

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY J.M. MAÇON OF ST. SAVIOUR
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 19th JANUARY 2016**

Question

What consideration, if any, has been given to issuing the population of Jersey with potassium iodide tablets in case of an emergency situation arising at the Flamanville plant in France, which could make Islanders more vulnerable to thyroid gland problems?

Answer

In 2007 the Emergency Planning Office commissioned the Radiation Protection Division of the UK Health Protection Agency to assess the potential radiological consequences for the population of Jersey from postulated accidental releases from the nuclear waste reprocessing plant at La Hague and the proposed pressurised water reactor at Flamanville. It found that to have any effect on Jersey not only would the incident need to be the size and scale of Chernobyl there would also need to be particular meteorological conditions e.g. the wind travelling towards Jersey. The estimated probability of a major incident at Flamanville having an impact on Jersey was assessed as one in every 34 million years.

The decision not to obtain iodine for the general population was based not only on this very low risk, but also on the fact that Jersey is much further away (40km) from the Flamanville site than the 10km distribution area within which protective (prophylactic) iodine would be recommended.

Even if Jersey were within the 10km iodine distribution area, the use of iodine prophylaxis in the event of a nuclear release is complicated. Iodine only protects the thyroid gland against the effects of radioactive iodine, which is only one of many isotopes that would be released in the event of a nuclear power station incident. Also, prophylactic iodine products last a maximum of 4 years which would make regular replacement of stock for an entire population very expensive.

Finally, these products can cause health problems in some individuals, so should only be used when absolutely necessary.

A similar decision not to issue iodine to the general population was taken in the other Channel Islands.