

2.7 Deputy D.W. Mezbourian of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding implementation of recommendations covering Suicide Prevention and Self Harm Reduction at H.M. Prison La Moye, and priority for funding:

Which, if any, of the recommendations covering suicide prevention and self harm reduction made in both the 2001 and 2005 Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prison reports on La Moye Prison have been implemented by 1st September 2006? Of those recommendations not implemented, if any, what priority has been given to them for implementation and what funding to enable implementation has been included in the proposed business plan?

Senator W. Kinnard (The Minister for Home Affairs):

There were a total of 10 recommendations made between both inspections in relation to suicide prevention and self harm, 4 in 2001 and 6 in 2005. Action has been undertaken in relation to all these recommendations although there does remain some outstanding work in relation to the development of new policies and training requirements. This is, of course, a dynamic process. Those at risk are constantly being evaluated and developed. The 2005 report stated that there were reasonable systems for prisoners at risk of self harm or suicide although they were over reliant on health care staff. The recommendations relating to greater involvement of residential staff have been implemented. Work in relation to the correlation between bullying and self harm is dependent on further resources which, of course, have been identified in the performance improvement plan and which will be discussed in due course by the Council of Ministers. But, Sir, there is no funding for that in today's proposed business plan. Of course the tragic events of 2nd September have reminded us of the need to constantly reassess the way that we care for all of our prisoners. I am grateful that the Prison Probation Ombudsmen from England and Wales has accepted my invitation and has agreed to conduct the internal inquiry into the sad death. On receiving his report of course we will want to see what further lessons we can learn and, of course, give priority to any necessary actions that are arising out of that report.

2.7.1 The Deputy of St. Martin:

I think the Minister will accept or agree that really there were a number of major criticisms made about the way in which the prison was functioning and there were a number of recommendations made in respect of the concerns around suicide and self harm. We have had assurances this morning that a number of the actions are being addressed but there are funding requirements. Is it not really a time that the Minister would really take it in hand at the prison to ensure that good practice is going on because every time something seems to be going wrong it seems to be there is a cost involved? Surely it must be good practice up there which the people should be doing their job in the first place. Would she not agree that possibly greater concentration should be given to the management of the prison itself rather than just throwing good money after bad?

Senator W. Kinnard:

I would never be one to throw good money after bad. Indeed the whole point of inviting over Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons is, in fact, to identify any shortcomings and recommendations that have been accepted by this Minister. But the bottom line is this, Sir, that prison has been severely under funded for years and years and years. Without extra funding to implement the performance improvement plan, one of the major recommendations of Her Majesty's Inspector, the reality is this, that you cannot turn that ship around unless you have some resources with which to do it. Having said that, Sir, many of the recommendations of the 10 that I have mentioned have indeed been implemented and, as I have already identified, there is the anti-bullying policy and issues which require extra funding. I am quite happy, Sir, for the reassurance of Members to perhaps circulate a short report I received on what has been implemented. I think, Sir, also we must be very careful not to try to, if you like, guess or try to anticipate any report that we might receive from the Probation and Prison Ombudsmen for England and Wales. I would just say to Members that we will not know what recommendations may be made there and I would really ask them to think in terms of sensitivity to the family and to await that report. I can say now, Sir, that whatever recommendations come through that report I intend absolutely to accept them.

2.7.2 Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Would the Minister agree that she accepted the recommendations made in the recent 2005 report and yet they have not been fully implemented? Why is it necessary now for her to wait for the recommendations of another report before implementing the suicide and self harm reduction measures?

Senator W. Kinnard:

We have implemented those suicide and self harm reduction measures that have been recommended by Her Majesty's Inspector where we have been able to. But it is impossible, Sir, to implement strategies and policies that are meaningful and work unless we have the necessary resources to do so. That was the whole point of Her Majesty's Inspector's recommendation for the performance improvement plan. That has been done and that is now going through the process of being discussed by the Council of Ministers as to how it might be funded. So those recommendations have been accepted and we are working to implement them. But you cannot implement everything overnight. Even if we had all of the resources today there takes some time to employ staff, train staff and so on. I think that people who are expecting that these things can happen overnight really have no idea, Sir, of what is involved in running a complex regime like La Moye Prison where we are 4 prisons in 1 at least with an extremely diverse group of prisoners. Much more complex than just about any prison I can think of in England and Wales. I would say to Members that what we should be doing is supporting the prison governor and his staff for the way in which they have taken on board the need for the performance improvement plan and the need to change. In other prisons, Sir, you would sometimes get reluctance to implement these

changes. There is no such reluctance up at La Moye and I give due credit to them and for the way they have wholeheartedly got behind the necessary changes, Sir.

2.7.3 Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I am sure the Minister would agree that by asking these questions in the House we are not implying criticism of the governor or, indeed, of his staff at La Moye Prison. We are, of course, aware of the funding issues. But I believe, Sir, that the Minister did not fully answer the question that I asked initially and the part that I believe was omitted is what priority has been given to these recommendations for implementation?

Senator W. Kinnard:

Sir, a very high priority because the vast majority of them have been implemented. I could go through them but I am not sure you will give me the time, Sir. Certainly if you take recommendation 100 in the 2001 report: "Steps should be taken to ensure every member of staff appreciates that understanding and reducing the risk of suicide is everybody's concern." That has happened. The profile of suicide and self harm remains very high in the prison. There are relevant meetings. Recommendation 101 has been mostly implemented in terms of the training that is required. Recommendation 102: "All of the reports are critically examined." That one is implemented. Recommendation 103, that has been implemented. You take number 33, that has been implemented.

The Deputy Bailiff:

How many are there?

Senator W. Kinnard:

I am happy to circulate this to Members ...

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

May I ask that the Minister does do that?

Senator W. Kinnard:

I am happy to do that, Sir.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Very well, Minister, you will circulate them.

Senator W. Kinnard:

Thank you.