

28.07.10

3.11 Deputy C.S. Alves of St. Helier of the Minister for Social Security regarding legislation to allow people suffering from mesothelioma to obtain compensation: [OQ. 95/2018]

Is it the Minister's policy position that Jersey should enact legislation similar to that already in place in the U.K. and France to allow people suffering from mesothelioma to obtain a nominal amount by way of compensation and, if so, will she commit to engaging with the Minister for Health and Social Services and the Chief Minister on this matter?

Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier (The Minister for Social Security):

I thank the Deputy for her question. I can confirm that the issue of providing compensation for workers suffering from asbestos-related diseases was raised by the Council of Ministers last week. I can also confirm that the ongoing major review of the Social Security scheme will include a review of the options available in respect of a compensation scheme for asbestos-related and other industrial diseases. Yes, I can confirm: I will commit to engage with the Chief Minister and any other Ministers on this matter.

3.11.1 Deputy C.S. Alves:

Is it not the case in the U.K. and other jurisdictions that sufferers are granted easy access to funds, given the short period of time between diagnosis and death?

Deputy J.A. Martin:

As I said to the Deputy, this needs to be looked at. The Deputy's question is on mesothelioma; and I could pronounce that earlier this morning. As I say, even the U.K. scheme says asbestos can cause many other diseases, so we need to look at what is best for Jersey, who it would affect. I am very pleased that the Social Security scheme - and this was before my time, before the question - was already going to look at this issue of compensation and how best, if we do it, it would work in Jersey.

3.11.2 Deputy C.S. Alves:

Does the Minister agree that it is appropriate to consult with the S.E.B., which should be reviewing its policy in light of concerns, especially raised by the N.A.S.U.W.T. (National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers) of asbestos in schools?

Deputy J.A. Martin:

That is on the list to consult and that will be a way forward and what S.E.B. do to probably protect staff as of now. Maybe not so much looking back, but all these considerations will be undertaken in different reviews across the Council and with, of course, the States Employment Board; that is a must.