

21.06.29

**11 Deputy M.R. Higgins of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding increase in stop and search of juveniles (OQ.154/2021):**

Further to Written Questions 280/2021 and 299/2021, will the Minister elaborate on the reasons for the increased stop and search of juveniles by the States and Honorary Police between 2016 and 2021 and explain what other measures are being used to deal with the perceived problems?

**Deputy G.C. Guida (The Minister for Home Affairs):**

The police have the power to stop and search any person who they suspect may be in possession of controlled drugs, stolen and prohibited articles such as offensive weapons, including knives, items relating to crimes including larceny, break and entry and fraud. In respect of juveniles, stop and search powers are used in a variety of circumstances including following reports from the public of suspicious behaviour, suspected drug use, theft reports and the suspected carrying of knives. The increase in the use of stop and search power over the period in question is a result of targeted action to respond to the behaviour and action of some young people.

**5.11.1 Deputy M.R. Higgins:**

The written answers indicated that a small number of people had been stopped multiple times. Can I ask the Minister what he is doing with the Youth Service or Children's Services, or whatever, to try and find other ways of dealing with these people that would stop the amount of police time being expended on it?

**Deputy G.C. Guida:**

I will answer to the Deputy that we would be delighted to find another way of dealing with these people. It is a very small number of young people, probably 10 to 20, which account for 20 per cent of all recorded crime in Jersey and if there was any other way to deal with them we would be extremely interested to hear about it. We launched Operation Rockpool in 2020 and it is a strategic and multiagency approach working with colleagues in C.Y.P.E.S., Health, the Honorary Police and others. The States of Jersey Police understands quite well the fact that this problem should be tackled earlier on but right now the delinquents are in the street and need to be dealt with.

**5.11.2 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

I do not know where to start my question now. The Minister used the word "targeted" towards a particular small group and then used the word "delinquents". Does the Honorary Police or the police have a list of their supposed delinquents and are they being stopped again and again and if so, what records are being kept of the outcomes and consequences of that? Does he really think that that is the best way forward?

**Deputy G.C. Guida:**

No, I do not think it is the best way forward but if there was any other suggestion I would be really happy to hear about it. Those young people come from families, which already have their own problems and usually for several generations, where it is quite clear that it is a longstanding social problem that needs to be resolved. The solution in this case, the actual best possible solution, was 30 or 40 years ago and the one thing that we must make sure is that we are not generating in this generation the same children that we have to deal with now.

**5.11.3 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Is the Minister now suggesting that particular families are being targeted for the stop and search of their children because of their historic incidents or because of a reputation that they have? Is that what our policing has come to?

**Deputy G.C. Guida:**

That is a weirdly formulated question. No, of course we are not. What did the Deputy expect me to answer? No. Again, 10 young offenders commit 15 per cent of all recorded crime in the Island. They are known. They are a problem. The only way that the police found to deal with them was to spend a lot of time with them but also to work with the other agencies to make sure that they had other activities that were not basically antisocial. So it is a multiagency process and we try to spend as much time as we can with them in schools, in extracurricular activities, and to make sure that they are not in the street committing crimes but when they are in the street committing crimes they do need to be stopped.

**5.11.4 Deputy K.F. Morel:**

From the written questions that Deputy Higgins lodged, it is clear by my own calculations that there has been a 700 per cent increase in stop and searches on young people between 2018 and 2020. While the Minister says that these are targeted approaches, does he not feel that such a massive increase in stop and searches, which is far greater than the increase than any young person's crime, is having a detrimental effect on the reputation of the police among young people because they are all beginning to feel targeted by the police?

**Deputy G.C. Guida:**

Absolutely. The States of Jersey Police recognises quite clearly that this is a problem and that it will not improve their relationship with young people. But do remember that the States of Jersey Police is targeted with keeping the peace and the safety of all Jersey residents.

**5.11.5 Deputy K.F. Morel:**

If I could ask as well, it is interesting that this increase in stop and searches coincides with the appointment of the new chief of police from the British Transport Police, originally where they undertake a large amount of stop and searches.

[14:45]

Does the Minister believe that this correlation is in fact causation and the chief of police is just importing a tactic that he used for different reasons as a member of the British Transport Police?

**Deputy G.C. Guida:**

This is a more interesting question. I would say no. I would say that if anything happened it was Constable Norman's and my own fault because a couple of years ago we decided to increase the number of active policemen for these persons. These extra influx of about 20 uniformed personnel allowed them to restart community policing. Whereas the Parishes have been depleted of States of Jersey Police officers in the past years we gave the possibility for the police to restart community policing and this of course is one of the results, is that the police force in the community are trying to deal with those delinquents.

**5.11.6 Deputy M.R. Higgins:**

Could I ask the Minister, I was somewhat concerned in the written answers that many of the police officers, although are wearing body-worn cameras, are not recording all these instances and I think it

would be beneficial, not only for the other agencies but for States Members, to understand the exact nature of the interaction of the police with these people? Could I ask him: will he seek to ensure that police officers do record these instances?

**Deputy G.C. Guida:**

Yes, a couple of things about this. The first one is that officers are required to record as much of their interactions of the public as possible. Sometimes the interaction happens unexpectedly or they just forget to record it but the vast majority of the interaction with the public is indeed recorded. One thing about these interactions in particular is that as they involve children it would probably not be possible to share them with just anybody. There will be a very strong presumption of anonymity, which means that we will probably not be able, especially in the Island where everybody knows everybody, to share them. To answer a previous question because I think this is relevant as well, everything - absolutely everything - is recorded. Sometimes it is difficult to find because it is somewhere on a piece of paper but there is no action from our police which is not recorded somewhere.