

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY DEPUTY R.G. LE HÉRISSIER OF ST. SAVIOUR
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 17th NOVEMBER 2009**

Question

“Given the Assistant Minister’s statement in the debate on P.145/2009 (‘The Committee of Inquiry into the management of Health and Social Services Department’), would the Minister confirm that staff have been suspended and dismissed in relation to child abuse matters and, if so, advise how many have been suspended and dismissed and for what reasons and over what time period?”

Answer

The Assistant Minister, in referring to staff within children’s services, made the statement that *‘people have been suspended. They are not in their jobs’*. When asked for clarification, the Assistant Minister confirmed that people had been suspended, but she did not state that staff had been dismissed. (Hansard, P.145/2009, 4.1.7.)

The Deputy’s question does not relate to any specific time period. For the purposes of this answer the information provided relates to the last 3 years. During this period 2 members of staff have had their contracts terminated and three have been suspended because of alleged inappropriate behaviour towards children. Suspension periods have ranged from three to 16 months, these periods being directly related to the time taken by the States of Jersey Police to complete their investigations. At the present time there are no members of staff suspended.

The Minister can confirm that any allegation made against a member of staff is taken seriously and promptly dealt with. As with any case where a possible criminal offence may have taken place, the States of Jersey Police Public Protection Unit is immediately informed and normal investigation and protection processes follow. Where suspension of a member of staff needs to be considered in order to protect children and/or other vulnerable individuals and the subject of investigation themselves, as well as to allow proper investigation of the allegations, this is conducted in line with the relevant States of Jersey disciplinary procedure, requiring agreement by the Chief Officer. Alternatives to suspension, such as placing the staff member in an environment where they do not come into contact with service users, are put in place **where this is consistent with the appropriate management of any identified risks**. In all such cases the protection of children and other vulnerable individuals is and must be the first concern of the Minister.