



**SELECT COMMITTEE
OF
TYNWALD COURT
OFFICIAL REPORT**

**RECORTYS OIKOIL
BING ER-LHEH TINVAAL**

**PROCEEDINGS
DAALTYN**

Poverty

HANSARD

Douglas, Monday, 3rd December 2018

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Members Present:

Chairman: Hon. J P Watterson SHK
Miss T M August-Hanson MLC
Mr J R Moorhouse MHK

Clerk:

Mrs J Corkish

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Select Committee of Tynwald on Poverty

*The Committee sat in public at 10.30 a.m.
in the Legislative Council Chamber,
Legislative Buildings, Douglas*

[MR SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Procedural

The Chairman (Mr Speaker): Good morning, everybody, and welcome to this public meeting of the Select Committee of Tynwald on Poverty. My name is Juan Watterson, Speaker of the House of Keys, and I chair this Committee. With me are Miss Tanya August-Hanson MLC, Mr Jason Moorhouse MHK and our Clerk, Mrs Jo Corkish.

5 If we could all ensure that our mobile phones are on silent or off, so that we do not have any interruptions, and for the purposes of *Hansard* I will be ensuring that we do not have two people speaking at once.

This is the first stage of our inquiry and we have invited you here today because we would like to talk a bit more about the definitions of poverty and the data available to help us understand the position on the Isle of Man. We plan to cover other topics in future sessions.

10

EVIDENCE OF

**Mr Michael Manning, Graih;
Mr Neal Mellon, Isle of Man Foodbank; and
Lt Dylan Nieuwoudt and Mr Derek Norton, Salvation Army**

Q1. The Chairman: So I would like to welcome you all and thank you for coming to talk to us. Perhaps if you would all begin, please, by introducing yourselves and telling us which organisations you represent and a little bit about the work you do. If I could start perhaps with Mr Mellon.

15

Mr Mellon: Thank you, moghrey mie. My name is Neal Mellon. I am the Director of Operations for the Isle of Man Foodbank.

The Isle of Man Foodbank is five years old this month. We had been going a bit prior to that when we were carrying out investigations as to whether or not there was a need for a foodbank. My initial expectations would be that I was going to return and say to people, 'It's all right, we don't have to worry about it,' but that was far from the truth.

20

We started off five years ago putting out 150 food parcels. Everything was measured in parcels – and we can go into more depth on that later. Over this last summer we have been putting out 215 food parcels on average per month, so a big difference.

We work primarily with people in crisis and we take on a number of roles. We have a number of community projects on the go as well. We work closely with Probation, the Prison, the Police and some schools in relation to holiday hunger.

25

30 **Q2. The Chairman:** Thank you.

Mr Manning.

Mr Manning: I am Michael Manning. I am from Graih, which is the Manx word for 'love'. We are a charity serving people who are homeless and in insecure accommodation on the Island.

We have been a charity for 10 years. In 2017 we had contact with 202 different individuals.

35 **Q3. The Chairman:** Thank you.

Dylan.

40 **Lt Nieuwoudt:** Hello. I am Lt Dylan. I am from the Salvation Army. I am a leader with my wife, Rachael.

The Salvation Army is a charity which was founded in 1865 by William Booth to help the marginalised, the poor, the homeless, the hungry, the addicted – to make a real practical difference to the betterment of humanity, really. We are a Christian church, first and foremost, and we act out of our Christian principles and morals to care for our society and to just bring positive transformation, really.

45 On the Isle of Man we are based in Douglas and we offer certain activities to help people, so we have from toddler groups to older people groups. We try to care for the elderly vulnerable. We offer practical assistance – acts of kindness through various means. At Christmas time now we help with toy hampers and we have a Boxing Day meal for the elderly, the vulnerable and the lonely.

50 We do everything from music – we have our brass bands and our songsters – and we even have a probation and bail hostel called David Gray House, which we help the community with, and we have the Ark community nursery, which is a daycare nursery to help people, especially those on lower income, to provide professional childcare and support.

55 **Q4. The Chairman:** Anything to add, Derek?

Mr Norton: I am Derek Norton. I am the Corps Mission Secretary and I assist the officers with the planning of our missional programmes, and that includes our community assistance.

60 **The Chairman:** Thank you.

Now I hand over to Mr Moorhouse to kick us off.

Q5. Mr Moorhouse: Thank you very much.

65 Our initial focus will be on definitions, and just to get the ball rolling, a question to all of you: how does your organisation define poverty? How do you view poverty as a concept?

70 **Mr Mellon:** In terms of the Foodbank, we do not have a set definition of poverty. We understand the terminology that comes up online when we look at what is happening nationally and internationally, but we do not take a specific view on 'here is a level beyond which somebody exists in poverty'.

75 I do have my own personal views on poverty. I believe that poverty exists when the total income for an individual, a couple or a family generates a dilemma in choosing which essential basic need to prioritise over another and which to ration or do without, which might result in physical, emotional or mental harm or generate charges of neglect. So situations such as 'do I heat or do I eat?', and that is a mantra that comes up regularly in the Foodbank.

80 I also believe there is another factor involved. It is my belief that poverty exists when one cannot afford transport costs for essential journeys, whether it is for health, for education or for any meeting that could make a significant difference to one's life, such as attending Social Services or the Foodbank.

I have to say my wife, however, who is also a director of the Foodbank, takes a much more simplistic and perhaps pragmatic view. For her, poverty exists when you do not have what you need rather than what you want.

85 **Q6. Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you.
Michael.

Mr Manning: Yes, similar to Neal, we do not have a working definition of poverty down at Graih. The nature of the drop-in means that it is fairly unconditional and open access, so we do not have criteria or a definition that we work to. I think we tend to deal with people at the very bottom of most social, physical and educational ladders in society and poverty is a deeply multifaceted beast. So we are talking of all the material poverty that Neal has outlined, but perhaps more insidious and damaging for many of the guys we see is the relational poverty – it is the isolation and the lack of any support networks that people have that lead people into warped perspectives, poor decisions, and further and further difficulty. So I think it is a complex thing and we do not have a set definition of it.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you.

100 **Lt Nieuwoudt:** The Salvation Army again does not have a set line on poverty, but we have a broad sense, very much taken from a biblical perspective. I have got here, just if I may, *Leviticus 25:35*:

If your fellow citizen becomes poor and cannot take care of his needs, then you must support him with what you have. Look after him, as you would a stranger or outsider, so he may keep living in your community.

105 That is taken from the Voice translation. So very much we have very biblical understanding, where we identify with those in poverty – we need to recognise that and we are commanded by God to meet the needs of the poor.

The Salvation Army is an inclusive organisation, so we respond solely on the basis of identified need and our capacity to help where we support people of different faiths, backgrounds, gender, sexual orientation. We do that without discrimination or prejudice. We believe we will help whosoever appropriately.

110 The Salvation Army has a broad definition of poverty, which includes those people who are presented to us with physical needs, material needs, emotional needs, and I think for ourselves another dimension is the spiritual needs of people. It is all about meeting the holistic needs, a well-rounded package of helping a person, which goes beyond just the material. It is much more than simply not having enough money for basic needs such as food, fuel or shelter; it is also about their health and their well-being – I guess their emotional well-being and it also includes their spiritual well-being.

Thank you.

Q7. Mr Moorhouse: Thank you very much. An interesting group of thoughts there.

120 I was going to move down the road in terms of income, but no one has really mentioned income. There have been the key needs of the individual, the ability to live in the community and the support network. Those three things came across from you separately, but you are all making the same statements. Is this desire to say it is linked to an income simplifying the problem too much?

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Mr Mellon: If I could start on that, income is an integral part of our interview with all clients. When clients come to the Foodbank, unless it is an emergency referral by a professional saying

somebody is in crisis this minute and needs a food parcel immediately, our preference is to meet with clients and go through a history-checking exercise.

130 In relation to that, essentially we will say to somebody, 'So you've woken up this morning, everything has been fine and you find yourself in crisis – what's pushed you over the edge to ask for help from the Foodbank?' We look at all the salient points that they bring up in relation to what has pushed them into that need and then we will work up an action plan to help get them out of that crisis and back to being independent. That would be the primary aim of the
135 Foodbank: not putting food in people's bellies but getting people back to being independent, and we use the food then as a bridge to return to independence.

As part of that interview, as well as looking at the salient factors pushing you into crisis, we look at income and we look at outgoings. We include everything that is being spent in the household except for food, so that when we balance the figures whatever is remaining is what
140 people have to bring food into the house. We are often working with families that will have between £30 and £50 a week for perhaps a family of four, five or six. We do have others who will start in the negative figure and we meet people who, actually, I have to sit and say to them, 'Well, on looking at your balance and what you have spent – and this is on your figures – you are actually quite affluent in comparison to some others,' so we'll go through an exercise on what
145 has triggered them to come into the Foodbank, what makes them think that they are not coping with what they have.

Q8. Mr Moorhouse: And the £30 to £50 is once they have paid for loans and the rent and those –?

150

Mr Mellon: No, sorry, that £30 or £40 is what is left after they have paid out for their rent, gas, electricity and whatever – everything except for food, so they are left with that £30 or £40, which is what they can use for food in the coming week.

Q9. The Chairman: Can I just ask, when you do that do you ask a question about what savings people have as well?

Mr Mellon: No.

160 **The Chairman:** Right, thank you.

Q10. Mr Moorhouse: How do you link into the income, Michael?

Mr Manning: I think income is certainly part of the picture of poverty. We are dealing with
165 people who are at the bottom end of income. Most of them are on benefits. Those who are not on benefits have got very low income or no income at all and all the associated difficulties of that. I think for the guys that we see income is a huge factor but it is also the decisions and education around money. Again, we live in a society that is increasingly digital and bank accounts are online. These are people excluded from all of that, so they are often paying
170 additional charges because it is more expensive to do things in cash, it is more expensive to not have things when you do not have a bank account.

