

2020.09.08

14 Deputy I. Gardiner of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding compliance with the Disability legislation: (OQ.224/2020)

Will the Minister advise what percentage of States-owned buildings, if any, are yet to comply with the requirements of the Discrimination (Jersey) Law 2013 that reasonable adjustments regarding disability be completed by 1st September 2020? Will he circulate to Members a list of any such buildings in which reasonable adjustments must be made and confirm the timeline for completion of any adjustment works required?

Deputy K.C. Lewis (The Minister for Infrastructure):

The law in question is the Discrimination Disability (Jersey) Regulation 2018. The requirements of the law is to make reasonable adjustments to premises, adjustments that are practical and manageable, to avoid a substantial disadvantage to an individual. The Government has for several years been making adjustments to our premises to facilitate access. While there are by-laws in place for mobility access since 2007, which we believe we have made reasonable endeavours to achieve, there are no specific standards for mental or other disabilities. It is not possible to say what percentage of the 900 or so sites require further adjustment. A review of all Government buildings that could reasonably expect to be accessed by the public has been completed and the outcome of that review was addressed with works packages, such as hearing loops, signages and miscellaneous adjustments. To test the practical aspects of this work, Liberate, the local diversity and inclusion charity, has a programme to review the sites and provide feedback if additional actions are required. Any additional work is high priority and will be addressed as soon as issues are identified. I will of course issue Members with a list of buildings reviewed by the department.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Supplementary, Sir?

The Bailiff:

You will get a final supplementary, Deputy, but in accordance with my previous ruling. I am taking no supplementaries, other than that.

4.14.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Does the Minister believe that the States Chamber would be compliant with the Discrimination Law 2013?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, I thank the Deputy for that question because the States Chamber is one of our more challenging buildings. It is obviously a compromise to achieve full disability access but maintaining the integrity of the building. It is possible for people, for instance, who are wheelchair users to access the States Chamber but it is a very convoluted route, which the Deputy is probably aware. It is very, very difficult, the States Chamber, but that is something the team are aware of.

4.14.2 Deputy I. Gardiner:

As the Minister mentioned, it is very difficult to define disabilities; each group has very specific needs and requirements of their own and many requirements are not obvious for those who have little or no experience with this condition. Could the Minister please advise which group

representation with disabilities and other external stakeholders the department had consulted with and, if not, if there are plans in place to consult with these groups?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, the officers have been liaising, as I have mentioned previously, with Liberate, the local diversity and inclusion charity and they have been very helpful.