

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS  
BY DEPUTY D.W. MEZBOURIAN OF ST. LAWRENCE**

**ANSWER TO BE TABLE ON TUESDAY, 13th FEBRUARY 2007**

**Question**

- (a) Following a suspected suicide at the prison, the Minister answered questions on this matter on 12th September 2006. Will the Minister advise members of any new suicide prevention procedures or measures that have been put in place since her comments?
- (b) During the same meeting, the Minister informed members that, although certain recommendations of Her Majesty's Inspector relating to measures for suicide and self harm reduction had been implemented, it was impossible to implement meaningful strategies unless the necessary resources were available. Will the Minister inform members whether decisions on the precise allocation and spending of prison resources are made by her and, if not, state how such decisions are made?
- (c) Would the Minister advise members whether, following the suspected suicide in September 2006, and her assertion of "the need to constantly reassess the way that we care for all of our prisoners", additional resources were allocated for suicide and self harm reduction measures?"

**Answer**

- (a) The question on the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2006 related to the recommendations made in the last two HMI inspection reports. It is relevant to remind members that the 2005 HMI inspection found that a self-harm and suicide strategy document had been written and published; a prison's suicide prevention co-ordinator had been nominated; a suicide prevention committee had been set up; and that good statistical information was provided and was being used by the committee to identify trends and potential areas of concern. The six recommendations made in the 2005 report related mainly to who should attend suicide prevention committee meetings and case reviews. Since I made my last comments, the prison has introduced additional risk assessment procedures for all new receptions into the prison. Regular suicide awareness group meetings continue to be held to review all procedures relating to the care of prisoners. Funding has been found from the prison budget to convert some cells across the prison to 'safer cells'. The main capital expenditure in relation to this is the purchase and fixing of 'safer windows'. These need to be manufactured to a particular design (only available off Island) and although the order was placed in 2006 unfortunately the manufacturer experienced problems with a sub-contractor. The windows are expected to be fitted by the end of February. This will mean that we have sufficient 'safer cells' for each part of the prison (male, female, young offender and vulnerable prisoners). These cells are designed to virtually eliminate ligature points.
- (b) As Minister for Home Affairs, it is my responsibility to agree the distribution of the Home Affairs budget among the various departments based upon business plan objectives. As with any major service area, I will also agree the overall budget and key areas of expenditure for the Prison which includes the Prison Performance Improvement Plan. However, the detailed expenditure of that budget in-year is the responsibility of the Prison Governor. He agrees spending plans with the Chief Officer Home Affairs who has overall responsibility for the management of the Home Affairs budget as the Accounting Officer.
- (c) Further to some funding being found from within the Prison budget to convert some cells to 'safer cells' as described in answer to (a), additional funding has been identified for the Prison to enable it to make significant progress during 2007 in many areas linked with the Performance Improvement Plan. Many of the proposals for improvement across the Prison are linked with the care of prisoners which will help to reduce the risk of suicide or self-harm. It is also clear that, if additional resources are found to offer better hope of rehabilitation through training or offending behaviour courses, this will have a positive effect in

reducing the risk of suicide or self-harm by reducing the sense of hopelessness felt by many prisoners.