We have also seen real squeezes in terms of accommodation costs over the past couple of years, and particularly this year with landlords requiring more and more of deposits and rents in advance, which again for people on limited income with limited means to pool or save any
175 money becomes very difficult. So we tend to see people with no savings and people who will be just cash in hand week by week and what they are getting from benefits or other sources of income are very low and the associated difficulties with that.

So, when we talk about poverty, income is certainly a factor in that. The cost of living continues to rise and it is difficult for people.

180 **Mr Norton:** I think it is pertinent to say that we are not a primary agent, so we receive referrals from other organisations. We require referral from a relevant carer, a health agency or other professionals to confirm a person's need, and then we are simply responding to that person according to their need. So we would not necessarily have information about that person's financial background.

185 As with the other speakers, we do see people who are in short-term difficulty, so there may be a relationship breakdown and maybe a partner leaves the house and then that brings that person into a financially difficult situation. We also see situations such as redundancy, which impact people's lives.

190 So we are seeing the short term, as you have heard articulated, but also we see a significant number of people who come back and are re-referred, and that seems to indicate to us that there is a broader problem of deep-seated poverty that is not just about that one-off instance and a person gets some support, the situation is alleviated and away they go; there is some more fundamental problem with people who are in this deep-seated poverty situation.

195 **Q11. Mr Moorhouse:** Just joining me further down that road, when we started off looking at this, we looked at definitions of things like absolute poverty and we questioned and thought about whether absolute poverty on the Island was possible. I looked at the World Health Organisation and they have got a daily income of \$1.90, which is a really low figure – about £1.50 a day. In terms of what you are suggesting, you have all got potential examples of people
200 out there who fall into that category. Is that a correct assumption?

Mr Mellon: I am not sure if I would say they would fall into absolute poverty, although like Michael and the others, we do meet people who are in crisis because they do not match the threshold for claiming benefits so they are on zero income while they are in their crisis and that
205 can be a fairly horrific state to be in.

It also depends on the definition of absolute poverty because we work with people who are both in employment and people who are on benefits and those with zero benefits, but when you see a letter from Markwell House advising somebody on what they are getting, for example on Income Support, they will say, 'This is what we believe you require,' or words to that effect; yet
210 we will put those people further into debt or into need by taking action that results in penalties being imposed or they are having to pay out against loans that they have taken. The loans are given to help them improve their situation, but they still have to pay it back so you are automatically getting less than the Government effectively has said is what you need from week to week. So there are dilemmas like that.

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Q12. Mr Moorhouse: Michael.

Mr Manning: Yes, we do see people with no income and who would classify under absolute poverty. We have people ... A guy we knew a couple of years ago comes to mind who had been
220 sleeping rough on the Island – with no income at all, in his 60s – in a tent for a number of months. He had come over with a little bit of savings and accessed us when those ran out. He had no income and was essentially destitute. So those situations do crop up and it is very difficult for people, obviously, when they do.

225 **Lt Nieuwoudt:** I was thinking about ... we have the World Health Organisation making a standard and saying that if you are below the standard then you are in poverty. I think that we have to keep in mind contextualisation, that every place is different and we have to consider the local reasoning why people are in poverty. If it is going to be a financial measure, I do not think that fully encapsulates the totality of a person as a whole.

230 For example, I had a lady who came to us, presented herself as in effect homeless – she was living in a tent at times, she was living in a boat at times on the Isle of Man – and when I started

asking her simple questions as to why was this happening, she said because she came from across and she did not qualify for any of the local benefits or housing needs. There were clear mental health issues involved and there was relationship breakdown because her family did not want to know her. We could help her as best we could, but again it is difficult to measure and tar everybody with the same brush to say if you are below this threshold of income per day you are in poverty. I think I said before, you could be in poverty ... You could have a job but you could still be struggling to make ends meet.

240 **Q13. Miss August-Hanson:** You have mentioned two situations, between Graih and the Salvation Army, as to people living in tents, sleeping rough. How many of those situations do you actually come across? Is it on a regular occasion?

245 **Mr Manning:** To give you a bit of context, in 2015 we provided three overnight bed spaces through the course of those 12 months at the drop-in – absolutely negligible, hardly needed at all. Those numbers have been ticking up since then: I think 19 in 2016; 33, going up to 43 if we include a bit more last year. Those have ticked up again this year and we have had numerous situations this year with people who have been living rough, who have been sleeping in tents or vehicles for long periods of time and have been really struggling for basic shelter.

250 Housing Matters, as of last month, had 60 cases requiring houses, of which 29 were people of no fixed abode – those are people who are maybe sofa surfing, in unsuitable accommodation, street homeless. Just last week we accommodated a guy at the drop-in for three nights because he was just out of prison, accommodation had fallen through and he had nowhere else to stay. He would otherwise have been sleeping rough.

255 So Graih are certainly sufficiently concerned about the rising demand for basic shelter for both men and women that we have seen this year, and certainly our partners in Housing Matters in the wider community are also concerned about that need. That is a need that seems to have grown over the past couple of years and it remains the case that basic shelter on the Isle of Man for men and women is still incredibly difficult to access. We are not open seven nights a week. Graih’s emergency accommodation provision is extremely limited because it is mostly done by volunteers, and so it remains very concerning for us.

260 Part of the challenges that we are facing, obviously, at beginning of December, beginning of winter, is how we can best improve our emergency accommodation and we are making plans towards doing that hopefully sooner rather than later, but it is very difficult for people.

265 **Miss August-Hanson:** Thank you.

270 **Lt Nieuwoudt:** To answer your question, just to explain a bit of my background, I worked in homelessness in Social Services for a couple of years and I had up to 15 homeless men at any given time that I had to help through various issues – addictions, mental health, disabilities – to get them resettled and back on to their feet, independent living, empowered. So I come from that context of understanding homelessness.

275 Coming to the Isle of Man I have become – I have only been here four months – more gradually aware that there is a homeless issue but it is not in the classical term of homelessness, as in if you see somebody sleeping rough with sleeping bags in a shopping centre precinct. It is more in the idea that they are sofa surfing, which basically means that they may find a friend or somebody who is a Good Samaritan and would put them up, whether that is in their room or in a shed, wherever they have got some space just to have some shelter and some warmth. Just engaging with the likes of Graih and David Gray House, I am becoming more aware that there are people struggling to find accommodation and it is an issue, in my understanding.

280 I spoke to a gentleman the other day who works at the switchboard for the emergency services and he said, ‘I was made aware of somebody who was homeless in Douglas town

centre, but who do I contact at three in the morning to say "Can you help with this situation?" Unless Graih is open 24/7 I am not quite sure what the solution is.

285 I think there is an issue. I definitely think there is a need to provide some sort of help for people who are perhaps disenfranchised and marginalised. I would like to see something happen in terms of supported accommodation or some more long-term assistance because I definitely think there is a need that we need to address.

290 We just cannot afford to turn a blind eye. I think that is from our deep-rooted humanity. We need to do something to help those who cannot help themselves, but that we help them get to a point where they can be empowered to help themselves long term.

Q14. Miss August-Hanson: And just a quick further question: what are the age groupings of those that you have seen in this situation?

295 **Mr Mellon:** Is that only in relation to housing?

Miss August-Hanson: Just in relation to those that in that bracket. So I suppose my question is just to Graih and the Salvation Army, if that is all right.

300 **Q15. The Chairman:** So that is just for those who are of no fixed abode?

Miss August-Hanson: Of no fixed abode.

305 **Lt Nieuwoudt:** I have come across individuals from their 20s up to their 60s.

Q16. Miss August-Hanson: Across the board?

310 **Lt Nieuwoudt:** A broad range.

Mr Manning: Across the board, yes. We would primarily see people between their 30s and 50s.

315 **Mr Mellon:** Can I say when I was working more closely with Housing Matters, the youngest I came across was a 15-year-old, who obviously was too young to enter into any contracts but we were working with childcare in relation to that and they were planning for him to begin to live independently at the age of 16, when his mother had scheduled to leave the Island and leave him behind. So 16 is the youngest and the oldest I have worked with was 83.

320 **Q17. Mr Moorhouse:** Just referring back to definitions, there is an assumption it is a male area. Is that an oversimplification? Is it affecting females equally, or is it changing?

325 **Mr Mellon:** In relation to the Foodbank, five years ago I was seeing primarily males, single people, and then we would see couples and some families. This last year in particular but for the last few years we have seen a change and we are seeing families primarily, and the split in singletons would be almost 50-50 male/female.

330 **Mr Manning:** It is predominantly male that we see, although there is a minority of females, and for females that we see it is a much more vulnerable situation than males and we find it more difficult to accommodate women at the drop-in at the moment, just with our volunteer team and our facilities, and so basic shelter for women is even more limited than it is for men. But we have got a certain core of women but it is mostly men that we see.

335 **Mr Norton:** With regard generally to our community needs assistance programme, we are finding that females are more than twice as likely to be referred as males. So, in 2016, for example, there were 639 females referred and 292 males.

Q18. Mr Moorhouse: Thank you.

340 Just returning to the definitions, the UK government have said one way to actually identify poverty is to look at the median income. If you focus on 60% of that being a key barrier and transfer that to the Isle of Man, we would be looking at people with an income of around about £334 a week. Would that be an adequate sum to live on in the Isle of Man, or is £334 going nowhere in terms of accommodation and things? If someone turned to you and said, 'That's our income,' would you see it as an adequate income?

345

Mr Mellon: I would find that hard to answer because you need to look at the other side of the scale and what else is being spent.

I met a new client this week, for example, who was in specifically for help in relation to food but brought up the issue of accommodation when we were looking at income and outgoings, and she had a rent of four hundred and something pounds. I nearly fell off my chair. We are used to hearing of people paying £700 to £800 for private accommodation. So she is in an exceptionally good accommodation where all her bills are paid for, which was the second time I nearly fell off the chair, so I have told her, 'Don't lose that, make sure you are always paying that rent.' But that is exceptional and you need to look not only at what is coming in but what is going out – and is that really what is coming in or do you take into consideration any penalties the client is paying before you then look at other deductions.

