

## **2.15 Deputy K.C. Lewis of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the treatment of the users of so-called 'legal highs' in the U.K:**

Further to news that Guernsey's Health Department has spent £400,000 so far this year sending users of so-called legal highs to the U.K. for treatment, most of which are under the age of 18, will the Minister inform Members how much, if any, is spent in Jersey on the treatment of such users?

### **Deputy A.E. Pryke of Trinity (The Minister for Health and Social Services):**

I am pleased to say that no one from Jersey has required specialist off-Island treatment for substances commonly referred to as legal highs with all treatments necessary being provided by our local services.

### **2.15.1 Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

I thank the Minister for her reply. Further on to the so-called legal highs, I highlighted last year and the previous year the so-called legal highs "Spice" and "Salvia." There is a new list of so-called legal highs coming on the market. Will the Minister be seeking to ban those as well?

### **The Deputy of Trinity:**

Yes. Under the Misuse of Drugs Advisory Council I signed a Ministerial Decision looking at those legal highs with a view of banning them. Jersey has banned marketing, importation or sale of "Spice" under its Medicine Law which resulted in the closure of those 2 shops which were selling this.

### **2.15.2 Deputy M. Tadier:**

The Minister will no doubt be aware of events in the U.K. where recently Professor Nutt was sacked from giving a too-truthful advice to the government in which he pointed out that, in fact, the legal highs that we should be worrying about in Jersey or in the U.K. or anywhere really, is first and foremost that of alcohol and, to a lesser extent, tobacco. Does the Minister agree, and I will quote Professor Nutt if I may, that: "The greatest concern to parents should be that their children do not get completely off their heads with alcohol because it can kill them" and that, in his view, if you want to reduce the harm to society from drugs, alcohol is the drug to target at present?

### **The Deputy of Trinity:**

This is a concern. I know it is a big concern of the House about the high level of alcohol and tobacco and I think all of us, all society, have a part to play in addressing these issues. It is important with young people that they are fully aware of the consequences of it.

### **2.15.3 Deputy M. Tadier:**

A supplementary, and I did provide the Minister with a list just a moment ago, and experts say that alcohol ranks among the top 5 after heroin, cocaine, barbiturates and street methadone and that it was more dangerous than tobacco, cannabis, solvents, L.S.D. (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide). Therefore, in Jersey, does the Minister think that we ought to have a complete review given that we have banned drugs which are relatively less harmful than alcohol and we are still permitting and condoning as a government taxing these things and sending out a mixed message?

### **The Deputy of Trinity:**

It is an all-round effect. The substances commonly referred to as legal highs did pose a problem but I am pleased to say that since the closure of those 2 shops the incidence has reduced. But, as we know, alcohol and tobacco have a big part to play and this is where raising the public awareness not only from the Department of Public Health campaign but also in schools and education as well. As I said, it is a community problem; it is not just a Health problem.

**2.15.4 Deputy M. Tadier:**

If I may one more, if no one else has got a question to ask. Given that it seems to be saying that as a State we are spending money advertising to warn people of the effects of alcohol which has been shown across the board as more harmful than something like cannabis, is the Minister therefore going to bring a change in the law to outlaw alcohol and perhaps legalise cannabis; surely that is the logical thing to do?

**The Deputy of Trinity:**

No.

**2.15.5 Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

Just one final one coming in. Reference cannabis: the cannabis of the 1960s, which was basically a herbal thing, has very little relation to the hybrid cannabis that is on sale now which can lead to schizophrenia. Does the Minister not agree?

**The Deputy of Trinity:**

Yes.