

2.13 The Connétable of St. John of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding succession planning for the Chief Ambulance Officer's position:

Would the Minister advise whether there was a succession plan in place for the Chief Ambulance Officer's position and if so, why was it necessary to advertise the post?

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

Yes, there was a succession plan in place, put in place by the former managing director of the hospital, and that plan is still ongoing. Acting-up arrangements do not, and should not, grant an advantage to the individual in terms of selection to a substantive post. National guidance on H.R. (Human Resources) policy is quite clear, that modern models of succession planning should still involve a competitive recruitment and interview process. Through that process all applicants will be assessed on a level playing field with every aspect of their experience taken fully into account not just in an acting-up capacity.

2.13.1 The Connétable of St. John:

That being the case, was the retiring Chief Ambulance Officer or acting Chief Officer offered the opportunity to run for this position? If not, why not? Will the Minister confirm that after having run the service very successfully for 4 years, as the acting chief, will his replacement have the knowledge, as he is coming from outside the Island, of the way Jersey works or are we going to have to train him before he can start his work?

The Deputy of Trinity:

I think there are 4 or 5 questions in there. I shall try and address them. The retired Chief Ambulance Officer did put his name forward, and it would be totally inappropriate to discuss any personal details. As regarding if the Constable thinks that it is an outside post, the outside gentleman mentioned is coming in to add his expertise to how the service should go forward. We have yesterday appointed an acting Chief Ambulance Officer and the outside expert will add guidance and support to him and to the rest of the management team before the recruitment process carries on in 6 months' time.

[11:00]

2.13.2 The Connétable of St. John:

Can the Minister please confirm then that the new ambulance chief will need training? Yes or no?

The Deputy of Trinity:

Will need training? It is ongoing training. All of our staff have ongoing training.

The Connétable of St. John:

Yes or no, please.

The Deputy of Trinity:

I have just answered the question. All of our staff do need ongoing training.

2.13.3 Connétable D.W. Mezbourian of St. Lawrence:

The Minister has told us that a succession plan was in place. Will she tell us now what the succession plan was and, in effect, has it failed?

The Deputy of Trinity:

No, the succession plan has not failed because it is still ongoing. As I said, recruitment will carry on in 6 months' time. This is an important post. It is important that it is done properly and

correctly. During that time, obviously training and support regarding management issues continues.

2.13.4 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

I am not sure we have been given the answer as to why the ambulance service is unprepared. Would the Minister be prepared to tell us in terms of all succession planning across Health - and there seems to be a very obvious trend that has emerged - would she be prepared to tell us that there are plans in place for all key officers and that these plans might, for example, involve periods off-Island to ensure that the right breadth of different experiences was obtained and so forth and so on? There is a feeling that these things are not thought about and all of a sudden panic sets in and all previous experience is somehow disregarded.

The Deputy of Trinity:

I totally disagree with the Deputy. We undertake individual appraisals of all our staff as a matter of standard H.R. policy, and supportive training and development of individuals to help them achieve their full potential. If that includes secondment off-Island then it includes secondment off-Island. We cannot, as I am sure the Deputy is aware, appoint everybody on-Island because, as you know, consultants and some middle grade doctors and some specialist nurses who ... we just will not be able to achieve that.

2.13.5 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Could the Minister explain then, given this excellent policy she has outlined, why they find themselves without a suitable candidate fully trained?

The Deputy of Trinity:

It went through a robust recruitment process, which included somebody from the Appointments Commission and an outside expert, and totally appropriate in the event that the right candidate did not emerge during this initial interview process and no one was appointed to the post.

2.13.6 Deputy J.G. Reed of St. Ouen:

Given the assurances that the Minister has given regarding the active engagement of succession planning within her department could the Minister inform this Assembly how many local and non-local individuals have been employed by the department over the last 3 years?

The Deputy of Trinity:

I do not have that number at my fingertips.

The Deputy Bailiff:

You are not required to answer it either.

2.13.7 Deputy S.G. Luce of St. Martin:

The Minister has told us that the acting Chief was in place for 4 years and that every person in the department has ongoing training. Given those 2 factors, will she review her succession plan?

The Deputy of Trinity:

It was unfortunate this case is not right, but at the end of the day it went through an appointments panel, so I am very happy with my succession planning. As with everything else, it can always do with looking at and if necessary to improve.

2.13.8 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Surely the succession plan must be reviewed. To have somebody in post for 4 years as an Acting Chief Officer and then to be rejected does not say much for the way the succession plan has been set up and put together. It really is not good enough, Minister. Do you not agree?

The Deputy of Trinity:

No, I do not agree. We undertake, as I have said, individual appraisals of all our staff and if necessary, where necessary, ongoing training and development of all our staff to reach full potential. Unfortunately, in this case, no one was able to be appointed at the interview panel.

2.13.9 The Connétable of St. John:

Does the Minister consider the buck stops with her and, if so, she has let her team down in making sure the successive planning has not been put in place? That being the case, will she review her position as the Minister for Health?

The Deputy of Trinity:

We have a staff of well over 3,000 people and succession planning is important but, as I said in this case, no one was able to be appointed at the appointments panel, which is quite right. Therefore, to enable that succession planning to be ongoing, to be able to review what is right for the service and that is the most important thing at the end of the day.