



# HOUSE OF KEYS OFFICIAL REPORT

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# PROCEEDINGS

DAALTYN

HANSARD

**Douglas, Tuesday, 14th May 2019**

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**Present:**

The Deputy Speaker (Mr C R Robertshaw) (Douglas East);  
The Chief Minister (Hon. R H Quayle) (Middle);  
Mr J R Moorhouse and Hon. G D Cregeen (Arbory, Castletown and Malew);  
Hon. A L Cannan and Mr T S Baker (Ayre and Michael);  
Hon. C C Thomas and Mrs C A Corlett (Douglas Central);  
Miss C L Bettison (Douglas East);  
Hon. D J Ashford and Mr G R Peake (Douglas North);  
Mrs K J Beecroft and Hon. W M Malarkey (Douglas South);  
Mr M J Perkins and Mrs D H P Caine (Garff);  
Hon. R K Harmer (Glenfaba and Peel);  
Mr W C Shimmins (Middle);  
Mr R E Callister (Onchan);  
Dr A J Allinson and Mr L L Hooper (Ramsey);  
Hon. L D Skelly (Rushen);  
with Mr R I S Phillips, Secretary of the House.

## Business transacted

Leave of absence granted.....	967
<b>1. Questions for Oral Answer.....</b>	<b>967</b>
1.1. Golden goodbyes for Government employees – Number over £100,000 in last five years .....	967
1.2. National Sports Centre – Progress in improving facilities.....	970
1.3. New teachers – Financial benefits available on Isle of Man .....	972
1.4. Carer’s Strategy 2007-2010 – When due to be updated .....	974
1.5. Blood donation – Policy on men who have sex with men .....	976
1.6. Local authority reform – DOI work being undertaken .....	977
1.7. The Public Sector Housing (General Needs) (Allocation) Policy 2019 – Emergency housing provisions .....	983
<b>2. Questions for Written Answer .....</b>	<b>988</b>
2.1. Bullying cases in schools – Details for last five years .....	988
2.2. Controlled opioid painkiller prescriptions – Number issued in last 10 years .....	988
Procedural .....	989
<i>The House adjourned at 10.54 a.m. ....</i>	<i>989</i>

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## House of Keys

*The House met at 10 a.m.*

[MR DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Good morning, Hon. Members.

**Members:** Good morning, Mr Deputy Speaker.

5

**The Deputy Speaker:** I ask the Chaplain to lead us in prayer.

### PRAYERS

*The Chaplain of the House*

### Leave of absence granted

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Mr Speaker is not with us today, he is on business with the British-Irish Council. We also have absence granted to Mr Boot and, of course, Ms Edge.

## 1. Questions for Oral Answer

### POLICY AND REFORM

#### 1.1. Golden goodbyes for Government employees – Number over £100,000 in last five years

The Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew (Mr Moorhouse) to ask the Minister for Policy and Reform:

*How many Government employees have received golden goodbyes of above £100,000 in each of the last five years; and whether the Government has considered putting a cap of £100,000 on golden goodbyes?*

10 **The Deputy Speaker:** Turning to our Order Paper today, Hon. Members: Item 1, Questions for Oral Answer and I call upon the Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Moorhouse.

**Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

I would like to ask the Minister for Policy and Reform how many Government employees have received golden goodbyes of above £100,000 in each of the last five years; and whether the Government has considered putting a cap of £100,000 on golden goodbyes?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

**The Minister for Policy and Reform (Mr Thomas):** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The term 'golden goodbye' is sometimes used to describe an exit payment when an individual leaves employment either through redundancy, mutually agreed resignation or as resolution of an employment dispute. Twenty exit payments have been made in the last five financial years of 100,000 or more, of which three-quarters were redundancy cases. These were distributed as follows: 2014-15 – 9; 2015-16 – 1; 2016-17 – 3; 2017-18 – 2; 2018-19 – 5.

Over the same period, 329 exit payments were made in total, out of which the overwhelming majority were redundancy or MARS cases.

Redundancy payments are governed by the Public Sector Compensation Scheme which was approved by Tynwald in 2014. This provides for redundancy payments of up to two years' salary for staff in post before January 2014; and up to 18 months' salary for those employed subsequently on the basis of one month's pay for each year of service. Mutually agreed resignations are provided for in a number of public sector schemes and mainly work on the basis that there is a payback within 12 and payments are capped at 12 months' pay. Employment dispute resolution is provided for by section 104 of the Equality Act 2017 *inter alia*.

Turning to the second part of the Hon. Member's Question: the UK government announced plans in 2015 to cap exit payments in the public sector at £95,000, but has yet to do so. HM Treasury is currently consulting on this matter. I note it states in this consultation document that, quote:

Exit payments associated with loss of employment, including redundancy, are important to employers' ability to reform, and an important source of support for employees as they find new employment, or as a bridge until retirement age.

It goes on to state:

However, it is also important that exit payments are proportionate and fair to the taxpayer ...

Reviewing Isle of Man arrangements is appropriate from time to time and the UK decision might well be a trigger to recommence this consideration in consultation with Isle of Man Government employers.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Supplementary, Mr Moorhouse.

**Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Does the Minister recognise that when so many public servants are receiving such massive payouts, some people out there are concerned, especially at a time when the number of Government workers is increasing?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

**The Minister:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

I guess of course people will be concerned about the value for money from public revenue. Of course I am sure there will be respect out there as well for contracts and for negotiated arrangements. I do not believe the number of public servants is increasing, so I am surprised with that second question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Supplementary, Mr Perkins, Member for Garff.

**Mr Perkins:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

60 Would the Minister confirm that it is in fact the financial years he has given, rather than the calendar years?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

65 **The Minister:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

That is correct. I gave it quite clearly in terms of the last five *financial* years.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Douglas South, Mrs Beecroft; and welcome back, Mrs Beecroft.

70

**Mrs Beecroft:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Could the Minister confirm whether any of the figures that he has given, of people who have received over that £100,000, are there any that do not form part of the MARS scheme, or redundancy, or any of the other schemes that he referred to?

