off by the OT Workshop Manager. When he takes time off the shop has to close.

The workshop was founded by a donation from the father of Valerie Band, a patient at St. Saviour's Hospital, some 25 years ago (see Appendix).

The workshop shop is on notice to close by 24th June 2011. No suitable replacement facilities have been provided for the staff to move on to. Their roles will cease. The staff, who suffer from a range of mental health problems, have been made extremely anxious by this fundamental change to their support regime and as a consequence have contacted me to express their concerns. All of the group have suggested that the alternatives they have been offered are not unsatisfactory.

There is a strong likelihood that if the staff of this particular facility are stood down, without suitable alternative occupational therapy of similar type, their mental health will deteriorate. This may result in some of these individuals becoming once again full time burdens on one area or another of States services, be that social services, hospital in-patients or other. The longer term costs of such an outcome would far exceed any savings predicted. In fact the answer given by the Assistant Minister for Health and Social Services on 17th May 2011 suggests that the workshop will remain open and that the savings indicated in CSR documents will not be achieved anyway.

Acorn Enterprises are doing similar work in renovating wooden furniture and will be having new and larger premises built at Howard Davis Farm. The intention has been to move the machinery to this new facility to bring these therapeutic activities together under one roof. However, the building is not expected to be ready for 18 months.

It appears that the desire of the health department to meet its CSR targets for 2011, rather than put in place a staged and sensible merging of this scheme with that to be developed by Acorn Enterprises, the department has rushed this closure. For the sake of an 18-month delay, the department has put the health of these clients at risk.

The total cost of running the facility is £60,000. Staff advise that sales generate some £15,000 annually resulting in a proposed saving of £45,000 in CSR proposals.

In the Health and Social Services Business Plan 2011, this change to the service was listed on page 15 as “Redesign services at Valerie Band House” with a saving of £45,000.

In the material presented in the CSR proposals, the closure proposal was listed as –

“HSS S10 Redesign OT Services”.

In answers to questions posed by the Health, Social Security and Housing Scrutiny Panel on 13th July 2010 the department responded as follows –

“ADULT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE (0.5 FTE):

- Which therapeutic interventions will be reduced as a result of this staff cut?

The Occupational Therapy Assistant post that currently provides woodwork activity for a small group of clients at the St. Saviour's Hospital site will cease. **These clients will be offered alternative OT activity within existing services.** There have been ongoing health and safety issues within the OT workshop which has precluded other potential clients from taking up OT activities there. The current postholder retired over 2 years ago but has continued to be retained on 6 monthly rolling contracts whilst alternative activities can be found for this client group.

- Please show the documented evidence that informs this decision.

All templates relating proposed schemes are currently being updated but are available.”

The key phrase here is the assurance that “these clients will be offered alternative OT activity within existing services”. The reality is that suitable therapeutic activity has not been on offer. The repeated use of the word “redesign” has hidden the reality that what is proposed is the closure of this therapeutic service leaving clients at risk of worsening mental health and possible breakdown.

In the longer term there is an intention for the property (Valerie Band House) and surrounding properties (which include nursing accommodation) to be sold off for £3 million to a developer. However, there is a covenant on the site, believed to be from 1886. This is likely to cause significant delays to any development. It cannot therefore be sensibly argued that there is any urgent need to close down this facility.

### **Financial and manpower implications**

An 18-month stay of execution in closing this therapeutic facility would result in a maximum additional spend on £67,000 as outlined above, but this figure may not be realised if the workshop remains open as indicated by the answers given on 17th May 2011. There are no manpower considerations.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

2nd October 1996

Mental Health  
Sheltered  
Workshop –  
relocation  
report  
58/33/1(4)

C.E.  
M.O.H.

14. The Committee, with Ms. G. Rattle, Senior Occupational Therapist in attendance, considered a summary report from the Mental Health Sheltered Workshop Manager, in connexion with the relocation of the Workshop to Maison des Vaux, a former residential unit.

The Committee was informed that the premises which presently housed the Mental Health Sheltered Workshop had become restrictive due to an increased number of clients wishing to use the facility and the increased demand for production of furniture since the opening of the retail outlet, Wood 'n Wheels. The Jersey Association for Mental Health had become the recipient of approximately £30,000 from the estate of Mrs. Valerie Band and had supported the request to complete all necessary work at Maison des Vaux, in order that three sheltered work activities could be housed under one roof. The project was nearing completion and the Committee approved the name 'Valerie Band House' for the new workshop building, in recognition of the generosity of the late benefactor.

The Committee expressed appreciation for the hard work of those involved in the scheme.