355

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you.

360 **Mr Manning:** Again, difficult to tell. From our guides you would get by but it would be low. So I think you would survive okay but it would be fairly low.

Q19. The Chairman: I suppose just to push you on the point, would you call it poverty at that point?

365

Mr Manning: In terms of purely income, probably not, although I assume that is still contextual about whether you are in accommodation where you are paying for bills or not. If you are in accommodation paying for bills, you probably are still really struggling, but if you are in a boarding house where you are not paying for bills, potentially you are coming out of the material poverty bracket. So it would just depend, I think.

370

The Chairman: Thank you.

375 **Mr Norton:** I would just say that some of this discussion needs to be about the kind of society that we want in the Isle of Man. We are hearing about people in very difficult circumstances with low income, but what we really want is to develop an inclusive society where there is real opportunity for participation in society and there are not the barriers in society. We want people to live positive and happy lives. All of these things are really important. And that is not just about the minimum income; it is about what we want for everybody. I think when you get below a certain level of money, that reduces access to the things that we take for granted in society. That is a really important point to make at this point. It is not just about that absolute material figure; it is about that broader participation and what we want of society.

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385 **Q20. The Chairman:** Coming back to the question, in terms of the figure that Mr Moorhouse outlined there, £334 a week, do you think that that is then at a level where people are not going to be able to participate adequately in society because of their income levels?

390 **Mr Norton:** I think it will restrict choice, so if you want to go to a leisure centre, joining all those things that people take for granted – they all have a cost and I think people would struggle because they would be focusing more on the absolute necessities.

395 **Q21. Mr Moorhouse:** Just to draw this section together, I think it is nice to actually go back to where I was coming from initially and meet you in terms of what you are saying. I came with the assumption that income was going to be a key feature; I am leaving this section thinking income is just one of the features. In terms of looking at an Isle of Man definition for poverty, could you all give one or two things that we should be bringing in to that definition? Income is there, but there are equal or more important things. Does that make sense?

400 **Mr Mellon:** Yes. I will start the ball rolling and I hope this is not too early for you, but I would always say – and Michael has started to touch on it – that the issues around poverty and the factors that push you into particularly short-term poverty ... because a lot of people are just coping: Theresa May's famous JAMs that she referred to – people just about managing. These are the people we meet who hit a crisis and then get pushed into short-term problems and we work with them to get them back to that level of independence that they had beforehand. For most of our clients we can resolve that problem over a six-week period. We will review the situation at six weeks. We would not leave anybody on a cliff edge, so if they are not coping we will extend that by two, four or six weeks. But the majority of people – up to about 90% – resolve their issues in that six-week period and the majority are non-returners.

410 After that we have individuals and families that need longer periods of help because in spite of doing all the right things, they are not going to be easy to cope with; they have got massive problems.

415 So I would say my opening definition would always be poverty is multifaceted and complex. There is no one answer to it because there is no one cause, and I think that might be what is sticking you at the minute, that you are looking at this issue of income and there are so many other things around that as well.

Q22. Mr Moorhouse: Thank you.
Michael.

420 **Mr Manning:** Yes, I very much echo what Neal said, and Derek as well, about the holistic nature of things, enabling people to participate in an inclusive society and all that sort of thing. I think poverty is very complicated and complex, and income needs to be one factor among many when we think about it on the Isle of Man.

425 I think we can fall into the danger of just talking about all the poor people. You have got to talk about all the rich people as well, I think, when you are talking about a society. A society without poverty is a society where those inequalities between the richest and the poorest are reduced massively, and that is not the case at the moment on the Isle of Man. We are a very rich and affluent Island – we have a number of extremely affluent people, individuals and businesses, on the Island – and yet we also have, as we have heard already, real need and poverty as well. I just think there is a systemic thing there of inequality and the damage that that does to us as a society needs to be included when we talk about poverty as well. It is not just about the poor people; it is about all of us, as Derek said, having a conversation about what kind of society we want to be.

435 **Q23. Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you. Yes?

440 **Lt Nieuwoudt:** Thank you, yes. I come from South Africa. It can be classed, I guess, as a poorer country, a poorer nation. I do not want to talk ill of my nation but I grew up proudly in South Africa and I was aware of poverty around myself, and I would probably describe poverty ... To combat it I would say that we need affordable and accessible housing, accessible and affordable education and healthcare and opportunities to learn skills, to develop those skills and then to use those skills. That would be great. Finally, I would have some sort of community base where we are joined together, we enjoy life together and we enjoy celebrating life together. That would be, to me, a great asset to combating poverty.

445 **Q24. Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you. Yes?

450 **Mr Mellon:** Could I possibly just come in with one other thing in relation to this £334? Whatever figure is decided on, wherever we might get to, that always helps the situation as long as it is an uninterrupted flow. The problem in reality is that, no matter how much benefits help, if there is an action taken against an individual – for example, somebody perhaps is on Jobseeker’s Allowance and they are changing on to Income Support or they have been on Disabled Living Allowance and it is being reviewed – my experience is that support terminates and then there is a review of the situation and then the new allowance is applied. But you can have a period of two weeks or more with zero income – at least that is what clients will say to me. And they have similar problems even in employment. We support quite a number of people who require help. They are experiencing poverty while they are in employment, and that can include professionals, Government workers and others.

460 **The Chairman:** Miss August-Hanson.

Q25. Miss August-Hanson: Thank you.

465 We have identified a number of these already, but common factors that are shared by people you support ... I know there is quite the community in terms of the third sector in relation to this area, so you do have a good rapport with one another and do share information and try to manoeuvre people into the places they need to be, but in doing so and in those communications that you have had what are those shared factors?

470 **Mr Mellon:** I have some information here that I have brought, if that helps, if you want to follow that through, but certainly in relation to people going into crisis and needing help from the Foodbank there are a number of triggers that we try to identify. We look at everything from gambling through to probation and prison issues, but the biggest triggers are breakdown in relationship, physical and mental health issues, debt, benefit issues and poverty in employment.

475 **Q26. Miss August-Hanson:** Thank you.
Michael?

480 **Mr Manning:** Yes, I think it is difficult for people. In 2015 we did the very first homeless health needs audit on the Island, which was the first piece of research that had been done around homelessness at all on the Island, and we did that in partnership with the Health Visitor for Vulnerable Adults part of Community Nursing. That showed up particularly mental health as a real factor among the guys that we see – 94% of the people we interviewed as part of that survey had diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health problems – and mental ill-health, we find, is far more of a determinant for people than almost anything else. Substance abuse and addiction is part of it, there is trauma and there is relationship breakdown. We have far higher than the average population in terms of care leavers, people who have been looked-after children in their childhood, as well as ex-services people who have been in the armed forces, far higher than the

general population are represented in homeless populations, and that is the case on the Island as well.

490 On the Isle of Man they tend to be the chronic problems rather than crisis problems with the guys we see, so the problems tend to have been going on for a significant chunk of time by the time people come to see us, and because there are a lot of complex problems they are people who simply fall through the gaps of existing services, or existing services do not want to take responsibility.

495 A guy we had staying just last week at the drop-in had come out of prison. I think there had been some accommodation sorted for him that had not worked out, so he had ended up sleeping insecurely over the weekend and came to us on Monday. Mental health issues very obvious – although I am always at pains to point out that I am not a mental health professional. Very obvious mental health issues, isolation and difficulties, and nobody wants to take responsibility. Mental Health Services do not want to take to take responsibility because he had
500 an assessment last year and that said there was nothing wrong with him. They say he has got a learning disability. Learning Disability say, ‘He has not had an assessment, so he has not got a learning disability – he is not our responsibility.’ The hostel he was going to go to said, ‘We cannot take him until he has had an assessment by somebody, so we are not going to take responsibility.’ This is a man who has got no shelter and this is somebody struggling. The people
505 who ended up taking responsibility for him were a septuagenarian volunteer and another volunteer who has got significant mental health problems themselves, a recent immigrant to the Isle of Man and a woman who has got a young family, who have given up their time to make sure that people are sheltered.

And so you have professional services who are abrogating ... There is a systemic abrogation of
510 responsibility, and that is a common factor among so many of the people we see. There is an abrogation of responsibility across the system for people who are the most vulnerable and the most complex. The Health Visitor for Vulnerable Adults likes to that say it is those who are most in need of services who often have the least access to them, and that is very much held up in our experience.

515

Q27. Miss August-Hanson: You have a Community Health worker who works with Graih?

Mr Manning: Yes, we have excellent relationships with grassroots workers, and the current
520 Health Visitor for Vulnerable Adults comes down on a weekly basis to the drop-in along with a social work assistant and a mental health liaison worker. We work as closely as we can with them and we are very grateful for that good working partnership.

Mr Norton: We receive referrals from a broad range of Government and non-Government
525 agencies, but if you look at the figures in rank order the second in that ranking is ... Referrals can begin from Health Services, so that is mental health and physical health. We are receiving these referrals directly from health visitors, doctors and key workers working in mental health, so there is a very significant issue to do with the mental health of people who are coming into the system.

Over and above that there may well be people with physical and mental health issues who
530 are being referred by other agencies as well. If you look at the totality of it, there is a very significant number that are coming through from the Health Services, so it indicates to us that there is a particular issue. We have been looking back over data for the last five years and the numbers that have been coming in from Health have been fairly consistent, in actual fact, so consistently high numbers coming in with mental and physical health issues.

535

Q28. Miss August-Hanson: Do you have those figures with you?

540 **Mr Norton:** Yes. For example, in 2016 we received 66 referrals coming in from health visitors and doctors. In addition to that, we received 18 referrals coming in from mental health organisations.

