

## **2. Oral Questions**

### **The Deputy Bailiff:**

The first question was due to be put and answered on 4th December and was put off at the request of the Minister. It is on the Order Paper today and I propose not to start the 2-hour period until after questions on this first question have been dealt with. So the Connétable of St. John has a question to ask of the Minister for Health and Social Services.

### **2.1 Connétable P.J. Rondel of St. John of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding construction works undertaken at the General Hospital on 9th to 11th November 2012:**

Would the Minister advise what construction works were being undertaken at the General Hospital on or around the Emergency Assessment Unit during the nights of 9th to 11th November 2012; what required such urgent work; by whom were they authorised and what action, if any, has been taken to discipline that person, given that patients were kept awake all night by the noise?

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

There was no construction work being undertaken at night in or around the Emergency Assessment Unit from Friday, 9th November to Sunday, 11th November 2012. A duty engineer was, however, called out at 10.20 p.m. on Saturday, 10th November to undertake an emergency repair to an oxygen compressor. That compressor, which provides oxygen to hospital patients, is in proximity to the Emergency Assessment Unit and was probably the source of the noise. I have no doubt the Constable will be reassured to know that I do not discipline staff for undertaking work that is critical to patient safety, even if that work should regrettably cause a disturbance to my patients. I am saddened again that the Constable goes straight to disciplining staff and his attitude has a very negative effect on staff who work tirelessly to ensure that all equipment is kept in good working order.

#### **2.1.1 The Connétable of St. John:**

Given the Minister's reply, could she please explain, if no building works were going on at that time in the morning, could the patients have been hallucinating or having nightmares or were they working in the operating theatre with kangos and power tools because it was kangos and power tools that were being heard and therefore I have to take issue with some of her reply.

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

As I have said, there was no construction work during the night on those times. It might have been, as I said, the compressor. The machine is close to the Emergency Assessment Unit and there was a problem with it at 10.20 p.m. The disturbance was reported and it was temporarily repaired. Other than that, I cannot say any more.

#### **2.1.2 The Connétable of St. John:**

If I could come back in on that, the Minister said 10.20 p.m. The complaints I received were in the early hours of the morning in writing from a member of one of the families of a patient and I am sure they would not have been complaining if it was before 11.00 p.m., as we say, the watershed.

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

As I said, there was no construction during the night. If any work needs to be undertaken during the night as an emergency, it is under specific authorisation by the Senior Management Team and no such work was requested or authorised on that weekend.

### **2.1.3 The Connétable of St. John:**

Did the Minister receive any oral or written complaints about the noise from the families or public who attended the hospital?

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

We received one formal complaint which was addressed within, I think, 48 hours of receiving that complaint.

### **2.1.4 Deputy T.M. Pitman of St. Helier:**

I was just going to try and be helpful and say there could be many reasons to be woken by heavy banging in the night and perhaps could the Minister for Health and Social Services undertake to do a bit of further investigation just to put the Constable at rest?

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

I thank the Deputy for his input. As I said, the formal complaint came in soon after this. We investigated thoroughly and we have investigated thoroughly since the Constable's question came in and, as I said, there was no construction work. There has been some construction work around the 1960s block for intensive care and there was some scaffolding put up but that was during the day. During the night, there was nothing.

#### **The Deputy Bailiff:**

A final supplementary, Connétable?

#### **The Connétable of St. John:**

No, Sir, I am not going to get any further, thank you.

#### **The Deputy Bailiff:**

It does not sound like it, Connétable, no. Very well, the 2-hour period will start now.