

**Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding social workers with British Sign Language signing skills and knowledge employed by the States of Jersey: [OQ.1/2018]**

How many social workers with British Sign Language signing skills and knowledge and expertise of the deaf community in the Island are currently employed by the States of Jersey; and what arrangements are in place to deal with the absence from work of such social workers?

**Senator A.K.F. Green (The Minister for Health and Social Services):**

I thank the Deputy of Grouville for her question. There is currently one social worker employed by the States of Jersey, who is a trained British Sign Language person. However, there are a number of staff employed across the community and in Health and Social Services and in Education who have significant knowledge and experience in the deaf community whose skills are used when required.

**4.1.1 The Deputy of Grouville:**

Does the Minister consider that one female interpreter - who is excellent by the way, and has probably far too much work to do - for the entire Island is appropriate? If there are male members of the deaf community who need to go for a medical appointment, for example, does he feel it is entirely appropriate that there is just the one female social worker?

**Senator A.K.F. Green:**

Until the Deputy asked this question - and I am still not aware there is a problem, it works - I am not aware of any issues. If the Deputy knows that there is a problem then I am happy to talk about it and review it. But as of now, I am not aware that there is a problem. It does work with the support from the other departments within the community, Social Services and Education.

**4.1.2 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:**

What steps has the Minister taken to ascertain what latent demand there might be?

**Senator A.K.F. Green:**

None, because I am not aware that there is a problem. If there is a problem please tell me and I will look at it.

**4.1.3 Deputy M. Tadier:**

I think by definition, that is the problem with "latent demand", that you do not know about it until you do some research to find out what the demand might be. So would the Minister, in the light of the Deputy of Grouville's question, ascertain to see if there is any latent demand for these services and whether they could be enhanced?

**Senator A.K.F. Green:**

Clearly, the Deputy does not listen to my answer. I did say to the Deputy of Grouville, if there is a problem I am happy to discuss it with her and look for the answer.

**4.1.4 The Deputy of Grouville:**

Well, there most certainly are issues. The one interpreter has been off work with stress for quite a few weeks because she has too much to do. There are issues. I mean if somebody needs to attend a doctor and the doctor does not understand sign language then clearly there are issues. The hospital appointments, for example, are sent out by letter asking the member of the deaf community to telephone to confirm. There are many issues. Can he look into this because one female interpreter for the entire Island is not enough?

**Senator A.K.F. Green:**

I get the gender challenge and I am happy to look at the problems. I will speak to the Deputy of Grouville and get officers to look into it.