545 **Q29. The Chairman:** So, given that the first one you mentioned was about medical practitioners, really this is far more about a needs assessment than a means assessment so that there may not actually have to be a financial gateway that people go through in order to access your services? I suppose that is a question for the whole panel.

550 **Mr Norton:** Yes, exactly. We are simply receiving those referrals from medical people and the medical issues could be related to poverty, they may be issues in themselves, but whatever the issue is, those people are seen by professionals as requiring support.

555 **Mr Manning:** Yes, we do it on need. The drop-in is as unconditional as we can make it, so people will walk in and do walk in off the street as well as people getting sent there from lots of different areas, statutory and third sector and the faith community as well. We very much will meet people at point of need, whatever that need may be, so there is not a financial assessment that is done on them.

560 **Mr Mellon:** A similar picture. We work with a lot of physical health and mental health issues. We also have a lot of clients who come to us with specific dietary challenges, people who are gluten free, dairy free, lactose free, etc. We are working very closely with a client with the worst anorexia that I have ever witnessed in 39 years of professional nursing, and that concerns me, that aspect of how do you manage anorexia through a foodbank, but that is just one of the many challenges that we would have.

565 **Q30. The Chairman:** Just talking about access criteria, you have kindly provided us with your assessment and review one-pager. There is nothing in there about it, so I am just wondering: do you have that access criteria in order to access your services?

570 **Mr Mellon:** All anybody has to do is ring in and say, 'I am hungry and I have no money.' That is your starter for 10 and you are in. Then it is going through the access criteria to get them through that interview, looking at triggers and looking at the income and outgoings.

575 We have clients we say no to for various reasons. What I would say, and it is just an interesting fact and we are monitoring it but over the last couple of months we have had more clients in believing they need help from the Foodbank but when we have gone through that interview process, sometimes witnessed with health professionals, what we are seeing is not somebody who is in crisis but somebody who is in fear of going into crisis. So we are seeing this group of anxiety-related issues. I am not saying they have got anxiety as a mental health problem; they are just desperately anxious and it is keeping them awake. It is a major worry: 'I'm not going to cope. I've got birthdays coming up, Christmas coming up, I've got rent to pay and different outgoings. I don't think I'm going to make it.' But when we go through that history, a lot of people have never seen their budget statement. They have not looked at what is coming in and what is going out and they find it quite fascinating. But when they are sat there looking and we are saying, 'You've got £180 here a week to manage on,' they go, 'But it doesn't feel like it.'

580 So there are people we will say no to but we will help in other ways. We have started a process at the minute and essentially said, 'We will support you, but rather than giving you a food parcel every week we will say you are entitled to four food parcels. They are virtual food parcels, they are on the shelf, and when you need them come in and get them and talk to us then.' We always follow that up, so if they are going away without anything they get a two-week follow up and, so far, everyone I have talked to has said, 'I'm fine, I'm coping. I've gone back, I've thought about it. I know it's there and I've been reassured.' But they are not actually taking food

590 from the Foodbank. I do not know if this is going to be a trend that we see continuing, but the
numbers are becoming significant at the minute.

Q31. Miss August-Hanson: Just staying with the Foodbank at the minute, because I am just
595 having a look at this report, would it be fair to say that the vast majority of those you see have
children?

Mr Mellon: At the minute we are working with a lot of families. Particularly over the summer
600 holiday period we were working with round about 120 children a month – or they were
benefiting from the food parcels requested by parents.

Q32. Miss August-Hanson: It seems to be fairly spread right across the Island, just looking at
the graphs that you have provided us with – south, north and central, (**Mr Mellon:** Yes.) which
you have split it down into, but most of them in central?

605 **Mr Mellon:** Most of them will take in the Douglas/Onchan area, yes, but that will fit in with
the geography and population.

Q33. Miss August-Hanson: There does not seem to be anything for the rest of the Island.

610 **Mr Mellon:** We cover the entire Island and we cover the west as well, but we do not have a
hub in the west. It is something that we look at. We are involved with a number of projects in
relation to Peel and the west, so we know that we can get in, but we do support families and are
doing in the west.

615 **Q34. Miss August-Hanson:** Do we have any figures, then, for the west?

Mr Mellon: No. I have never broken it down because I have not had a need to break it down.
It is not impossible to do.

620 **Q35. The Chairman:** But would they be under ‘central’ in these graphs?

Mr Mellon: Yes.

The Chairman: Thank you.

625

Q36. Miss August-Hanson: And also the vast majority are of Manx and British nationality?

630 **Mr Mellon:** Yes. The most frequently asked question I get asked is, ‘Oh, you must be feeding
the immigrants.’ Well, if by ‘immigrant’ you mean anyone from outside the Isle of Man, then
yes, we work with a lot of them. But in response to what people are asking me – that hidden
question, ‘Are these people of other nationalities?’ – no, 50-odd per cent of our clients are
Manx, the rest are British Isles and then down to immigrants.

635 **Q37. The Chairman:** So pretty much a perfect reflection of our wider society, then?

Mr Mellon: Yes.

Q38. Miss August-Hanson: And does that go for Graih and the Salvation Army as well, then?

640 **Mr Manning:** Yes. Most of the people we see are either born here or long-term resident
here. We do see people who have recently moved to the Island, sometimes from the UK,

sometimes from further abroad. That tends to be, often, if people are in difficulty, even more difficult for people. The really difficult cases are when people have been maybe working here on a work permit for a number of years but below five and then have lost their job. You have
645 already invested a good few years of your life here but you are not eligible for any support yet. Those crop up as well and those situations can be very difficult for people, having to make very difficult decisions. So yes, it is mostly long-term resident here.

Q39. Miss August-Hanson: Thank you.
650 Dylan?

Lt Nieuwoudt: I have not been here long enough, I have been here a short while, so I am having a guestimate. I do not know if you have anything to say?

Mr Norton: Yes, what I would say is that we were talking about the size of the family units that referrals come from a moment ago, and just looking at the statistics here, clients from single households are three times as likely to be referred for support from the Salvation Army community assistance as those in larger households, so there is quite a significant emphasis on people in those single households.
660

Q40. The Chairman: Can I pick up on that, because it is interesting to contrast that with the point that Neal made earlier that sometimes you seem to be helping larger households – or that was the impression I got when you mentioned earlier that perhaps larger families might be disproportionately affected. (**Mr Mellon:** Yes.) So there is quite a variation there.
665

Mr Norton: Yes, I guess, but possibly a reason for that could be that we have been talking about the kind of situation that is the straw that breaks the camel's back in terms of finances, and if you are in a single household and something goes wrong there is not the resource to fall back on to sustain you through that difficulty. I guess that could be why we are seeing a predominance of people being referred from single-person households.
670

Q41. The Chairman: Whereas the food budget for a larger family will probably be a far greater proportion of the income that is coming into that household, I suppose.

Mr Mellon: Yes, but again it is back to this issue of complexity. It is never just a straightforward, 'You have got two children, well done and that is your income,' and 'You have got nine and you're struggling a bit more.' It is not like that; it is more a case of ... A lot of these families have dysfunctional behaviour, so you could have, say, a family of seven or eight where children are coming back from school and saying, 'I want this for my dinner,' and another two want something else, and you have families – and I am not discriminating, but particularly mothers – who are trying to cope with menus for perhaps four different meals on the go for the children because otherwise you are not going to cope with them when they start getting 'hangry', that 'hanger' when they are hungry. So there are issues about how you manage a budget because, rather than just having a pot of stew on and everybody sits and has it, you have
680 got someone saying, 'No, this is what I want and I have to have this,' and they want it at different times.
685

One of the best things that I have seen happen in the last couple of years was an initiative by a care worker from Social Care who sat with the family and went through meal planning with them and made them understand that this is what is destroying the family, not the issue of can I
690 afford it but can I afford this range and this complexity and this strain on mother's time. So there are a lot of issues like that that make the difference.

695 **Q42. Miss August-Hanson:** Could each of you suggest the best way in which to engage with people who are experiencing some of these issues? Are there certain communication methods that have perhaps worked best in the past for any of your organisations?

Mr Mellon: Do you mean for the panel to engage?

700 **Miss August-Hanson:** Yes.

Mr Mellon: I have talked to some clients and explained that this investigation was going to happen and I have clients who would be prepared to talk to panel members; either at their home or somewhere where they are not too public they would open up about what it is like.

705 **Mr Manning:** For the guys we see it is about meeting people where they are, whether that is at the drop-in or in the shelter where they are. We always find that being kind and taking an interest in people is a key part of being able to communicate effectively, particularly when people are very vulnerable – they are very afraid and levels of anxiety are very high. They are used to being ignored, they are used to barriers being put up, they are used to people saying, 710 ‘You need an assessment before we can speak to you,’ and so being willing to meet people where they are and being flexible and kind and gentle is really key in terms of the communication that we give to the guys.

Lt Nieuwoudt: I think for the Salvation Army we are always trying to be a voice for the voiceless and hear that voice and actually take action upon what we are hearing. 715

Echoing what Michael was saying, I think it can be quite embarrassing. I try to put myself in other people’s shoes if I were in that situation of crisis and needed help. If somebody presented and said, ‘I’ll help you if you have this pack of forms that you need to complete so that we can assess you properly and thoroughly before we can actually give you any practical help,’ for some 720 people that is off-putting and it is very impersonal. I would not like that. If I had to do it for the sake of my children, my family and myself I would do that.

So I agree – I think there needs to be a level of listening to people, perhaps on neutral ground having that conversation, but it is important that we listen to people in those situations to better understand them so we can best meet them where they are at. 725

Mr Norton: I think the mantra needs to be ‘nothing about us without us’ because I think it is really important that we hear the experiences of people who are experiencing these difficulties rather than just surmising from our own views, just to actually try and understand what is happening. Whilst we are going to be talking about figures and statistics today in the cross 730 section, it seems to me that probably what we need is some kind of more longitudinal study, looking at how needs change for people throughout a period of time, to really get to grips with what is going on here.

