

2020.06.16

11 Senator S.Y. Mézec of the Chair of the Comité des Connétables regarding the equality and diversity training offered to Parish employees and honorary personnel (OQ.160/2020):

What equality and diversity training, if any, are Parish employees and honorary personnel required to undertake and, if none, will the Comité bring forward proposals to provide such training?

Connétable D.W. Mezbourian of St. Lawrence (Chair, Comité des Connétables):

I thank the Senator for his question. As he will know, there is no requirement in the Employment (Jersey) Law 2008 for any employer to provide equality and diversity training. However, I understand that it is referred to as part of staff induction processes within Parishes, which also refer to other legislation such as data protection and it is referenced in staff handbooks. In 2017 training was provided by Law at Work to the Honorary Police on the Discrimination (Jersey) Law 2013 and this was attended in some Parishes by other members of the municipality. In November 2017 all members of the Honorary Police were invited to meet with the Attorney General, at which time he outlined the scope of the law and how it applied to them. The Honorary Police are required to adhere to the Honorary Police Discipline Code, which sets the standard of conduct that is expected of them. The code refers to, among other things, honesty and integrity, fairness and impartiality and politeness and tolerance. The Constables will be meeting again on 22nd June, at which time we will consider the question from the Senator. In recognising that there is always room for improvement, we will consider how we manage equality and diversity with not only Parish staff but across the municipality. That consideration will cover any future training that may be required to avoid the risk of discrimination.

3.11.1 Senator S.Y. Mézec:

Can I thank the Chair for that very helpful answer? Could I ask her if she would be willing to provide an update after the meeting takes place which she has referred to that the Comité will hold to discuss this? Could I also ask if she would give consideration when the Comité is considering this issue and if there is any more they think they can be doing, if they would be prepared to be involved in discussions with some of the groups that already exist in our community that are doing brilliant work to promote equality and diversity and understanding of the issues that go alongside with that, groups like, for example, Liberate?

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Yes, I have absolutely no problem in agreeing to provide an update following our meeting. I will provide that update to all Members of the States. Certainly what I am thinking about is possibly setting up a subcommittee of Constables to look at this. In March 2007 the then Connétables agreed to sign the Jersey Anti-Discrimination Promise, which was promoted at that time by the Community Relations Trust. In considering the way forward, since I have seen the question from the Senator, it occurs to me that we probably do need to have some form of liaison with the J.C.R.T. (Jersey Community Relations Trust) and with other groups such as the Senator has just mentioned. But clearly this will be on the table for Monday and will be referred to when I report back to the States following our meeting. I will do that by way of a report.

3.11.2 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour:

The Senator asked most of what I wanted to ask, but just to add to that, as well as communicating with groups such as the J.C.R.T. and Liberate, would the Constable agree to talk to individuals that

have interacted with the Honorary Police and in the Parish system? Because I think hearing directly from those individuals as to how they felt they were treated and whether they had any suggestions, I think that would be valuable.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Again, yes. All of these comments are helpful because we endeavour to act in all ways to the appropriate standards and I am aware of complaints against certain States Members that have been made to me by people who feel that they have not been treated with the respect and dignity that they deserve. It is clear that we can all make improvements whether we are States Members, Parish staff or members of municipalities. I think we all have to make our best endeavours to ensure that we do not discriminate and that we treat everyone with dignity and respect.

Senator S.Y. Mézec:

Just to thank the Chair for her helpful answers. I am looking forward to hearing about the work when she reports back.