

**STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION 117/2005**  
**23 November 2005**

The Opposition is very concerned to learn of the problems that seem to be affecting the Social Services Agency and in particular the fact that there has been no delivery of the respite care service for persons with disability since mid-June.

Given that the families concerned have apparently been told that funding is available for 800 hours of respite care per month in the budget of the agency, it is completely unacceptable that staffing problems should be given as the excuse for the failure to provide the service.

The Opposition urges the Minister responsible to give the matter the highest priority and restore the service.

Commenting on the issue, Shadow Minister for Social Services Charles Bruzon said that the needs of the families affected must take precedence over every other consideration.

“If the Government have identified that these families need to be given support by having 800 hours a month of respite care available for the family member with disabilities, then in the five months when the service has not been available means there has been a failure to provide 4000 hours of support during which some relief could have been provided to the families affected,” said Mr Bruzon.

Mr Bruzon added: “The House of Assembly has been asked to vote the necessary money in this year’s budget, therefore it is not acceptable that this money should remain unused and that the question of ensuring that the service is there has not yet been addressed since June.”

ENDS