

APPROVED

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY R. LABEY OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 18TH APRIL 2017**

Question

Will the Chief Minister advise if the services of Portland Communications have been engaged by the States of Jersey to provide media training to Ministers and/or others in preparation for the publication of the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry's report, or for any other reason, and, if so:

- (a) which Ministers or other personnel are receiving this training;
- (b) if the cost of the programme including fees, flights and accommodation are to be met by the tax payer, how much will this amount to; and
- (c) what is the brief Portland Communications are working to and what exactly is the firm charged with delivering for the government?

Answer

Portland Communications were first engaged as a result of an open competitive tendering process initiated in 2011 by the Bailiwicks of Jersey and Guernsey for the provision of combined strategic support to the Islands, which at the time was mainly in relation to UK matters.

During 2012 and 2013, Portland Communications provided advice on UK Party conferences, Global transparency initiatives, FATCA and enhanced engagement with a number of key European countries. Since the offices in London, Brussels and Caen have become more fully established, in partnership with the Bailiwick of Guernsey, those offices have been able to take on these functions and Portland Communications is now engaged only to provide additional strategic advice, as needed, on matters where there is strong national or international interest.

Most recently, this has included the provision of advice on how best to engage with the anticipated national and international interest in the report to be published this year by the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry. The aim is to improve upon the past handling of such matters by the Island and being fully open and informative in the public response.

This strategic advice includes matters relating to anticipated national and international media interest and has been provided to officers and relevant Ministers (the Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister/Minister for Health and Social Services, Minister for Education and Minister for Home Affairs), usually during telephone calls. In 2017 this has also involved the relevant Ministers visiting the offices of Portland Communications in London as convenient (usually when in London for other personal or official business).

Portland Communications has received £33,500 from the Department for Community and Constitutional Affairs for the provision of this strategic advice and support, with the aim of enhancing the provision of public information, including to the national and international media, following the release of the report by the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry.