

2016.03.22

**3.4 Deputy R. Labey of St. Helier of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding any arrangements between any government agency and ex-offenders or re-offenders with regard to offenders being accommodated in hotels and guest houses:**

What arrangements, if any, exist between any government agency and ex-offenders or reoffenders with regard to such people being accommodated in hotels and guest houses?

**Deputy K.L. Moore of St. Peter (The Minister for Home Affairs):**

With regard to the Community and Constitutional Affairs Department there are no formal agreements or arrangements that I am aware of related to ex-offenders or reoffenders being accommodated in hotels or guest houses. However, the chaplaincy team at La Moye Prison supported by the Freedom for Life Ministry do assist offenders in finding accommodation on release at the end of a prison sentence and guest houses are often the only option. I am not in a position to respond on behalf of any other government agency other than to say that I know the Jersey Probation and After Care Service also assists offenders to find accommodation on release from prison and again guest houses are frequently the only option available.

**3.4.1 Deputy R. Labey:**

I thank the Minister for that. I wonder if she knows if the police are aware of instances where there are high concentrations of ex-offenders or reoffenders in guest houses and do they have a policy for keeping an eye on C.C.T.V. (closed circuit television) for extra patrols, *et cetera*?

**The Deputy of St. Peter:**

That is not information that I have.

**3.4.2 The Deputy of Grouville:**

It is one thing assisting offenders to find accommodation but if there are a few of them put into one particular area should the authorities not have some certain responsibility to ensure that that will be a safe area both for the current residents and the offenders themselves?

**The Deputy of St. Peter:**

I thank the Deputy for the question. I am not aware of a concentration of offenders being in particular areas. I am aware that there are a variety, as I have expressed in my previous answer, of guest houses that may be used but I am not aware whether this causes some concentration in any particular area and it is something that I am happy to look into a little further.

**3.4.3 Deputy J.A. Martin:**

I think the Minister has sort of answered my question. I think there is a concern that if there is a concentration or even one large guest house is accommodating rehabilitation of offenders or anything like that the community around is not informed and we do not wish to say to the Minister, she should know, but there should be work with the Honorary Police in the area, the Constable of the area, and especially the residents so they know who is living next door and if it is something to do with probation or people who have just come out of prison. Obviously as long as they are getting the right help there is not every guest house in one road being occupied, these schemes could work but the Minister said she does not know. Will she find out and will she try to push this forward so people in the areas do know and they can work together?

**The Deputy of St. Peter:**

There has to be a balance struck here in relation to data protection, of course, of these people and also we need to encourage our offenders to progress in life and to enjoy stable accommodation so that they can go out and return to a good and wholesome lifestyle. It is important to remind Members that our reoffending figures in Jersey are much lower than they are in the U.K. That is something that we can always improve upon of course and we most certainly will, I hope, in forthcoming years. It is also important to remind Members while I have the opportunity that in the case of sex offenders there are processes in place, particularly with the M.A.R.A.C. (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference), who keep a very close eye on these people and monitor their wellbeing.

#### **3.4.4 Deputy J.A. Hilton of St. Helier:**

Does the Minister agree with me that the potential for putting convicted sex offenders into guest houses or hotels is wholly unacceptable? There will be families come into the Island who would have absolutely no idea that they are sharing space with guests who are convicted sex offenders. Does she agree with me that this is absolutely unacceptable?

#### **The Deputy of St. Peter:**

Perhaps that was an unfortunate example as I may have drawn the Deputy to reach that question. I am not suggesting that this is common practice. What I was merely trying to suggest to the Assembly was that through the processes that we have in place that safeguarding measures are there for the community and that these decisions are taken with those parameters in place. So it would not be acceptable for members of the community to be put at risk by the placement of certain sectors of our community.

#### **3.4.5 Deputy J.A. Hilton:**

Supplementary. Does the Minister agree with me, regardless of what steps are put in place to supervise sex offenders, that the idea of putting sex offenders into guest houses and hotels where the public are coming on holiday with children is unacceptable?

#### **The Deputy of St. Peter:**

So what I was trying to express was that I am not sure that this occurred, and I will happily look at the rules and the regulations, but I am confident that we have adequate safeguarding measures in place for this group of people.

#### **3.4.6 Deputy R. Labey:**

I am grateful for the Minister and her statement that she will look into this. Could she bear in mind while doing so that the situation now coming up to Easter might be very different from the situation a month ago? There is a seasonal element to this. I do not want her to be fooled by it.

#### **The Deputy of St. Peter:**

I note the comments.