

3.6 Deputy F.J. Hill of St. Martin of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the suspension of the Chief Executive Officer of Family Nursing and Home Care:

Given the considerable funding to Family Nursing and Home Care, will the Minister advise Members what monitoring provision, if any, is in place, whether he has held meetings with his chairman and committee to discuss in particular the lengthy suspension of his Chief Executive Officer and what, if any, lessons have been learnt by his department following the way the matter has been handled?

Senator J.L. Perchard (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

While meetings have taken place between myself and the chairman of Family Nursing and Home Care and senior officers, I can confirm that the allegations and evidence which has led to what the Deputy describes as the lengthy suspension of the Chief Executive Officer have never been discussed in such meetings. This matter is entirely the preserve of the Family Nursing and Home Care Management Committee which is required to manage this matter within the appropriate laws of Jersey and the standards laid by the recently signed Service Level Agreement. Since the suspension and subsequent dismissal of the Chief Executive Officer, I have met on 3 occasions with the chairman of Family Nursing and Home Care together with my chief officer and acting chief officer of Family Nursing. The purpose of these meetings was for me to be assured that there was a continuity of service to both patients and clients. I have been given those assurances. I am satisfied that these assurances are valid as I regularly receive corroborating assurances from my director of Nursing and Governance and from other senior officers who meet with their representative colleagues in Family Nursing. While my department is entirely disposed to learn lessons from acts and omissions resulting from either within the Health and Social Services Department or from within a partner organisation, I have yet to learn lessons about lengthy suspensions with regards to the Family Nursing and Home Care Executive Officer. If in due course, however, the Family Nursing and Home Care Management Committee has learned lessons and wishes to share them with me then of course I would be very interested in what they have to say.

3.6.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Is the Minister aware of what exact charges were levelled against the Chief Executive Officer because she appears to be unaware of them?

Senator J.L. Perchard:

I think it would be unfair for us to discuss the business of a third party in the States here. I have involved myself in the good governance of Family Nursing and Home Care. I hold them to account. We have signed a Service Level Agreement with them recently. I intend to ensure that the taxpayers' money is best protected in our business relationship with Family Nursing. How they govern their internal matters is entirely for them.

3.6.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

I am not asking what the charges were. I am asking is the Minister aware of what the charges were, yes or no?

Senator J.L. Perchard:

I have had discussions with Family Nursing and Home Care since. I am not entirely certain as to why the committee have taken the decision to dismiss the Chief Executive Officer.

3.6.3 Deputy A.E. Pryke of Trinity:

Just for clarity I would like to mention that I am a member of Family Nursing Services. Could the Minister comment on his open letter that he released last week that could be seen as perhaps intimidation to the families who relied on this very important service? **[Approbation]**

Senator J.L. Perchard:

The Deputy has a question on the Order Paper on this very subject which I will be answering in full later.

3.6.4 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

As the Minister's department is paying a considerable amount of money to this particular organisation, is he satisfied that the process that they have adopted dealing with this disciplinary matter which from news this morning ... I have been out of the Island and just come back and heard she had been dismissed on one set of grounds but to date she does not know what the previous ones were. Is he convinced that the hearings and the process they have adopted to date are the correct proceedings?

Senator J.L. Perchard:

I am absolutely convinced that the processes adopted to date have been adopted after seeking proper advice from the Jersey Conciliation Service, from lawyers and that one side of this argument is being played out in the media.

3.6.5 The Deputy of St. John:

Given the Minister's answer previously that he was not aware of what the charges were, how can he give the answer he just given, please? **[Approbation]**

Senator J.L. Perchard:

I am perfectly happy to give the answer I have just given and I will repeat it. I have undertaken to make sure that the procedures adopted on this disciplinary have been verified legally and by the Jersey Advisory Conciliation Service. I have not bothered myself with the detail of the accusation; just the process.

3.6.6 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Just for the purpose of absolute clarity then, is the Minister perfectly content that the procedures adopted were in conformity with the Jersey Employment Law and, in particular, with respect to proper representation of the accused?

Senator J.L. Perchard:

The Deputy knows that there is a threat that this may go to tribunal. I think loose words will not help this. If there is to be a process, let it unfold and let it be handled independently. But from my position I am satisfied with the good governance of Family Nursing and Home Care. I hold them to account and I intend to continue to do that.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Can I get the Minister to answer the question? Is he content that the procedures laid down in the disciplinary process were adhered to in accordance with Jersey Employment Law?

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Whether I am content or not is irrelevant. The threat has been made that this will go to tribunal and it is they that must be content.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Will the Minister answer the question?

The Deputy Bailiff:

I am sorry, Deputy, you have asked several questions now.

3.6.7 Deputy D.J. De Sousa of St. Helier:

Would the Minister agree that the tone of his letter and the timing were unfortunate in the circumstances?

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Absolutely not. I think it was necessary and I do wonder if the Deputy has even seen the letter.

Deputy D.J. De Sousa:

Yes, I have.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Thank you for the interjection. Many people have commented on it without even seeing the text of the letter. It was necessary that when £6 million worth of taxpayers' money is being used to support an organisation such as Family Nursing and Home Care to hold them to account. Good governance is not optional.

Deputy D.J. De Sousa:

I completely agree that we must have all these people brought to account when we are giving them taxpayers' money but I am asking the question really, does the Minister not consider that the tone and the timing of his letter was unfortunate in the circumstances?

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Absolutely not. No, I do not.

3.6.8 The Deputy of Grouville:

Is there an up-to-date Service Level Agreement with Family Nursing and Health?

Senator J.L. Perchard:

I am delighted to advise the House that despite years and years of attempts to get a Service Level Agreement by previous Ministers, we have now an up-to-date Service Level Agreement signed with Family Nursing and Home Care and that was done quite recently.

3.6.9 The Deputy of St. Martin:

Just to make reference again to the letter that was sent. I am sure I am not alone but I think it would be helpful if the Minister could give assurance that maybe the letter

could be circulated to all States Members. After all we do have an interest. There is £6 million of taxpayers' money so would that letter be made available to all States Members as well, please? I am talking about the letter to Family Nursing.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

I would have no problem with circulating the letter; none at all.