75

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

**The Minister:** No, I referred to everything that is included in the number, but that does not only include redundancy and MARS schemes, there are other resignation schemes; and of course there are settlement agreements under the Employment Act and under the Equality Act, as I indicated.

80

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you.

Further supplementary, Mr Moorhouse.

85

**Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

From the numbers given, is the Minister aware of how many of those individuals have returned to Government work?

90 **The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

**The Minister:** There are very strict regulations that apply in all three cases so redundancies are covered – obviously the post was made redundant not the person. Mutually agreed resignation is all about freeing up posts and things. And in terms of settlement agreements there will always be conditions on those settlement agreements.

95

But I will double check that number if that is in the public interest and it can be disclosed without in any way breaching any data protection issues.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr Hooper.

100

**Mr Hooper:** Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Whilst acknowledging that we need to be careful not to identify any individuals as a result, would the Minister be able to split that number down between the numbers that *were* involved in a mutually agreed resignation or other redundancy schemes, compared to settlement agreements, specifically? And if he would also be able to break down the numbers by Government Department as well, it would be interesting to understand more about the redundancy which normally would apply when Government stops providing a service or stops providing a role.

105

It will be interesting to see that information.

110

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

**The Minister:** In terms of the 20 exit payments which are over £100,000 or more, I already gave that information – so 15 of them were redundancy cases and the other five were either resignations on agreed terms, or settlement agreements.

115

**The Deputy Speaker:** Another supplementary, Mrs Beecroft.

**Mrs Beecroft:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

120

Would the Minister confirm how many were purely settlement agreements?

**A Member:** Five.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Minister to reply.

125

**The Minister:** Does the hon. questioner mean in terms of the 20 or in terms of the 329?

**Mrs Beecroft:** The ones that you listed before.

130

**The Minister:** I believe that the majority of those would be settlement agreements, at that level. But I will circulate information if that is not the case.

## EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE

### 1.2. National Sports Centre – Progress in improving facilities

The Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew (Mr Moorhouse) to ask the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

*What progress has been made in improving facilities at the NSC; and if he will make a statement?*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members, turning to Question 2, I call again on the Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Moorhouse.

135

**Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

I would like to ask the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture, what progress has been made in improving facilities at the National Sports Centre; and if he will make a statement?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister of Education to reply.

140

**The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture (Mr Cregeen):** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

I refer the Hon. Members to the Answer that was circulated earlier and to that I would say that unfortunately, at this moment, we cannot give a confirmed opening day for the swimming pool at the NSC.

145

*Answer circulated by the Minister on 13th May 2019:*



The National Sports Centre swimming pool first opened in 1998 and welcomes yearly attendances of approximately 300,000 participants. Needless to say the 20-year-old facility was in need of investment and closed in August 2018 for significant refurbishment and improvement. Included in these improvements are a new moveable set of floors on one side of the main pool which will provide increased flexibility for the delivery of swimming lessons to participants of all ranges of age and ability. Also included in this part of the refurbishment is improved access into the pool for people with disabilities with a new pool pod lift that will allow for those people with mobility difficulties and wheelchair users to enter the water more safely and easily. In addition there will be new steps into the pool which will assist those who have previously struggled to enter the pool via the vertical stairs. There will be an additional pool hoist system to assist those customers with complex disabilities access the leisure pool. There will be two new flumes which will replace the previous set along with a newly located stair tower to access the flumes and a brand new zero depth play area which will provide an interesting and exciting experience for the younger age groups. The pool surround has been completely re-tiled with additional seating being provided for competitors involved in galas, along with new timing systems and equipment for competitive swimming. All of the changing areas have been completely refurbished, along with new showers.

The project has also included significant maintenance works, including new roof lights and roofing repairs to the pool hall, new air handling plant and new pool hall lighting. There have been extensive works to the water treatment plant, including the relining and new filter material to the filter vessels, new ultra violet water treatment plant and new heat exchangers.

The front entrance of the National Sports Centre has also been improved with a new set of doors which will make it easier for people to enter the NSC, particularly those users with disabilities and families with push chairs and young children.

These improvements supplement the very recently refurbished indoor sports facilities at the NSC. The two Sports Halls, Squash Courts and Bowls Hall along with the synthetic astro-turf pitch were all refurbished and improved following the significant and devastating flooding the NSC experienced in December 2015.

When the Pool does re-open the Isle of Man will in essence have newly refurbished dry and wet sports facilities at the NSC and barring any further natural disasters, which we have sought to protect against with our extensive flood protection measures, will serve the Island's residents and indeed visitors to the Isle of Man for another 20 years. These excellent facilities will play a key role in the preventative health care of our population now and our future generations, which is essential for our Island's well-being.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Supplementary, Mr Moorhouse.

150 **Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker; and thank you, Minister, for the statement yesterday.

In terms of the statement, you do not give a date when the pool will be open and if you could just reaffirm that at the moment: is there any indication when it *will* be opened?

155 Also, the statement makes clear reference to various improved facilities. Which changes have led to the delayed opening?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

**The Minister:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

160 I said previously that I cannot give a date at the moment for when the pool will be open, but the delays are caused by the flumes.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further supplementary, Mr Moorhouse.

165 **Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker; and thank you, Minister.  
Will the project be completed to the initially agreed cost of £4.2 million, given the overrun?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

170 **The Minister:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.  
As far as I am aware the costing is still on schedule.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Douglas East, Miss Bettison.

175 **Miss Bettison:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.  
I wonder if the Minister could advise whether the pricing structure will be reconsidered when the NSC reopens?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

180 **The Minister:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.  
No, there are no thoughts about redoing the pricing structure.

### 1.3. New teachers – Financial benefits available on Isle of Man

The Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew (Mr Moorhouse) to ask the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

*What financial benefits are available as part of the pay package for new teaching professionals on the Isle of Man?*

**The Deputy Speaker:** We move on to Question 3, Hon. Members, and again I call upon Mr Moorhouse, the Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew.

185 **Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.  
I would like to ask the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture, what financial benefits are available as part of the pay package for new teaching professionals on the Isle of Man?

