

3.3 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of the Chief Minister regarding measures to ensure the evidence received by the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry would remain publicly accessible and complete: [1(273)]

What measures, if any, will the Chief Minister be taking to ensure that in the aftermath of the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry publishing its report, the evidence it received remains publicly accessible and complete?

Senator I.J. Gorst (The Chief Minister):

The information created by the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry is of significant and lasting interest and it is crucial that it is archived to ensure future access. The inquiry has already confirmed that the evidence received will not be destroyed and that arrangements for securing that data are under active consideration. As the official repository of public records, the Jersey Archive is the appropriate place for the records to be stored.

3.3.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

The Chief Minister will be aware that a former politician has raised concerns on this issue. Would the Chief Minister agree that, in advance of the report being published, it would perhaps be a good idea to review the accessibility of this information, given that the website that much of this information is held on is not particularly user friendly? It will, obviously, be in the public interest, when the report comes out, for all of it to be able to be accessed as easily as possible and that there is room for improvement on that?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I do not know about the last comment about whether there is room for improvement. The Deputy makes a very good point. It is important that all the evidence that has been provided and is currently in the public domain remains so at the post-publication point. I know that officers across departments, together with the archive, are considering how in future it will be best archived, but I will relay back to them the Deputy's point about it remaining public in the immediate post-publication period.

3.3.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

With regard to the aftermath, which the question talks about, will the Chief Minister state whether he will consider what institutional changes might need to be made in Jersey following the publication of the report - before it is published - so that the Government is not seen to be reacting to recommendations in the report, but can be proactive when it comes to institutional changes that may need to be made in Jersey, not simply, but also, related to child protection issues?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I am not quite sure what the Deputy is asking me, but he will not be surprised to learn - or I hope he will not - that right across departments, people and departments are considering constantly improvements that might be made to their service provision. The Deputy will know that many millions of pounds have been approved by this Assembly, at the request of Ministers, to improve the service to children in our community and those who come into, or touch, particularly, social services. We are thinking about, in light of some of the evidence that was provided to the inquiry, how changes could, or should, be made. We do not want to, necessarily, step to big changes prior to the recommendations of the inquiry, so that we can retain that flexibility, but we are thinking about what those recommendations might be and what they might mean.