Q43. Miss August-Hanson: A number of you have mentioned and we have strayed into discussion about conditionality. How much do you feel that conditionality within Government 735 services perhaps gets in the way of them attaining what they need and the support that they need?

Mr Mellon: You will have to define conditionality for me. I am struggling to understand what you are asking. 740

Q44. Miss August-Hanson: In terms of perhaps some of these forms and assessments in order to reach a certain point. Do you understand me?

745 **Mr Mellon:** I think there are some really good examples of exceptional engagement with
clients in places like the benefits offices down at Markwell House, and there is also evidence of
people who do not want to work like that. The same as the work that we are doing with the
prison services, with people who think up the idea of taking our large meat joints away to the
Prison and getting the inmates to cook it, prepare it and freeze it for us so we can put it out,
750 giving them more experience. They can see all the advantages: prisoners coming out with a
better CV and being able to apply for vacancies in the catering sector, and we all know that that
is one of the Island's biggest needs in terms of employment. So it is a win-win-win if we can
make it work, but you have to win those hearts and minds and it is the same in other supports.

755 We have included a copy of the interview form that we would have as a prompt for the
interviewers, but I would agree that just to send out something written would be fairly
disastrous. People are not going to sit there and fill it all in.

Miss August-Hanson: Thank you.

760 **Mr Manning:** Conditionality is a massive barrier for people across statutory services and the
tendency towards bureaucracies is to protect the bureaucracy and the institutions rather than
the people they are meant to serve. Where we see the best working is where statutory workers
are willing to blur professional boundaries and guidelines and work outside sometimes strict job
definitions. Again, the health visitor we used to work with very much said it is the podiatrist who
765 says, 'I'm only here to see your foot, so it doesn't matter whether you're living in a tent or in a
car park or anything else because I'm a podiatrist so I only care about your feet,' when actually ...
'There is something else going on if you are living in a tent or in a car park and we need to make
sure you get some help,' even though that is not her responsibility. It is the willingness to cross
those boundaries that means that effective working happens. I think the tendency towards any
770 structures is to become rigid and to protect themselves, so I think conditionality of lots of
different sorts is a massive barrier for people for accessing things.

People are complex, people are messy, people are wonderful; they do not make sense, they
do not make rational decisions. None of us do. None of us are going to be able to sit down and
come up with systems that are going to ... People are always going to fall outside of those boxes.
775 There are always going to be things where you are going to have to break those rules to help
somebody, that is just human life, and if we have got systems that are properly organised – they
need to be, of course they do, but if they recognise the messiness of human lives and needs in
the middle of that they are going to be far more effective in meeting the needs of the most
vulnerable, whose lives are very messy and very broken.

780

Q45. Miss August-Hanson: Thank you, Michael.
Dylan.

785 **Lt Nieuwoudt:** In terms of having conditions, I think we have just got to make sure we do not
put up walls where there do not need to be walls. It needs to be accessible. For me, whatever a
person's practical need is, if they are in crisis ideally what I would like to see is a single point of
access where people are made aware and institutions and Government bodies and third party
charities know we can send that person to a point to be assessed perhaps in whichever manner
is appropriate to then say, 'Right, we can signpost you accordingly to get the right help,' whether
790 that is housing or mental health or the Foodbank, or whatever that looks like. That is an idea
that I have, that we do not then create restrictions and too many qualifications so that people
just decide, 'I don't meet those needs, I don't meet those qualifications, so I shouldn't even
bother.'

795 **Mr Manning:** Can I just add to that that conditionality is often, I would say, increasingly a
symptom of the stress that statutory services are under, and that is particularly within Health

and Social Care. Statutory services and workers within statutory services feel stressed. Their case loads are too big, they feel too hassled, they do not have the resources or the freedom to do the work that they have been employed to do, and therefore that makes it far easier, when you are
800 faced with somebody who is vulnerable and messy and is not really strictly maybe your responsibility, to say 'You're not my responsibility.' And so conditionality and using conditionality as a barrier will only increase the more the statutory services, particularly in Health and Social Care, are under the sort of financial and staff pressure and stress that they have been under for the past couple of years. I think the broader context within which
805 conditionality becomes even more problematic is when people feel as if their services are threatened or stressed or overburdened and people themselves become overburdened as well, the workers.

Lt Nieuwoudt: Can I just add that I think it is one of those things we do not like to shine a light upon, but we are always in danger of institutional abuse. What I mean by that is that you have an individual or a family who are in need and we pass the buck. We say we can help them with so much 'But then you will need to go and try so and so,' or 'We'll refer you, we'll signpost you.' But at the end of the day are we actually aware was there a solution, was there finality to that? And so we have got to be careful that we do not just bounce people about in our
815 community without really genuinely knowing if they have got any help and following that up. So there is always a risk, and I understand that it is not always avoidable but if we can reduce that risk of institutional abuse that would be brilliant because then people have the clarity of knowing that we will help them, that we will not discriminate against them and that there is something accessible for them.

820

Q46. Miss August-Hanson: You mentioned previously that you have an idea for almost a one-stop shop for statutory services. (**Lt Nieuwoudt:** Yes.) Could you just explain that, just expand on that a little for me, please?

Lt Nieuwoudt: I have seen it work in my previous town where I worked across. The local council developed something called Single Points of Access and that was basically a hub with various charities and government agencies – such as social care and social services, it could be elderly services to care for older people, Red Cross, you may have housing matters or housing experts or consultants – and people could contact you, could give out a card or refer them to
830 this call line, I guess, and they would help as best they could with perhaps a catalogue of other people who would meet their specific criteria within their needs. That is just an idea that I have – a hub where we have joined-up thinking, co-operating and complementing each other. I think that would be a great thing to see happening.

Q47. Miss August-Hanson: Do either of you from Graih or the Foodbank have anything to add in terms of how we might overcome any issues that perhaps the people you have seen who do struggle ... that perhaps we might overcome this barrier between them and accessing what they need?

Mr Mellon: No. I would say, though, that I think the worst thing that has happened across the Island this year has been the data protection that has come in. I think it has become an unnecessary inhibitor with the flow of information. Everyone is being ultra-cautious and I think that is something that we have to be careful of. I have seen it happen in the past in relation to confidentiality, when rather than using confidentiality as a positive tool, people start to hide
840 behind it like a shield: 'I can't work with you. I can't tell you this. We can't share information because of confidentiality.' I think if you have information about an individual where they can benefit from sharing that information with others, that should be recognised and allowed to happen. For me, that is just one issue.

845

850 I would fully support what Dylan said about that working together, something we have
explored in the past and talked about on a number of occasions, if we had a one-stop shop
where each of us had rooms. Just imagine a hotel came up somewhere in Douglas and we all had
a room and somebody could walk in and say, 'Here are my issues,' and as you said, 'Get
signposted and while you are here you need to talk to the representative from Social Security,
855 you need to talk to Foodbank and you need to talk to Housing Matters because those three
things will take up 95% of your issues but there will be other things that you need help with.'
Great, but those things do not happen. That is not available to us. It does not mean it will not be.

But I do think there are other issues that would make a difference, and for me the one thing
that would make a difference – and I think it surprises people when I mention it, because I think
they all expect me to say about making a difference, 'Give me some food or give me some
860 money,' but for me I see so many people who have missed opportunities to help them or to
improve their lives because they do not have the bus fare to get from Ramsey into Douglas or
from Port Erin into Douglas. I meet people who will say to me, 'Mister, I have got a CAT scan
next week,' and I will say, 'Great – sorry that you need it, but great because this will make a
difference,' and they go 'Oh, I'm not going – I don't have £5.40 to get in.' There is no point in
865 slipping them a fiver and saying 'Here, take that and it will get you in.' They cannot stop the bus
and go, 'Oh, Mister, here's £5 – I know it's more than that to get to Douglas but I've got a CAT
scan.' The bus driver is not going to go, 'Yes, come in'; you have to have that amount of money.

People find it hard to realise that people do not have loose change to make journeys like that
or to hand £1.50 to a child going into school for the breakfast club because there is no food on
870 the table at home. We know that at Willaston School, for example, the headteacher can identify
10 hungry children a day at least. I am not saying that is reflected in every school around the
Island, but if it was reflected in the 30-odd schools that we have – say there were just two or
three – there are daily a hundred kids going into school hungry. People do not have that small
amount of change, so I see cancelled – not *cancelled* hospital appointments, *wasted* hospital
875 appointments, wasted opportunities for CAT scans. There are demands on people to go away to
Government Departments ... And I am not picking on Social Security, but that is who a lot of our
clients are engaging with. They need to come in sometimes two or even three times in a week.
Well, there is £15-odd that you have to pay out for bus fare. If you have not got the fiver, you
have not got the £15.

880 Then you run the risk of being penalised. We have people who are penalised by education
because they have not got their children to school. So what do we do? We say, 'Here's a penalty,
you must pay that penalty.' But you are taking money out of an already low income where they
cannot afford to decide 'Do I eat or do I heat?' and now they are saying, 'Now I have to put
money into the car,' which probably is not taxed and may not be insured, 'but I have to get it
885 because I have to put petrol in the car because I have to get the kids to school, because
otherwise we are going to get fined again – or, worse, we are going to have that threat of action
being taken against us because we have been negligent in the care of the children or because we
cannot guarantee food safety over winter, or we cannot guarantee that we can keep the house
warm enough for the kids over winter, so we are going to end up being in conflict with Social
890 Care in relation to the child safety.'

There is an answer. The Island is covered every day with buses with empty seats going from
north to south. They could easily pick people up and drop them off if an agent such as us could
say, 'Here, we'll write a travel warrant for one day.' This is not stuff for people who are going to
go out partying at the weekend because the Foodbank has given them a travel warrant. This is
895 saying, 'This person can travel on a Monday from Ramsey into Douglas and up to Noble's. End
of.' It costs nothing because the buses are already running but the seats are empty. There is an
anxiety in the people on buses around, 'Oh, no, we'll lose money if we do that,' but the money is
wasted anyway: the seat is empty. We are not saying give us extra cash, we are not saying let's
invest in something that will take money away from something else; we are saying use the

900 resources we have. It will cost nothing, but do you know what: the value of what we are giving those individuals is much greater than the costs associated with it.