190 **The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

**The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture (Mr Cregeen):** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.  
The financial benefits available as a part of the pay package for new teaching professionals in the Isle of Man are as follows, and salaries are generally equivalent to those paid in the UK.

195 Student loan forgiveness: this is a benefit for all newly qualified secondary teachers who return to the Island after their undergraduate and postgraduate studies, and which presently totals £10,000 – being £2,500 for each of their four years of study. The loan would be repaid in full with agreement that the teacher would complete three years at one of the Island's secondary schools upon course completion.

200 'Golden Hello': this is a benefit for all secondary school teachers who have successfully completed their NQT induction year, or equivalent, and have a permanent contract in one of the Island's secondary schools. These teachers will receive consecutive lump sum payments of £2,000 at the beginning of their second and third full school years in teaching, amounting to £4,000 over the two years.

205 Additional benefits for teachers who relocate are as follows: the National Insurance Contribution Holiday for a year, which has a maximum value of £4,000.

Benefits for secondary teachers who relocate: housing assistance. This benefit is subject to relocation circumstances. It provides a maximum contribution towards mortgage payments of £500 per month for two years, or £200 per month for two years towards rental costs, and a 70% contribution to relocation expenses.

210 Shortage subjects: this benefit is subject to relocation circumstances. The assistance is a maximum of £500 per month towards the actual cost of renting living accommodation for a period not exceeding eight months.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Supplementary, Mr Moorhouse.

215

**Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Have these generous starter packages been created to deal with teacher recruitment issues? Towards the end of your answer you do suggest certain areas are receiving certain benefits but, overall, is there an issue?

220

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

**The Minister:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

225

I am trying to understand what the Hon. Member means by 'are there any issues regarding' – is that regarding the benefits that we are giving or regarding the teachers?

**Mr Moorhouse:** Recruitment.

230

**The Minister:** Well I think, as in most educational establishments across the whole of the UK as well, there are shortage subjects and there is a shortage of the number of teachers entering into the profession. So this is to try and encourage some of those students back to the Isle of Man.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further supplementary, Mr Moorhouse.

235

**Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker; and thank you, Minister.

In the initial Answer, the Minister made reference to payments generally being equivalent to those in the UK. Was the 3.5% pay increase, as recommended by the School Teachers' Review Body, brought in as recommended last year?

240

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

**The Minister:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

245

The agreement is with the Unions, and it is an agreement that the Department has honoured and the STPRC, I think, has published; and it has mirrored that which was implemented in English schools.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further supplementary, Mr Moorhouse.

250

**Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker; and thank you, Minister.

When I returned home to be a teacher, I was not actually able to qualify for many of the benefits that were on offer then. Do teachers who are returning home *now* from university, or wherever, have access to all these wonderful incentives?

255

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister.

**The Minister:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.  
Yes, as I said in my Answer, they are able to get these living expenses.

**1.4. Carer's Strategy 2007-2010 –  
When due to be updated**

The Hon. Member for Ramsey (Dr Allinson) to ask the Minister for Health and Social Care:

*When the Carer's Strategy 2007-2010 will be updated?*

**The Deputy Speaker:** We move on to Question 4, Hon. Members, and I call on the Hon. Member for Ramsey, Dr Allinson.

260

**Dr Allinson:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.  
I would like to ask the Minister for Health and Social Care when the Carer's Strategy 2007-2010 will be updated?

265

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

**The Minister for Health and Social Care (Mr Ashford):** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Carer's Strategy 2007-2010 was developed by several Government Departments in collaborative partnership with the third sector organisations including Crossroads Care, Isle of Man Live at Home Schemes, and Manx Cancer Help.

270

In their recent publication, 'The State of Caring in the Isle of Man', Crossroads Care recommended the strategy is revisited. The Department is engaging with third sector and other partners to start planning how this can be progressed.

275

**The Deputy Speaker:** Supplementary, Dr Allinson.

**Dr Allinson:** Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker.

I would like to thank the Minister for this reaffirmation. Would the Minister agree that part of the survey of carers has shown a wide variety of ages, with 8% between 11 and 18; but also an increased number of older carers, 95% of who live with the person that they care for? And so now, more than ever, things like the access to respite care and also allowances are very important – particularly the Carer's Allowance, which stops at retirement age?

280

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

285

**The Minister:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

In relation to the Carer's Allowance, that is not really for me to comment on, I think it would be better directed towards Treasury. But in relation to carers in general, what I would say is that they are the lifeblood of any society.

290

As the Hon. Member for Ramsey, Dr Allinson, pointed out the age profile of carers is going up as we live longer and as people want to keep their parents and relatives in the community – I think that is something we are going to continue to see. It is an absolutely excellent report that Crossroads Care has done and it has identified many stats. So, for instance, a couple more I could put out there are that they identified 84% of carers have feelings of worry and anxiety because of their caring role, and 44% of carers said they had to give up employment as a result.

295

These are all issues that need to be tackled in one way or another and that is what we will look to do by engaging with the third sector and bringing forward a modern Carer's Strategy fit for the 21st century.

300 **The Deputy Speaker:** Supplementary, Hon. Member for Douglas Central, Mrs Corlett.

**Mrs Corlett:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Just following on from the Minister there, would he agree that updating this strategy is essential? As we move towards integrated care and helping people to stay in their own homes longer, it really is time to start taking care of carers.

305

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

**The Minister:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

I fully support the comments there by the Hon. Member for Douglas Central and I think the Hon. Member makes a *very* important point that sometimes it is very easy to get fixated on the person being cared for and forget about the carers themselves and the pressures and strains that they are under. So respite and providing them with support is absolutely as crucial as ensuring that there is support for the person being cared for.

315

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further supplementary, Dr Allinson.

**Dr Allinson:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

I would completely agree with the Minister on that. In another place, later on this month, we will be discussing wider issues in terms of care, in terms of the Health Care Service on the Island but also in terms of integrated care and this ambition to keep people in their homes longer rather than admit them to hospital or other institutions.

320

Would he agree with me that carers in the Isle of Man provide an invaluable service and actually underpin a lot of the care that is done, above and beyond what can be provided by Government?

