

2020.03.24

9 Deputy I. Gardiner of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding measures to ensure self-isolation by those people who were required to do so: (OQ.88/2020)

Will the Minister advise what actions have been taken, or are being considered, within his portfolio to ensure that people who need to self-isolate following Government advice in fact do so during the current coronavirus situation?

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

The situation we find ourselves in is principally a public health issue and the response, I have to say, is being ably led by the Minister for Health and Social Services and his team, both medical and administrative and I pay tribute to them all. The Minister for Health and Social Services will lodge, probably tomorrow, legislation that will make it an offence for people to refuse to submit to a COVID-19 test and/or refuse to self-isolate if required to do so. It is anticipated that the legislation will be ready for consideration by the Assembly on Friday.

3.9.1 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Would the Minister support lockdown and what preparations have been made to enforce lockdown?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

I am not talking about lockdown. I am talking self-isolation.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I will rephrase it. How will the Minister prepare to enforce self-isolation?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

Under the legislation, which, as I say, will be lodged tomorrow, the police, or other officials appointed by the Minister, will have the power to require these people to self-isolate and even with the ability to use reasonable force if necessary.

3.9.2 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I am assuming that the Minister is talking about people who should self-isolate, if they are showing symptoms and if they themselves might have had a chance of having caught the disease. But are there any plans to put any powers in place to encourage people to self-isolate for their own protection, who maybe have medical conditions, pre-existing conditions and perhaps have chosen not to understand the severity of the situation and are not isolating themselves, but have had no risk of catching it? Does that make sense?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

People of a certain age and people who have underlying health conditions have been advised to self-isolate. It would be quite wrong, in my opinion, to require those people to be forced to self-isolate at this stage, because it is for their own protection. The ones that we are talking about in the legislation, or the Minister for Health and Social Services will be speaking about in legislation, are those who are required to self-isolate to protect others.

3.9.3 Deputy I. Gardiner:

How will police enforce legislation from today from the Minister for the Environment for reducing gatherings under the Statutory Nuisances (Jersey) Law?

The Connétable of St. Clement?

Under the Statutory Nuisances (Jersey) Law?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Yes.

The Bailiff:

Is that not a matter for the Minister for the Environment? I think the Statutory Nuisances (Jersey) Law is not for the Minister for Home Affairs. He does not have statutory responsibility.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

OK. May I ask a different supplementary?

The Bailiff:

Well, if it is a supplementary directed to the Minister, yes.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Yes, it is. Would it be within the remit of the Minister to introduce daily checks by phone to mandatory self-isolation people and police checks at the location if there is no answer?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

The legislation will be lodged tomorrow. Police and other people appointed by the Minister will have the right to force people to self-isolate if they do not do so when required and that is important. Those powers will exist once the legislation is approved on Friday, hopefully if the legislation is approved on Friday.