

21.11.02

**11 Senator S.Y. Mézec of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding Accessibility of emergency services (OQ.225/2021)**

Will the Minister outline what the process is for people with severe hearing impairments to contact the emergency services if they cannot speak over a telephone and will he further state what training, if any, emergency services responders have received to support individuals in this position?

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

I am delighted to answer a question that has nothing to do with fishing. All 3 emergency services have dedicated mobile phones that allow those with severe hearing impairment to text the required service in the event of an emergency. All of these numbers are available on the Jersey Deaf Society website and published to the local deaf community. While there is no formal training provided, each service has a way of dealing with this. So, for example, the fire services do engage with charities and others around supporting deaf people and, for example, give specific smoke alarms for free for people who are hearing impaired. The ambulance service has provided some training on sign language and some books with statements written in them for specific medical conditions that people can point at, so there has been informal training in all services to deal with the matter.

**4.11.1 Senator S.Y. Mézec:**

I am grateful for that answer. I asked the question following a conversation with a young person who had some concerns over these areas. The Minister referred to a text message service. Could he confirm that that is rolled out across all of the emergency services?

**Deputy G.C. Guida:**

Yes, it is rolled out for all the emergency services. I checked myself and it is also on the government website so it is a service that it is available to all.

[11:45]

**4.11.2 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

The new integrated I.T. (information technology) system used in the joint police, fire and ambulance - the name of which I should remember because I have asked you about it a number of times but it has just left me - does that take account of those with hearing impairment? Is that a step forward in enabling people to contact the emergency services given that it is a new system?

**Deputy G.C. Guida:**

The answer is that I do not know and the system that we use now basically is cell phones, so there is a cell phone number. Anybody can use that cell phone number to text. The fact that the control room is now combined makes it much easier because a single number will get you any of the services. The new system could take this into account. It could use other methods of communication and this is something that we will look into.

**4.11.3 Senator S.Y. Mézec:**

The Minister said that there was no formal specified training for those working in emergency services when they encounter people with hearing impairments but he listed other things that they do. Does he think that there would be any benefit in formalising that training in any way?

**Deputy G.C. Guida:**

Yes, absolutely.