325

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister.

**The Minister:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Yes, I most certainly agree with the Hon. Member. As I said in a previous answer, the carers as far as I am concerned are the lifeblood of any society. Although we may be discussing wider issues in another place later this month, it is all interlinked and a massive part of integrated care and community care is ensuring people can stay in their own homes longer. Carers have a massive role to play in that and we should never underestimate the amount of work that they do.

330

335

**The Deputy Speaker:** Supplementary, the Hon. Member for Garff, Mr Perkins.

**Mr Perkins:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

I thank the Minister for his reply and the very thorough investigation that he is doing into the carers and the support for people. One of the things that have come to light is that there are families who do not qualify for carer support and they have to employ their own carers. Now, with the advent of National Insurance holidays for teachers, and things like that, I have had put to me several families saying would it be possible – because they are actually employing these people and they have to pay employers' National Insurance.

340

345

Would the Minister consider approaching the Treasury for a National Insurance reduction?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister.

**The Minister:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

350 While I can see where the Hon. Member for Garff is coming from, I think that is a matter he is better off raising with Treasury directly.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further supplementary, Dr Allinson.

355 **Dr Allinson:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Final supplementary, really. One of the aspects of the Crossroads Care Survey was the need for an assessment of carers in terms of their individual needs – their individual financial needs, but also social needs and health needs themselves. Would the Minister agree that part of a review of the Carer Strategy should look at individual assessments so that these people can be helped in a way that is appropriate for them?

360

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister.

**The Minister:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

365 Yes, as the Hon. Member for Ramsey knows very well, I am not for putting people in boxes. I think it is important we do look at people individually and particularly when it comes to ... And the Review, which again we are going to be talking about in another place next week, Mr Deputy Speaker, focuses on putting the patients at the centre, but when it comes to caring we have got to put the individual carer at the centre as well.

370 Carers have different needs, just as different patients have different needs and it is important that is recognised in any developments going forward.

### 1.5. Blood donation – Policy on men who have sex with men

The Hon. Member for Ramsey (Dr Allinson) to ask the Minister for Health and Social Care:

*What plans he has to review the policy regarding blood donation by men who have sex with men?*

**The Deputy Speaker:** We move on to Question 5, which is again with Dr Allinson.

**Dr Allinson:** Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker.

375 I would like to ask again the Minister for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to review the policy regarding blood donation by men who have sex with men?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

380 **The Minister for Health and Social Care (Mr Ashford):** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The NHSBT, or National Health Blood and Transplant service, in the UK has introduced a method of screening donated units of blood for HIV using technology called NAAT, which is Nucleic Acid Amplification Testing. This has enabled them to allow donations from MSM individuals. The Isle of Man is in the process of implementing the same testing for our donors and when this is in place we will be in a position to re-evaluate our donor selection criteria.

385

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further supplementary, Dr Allinson.

**Dr Allinson:** Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker.

390 I am glad that the Department is looking at this again. It seems anomalous that in 2011 the UK moved for the deferral from indefinite to 12 months, and in 2017 down to three months. Would he agree with me that by excluding men who have sex with men from giving blood he is actually excluding people who could – particularly in terms of platelets and rare blood groups – benefit by donating blood to the Isle of Man transfusion service?

395 **The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

**The Minister:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

400 I am happy to agree with the Hon. Member for Ramsey in that regard. I think the policy has been long overdue for a review and that is now being undertaken with the testing that we are now able to undertake. It is important that we do not exclude people unnecessarily and I think, moving forward with the policy as we are, that will allow us to be much more all-encompassing and also ensure that people can participate when and where they want.

#### **1.6. Local authority reform – DOI work being undertaken**

The Hon. Member for Ramsey (Mr Hooper) to ask the Minister for Infrastructure:

*What work he is undertaking on local authority reform?*

405 **The Deputy Speaker:** Question 6, Hon. Members, and I invite the Hon. Member for Ramsey, Mr Hooper, to ask his Question.

**Mr Hooper:** Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker.

I would like to ask the Minister for Infrastructure what work he is undertaking on local authority reform?

410 **The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

**The Minister for Infrastructure (Mr Harmer):** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

415 This Department continues to work with local authorities to help them work as efficiently and effectively as they can. The Department is paying particular attention to helping local authorities work well with each other and helping local authorities work well with the Department. Our shared aim is of course to ensure that both the taxpayers and ratepayers get good value for money. I am pleased to say that many of the initiatives we have undertaken with local authorities have been successful and are now part of the normal way of working.

420 Hon. Members will know that we now have regional waiting lists for housing. These lists not only show that various local authorities and the Department can work well together, but more importantly have provided significantly increased opportunities for those on housing waiting lists to find a property that meets their needs.

425 Members will recall that local authorities were asked to take over some of the basic maintenance of highways in their areas. Local authorities have taken the opportunity to show pride in their areas and in many cases invested their own sums on top of those provided by the Department. I accept that there may be, as a result, some variation in standard, so the

Department is working with local authorities on setting appropriate standards for highway maintenance.

430 Given the scale of climate change facing us, many of us are concerned over how we manage the Island's waste. Local authorities play a very important role in the Island's waste management system and I am pleased that both the political and officer working groups are progressing improvements aimed at increasing the amount of recycling that we do on the Island, as well as improvements aimed at sharing facilities, plants and equipment. The Department is now considering options for incentivising a more integrated approach to the collection and  
435 management of household waste.

I am pleased that the merger of three local authorities into the new Garff authority has been reported as being a success. I am equally pleased that a number of authorities have been progressing schemes to reduce the numbers of members. I hope and expect that we will see more mergers and further streamlining of authorities.

440 I am firmly convinced that the Department's role is to guide, facilitate and enable this sort of change. It is critical that any change is not for its own ends but improves the services and lives of the local authority it serves.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Supplementary, Mr Hooper.