Sorry, that is my rant. (*Laughter*)

Q48. Miss August-Hanson: Thanks, Neal.

905 The people you support who access services in addition to or instead of state-funded support or benefits, do they support access in the service in relation to you or instead of state-funded support or benefits?

Mr Manning: It is a mix. Most of them will have access to some form of state support, 910 whether that is through benefits or through support and/or through the support of other statutory services, but we do see people who, usually for reasons of mental ill-health, want to stay as far away as possible from any statutory support, and that is often a symptom of someone with mental ill-health. We do see people where they will not engage with statutory support or services because of their particular problems.

915

Q49. The Chairman: Could you expand on that, please? What is it that you see in terms of the thought process that the individual is going through in terms of not engaging with that application for benefits or whatever it might be?

920 **Mr Manning:** Statutory services are a threat rather than a place where you go for help.

Q50. The Chairman: And is that because of, say, perhaps a lack of intermediary, so if they were able to turn up to ...? If we use the example of the one-stop shop, where somebody from Graih or the Salvation Army would help them go through the application for benefits, do you 925 think that would encourage them to go through that, or is it just a case of it is still going to end up with officialdom and so they are not going to engage with it? I am trying to unpick the ...

Mr Manning: I think a mix. I think it is always, when you have got anyone who is non-threatening, whoever that may be, whether that is somebody from a charity or somebody –

930

The Chairman: Help-a friend, yes.

Mr Manning: – anyone, it helps when you have got somebody to go through that journey through services with you, particularly statutory services, which can often be threatening. I do 935 not want to be critical, in that sense, of statutory services either because mental ill-health is incredibly difficult, to support people who are very isolated.

One of the guys we saw would not go near any statutory services because he spoke to a communist 50 years ago and he knows that the Secret Service is bugging him and tracking him wherever he goes. So he is not going to access any statutory services whatsoever, because he is 940 terrified. The man is delusional and he has got mental ill-health problems but he is not going to make any mental health appointments, that is for sure! So if somebody is going there who has got no family, no friends, is very isolated, very alone, it is those sorts of bizarre, outside of the normal boxes sort of situations that people will not be accessing and will be choosing not to access support even though that may be available.

945

Q51. The Chairman: Are you aware of any access or intermediary services that Social Security provide in order to make issues that insulate people from having to go through the doors of Markwell House if they have this fear of officialdom? Do you know if that service exists?

950 **Mr Mellon:** Ralph Peake worked with me looking at how we can soften that offer and we did some work up at the University College of Man. It was limited in what we did and the

attendance was not great, but the feedback from the few people who came up was very positive. Because it was outside of the official confines of a Government building we had some really good, well-experienced practitioners, officers, whatever we would call them down at Social Security, come up and talk very freely with the individuals, who could come and ask questions about the Foodbank, about benefits etc. and any problems and talk quite openly. It was perhaps an embryo of what you are describing as a walk-in centre. As I said, not big numbers but the feedback was really positive. It also allowed us to develop a much stronger and much more open relationship with those officers from Social Security, so we can now get in at, I think, quite a high level to answer questions that need to be addressed with some of our more challenging clients.

Mr Manning: Certainly I think things have improved immensely in certain sectors of statutory services over the past couple of years and I cannot sing the praises enough of some of the guys down on the counters at Markwell House who are absolutely wonderful in terms of engaging with vulnerable adults and understanding some of those issues.

We have also seen fantastic work accompanying people through their journey through statutory services with the likes of the Health Visitor for Vulnerable Adults and some of the members of the Adult Services Access Team (ASAT). I think there has been a new Vulnerable Adults team that has been created within Social Care just this autumn that will hopefully also begin to be able to give people more opportunities to have somebody who will accompany them through the system and help them to navigate those difficulties.

Q52. The Chairman: Just one more question from me, if I may, about access to statutory services. Government forms, God love them, the first thing they ask you for is your name and the second thing they normally ask you for is your address. You mentioned earlier, I think, that 29 people have no fixed abode. Is that something that is surmountable in terms of actually making sure that people can access mental health appointments or Social Security or other things, or is this something that is just too hot to handle at the moment for officialdom?

Mr Manning: Nothing is too hot to handle; it is just people have got a bit of common sense. We come up with the forms ourselves, or the services do. There is no reason why they cannot be different or there cannot be flexibility within things.

We had a ridiculous situation a number of years ago where a guy turned up to an X-ray appointment with the appointment letter in his hand. They said, 'What's your name?' He confirmed his name. 'What's your address?' He said, 'I don't have an address.' They said, 'Well, you can't have an X-ray then,' and he said, 'What?' And this was with people queuing behind him and all that kind of thing. We did some education, and the Health Visitor for Vulnerable Adults did some education with the X-ray department, and that has been eased slightly. That is just a computerised form thing that is about saying if we cannot confirm this, this and this, we do not know who it is and therefore we are not going to give them our service. There is no reason why those barriers need to be as rigid as they are, and again that is down to services being porous and flexible and seeing there is a lot of lip service given to person-centred care often in direct relation to the reality of it.

It is so important for the most vulnerable – I cannot stress this enough – that services are flexible and why people who are managing those services, whether it is the frontline workers with the freedom to be flexible or whether it is the managers who are coming up with the forms and things just to be flexible.

Q53. The Chairman: So perhaps if I look to each of you for some examples of good and bad practice in this area, about making sure that people who are either moving a lot from house to house or do not have any fixed abode are able to access those services – do you have good examples? I think we have heard one bad example, but again it is important to make eye contact

1005 with that so that the education can be provided and there is the feedback there. I will throw that open to anyone who wishes to give more examples on that.

1010 **Mr Manning:** We had a guy who was rough sleeping by choice for many years. Physical health deteriorated and he went into a room in a boarding house. He came fairly regularly to Graih and we noticed a severe deterioration in physical and mental health, sufficiently that we were very concerned. We got in touch with Mental Health, who said, 'We've got his address, we'll send him an appointment.' We said, 'He lives on his own and his mental health has deteriorated. He will not get that appointment. He lives in a house where the post turns up occasionally and gets nicked when it does.' Eventually he did actually show us a letter that he sent, which said on it in quite bold letters 'Give this to your carer', which obviously he did not have, and so we said to Mental Health, 'If we can just lay hands on him and bundle him into a car, we'll bring him up to you.' They said, 'We're not going to see him without an appointment. You can't just turn up here with somebody.' And so this was a few years ago but that was a guy who went through a great amount of completely undue suffering just through people being inflexible. Eventually the consultant psychiatrist came out and saw him in the boarding house, and as soon as he laid eyes on him he said, 'Yes, he's as mad as a box of frogs – let's get him in a residential home.' And so his care became much better, but that was unnecessarily protracted and delayed.

1020 Contrast that with our experiences with the Health Visitor for Vulnerable Adults and that sort of service where it is very holistic and it is very flexible. She will go and find people under the bushes on Douglas Head, she will go and meet people in squats, she will go and accompany people to GP and dentist appointments and hold their hand until they feel more comfortable, and that is a fantastic example of exactly the kind of meeting people where they are, journeying with them gently as they are going into more mainstream services and then letting go. When they know that the dentist is lovely and there is nothing to be terrified of they will go back to the dentist, but they are not going to go there first unless there is somebody to accompany them. And so that is a fantastic example of good practice that we have had experience of.

Q54. The Chairman: And how many of those are there, Health Visitors for Vulnerable Adults?

1035 **Mr Manning:** There is one for the Isle of Man.

Q55. The Chairman: And is that sufficient in the experience you have?

1040 **Mr Manning:** No.

Q56. Miss August-Hanson: Ideally, how many would you say might be needed?

1045 **Mr Manning:** You would have to ask about the caseload of the Health Visitor for Vulnerable Adults and ask her opinion on that.

1050 From our point of view it is again the most vulnerable who get the least access to services. There has been an initiative within healthcare recently of long-term condition co-ordinators, which again is a fantastic idea – health visitors connected to GP surgeries with people with lots of different and ongoing chronic conditions and to just trying to give some support in that respect, which is exactly what the Health Visitor for Vulnerable Adults does. The tendency in any services that are lovely and created is that the people who need them least – who have already got family, who are already educated, who have already got transport, who have already got access to services – get more services. That is just the way the system works at the moment. And so from our point of view we would like to see a huge increase in resourcing for the people who are the most vulnerable.

1055 **Q57. The Chairman:** Thank you.

We have talked about the difficulty in reaching out and connecting with the most vulnerable people and those who need the support most. The UK undertake policy and social exclusion surveys. How difficult do you think that would be to do on the Isle of Man?

1060 **Mr Mellon:** If you talk about any piece of research, the Island I think is ideally positioned in terms of its size, its population, the flow. It should be easy to undertake a piece of research, but in terms of how many people are going to engage with you, that is another question.

1065 **Mr Manning:** Our experience of doing the Homeless Health Needs Audit was that it was challenging to engage people, but it is possible if you are willing to be flexible about how that is done. That was extremely labour intensive because that involved meeting with people face to face and going through a survey process with them, but when that priority is given to it, it is possible, so I think it is eminently possible if there is the flexibility and the willingness.

1070 **Mr Norton:** I guess it is where we decide to focus a piece of work like that. We have heard about people who fall into poverty because of some situation in their lives and they get some support such as support from the Salvation Army, the situation is alleviated, on they go and we do not see them again. But there is this other group that have got more deep-seated issues, and maybe in considering a piece of work such as that there would be a need to think about exactly
1075 what that focus is going to be. It comes back to the definition of poverty and where we are going to focus a study such as that. That is something that really needs to be thought through. From my perspective I think the absolute priority is that group of people that we keep seeing week in, week out, year in, year out, and the statistics are reflecting that there are a significant number of people in that particular cohort.

