

**REPLY BY THE CHAIRMAN/MINISTER OF
THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
TO A QUESTION ASKED PURSUANT TO RULE 6 OF THE
RULES OF PROCEDURE BY DEPUTY LAURIE B. QUERIPEL**

Question 1

Why are some youngsters/children continuing in off-island placements when there is evidence to suggest that their parents are willing and apparently able to care for them on-island?

Answer

The Department works with children and their families to support children and enable families to provide appropriate care, guidance and control. However, for some children it is not possible for them to continue to live with their birth parents and at this point all extended family options will be considered and assessed. If it is not a possibility for a child to be placed in the care of the extended family then the on-island options will be considered including fostering and adoption.

There are no children placed in Out of Jurisdiction Placements where there are parents or other family members both willing and able to care for the child. All placements of children Out of the Jurisdiction are either with agreement of the parents, for example where a child has significant learning difficulties and the parent is unable to manage the child's care, or by an order through the Court or Child, Youth and Community Tribunal where the possibility of a placement with immediate and extended family will have been thoroughly explored.

Question 2

What is the present cost regarding off-island placement of young people and would the Department reconsider some of these placements if it can be established that in some cases they can be adequately cared for on-island by their parents?

Answer

The total cost of placing children off island in 2012 is £2,184,687 to the end November, with a £191,354 forecast for December giving a predicted total spend in 2012 of £2,376,041.

There are currently 31 children in off island placements and the average cost of a placement is £76,646 p.a. (based on predicted 2012 total). The cost of individual placements vary considerably with the range being between £7,402 p.a. - £321,605 p.a.

When planning for children it is always important to consider the needs of the child and once in a long term placement the Department aims to maintain and support this placement for the best possible outcome for the child.

Date of Receipt of the Question: 14th December 2012

Date of Reply: 11th January 2013