445

**Mr Hooper:** Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for that Answer.

I am sure the Minister is aware that in the Programme for Government there was an action to review the approach and timetable for local authority transition, which his Department  
450 marked off as complete in the most recent update. In June last year I asked the Minister a Question about this, about when he would be presenting this revised approach and timetable to Tynwald and the Minister did confirm he would circulate to Hon. Members – to Tynwald Court, in fact – copies of the review findings, the outcomes of that and his new timetable. We are nearly 11 months later and I have not seen hide or hair of this and neither have the very  
455 excellent research staff from the Clerk of Tynwald's Office who I asked to investigate this for me.

I wonder if the Minister would confirm he will be making good on his commitment and circulating the current position of the findings of his local authority transition review, the current review process and the current timetable that he actually promised Tynwald Court in June last  
460 year?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister.

**The Minister:** Thank you.

I can circulate that to the Member.

465

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Member for Douglas South, Mrs Beecroft, supplementary.

**Mrs Beecroft:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Minister referred to waste management. I wonder if he could confirm whether he is  
470 aware that the UK is trying to reduce the food waste in the UK by 50%. I am wondering if the Minister is aware of this and if he has any plans to support local authorities in endeavours to do the same here?

**The Deputy Speaker:** This is moving us away somewhat from the Question, but I will leave it  
475 with the Minister.

**The Minister:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.



480 That is one area that I think we need to look at. Waste management is really where a lot of the focus will be over the next coming months, in particular in terms of our Waste Strategy which was approved in another place last year, which was very much about what was left in the waste stream, and we need to ensure that we recycle and that we deliver that waste strategy.

To me it is about outcomes and it is very important that we work with local authorities on that.

485 **The Deputy Speaker:** Supplementary, Mr Hooper.

**Mr Hooper:** Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker.

490 I would like to ask the Minister how the work that his Department is undertaking is tying in with the work that is being undertaken by the Cabinet Office on rates modernisation. Both the Minister for Policy and Reform and the Minister himself have commented that local authority transition is going to be highly dependent on a number of other work streams, including the waste strategy and including the rates reform. So I would like to understand better how those two pieces of work are collaborating.

495 **The Deputy Speaker:** Minister.

**The Minister:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

500 We are working very closely with the Cabinet Office on that work and obviously it will depend on the outcome of what happens and what final decisions they are making, but obviously that has *potentially* quite a significant impact on local authorities and the transition.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further supplementary, Mr Hooper.

**Mr Hooper:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

505 I am not really sure that that answer helped, but at least I am gratified to hear the Minister is working with the Cabinet Office on the rates proposals.

510 One thing that does concern me, however, is that a number of the items he listed in his original Answer about what the Department is doing to encourage local authority transition, a lot of the things that were coming out of his Answer were actually local authorities reforming themselves – the Garff Initiative, members reducing in things and local authorities taking on more work. All of this seems to be local authorities leading the way rather than the Department actually taking decisive action.

515 I wonder if the Minister could just reconfirm that it is actually his Department that is trying to lead the local authority plans rather than simply allowing things to plod along as they have done for the last century?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister.

**The Minister:** Thank you.

520 There are two elements: yes, there is an essence of working with local authorities and guiding them and working with them, but very much the essence from my passion is about improving services, and I have mentioned waste.

525 One particular service that we have improved is housing and that has very much been a lead by the Department, looking at each of those areas of where we can transition. This is going to be fundamental over the next two or three years.

Also where we get new initiatives such as GDPR, Freedom of Information and so forth, we have been working very closely with local authorities and we know that there are instances where they would perhaps be working better together and maybe even merging, and those elements are very much a part of what we do. And part of what we do with the Cabinet Office is

530 a number of very close-tied working relationships and meetings that we have had. But obviously with regard to rate reform it really depends on how that falls and where that comes.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Supplementary, the Hon. Member for Douglas Central, Mr Thomas.

535 **Mr Thomas:** Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Would the Minister agree with me that the way change and reform happens is by building deep relationships, not only at political level but also officer level? And would he agree to welcome, with me, the Officer Working Group that is working across rates reform and local authority reform which has representatives in most of the Departments of which Members in this House serve?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

**The Minister:** Thank you, I fully agree.

545 It is that close relationship and also with the local authorities, because without that trust and engagement many local authority reforms will fail and immediately hit the buffers and that is really where we have been working, not just with local authorities but with the Cabinet Office. And I do really see this as an inter-Government project to see the necessary change.

550 **The Deputy Speaker:** Supplementary, Hon. Member for Ayre and Michael, Mr Baker.

**Mr Baker:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

555 Would the Minister agree with me that the Department's strategy could be summarised as encouraging and incentivising and facilitating change within local authorities, and that there is good evidence that change is actually happening? And that that actually supports the strategy, as opposed to taking a big stick to local authorities and forcing them into reform, which is likely to get a less collaborative and progressive approach?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

560 **The Minister:** Absolutely, and I do think it is a very different approach; it is a progressive approach. As I say, there are a number of things that we are leading, continuing day by day. If we take roads, that was led by the Department and so forth. But it is very much about guiding and working with them.

565 I think the other alternative, I suspect, would be very much the sort of approach where we dictate the terms, but I do not think that is the right approach. I think we are seeing the success and we are seeing the success in terms of rate reform and so forth.

So that is the approach that I am continually pushing.

570 **The Deputy Speaker:** Supplementary, Hon. Member for Garff, Mrs Caine.

**Mrs Caine:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

575 I would just like to query the Minister on the point he made about looking for more mergers and further streamlining of the local authorities. Could he tell us whether the four-plus-one model is completely off the table? And in my mind I think the Garff Initiative, as we know, has worked very well with each of the three parishes still represented and efficient working in a bigger authority.

580 So would he think that perhaps aligning the rural parishes to the new Keys constituency boundaries would be a good merger, still representing the rural parishes against the towns and that would mean a significant reduction in local authorities?

Is there a master plan? Does he have a figure in mind of what local authorities might be reduced to? Or does he in fact anticipate seeing *any* major reform of local authorities working before the end of this administration?

