

2.15 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding programmes in place for succession planning within the Health and Social Services Department:

Would the Minister outline the programmes in place for succession planning within the Health and Social Services Department and advise whether they are considered to have been successful?

The Connétable of St. Peter (Assistant Minister for Health and Social Services - rapporteur):

The States Human Resources Department is actively exploring options relating to a number of staff development schemes that will support H.S.S.D. (Health and Social Services Department) and other States departments. In the meantime, however, Health and Social Services has a number of initiatives already underway. Our human resources and finance teams have secondments and coaching arrangements in place, as does our nursing team. Groups of Health and Social Services staff from across a variety of disciplines are currently being supported to develop rapid management skills and being trained in service improvement techniques. The aim is to develop these staff so they are better placed to step up to more senior roles. In addition, our recently appointed directors have explicit contractual obligations to develop their own successors. That said, it must be recognised that good succession planning requires time, resource and capacity. Our overall management numbers need to be stronger if we are to fully succeed, plus succession planning is not always the answer. There are some posts that require a breadth and depth of experience that cannot be just acquired in Jersey alone.

2.15.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Despite that very rosy picture that the Assistant Minister has put to us, would he not accept the report of R.30, which is the £100,000-plus employees report, the bulk of appointees there are from the Health Department, 7 out of 11 are managerial appointments which are from outside? Would he suggest that that is a totally satisfactory situation and reflective of excellent succession planning?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

No, I cannot accept that is an ideal situation. Wherever we can appoint locally, that is the correct way to do things. However, I must point out to the Deputy and other Members that, within Health, the majority of our employees are clinicians and, therefore, those clinicians do need to gain a wider breadth of skills than they can get just from Jersey alone. Where we lack the development is within the policy-setting and the administration areas of the Department of Health and Social Services and clinicians cannot stop doing their day job to do those other jobs as well, which is what we are currently expecting many of them to do. We need to be more robust at the top end to be able to organise the longer-term planning and direction of Health and Social Services and also enabling clinicians, possibly, to move off-Island for a period of time to expand their skill base, to be able to come back and work within the Jersey environment.

2.15.2 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Moving on to another section of Health, the Director of Social Services left recently and was replaced without the job even being advertised. Is this part of this new succession planning process?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

I would sincerely hope not. The only point I can make is the successor is a Jersey-born person who has taken over the job as Director of Social Services. I was not aware the post was not advertised and I will look into that and come back to the Senator in due course. It would be of interest to find out what the reason was.

2.15.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Is the Assistant Minister aware of the recent U.K. court ruling that suggests that succession planning renders compulsory retirement at 65 non-discriminatory? What impact might such a decision have on his policy for retirement?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

I do not think that is a subject that has been considered within H.S.S.D., that we are looking at succession planning being non-discriminatory, and I think the Deputy is talking about age-related discrimination. Would he clarify for me, please?

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Yes. We are talking about a discrimination law coming in at the end of the year. Age discrimination is one of the motivators and this ruling suggests that compulsory retirement at 65 would no longer be discriminatory. Therefore, it is possible to make sure people leave at 65 despite the pension age going up to 67.

The Connétable of St. Peter:

I still find myself at difficulty in answering this particular question of the Deputy. Certainly non-discrimination should be the basis of all succession planning anyway. It should be on ability rather than age or any other measures. The point about the retirement age going up, I do not see that that changes anything in relation to succession planning.

2.15.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

How does the Minister's and the Assistant Minister's department balance the desire for promotion from within with the need for open and transparent recruitment processes that are free from any perception of nepotism?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

"Nepotism" is a rather strong way of putting it. I think one could say, if we prejudice external applicants from applying for jobs because we want Jersey people to have them, that in itself would be a form of nepotism and that is something that I would not condone.

2.15.5 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Could the Assistant Minister give a simple answer to my second part of the question? Has succession planning been successful, yes or no?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

No, not good enough.