

2024.07.16

2.10 Deputy H.L. Jeune of the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs regarding regarding the Taskforce on Violence Against Women and Girls Report (OQ.146/2024)

In relation to the Taskforce on Violence Against Women and Girls Report, published in 2023, will the Minister provide her top 3 priorities in relation to the report's recommendations?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat (The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs):

I thank the Deputy for the question. The Government has accepted all of the recommendations of the Task Force on Violence Against Women and Girls and made them a strategic commitment through the C.S.P. (Common Strategy Policy). Recommendations are component parts intended to fit together to address gender-based violence and it is artificial to pick the individual recommendations. Ultimately the response to recommendations must be a joined-up series of actions to facilitate holistic change. The recommendations are being progressed. Already plans have been put in place in relation to the development to introduce a dedicated service to support victims of harmful online behaviour, starting with the provision of a U.K. support and by the end of 2026 moving to a fully-trained support service located in Jersey. In partnership with the Minister for Social Security, we have agreed and funded the ability to allow people who are in a domestic violence situation to be able to leave that situation immediately and be able to be funded, whereas this did not happen before. This has already had a positive impact as we have received feedback from third sector agencies.

2.10.1 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I thank the Minister for her answer and understanding that these recommendations all need to be worked on together. A few of the recommendations are recommendations for independent reviews, including the criminal justice system. Could the Minister advise what discussions he has had with stakeholders on the best way forward to establishing independent reporting?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

In relation to the criminal justice system, I have liaised with the States of Jersey Police and a review of their processes is going to be underway shortly. I have had a consultation and a meeting in the last 10 to 12 days with a barrister from the U.K. and we will be looking at both the reviews in relation to the Law Officers' Department and the courts.

2.10.2 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Could the Minister advise what level of funding she believes is required to enact all the recommendations from this review, how that might be phased and what she would be requesting as part of the Government Plan this year?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

The funding in relation to the reviews is already within the plan and there will be further funding required in relation to policy officers. There will be potentially further funding but at this stage it is very difficult to say exactly how much that money will be because it is going to be an ongoing process. During the feedback on the report it was given a timeline of how long this will take and obviously it is not going to happen overnight.

2.10.3 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Could the Minister give some indication of what she believes the timeline will be to deliver all of the recommendations, please?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

We are progressing well and I would like to be able to have as many of the recommendations completed before 2026, when there will be an election. We do not want any of those recommendations to slip

through the loop. We want to ensure that the task force review and its recommendations have all been completed, and that is my aim.

2.10.4 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Following up on my question to the Minister before about independent reviews of the criminal justice system. Could the Minister give an indication of the discussions that she has had with stakeholders and the steps that she will take in the independent review related to the Family Court review that is urgently needed?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

I have met with all of the participants within the Family Court, there was a round table discussion with 15 to 20 people and, as I said, I have had consultation with a U.K. barrister. We will sit down to look at ... and also I have officers within the policy team who are looking at terms of reference. We will look at some of the things that have clearly already been resolved and then I, with her, will actually then come up with a plan and she will then look at reviewing the Family Courts as well as all of the other courts within this process.