

21.03.02

10 Deputy C.S. Alves of the Chief Minister regarding the diversity of citizens' panels and juries set up by the Government of Jersey (OQ.58/2021):

In light of the citizens' panels and juries being set up by the Government, will the Chief Minister state how the Government will ensure that the people selected to take part in any such panels are representative of the Island's population, and that all methods of collecting qualitative and quantitative data from these panels and juries are impartial and follow international best practices for market or social research?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré (The Chief Minister):

There are currently 2 live projects being undertaken, the Jersey citizens' assembly on climate change and the Jersey assisted dying citizens' jury. I am advised that the process of selection involves 2 rounds of random selection on an anonymous basis. In the first round invites are sent out to a randomly generated list of Jersey addresses with invites to individuals to register their interest to participate in the processes. Relevant demographic and attitudinal information is captured at this stage. In the second round, these expressions of interest are randomly sorted by a specifically designed software programme to produce a group of participants who are broadly demographically representative of the Island. To undertake this process, the Government has engaged the services of the Sortition and Involve Foundations, not-for-profit entities that respectively promote the use of randomly selected groups of people in decision-making and also putting people at the heart of decision-making. More information can be found on their respective websites. I hope that is short enough.

3.10.1 Deputy C.S. Alves:

Can the Chief Minister state how he may have looked at the bias that might be introduced by having fixed predetermined days - I think one of them has Thursdays and Saturdays - as part of the selection process, especially as people have to attend so many of them in order to be fully involved?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

I have to say I am not sighted on that. I do know that every effort has been made by engaging in this way that essentially it is as unbiased as is possible. My understanding particularly is that by having a sufficiently wide group from which the random selection is taken is one of the ways that the bias is removed. In terms of days, I suspect the problem there is that - and this is an opinion, I will have to go back and verify - by picking a working day, as it were, and a weekend day, one is trying to spread the load. I think the same problem can be identified no matter what days of the week are selected. One has to make a decision somewhere in there and it will impact upon whoever cannot make those particular days.

3.10.2 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Could the Chief Minister please read out the list of demographic criteria that will be used in sorting and selecting the participants?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

Sorry, I was just referring to the list I have. The criteria used for selecting participants in both examples and the source data are as follows: age, the source is the opendata.gov.je 2018 population estimates; gender, the same source; location, Jersey Opinions and Lifestyle Survey 2020; socioeconomic status, which is the Jersey Opinions and Lifestyle Survey at source; the place of birth,

for which the source is the 2011 census data; and some relevant attitudinal questions, which is different sources. The purpose of the attitudinal questions is to ensure a broad reflection of different opinions on the relevant topics. I am very happy for Members, if they wish to quiz in further detail, for the relevant officers to provide interested Members with a briefing if they should wish.

3.10.3 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

The criterion that I am interested in and I believe should be included, especially for the assisted dying consultation, is that of holding a religious belief or a non-religious belief or indeed no particular beliefs. That is a characteristic that is especially relevant to that consultation. I would be grateful if the Chief Minister could go back to his officers and enquire about that, please.

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

I am very happy to do that and arrange a briefing. As I said, the system has been set up to try and get a randomly selected but also as representative a group as possible. I was quite impressed when I was given the information and I hope the Deputy is as well.

3.10.4 Deputy R.J. Ward:

My question has partly been answered. I just would like the Minister to confirm that the Sortition Foundation is involved and it is the same one that helped set up panels around the world and that form of stratified sampling is quite a robust system. Just to confirm that it is the same Sortition Foundation that was used for the Climate Assembly in the U.K. and elsewhere.

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

I have 2 answers. One is I agree absolutely with the Deputy about the difficulty of pronouncing the title of the organisation. Yes, I can confirm that is the case, so it is a very robust process that has been put in place.

[11:15]

3.10.5 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Will the Chief Minister tell Members whether the same criteria were used in determining who was going to be on the panel that was reviewing the decision to place the hospital at Overdale? If not, what criteria were used to set up that panel?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

I would have to go away and identify it. What I do know about the panel that was established was that there was certainly no political involvement and it was kept as arm's length as possible in order to avoid influence. But I will have to go away and identify the process that was done. I think it has previously been put into the public domain. We are testing memory here, but I will go and get the information.

3.10.6 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Could the Chief Minister also check and provide us with the demographics of that panel as well?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

Yes, willingly.

3.10.7 Deputy C.S. Alves:

Will the Chief Minister confirm whether the Sortition Foundation will be involved throughout the whole duration of the existence of these assemblies and juries when they are collecting data and points of view?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

My understanding is the whole point of the involvement of Sortition is purely to get the assembly/jury established, that they then do not facilitate or anything along those lines during the deliberations. My understanding is that they are involved in creating the bodies that we are talking about.