

2018.10.09

**8 Senator K.L. Moore of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding facilities for breastfeeding mothers in States-owned buildings: [OQ.134/2018]**

Will the Minister commit to providing a proper facility for breastfeeding mothers for both staff and members of the public in States-owned buildings such as sports centres, the hospital, the Customer and Local Services Department and C.A.M.H.S. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service)?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis (The Minister for Infrastructure):**

Any decision to provide facilities for breastfeeding within buildings occupied by States departments is a matter for the occupying department to determine. If the occupiers consider that there is a demonstratable demand for such facilities my department will work with them to determine how best they can be provided subject to the necessary approvals and funding provisions.

**3.8.1 Senator K.L. Moore:**

As the Minister with responsibility for policy of all States-owned buildings, would the Minister consider revising his approach so that he has a policy for all States-owned buildings which supports and encourages mothers to breastfeed their children so we, as a community, can support and encourage people to do so and to understand the health and well-being benefits of breastfeeding?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

The States of Jersey Human Resources Department have in place a policy and guidance to line managers to ensure that they are best equipped to plan for and meet the needs of new and expecting mothers. We are more than happy to work with the department.

**3.8.2 Deputy R. Labey:**

Is it not about facilities for nursing mothers or feeding mothers? There is a danger, is there not, with this drive that the amount of mothers who, for very good reasons, cannot breastfeed are made to feel like second-class citizens. I hear nothing about them and I am worried about that. I wonder if the Minister shares that concern?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

Yes, absolutely. I am in full support of the sentiments expressed by the Deputy and the more we can do to assist, we would be more than happy to go along with that. We have papers from U.N.I.C.E.F. on the Baby Friendly Initiatives. It is crucial for new mothers to have a supporting working environment that allows the flexibility and time needed to develop a healthy and strong relationship with their child. I would support all these sentiments expressed by the Deputy.

**3.8.3 Deputy K.F. Morel of St. Lawrence:**

In his answer to the original question the Minister mentioned the need to demonstrate demand. Would 1,000 births, and therefore approximately 1,000 mothers, not demonstrate that demand?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

As I say, we are led by the various departments. If the demand is there, then we will meet that demand.

**3.8.4 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

I would like to voice my entire support for a States policy and provision for breastfeeding facilities in all States buildings. This must be part of a cultural change in our society that makes breastfeeding part of everyday life. It is natural and the best way to bring our children up, if possible. We

understand the difficulties that some mothers have and they need to be supported in that. But it is a natural part of what we should be doing and we must be supporting it as a States body if we are to genuinely put children first.

**The Bailiff:**

In that area there must be a telephone or a computer which is upsetting the arrangements. Could you all check your arrangements?

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

I think it is a faulty mic for Deputy Ward.

**The Bailiff:**

The Greffier says that will be checked at lunch time. In the meantime, just in case that is so, Deputy Ward, perhaps you will share a mic with Deputy Tadier. Minister.

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

I think I have the gist of the question from the Deputy. Yes, we are more than happy if the demand is there to convert existing rooms or even build new ones, we are happy to support that. It is led by the various departments but we are more than happy to lend our support to that and I fully support breastfeeding and expectant mothers' privacy.

**3.8.5 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:**

I can perhaps help some of the previous questioners. The Baby Friendly Initiative: the focus is on a society and the support, not on the mother having a sole responsibility and it is never, ever the failure of the mother, it is the failure of the support systems. Nearly 80 per cent of mothers initiate breastfeeding so there is a very high demand. Given this high demand, and also given that it is likely with the new family friendly legislation coming in, the next round of that in September this year, workplaces will be required to provide facilities. If States-owned buildings, workplaces are providing these facilities for their employees, could the Minister commit to looking creatively at this and see perhaps if the facilities could be shared between the public and the employees of those States-owned buildings.

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

As I have said previously, for any new buildings coming on line obviously this can be factored-in. Old buildings can be retrofitted or a spare room allocated if it is suitable for such a purpose. More than happy to do that.

**3.8.6 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Would he further promote these facilities by arranging for a map indicating where those facilities are in place so that feeding mothers know that they have a place to go to should their baby suddenly start crying and need feeding?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

That should be very useful in both States and private premises throughout St. Helier, for instance. More than happy to pursue that.

**3.8.7 Senator K.L. Moore:**

Given the support and the excellent points raised by Members, particularly in relation to the demand for breastfeeding facilities, would the Minister agree to revisit his view and approach on

policy with the emphasis being that the important part is that we as a public body encourage and support breastfeeding in our community.

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

Indeed. I do not think I need to review my opinion, as I support it. I am fully supportive of nursing mothers and we must do whatever we can to assist in that respect. Obviously, there is a cost involved but so be it.