585 **The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply. (*Interjections and laughter*)

**The Minister:** Okay. I think what I was trying to say is that I am very much conscious of everything that we do in the Department and across Government is very much about the constituent and about the local authority member and the local authority. The transition that we  
590 have been putting forward has not been about structure it has been about what is in the best interests of the ratepayer. So in terms of can we work better and collect waste together? Can we recycle better? Those are the focuses and that is the thrust of what we are trying to do.

It has not been about structure because I do not think that will get the outcomes that we are trying to achieve.

595

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further supplementary, Mr Hooper.

**Mr Hooper:** Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker.

I would like to congratulate the Minister on that, actually having an outcome-focused  
600 approach rather than focusing on the structure which really is not the issue at hand.

I accept completely that the Department's softly-softly approach appears to be having some success. My area of concern, however, is that it is only the local authorities that want to reform which are the ones that are reforming. Regional housing lists are a perfect example of this.

I wonder if the Minister could confirm that now every single local authority area is signed up  
605 to a regional housing list – or not? If the case is that they are still not all signed up to this, is there clear evidence that this approach of working together can only take us so far, and at some point the Department is going to have to show leadership and is going to have to take some kind of decisive action?

610 **The Deputy Speaker:** Minister.

**The Minister:** I think there will always be a point where that will naturally come to a conclusion, and I suspect it will as there is one local authority and there is only so much ... It is like a vacuum can only exist for a time. But I think the right approach is to engage, to move  
615 forward and collaborate. But I take the Member's point, it is absolutely right, it only goes so far.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further supplementary, Mr Thomas.

**Mr Thomas:** Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Minister has agreed that the GDPR initiative and FOI initiatives are putting pressure for efficiency through transparency. The Minister has accepted that ratepayers are likely to demand reform and change. What about two other things, Minister?

I would like to ask the Minister, Mr Deputy Speaker, whether or not he can confirm that we  
625 have been working very closely between the Departments in terms of electoral reform? And voters are crucial in this because we have got local authority elections coming up in 2020 and national elections coming up in 2021. It would be lovely to see, but does the Minister agree more integration between the electoral registration forms? And does the Minister also agree that the Ombudsman which needs to be extended to cover local authorities could also be transformational in local authority transition?

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**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

**The Minister:** Yes, I suppose there are many things that we are doing and it is good that the Minister has reminded us of that, that both of those are key: electoral reform and also the Tynwald administration. I would agree with both of those.

635 In addition we are also looking at a new Local Government Act which deals with a number of the issues that were dealt with by the Select Committee of Tynwald on Local Authorities, which has an update to provisions relating to members' expenses allowances; clarifying local authority boundaries; clarifying the process for filling casual vacancies; clarifying the alteration of local authority member rewards; superannuation scheme; update the provisions regarding the  
640 inspection of minutes; amending Tynwald procedure for local authority byelaws and clarification – the list goes on. It is a significant piece of work that we are doing to update and reform.

But, as I said to Members, I think what is more important and what we must be actually focused on is the outcomes that we are trying to achieve, making our lives and making the lives  
645 of ratepayers better, and delivering services better. And I know that local authorities want the same thing and that is why we are working together.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further supplementary, Mr Baker.

650 **Mr Baker:** Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Would the Minister agree with me that reforming local authorities means very different things in very different areas of the Island, and that where local residents wish to see their local authority move forward in a direction which is different from that which it is currently doing, they have got a fantastic opportunity to influence that directly when the elections for local  
655 commissioners are held in 2020? (**Mr Thomas:** Hear, hear.) And that is a great opportunity for people to take social media chatter into real action and real local engagement, to make a difference in their own communities?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

660

**The Minister:** Thank you; and I would agree with that.

I think what is really important is that April 2020 – which is less than a year away now – is a real important indication for members of the public to really define what sort of local authorities they want. In particular, for example, that they want to be able to have kerbside collection, that  
665 they want to have merger, or not, with others ...

But those sorts of messages need to come from ... and I would welcome and encourage them. We certainly would be advertising full engagement with the process that the people, constituents and ratepayers get their voices heard.

670 **The Deputy Speaker:** Final supplementary, Mr Hooper.

**Mr Hooper:** Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Minister has acknowledged that his current approach will only take us so far; and his main aim, the outcome he is looking for, is to improve the lives of constituents, of ratepayers  
675 and of service users. That is definitely the right approach. But the corollary to that is that where local authorities are not engaging properly in this process their ratepayers, their constituents and their service users are being disadvantaged by his Department's approach.

So at what point is the Minister going to say 'enough is enough' in terms of, for example, regional housing lists and say that these people are being disadvantaged by his Department's  
680 current approach to not enforcing this on the last remaining authority that has chosen not to participate? What time is he going to say enough is enough and it is the right thing to do for those service users, for those constituents and for those ratepayers? When is his Department going to act?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister.

685

**The Minister:** Thank you.

I think it is an incredibly delicate balance which is why I am trying to finesse this in terms of it is a local authority and people who vote for their local authority have to make their voices known. But there are elements, for example, if you take waste, where we are all aware of the climate change that is happening and that we need to see certain actions happening, and therefore we will have to legislate in certain areas that will make local authorities come together. And likewise with housing.

690

As I say, this train only goes so far and there are national objectives that we need to achieve.

### **1.7. The Public Sector Housing (General Needs) (Allocation) Policy 2019 – Emergency housing provisions**

The Hon. Member for Ramsey (Mr Hooper) to ask the Minister for Infrastructure:

*Pursuant to his Answer in Tynwald on 9th April, which section of the Public Sector Housing (General Needs) (Allocation) Policy 2019 enables a person with an emergency housing need to be placed onto the housing waiting list; and what emergency housing provision his Department provides or supports?*

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**The Deputy Speaker:** We move then to our final Oral Question this morning, Hon. Members, and I again call on Mr Hooper.

**Mr Hooper:** Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker.

I would again like to ask the Minister for Infrastructure pursuant to his Answer in Tynwald on 9th April, which section of the Public Sector Housing (General Needs) (Allocation) Policy 2019 enables a person with an emergency housing need to be placed on to the housing waiting list; and what emergency housing provision his Department provides or supports?