1080 **Q58. The Chairman:** Yes, and if we were looking to start collecting that data or finding a way of measuring poverty on the Island, I think we have touched on some of the themes that we might look at. Obviously income would be one and there are a lot of statistics around that, but also probably things such as ... we have touched on housing, we have touched on travel and we
1085 have touched on their physical and mental health. Are there any other factors that we might be missing in terms of areas that we need to look at? I think isolation as well would be another one that we need to try and grapple with in terms of trying to understand it better as a society. What other areas do you think we are deficient in, in terms of the information that we would seek to collect as Government in order to try and obviously then use it to drive policy outcomes and to
1090 improve the lot of the wider population?

1095 **Mr Norton:** I think perhaps also accessing the things that we all take for granted. For example, the Salvation Army supports a significant number of people with clothing and, within that group, supporting families with purchase of school uniforms. There is a particular area that would be really important to focus on. It is to give people access to the things that we take for granted. To access school you need a school uniform so that your child does not stand out. People need access to leisure facilities. We need to have a look more broadly at that particular issue.

1100 **Q59. The Chairman:** And would you consider also access to the internet, potentially, in that?

Mr Norton: Yes, exactly.

1105 **Q60. The Chairman:** Any other views, in terms of things that we should really be collecting data on?

1110 **Mr Mellon:** I would be very interested in looking at a number of things. I think what would affect your survey is the same problem that we have getting people to engage with us in the first instance, which is pride. There is so much pride out in the Manx community. They do not want their family and friends to know that they are struggling. They do not want people to be aware.

1115 We are looking at getting our first vehicle to help with deliveries for the Foodbank and our plan is we will get a magnetic plaque to go on the side of the van that will say very clearly 'Foodbank' when we are going to pick food up from donor sites such as Marks and Spencer, Tesco, the Co-op, etc. and we will take it off then when we are going out to see people, to respect that pride.

1120 There are three things involved with food poverty that we would tackle – people's ability to purchase what they need as opposed to what they want, but then hand in hand with that goes the knowledge to be able to process the food that we give them. We meet a lot of families where parents cannot cook and we see a lot of burnt meals, so part of our role is that education side of stuff and it is something we want to expand on over the next two years. There is a whole generation out there that missed out on home economics at school or have had poor parenting skills passed on to them.

1125 Then the other area is ensuring that they have the facilities to process that food. I go into a lot of homes that have damaged, faulty or just downright dangerous cookers and other kitchen units. They might have a freezer and are being charged for it but it is not working, or one part of a fridge-freezer cabinet is working and the other is not. To help out there we provide slow cookers but there is certainly a major issue around a lot of the private accommodation in terms of the state of the ovens. I have talked to landlords where two burners on a cooker might not be working or the regulator on the oven will just spin so you cannot set the temperature, so everything goes in at maximum heat and just ends up burnt and it is a guessing game, and the landlord's attitude is often, 'There's nothing wrong with it. I bought that 20 years ago, it's been used by hundreds of people and it's fine.' But that is the problem: it has been used by hundreds of people for 20 years. I have seen one unit where the mother of the house was getting electric shocks off the oven. In the end, the Isle of Man Foodbank bought a replacement oven to put in for her because we just could not leave it, being aware that there was that much danger associated with it. The landlord's approach was, 'Don't dump that; I can use that somewhere else.'

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1150 What I would like to see addressed, what is near to my heart, is the issue of child hunger and free school meals and breakfast clubs. I think there is a need for everybody, Government and ourselves, to know what is happening in relation to breakfast clubs, how accessible they are and how affordable they are, but also there needs to be a standardisation, I think, around free school meals. My understanding is if you are living in Castletown and you go to Castle Rushen your free school meal will entitle you to a wrap, so a cold meal but not a hot meal. You can have a wrap and a drink but there is not enough to trigger a hot meal. Over in Peel you can get a meal but you cannot get a drink. So kids stand out in the crowd because they cannot go and get the same as everybody else. I need to understand it better but this is just the feedback that I get from mothers around the Island. There are these regional differences and I think, particularly in this weather, any child who is going into school hungry should be having a hot school meal and it should not be a case of you are allowed something but not that much. It is back to this issue of worthy hungriness and unworthy ... It is not universally applied, one standard.

Q61. The Chairman: Okay, that is interesting.
Derek.

1155 **Mr Norton:** I think any study would also need to have a look at the issue of fuel in particular. Just some statistics from us, as the Salvation Army: in 2016 we supported 74 people with electric fuel payments, 61 people with payments for oil and 243 people with payments for gas. This is a very significant amount of money and it is a significant number of people, so I think any research

1160 would really need to understand what is happening there. We often hear talk about fuel
poverty, but the underlying issue is just poverty in general that means that you cannot get the
1165 food that you need.

There also seem to be particular issues to do with gas deposits. We are fortunate on the
Island in that Manx Gas does support the Salvation Army with enabling us to help clients with
gas. Gas deposits are expensive so we are supporting people with gas deposits. Some of the
1165 money we get back at the end of the term – about a third of the money comes back – but
nevertheless we are actually supporting people up to £200 towards a gas bill, for example. Gas is
very expensive on the Island. We are supporting people with electric top-ups of £20 a go. People
are really struggling and they are having to make choices between heating and feeding
themselves or feeding their children, very difficult choices.

1170 So I would like to think that any particular study has a focus on fuel. Fuel is one of the biggest
areas that we support people with.

Q62. The Chairman: Michael, do you have anything in terms of what would add to our data
set to understand the issue better?

1175 **Mr Manning:** I am not a data person at all, really, so I am probably the worst possible person
to ask about data rather than cracking on and doing things, but I think the problem from Graih's
perspective is that because homelessness occupies this sort of statutory void on the Island there
is not a lot of data at all around it. What there is is provided by essentially two charities and that
1180 is very limited because their data capacity provision is very limited. So I think there is more
scope there for Government to take some responsibility about homelessness on the Island, and
data I am sure would help it plan ongoing provision as well.

We have talked a little bit about those aspects of access to opportunities for people, and
again we have talked a lot about the poor people and their needs and all that kind of thing. I
1185 would be interested to get data on how many employers take people who have got significant
periods of mental ill-health or prison or various other things that people have been struggling
with. I would be interested to see how that works in quite a competitive job market with very
low unemployment and where are the employers who are taking responsibility to provide a
holistic and inclusive society. That could be potentially some interesting data on how easy it is
1190 for people to go back into forms of employment and meaningful activity.

The Chairman: Thank you.

1195 **Mr Mellon:** Can I just add to that in relation to employment and employment practices I
meet with more and more people for whom part of the reason why they are pushed into crisis is
they are taken on on an employment trial – no payment for two to four weeks. They will work
throughout that period and, at the end of it, it is a case of 'No, thanks very much, you can go
now. We are not paying you and we have got someone else lined up for Monday.' I have had a
1200 case like that that happen in this last week with a lady we had supported before and we were
very pleased to see her get back into employment, but again it was employment for an
individual professional who then, after a number of weeks, has refused to pay her and said no.
For me, that is just another version of modern slavery.

Q63. The Chairman: I think we might ask you to provide us with a bit more detail about that
1205 outside of the public session, if that is okay.

Derek, you talked a little bit about looking at fuel as one area there and that is very
interesting. I think the retail price index and consumer price index have shown that fuel prices
have gone up by about 25% in the last year. Obviously benefits only go up in April. How
responsive do you think you have been able to be in light of those increases when you are seeing

1210 big jumps in gas and oil prices, and less so perhaps electricity prices? And then what about the
reaction from others as well, especially the statutory services?

Mr Norton: We can be as responsive as the generosity of the public and of businesses allows
us to be because that is where the money comes from that we are able then to give to people
1215 who are in need.

I have already mentioned Manx Gas as being generous and supportive and enabling us to
support people with gas, but we receive support from other industries on the Island and we also
receive money from the public, who are very generous towards the Salvation Army. But we
1220 could do more, because the need is great, if we had a higher income stream. That is the reality
of our situation. At the moment we are alleviating need to the tune of £50,000-plus per annum,
so it is a significant amount of money that we are supporting people with who are being referred
to us by not just statutory agencies but also the third sector as well.

Q64. The Chairman: I think I mentioned at the start that we are looking to take this inquiry in
1225 stages, and we have touched on the massive degree of complexity that there is in subjects such
as poverty. In terms of trying to break this down into manageable chunks for the Committee to
move forward, we have been looking at whether we should approach this in terms of life stages,
whether we should look at it in terms of themes such as picking out things – housing or fuel –
and trying to pick them out separately, because this is a massive elephant. It is now at least out
1230 there, and trying to work out how to tackle it we would be interested in your thoughts as to
dealing with an issue of this of size and complexity, whether you have views as to the best way
of trying to grapple with it.

Lt Nieuwoudt: I would like to start off by just saying one of the main things for myself is to
1235 identify that there is a need, to acknowledge that and perhaps acknowledge it publicly that yes,
the public recognise that we have to perhaps do more and do that without discrimination and to
look to our brothers and sisters and think how can we best serve each other, that we enjoy a life
together and enjoy life on the Isle of Man. I would say that would be my starter point. It is just
identifying and acknowledging the issue here.

Q65. The Chairman: I think certainly in terms of Tynwald's acknowledgement of the issue,
1240 the fact that the Select Committee was formed in the first place is that first hurdle and now we
are left with one teaspoon and an elephant to consume. But in terms of trying to get a hold of
it –

Mr Norton: I think there would be danger in compartmentalising it just to look at fuel poverty
or poverty to do with buying white goods or furniture or poverty to do with buying clothing,
because in reality people are making choices dependent upon the amount of money they have.
So I think it would be false to split things down. I think it is also such a complex issue and it is a
1250 multi-variant issue, my own suggestion would be that we need to actually really try to
understand what is happening for a group of individual people that we may identify. Personally,
I think identifying those with the greatest need would be a good starting point, but not to try
and compartmentalise, just to have a really in-depth look at what is happening. Follow some
case studies through to really get to grips with what is the experience of that person when they
1255 go to statutory agencies, when they go to the third sector; how does it all fit together or not fit
together? I think that would be a good way of moving forward.

