

2019.04.30

9 Deputy R.J. Ward of the Chairman of the States Employment Board regarding the Board's assessment of the present circumstances in respect of recruitment and retention: (OQ.108/2019)

A very simple question. Is it the States Employment Board's assessment that there is a recruitment and retention crisis in the States at present?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré (Chairman, States Employment Board):

No.

4.9.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:

May I ask how you have made that assessment and how you assess recruitment, how many vacancies there are, *et cetera*?

The Bailiff:

Through the Chair.

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

As I said, it is not the States Employment Board's assessment that there is a recruitment and retention crisis, to use the words of the Deputy. In essence, if we use particularly the example of teachers - which I am sure the Deputy will be very interested in - currently, in terms of vacancies we have 14.6 F.T.E.s (full-time equivalents), which is around 2 per cent, which indicates that, at the moment, the system is working. Also, in the nursing side of things, as I believe the Minister for Health and Social Services has already alluded to, we have vacancies of about 26 per cent, I believe, which is around 4 per cent. In terms of turnover rates, I am just looking, broadly speaking if I use the medical side, the nurses and midwives, it is around 11.8 per cent and by comparison N.H.S. U.K. has an annualised turnover rate of 22 per cent.

4.9.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Those figures, that sprang into the Minister's mind, seem to me rather to suggest that the answer is yes, rather than no. The Chief Minister's logic that vacancy rates at 11 per cent are okay, compared to 22 per cent in the N.H.S. in the U.K. is breaking down. We only have half their problem. That seems to be yes, rather than no. Does the Chief Minister not agree?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

Just to clarify, the vacancy rate for the local side of things on nurses and midwives was 4 per cent, not 11 per cent. That was the turnover rate. The vacancy rate is 4 per cent.

4.9.3 Deputy C.S. Alves of St. Helier:

Given the turnover rates that the Chairman has just mentioned, does the Chairman think it is acceptable that no information regarding interviews across the public sector are kept centrally, as stated in written question 243 of 2018?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

In terms of matters such as exit interviews, we do know that we are not doing well enough and S.E.B. (States Employment Board) have asked officers to look into this to address it and try and improve matters. We accept there is room for improvement in that area.

4.9.4 Deputy R.J. Ward:

I would like to ask the Chair of the S.E.B. to keep better records for the future. For example, in teaching - the resignation date for the May term is not there yet, -14 vacancies I would consider as significant across our education system, as there may be many more at the end of May. Could I also ask that these records are kept in terms of retention over the next coming years, given the upheaval in the States and its implementation of target operating models? I do not think the data is there to say whether there is, or there is not, a recruitment crisis in the way that you are saying.

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

All I can say is on the data I have been provided with, if we are using the teaching side as an example, it is 14.6 F.T.E.s as a level of vacancy against a workforce of around 750 in the teaching side, that cannot be considered a crisis, in any shape or form. We do know, looking ahead, that we do have challenges around the ageing demographic and that over the next 5 to 7 years there is a slight bulge coming through at the end of that workforce, in terms of age profiling and that is something that was already alluded to by the Minister for Health and Social Services. There are measures in play and being built on to try and address some of those issues.