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**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

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**The Minister for Infrastructure (Mr Harmer):** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

In respect of the first part of the Hon. Member's Question I can advise that, unless they qualify for the eligibility criteria, no part of the 2019 policy enables a person with an emergency housing need to be placed on the waiting list. This reflects the way in which allocations have operated after the implementation of the criteria since 2002.

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By way of clarification for Hon. Members an applicant, whether in emergency housing need or not, can only be accepted for inclusion on to a housing waiting list for public sector accommodation if they meet all the applicable conditions as specified in Part 1 of the Schedule to the Public Sector Housing (General Needs) (Allocation) Policy 2019. If they are accepted on to the housing waiting list, Part 2 of the same policy sets out the pointing priority within that list.

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In the event that they find themselves in urgent need of accommodation, additional points can be awarded and therefore priority for housing recognised. In this eventuality, section 6 is the primary means for the award of additional pointing based on need; while sections 7, 8 and 9 also assist in prioritising housing need.

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To summarise, this means that if somebody is in an emergency housing need and they meet the criteria for being added on to the housing list, they can be added to the list and given all the points that they would be allowed to under the various criteria to ensure they have a priority

status that reflects their position. It also means that someone who does not meet the criteria cannot be added to the list and cannot be housed.

725 Now, in answer to the second part of the Hon. Member's Question, at a broader level the Government and the Department have provided, and continue to provide, assistance to the third sector providers who specialise in the provision of emergency housing and housing support to individuals, assisting them through the process of securing accommodation. And in respect of new, eligible applicants requiring housing in a specific area for support or welfare needs, there is an ability for using the shared waiting lists to provide greater choice as the applicant only needs  
730 to have spent three years in total – not necessarily consecutive or concurrent – within the boundaries of any Department of Infrastructure housing areas – or the local authority area, or a combination of both – to qualify, as opposed to the previous policy of five years in one housing authority to qualify for housing in that area.

735 Now, for existing public sector tenants these criteria do not apply and any tenant who needs to move from one area of the Island for social, economic or health reasons can do so using an inter-authority transfer or mutual exchange, neither of which is subject to local area of residency rules. If any of the reasons are of an urgent or emergency nature the Department would work with the relevant housing authorities to facilitate the move.

740 **The Deputy Speaker:** Mr Hooper, supplementary.

**Mr Hooper:** Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker.

745 The Minister started off that Answer by stating quite clearly that no part of the housing regulations enable someone to get on to the waiting list because they have an emergency housing need. That is a complete 180° flip on his position on 9th April where he stated this discretionary emergency allocation still existed.

750 So my question for the Minister is: was he fully informed in this policy development? Was he fully supportive of all the elements in this policy? Did he fully understand the implications in this policy when he brought it to Tynwald? If so why have we received, within the space of four weeks, two completely contradictory answers from him with the same question?

**A Member:** Hear, hear.

755 **The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

**The Minister:** Thank you; and I apologise where I have not been clear and given clarity, because that was not my intention. Obviously, to be absolutely clear, there are two elements of housing: there is the qualification which is based on specific criteria that you have to be here for 10 years, for example, and you have to meet financial criteria as well. That is the qualification; and then to be allocated is based on priority.  
760

In relation to the Question, it was really regarding confusion caused by the reference made by the Hon. Member in another place to a section of the previous policy document, namely the Public Sector Housing Criteria which is replaced by the Public Sector Housing (General Needs) (Allocation) Policy 2019. It is important to point out that the discretionary emergency criteria referred to in the previous policy document were not used for placing people on to housing waiting lists. Instead, they were used to determine the housing priority for those already eligible for public sector housing.  
765

770 So, let me be clear: the new strategy document does not contain discretionary criteria for emergency acceptance on to public sector housing waiting lists, but does allow for the awarding of extra points to eligible applicants already on the list who are in urgent housing need.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Supplementary, Hon. Member for Ramsey, Dr Allinson.

**Dr Allinson:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

775 In terms of the function of his policy, could the Minister confirm that this would help victims of domestic abuse who may be either on shared tenancy or actually not on the tenancy agreement at all, but would qualify for public sector housing to be rehoused? And particularly if it was in a different area to the address of the abuser?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

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**The Minister:** Thank you.

785 In that circumstance, if you meet the residency, if you have been here for 10 years and you meet the financial criteria then, yes, we have Department houses all over the Island and therefore you will be able to meet those criteria. In particular, we have now improved it because it was five years on a specific housing list and it is now three years, and of course we have shared waiting lists and we have a Department list that covers the whole Island.

790 In terms of those who are not qualified – and that is specifically talking about those who have not been here for 10 years and who have a much higher salary – then in those instances we would work with the housing providers and we could operate in a licence situation. But that is non-statutory and that is working outside of our statutory requirement.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Supplementary, Hon. Member for Middle, the Chief Minister.

**The Chief Minister (Mr Quayle):** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

795 Could the Hon. Member just please reiterate for my benefit that for the emergency housing need to be placed on the waiting list, the policy in 2019 reflects the way in which allocations have operated after the implementation of the criteria since 2002 – so it is business as usual?

800 And, is it not his Department's policy *not* to give housing – even if it is an emergency – if people can afford to buy their own house, or sort themselves out themselves? It should only be there for people who have a low income and who have a genuine emergency and do not have the funds to sort themselves out? It is not a free-for-all for wealthy people just because they have an emergency?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

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**The Minister:** Yes, and that is where I need to be actually clear where, if I was not clear before, it was really business as usual. And I want to make that absolutely clear: the qualification criteria to get on the list have not changed and absolutely we do not want to be ... All of us who own a house or who have the financial means should not be looking to the Government to house us. So the Chief Minister is absolutely right.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Member for Ramsey, Mr Hooper.

**Mr Hooper:** Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker.

815 I am a little confused by the Minister's assertions here. The acceptance criteria, the criteria that allow people to get on to the waiting list, previously had an emergency housing condition. The Minister is trying to imply that these acceptance criteria were not really acceptance criteria, this was to do with the allocation of points – which is clearly not the case.

