

2018.12.03

14 Deputy R.J. Ward of the Chairman of the States Employment Board regarding Civil Service vacancies within the new Target Operating Model: [OQ.215/2018]

Further to the response to Written Question 201/2018, will the Chairman detail which of the 276.7 Civil Service vacancies are planned to be left unfilled and then lost in the new target operating model and state what long-term effects it has been assessed such measures will have on services to Islanders?

Senator T.A. Vallois:

That is for my Vice-Chairman.

Connétable R.A. Buchanan of St. Ouen (Vice-Chairman of the States Employment Board - rapporteur):

I thank the Deputy for his question. He has correctly assessed that as each area rolls out its target operating model existing vacancies within the structure that is being looked at will be looked at to see if they fit into the revised new model. If they do they will be retained, if not they will effectively be absorbed and disappear. However, I can reassure the Deputy that the purpose of the target operating model in each area is to remove duplication, not to impact on the service offered to the public, so front line roles are not expected to be impacted and that was emphasised by the Minister for Home Affairs. While some target operating models are currently being implemented at the moment, accurate vacancy numbers are not yet available because of the way the process works. However, a full report will be provided on completion of the roll-out of all target operating models in March 2019. I can also assure the House that S.E.B. (States Employment Board) are currently reviewing all directorates' target operating models and redesign proposals to ensure that they have been correctly and properly considered in respect of staff and employment matters. The board additionally has advised all directorates to share their proposals with their relative scrutiny committee to ensure that the impact on services are fully considered.

3.14.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:

May I ask, given the announcement by the Vice-Chairman of the S.E.B. that only roles key to operational of the States, including P.R. (public relations) and communication workers, will be filled, are jobs in pathology, which are Civil Service vacancies, considered as key roles to operation of the States or is P.R. and communication more important?

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

I thank the Deputy for his question. It is sort of self-answering really. Of course pathology roles are important, I do not think anyone would agree otherwise. If those roles become vacant and we are able to fill them as the target operating model for Health is rolled out, then they will be filled.

3.14.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

I have just been looking at the people who work on the Civil Service grades in the hospital and there are a considerable number of them. Will the Assistant Minister assure this House today that he will not be removing social workers, for example, or occupational therapists, posts like that, which are linked to direct services?

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

I thank the Deputy for the question. It is difficult to give an absolutely definite answer, but it is our intention to maintain public-facing services wherever possible. Clearly those roles that

he has described are within the remit of Health and it is their decision whether they keep them or not, but that will be reviewed by the S.E.B. and we will comment if we feel that public services will suffer as a result of the removal of certain roles.

3.14.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

The Assistant Minister appears to be saying that some Health posts will go under his target operating model. Is that the truth as he sees it?

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

I thank the Deputy for his comment. It is an interesting interpretation of my last comments. What I am saying is that I do not know the answer because at the moment it is outside of my control; it is within the control of Public Health. But we will be reviewing and in fact we did review their model last week and wherever possible public services, people who are on the front line, will be retained in those roles, provided the department that is running that considers it to be necessary.

3.14.4 Senator K.L. Moore:

Perhaps my interpretation of the previous answer had been slightly different because I would just like to check with the Vice-Chairman that when he said “public-facing roles” it was his intention that teachers, health workers and those in the emergency services, would be protected, would have their jobs protected?

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

I thank the Senator for her question. I think the general principle is the answer to that is yes, they will be protected, provided that the Education Department and the Health Department consider that they have vacancies for those roles. But in general terms, yes, they will be protected and our priority will always be providing services to the public.

3.14.5 Deputy R.J. Ward:

I would just like to say, I am uncertain as to whether the target operating model is a white elephant or the emperor’s new clothes, but do you not agree that the uncertainty that comes from it as to whether people will have jobs is what is increasing the effective stress on the workforce and contributing to low morale? Can you also confirm that maternity cover within pathology, for example, will be seen as one of the essential services that this Island relies upon and it will be undertaken?

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

I thank the Deputy for his question. I think the answer to the second part of the question is yes, obviously those essential services, which are required by Health, will be maintained where there is a maternity gap. As far as his comments about white elephants and the target operating model is concerned, I have some sympathy with what he says, I have been through this in the private industry, it is a very unsettling time for anyone who is thinking they might lose their job. However, we are addressing the issue of communication, which is a big part of driving this forward successfully, and we hope that will help in some way to address morale. The more certainty people have, the less likely they are to be concerned about what is happening.