Q66. The Chairman: Thank you.
Neal.

1260 **Mr Mellon:** I agree entirely with what has been said there. Everything fits together, that complexity, but it does not dovetail. It is all entwined, it is all twisted up and interrelated. You cannot just compartmentalise it, as you said.

1265 When I have talked to people about what I do at the Foodbank ... And again this might just sound like I am going off to hug trees and stuff, but I think a lot of what I do is deal with lost dreams. We meet people who have never wanted to come to a Foodbank. It is not something that any mother relishes the thought of, waking up thinking 'What am I going to give my kids for breakfast? What am I going to put in for their school dinner? What am I going to tell the gas board when they come for the money, because I have to give it to the landlord? The one thing worse than being cold and hungry is being homeless and hungry. What do I say to the landlord if I prioritise Manx Gas?' When you listen to the stories ... because when people come up – and I am sure it is the same with all of us when we engage with clients – they will open up their soul to you and you get this life story of what has happened from childhood through and all the factors that have got them to this stage.

1275 I talked to somebody yesterday who does not have a problem, who just happened to start to talk about the Foodbank and then opened up about relationships and other things that I would hear from our clients: people who are in crisis because they married into debt but they knew nothing about the debt, and it does not even come out when you get married; it might come out years later or it comes out when your husband walks out on you and you are left with the kids and the house and this debt that you never realised was there, or other issues like that.

1280 It is back to this thing about the complexity, so if you are doing stuff you have to allow the time to listen to the client. It cannot be 'Come and tell us in 10 minutes why you are in a crisis.' Somebody has to sit and listen to that story and record it and almost feed that back to them and make sure you have got it right.

1285 **Mr Manning:** My gut instinct would be that it would be counterproductive to compartmentalise it in terms of themes. There is obviously the data side that agencies can provide you with, which is handy, but I think, as Derek said and as Neal said, it is about meeting people where they are and hearing their stories. So I think it is as much as possible how the Committee can meet with the people who are actually in need – and that will certainly mean getting out of rooms like this and environments like this and meeting people where they are as much as possible. I do not know how practical that is for what you guys need to do and how it works, but that is going to be what will give you that experience of hearing people's stories and much more of an understanding than the likes of us coming and appearing before you.

1295 **Mr Mellon:** And could I just suggest that you take a warm coat with you, because we sit in a lot of very cold rooms.

1300 **Q67. The Chairman:** Well, we appreciate ... We have popped into the drop-in centre and been up to the Foodbank and I know colleagues have spent time on the counter at Markwell House, so there is a general desire to get out there and scratch this problem and really get under the skin of it.

1305 One of the other things we talked about was education. We have talked about food education and we have talked about financial education. I suppose, just to throw one back, in terms of education as a theme, what would be the one thing that you would change about how we educate, or something that you find is quite widely missing from people's education that we could try and do more about and maybe focus on more?

1310 **Mr Norton:** I think, speaking to clients, one of the things that comes out repeatedly is to do with the management of debt. From debt, clients get into a downward spiral, so I would say one of the key areas needs to be in debt counselling and in education of managing money and being

able to make informed choices about how money is spent. I would say that would be my number one.

The Chairman: Thank you.

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Lt Nieuwoudt: Yes, Derek has beaten me to the punch. I definitely think that it is money management. It is how we manage our money wisely and be good stewards of our money. It is very easy not to look at a bank statement for months and months on end and then wonder why people are asking ... because you are in arrears and you are in debt and you are chasing your tail. So I definitely think there is, for me, a strong desire to see really good money skills taught to people – budgeting skills, I guess.

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The second thing would be life skills. I think that we provide a space when it is healthy eating, interview skills, applying for work, all those self-confidence, self-esteem ... because a lot of those things are especially linked to mental health. It knocks us down and we need to be encouraged and motivated in life, and so just a general sense of life skills. Those sort of workshops would go a long way to helping people back on their feet, and doing that together with other peers who they can relate to without a judgmental attitude they will encourage each other and form a community to go onwards and upwards.

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Q68. The Chairman: Thank you.
Michael.

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Mr Manning: I think it comes back to much the same as many of the other statutory services. It is the flexibility and holistically looking at people and the creativity in understanding of when people ... Many of the guys we see have come from traumatic family backgrounds, often looked-after children but even if not there has been a lot of difficulty and a lot of dysfunction and it is that lack of any positive role models and relationships that is severely detrimental to your education, which has lifelong consequences. We see that for so many of the people and it is, within the education system, being able to creatively work with children. The earlier you can get working with people and doing preventative work with people and with families the easier it is going to be to stop those problems developing where they turn up to me at the drop-in at age 30-something with very deep-rooted problems.

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Q69. The Chairman: Are you talking there about education in the field of, for example, emotional resilience, self-awareness and problem solving?

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Mr Manning: I think there are degrees of that, but I think primarily from our point of view it is the relationships that people have. That is relationships within their families, relationships with friends. People just do not have people who care two hoots about them and it is at that level, when they are that isolated and that lonely and have been for maybe all of their lives unwanted and unloved. It destroys your life. I regularly sit with people in their 50s and 60s who mentally, socially and emotionally are young children who need parenting and who need to be loved. It is those sorts of difficulties. There is no point teaching them GCSEs and A-levels when they are mentally and emotionally in that kind of space because of reasons of poverty that are going on outside of the school and it is those really difficult cases in families and individuals in pockets of need where you need creative responses and loving and kind people from statutory services and across the community to be involved in lots of different initiatives to make sure that those families and individuals and children are getting the relationships that they need.

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Q70. The Chairman: Thank you.
Neal.

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1365 **Mr Mellon:** I would touch on two things. One is following on from what Michael is saying. I would say in relation to the statutory organisations there needs to be education in people being
conscious about the consequences of their action. Our role at the Foodbank we see as getting
people who are in crisis back to being in control and independent again and using the food as a
tool to do that. If we are trying to get them back to being independent and they are being
penalised and the amount of money they are actually getting is going down and down or is
suspended for a period, all that does is make people more and more dependent upon the third
1370 sector.

The other thing I would say, and it might sound like I am banging a drum for children but
when a hungry child is found the approach has to be feed the child first and then investigate
what is going on. Do not start the investigation and go through the paperwork as to why you
should feed the child: just feed the child and then sort out the problem.

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Q71. The Chairman: Derek.

1380 **Mr Norton:** Yes, I would say that whatever we do in terms of education needs to be as a
result of some co-ordinated discussion. What we do not want is needless duplication, because
the resources are limited. So it feels to me that the statutory services and the third sector need
to be working in this integrated way to identify what needs to be done and then to jointly be
commissioning this work so that we do not end up with unnecessary duplication. I think that is a
really important issue.

1385 **Q72. The Chairman:** Thank you very much.

Just one more question from me and then I will let you all get back to the good work that you
are doing on a day-to-day basis that we have been hearing about this morning.

1390 Do you have a model of best practice that you have seen, either in the government sector, in
local councils or in the third sector, that you really would hold up and say, 'The Isle of Man really
should be following that' or 'This is something that really works well and is worthy of
emulation'? Have you got an example that you can think of where it all fits together and works?
A tough question, but who would like to go first? Dylan? Neal?

1395 **Mr Mellon:** Perhaps the absence of a response is an indicator.

1400 **Mr Norton:** I think there are models of joint commissioning through clinical commissioning
groups, for example, whereby groups of people come together, they decide on the priorities and
then they work together with resources to decide what the priorities should be and then they
implement them in a collective and integrated way. Perhaps what we need to be thinking is how
we can move towards that through time to meet the complexity of problems. So I would say
some kind of integrated working, possibly joint commissioning of services. It is complex but it
can be achieved and I think there are models in the health sector over in the UK that one could
look at and try and emulate.

1405 **Lt Nieuwoudt:** I can only speak from experience, so I draw on my own experience. I worked in
a town across; it is a fairly large town and I thought the model worked really well. The individuals
who were in crisis were referred to the council offices, to a type of hub where they were
assessed initially over a cup of coffee or tea and then they were signposted in whichever
direction – homelessness, mental health, social services, whichever direction they felt was
1410 necessary.

I guess there is a level of qualification, whether there is a duty of care to help these
individuals, so we have the very clear criteria of who we are able to help and who we can help.
For example, I worked in homelessness and the model was really great because we made really
thorough care packages together to make sure that we helped people from the themed

1415 elements of that individual's life. Every person is different but it is making sure that it is not just
crisis care but it is preventative and it is long-term care. So we are looking at working jointly,
inter-agency with the Police, with Social Services, with other third-party agencies. We would sit,
very similar to this, round a table and go through certain clients who we thought were in poverty
or who were struggling at this time, perhaps once a month or so, and then we would jointly
1420 discuss and we would find information slightly varied or we would find new information which
would help us to jointly work together to assist that person in the long run.

Q73. The Chairman: Where was it you worked in the UK?

1425 **Lt Nieuwoudt:** This was in Warrington in the North West.

The Chairman: Well, thank you very much. I am conscious we have only touched on some of
the causes and some potential solutions which we will invariably return to as the Committee
progresses its work.

1430 Can I, on behalf of the Committee, thank our witnesses for attending today and sharing your
experiences and the good work that you have been doing out there in the community in the Isle
of Man. These are those tentative first steps by the Committee to sort of try and understand the
definitions and start making eye contact with the problem.

With that, thank you very much. The Committee will now sit in private.

The Committee sat in private at 12.28 p.m.