820 But anyway, the question I would like to ask the Minister is: he is absolutely certain that these particular discretionary criteria have never been used in the way outlined. However, when he has been asked previously about the use of discretionary criteria and waivers he has responded that he does not know how other waivers and discretionary criteria have been used because it is done by local authorities and they do not record that information.

825 So, which of those two statements is accurate? Does his Department have the data on how discretion and waivers were used by local authorities in the last five years, as I have previously asked? Or does he not have this information? If he does not have the information how can he make a statement to the effect that he knows how these particular criteria have been used as a way of general practice?

830 I would like some clarity on exactly what the Department knows and what the Department does not know, because really it seems the Minister does not know what his Department knows and what his Department does not know.

**The Deputy Speaker:** We are looking forward to the answer, Minister.

835 **The Minister:** How I know what the Department does not know!

Absolutely, the guidance has not changed; the operational procedures have absolutely not changed ... I understand why he is confused by it because it confused me when I looked at it the first time, and it is not relating to qualification. So there is qualification allocation. Qualification has always been the same and it is based on financial need and 10 years' residency. It is as simple as that.

840 How you get awarded priority and allocated is based on a number of criteria which are based on housing needs. And just to reiterate, 'housing need' is much better in the new criteria that have been approved in another place – it is more about need, which is where I was coming from, and my passion was about the very fact that we are improving things.

845 So in terms of the Department which we do know about, the only circumstances where we have flexed is on one particular criterion in the past, and that was particularly on the five-year waiting list for the Department. The reason now why we do not worry about that is because now we have shared lists and we can use the whole Island, because the Department has the whole Island. And although as a Department we prefer not to have any local ... and I am not talking about 10 years on the Island, I am talking about the local five years' residency requirement. The Department would have preferred it to be zero, but local authorities wanted it to be higher than that and the compromise was at three years.

850 Now, those three years are significantly better than before and we do not believe with the shared lists that that really presents a problem for us any more. So that is absolutely where the Department is.

855 Regarding local authorities: no, we do not have the information on those, but we do not believe ... And I think we need to just take a step back. Public sector housing is a precious resource and, as the Chief Minister outlined, it is not for everybody who has the ways and means and who has their own house, and who has maybe only lived here for two years, or whatever. The absolute qualifying criteria, which were approved in another place, were basically saying you needed 10 years and you needed a minimum financial requirement. I think that is right. That is business as usual and that is the way it has been operated and the way it should operate.

865 What will happen, obviously, when we talk about a strategy document is that we are now putting clarity about it. So this is actually about presenting clarity where there would have been confusion before – clarity in the fact of the 10 years and you meet the financial requirement. If you do not meet those, unfortunately, for the public sector housing, you have your own means and you need to get your own housing.

870 **The Deputy Speaker:** Supplementary, Mr Baker.

**Mr Baker:** Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Minister is wanting, very correctly, to bring clarity to the situation. I wonder if he could clarify what happens if there is a vulnerable person who requires emergency accommodation?



875 **The Deputy Speaker:** Minister to reply.

**The Minister:** Well, as I say, there are two elements. One, if they are a vulnerable person but they have lived on the Island for 10 years and if they meet the financial criteria then obviously the public sector will work.

880 On the other issue, we will work with other local ... And we have the flexibility to work with Graih and all of those vulnerable people, to work in those circumstances.

So we have the *vires* and we can license housing in those particular instances, if we work with other agencies to find that, and we will always do so.

885 **The Deputy Speaker:** That brings our Oral Questions to an end, Hon. Members.

There are two Written Questions for answer and these will be distributed in the normal manner.

## 2. Questions for Written Answer

### EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE

#### 2.1. Bullying cases in schools – Details for last five years

The Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew (Mr Moorhouse) to ask the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

*How many bullying cases involving (a) students; (b) teaching staff; (c) classroom support; and (d) ancillary workers the Department has dealt with in each of the last five years?*

**The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture (Mr Cregeen):** The Department is unclear about what the Hon. Member is referring to, therefore we assume cases means complaints, which is how this is being interpreted in this Answer. Furthermore, 'involving' has been taken to mean that it has been mentioned in a complaint, whether or not this is the substantive issue being considered. From information available following analysis the following has been determined:

Year	Students	Teaching staff	Classroom support	Ancillary	Another
2018-19	4	1			
2017-18	1				
2016-17	3				
2015-16	6	1			1
2014-15	3	3			

### HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

#### 2.2. Controlled opioid painkiller prescriptions – Number issued in last 10 years

The Hon. Member for Ramsey (Mr Hooper) to ask the Minister for Health and Social Care:

*How many controlled opioid painkiller prescriptions were issued in each year for the last 10 years?*

**The Minister for Health and Social Care (Mr Ashford):** The information pertaining to the number of prescriptions over the last 10 years is not available, as data is only stored for five years, therefore full data sets are available from 2014 to the end of February 2019.

Financial Year	Items	Actual Cost
2014-15	34,329	642,234.17
2015-16	35,652	670,958.35
2016-17	35,872	666,706.97
2017-18	35,402	612,560.87
2018-19 (11 Months)	32,035	503,598.05

900 It is crucial to appreciate that this data is not linked to patient demographics; therefore it does not represent the number of patients receiving prescriptions – only the number of issues to patients in the community. These prescriptions could be from GPs or Noble’s Hospital on outpatient prescriptions.

Controlled drugs issued to inpatients of Noble’s Hospital is complicated by the fact many wards have stocks of controlled drugs, and an accurate presentation of this data would require a lengthy, detailed audit.

905 The cost has dropped significantly in the past year due to the work of primary care pharmacists and GPs, namely reviewing and reducing prescribing where possible and in making ‘brand switches’ which involve changing patients to clinically equivalent but cheaper options of the same drug.

DHSC are planning a working party – to include prescribers, pharmacists and Public Health as stakeholders – to work on the wider issues of opioid prescribing.

910 This will involve GPs and hospital prescribers but it is important to emphasise that this will be a large and lengthy project.

### **Procedural**

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members, there being no further business, the House now stands adjourned until 10.30 a.m. on 21st May in Tynwald Court.

*The House adjourned at 10.54 a.m.*