

2019.10.08

16 The Connétable of St. Martin of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding the vetting of officers and staff of the States of Jersey Police and the Fire and Rescue Service: (OQ.228/2019)

Further to the publication in the U.K. of the report *Shining a light on betrayal: Abuse of position for a sexual purpose*, by H.M. Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, will the Minister confirm that all officers and staff of the States of Jersey Police and the Fire and Rescue Service have been correctly and rigorously vetted and not employed without adequate checks having been performed?

The Connétable of St. Clement (The Minister for Home Affairs):

I am pleased to assure the Constable that all officers and staff of the States of Jersey Police and the Fire and Rescue Service receive appropriate and rigorous vetting.

4.16.1 The Connétable of St. Martin:

I am delighted to hear that response. I would just like to say that our forces need dedicated resources to proactively look for warning signs and develop intelligence. In this report, unfortunately, 2,000 forces in the U.K. have insufficient capacity in their counter-corruption units. Forces need to be able to proactively detect the misuse of their I.C.T. (Information and Communication Technologies) systems and the information they hold, so my question, therefore, is: can the Minister assure the Assembly that the Government Plan will include sufficient provision for the I.C.T. resources needed?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

Yes, absolutely. Any abuse by a police officer, fire fighter or staff is abhorrent. We do have the safeguards in place, including a whistle-blowing procedure, so any member of staff who has concerns about a colleague, including a superior officer, can report it securely and anonymously. Should a situation occur, I very much hope that they would do so.

[11:30]

4.16.2 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Following on from the Minister's answer, can he tell us when that policy came in? In the past, including at the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry, it was proved that officers had evidence of abuse and officers were sitting on it and nothing happened. We are talking about people, who were dedicated police officers, who were complaining about abuse, had evidence, wanted it to be investigated and senior officers were sitting on it. When did that policy come in?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

As far as I am aware, the policy of investigating crimes that are reported to the States of Jersey Police has always been in place. I commend the States of Jersey Police as currently constituted under the current leadership for being very proactive in encouraging people, who claim to be the victims of crime and particularly sexual abuse, to come forward with the assurance that their complaints will be properly and rigorously investigated. I have no reason to suspect that anything other than that happens. I commend the way that the police tackle these issues.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Sir, the Minister has not answered the question, because I am referring to police officers referring their evidence to senior officers at the time and nothing was done on that evidence. No investigations followed from it and police officers, the good police officers that I am prepared to commend, are the ones who gave evidence to the Care Inquiry about those officers who are withholding the evidence.

The Connétable of St. Clement:

If there was any suggestion of withholding evidence, that would be a criminal offence and that would be investigated and dealt with and dealt with appropriately.

4.16.3 The Connétable of St. Martin:

My supplementary question was: can the Minister assure the Assembly that the Government Plan will include sufficient provision for the I.C.T. resources needed to be able to police this?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

Yes.