



Deputy Sam Mézec
Chair, Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel
Scrutiny Office
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BY EMAIL

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Dear Deputy Mézec

Thank you for the opportunity to provide evidence to the People and Culture Follow Up Review conducted by the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel.

My experience is limited to that which I summarised in my report of August 2022 and my more recent experience of being closely involved with senior staff at Health and Community Services (HCS) and senior members of the Government of Jersey, both senior managers and politicians.

In my report I made the point that it had been repeatedly said to me that “there are no consequences”. Interestingly, this was perceived as particularly applying to senior and more powerful people, and I had the impression that this was very damaging. It is unhelpful and should be corrected.

In my current role I and others have attempted to increase the accountability of staff. Inevitably, this has met with resistance and, rather disappointingly, sometimes criticism from politicians. If senior management is to change the culture appropriately, it requires vigorous public support from politicians.

My day-to-day contact with senior managers has made me aware that they felt bullied, harassed, intimidated, and belittled by the behaviour that they reported at the State Employment Board. The most recent example that came to my attention was only a few weeks ago. However, the senior person involved was too nervous to complain.

I have tried previously and failed to persuade the senior managers to complain about the behaviours which intimidate them, but, to the best of my knowledge, none of them have done so. Even though some were visibly shaken and sometimes tearful, their fear of reprisal stopped them complaining.

These behaviours could easily be investigated, and corrective action taken.

In my report I wrote that “the fish rots from the head down”. In paragraph 76 of the People and Culture Review 2021 comment is made about the role of the Commissioner for Standards. It must surely be the case that the standards set for senior politicians should be at least as high as those for everyone else. It is a matter of setting the right example.

(My experience in the NHS was that when the Secretary of State at the time and several very senior managers had a reputation for bullying, this permeated down a through a service employing a million people).

A second area of difficulty is more technical. The disciplinary processes within the NHS, particularly for Doctors and Dentists, are complex and difficult to enact. The UK processes appear to have been adopted by Jersey and this is probably not unreasonable since the UK regulatory framework is also used. In my experience a weakness in the NHS is the lack of HR professionals with a detailed knowledge of these processes, whilst the Unions representing these staff have a very good grasp of them. It would seem sensible to me that the appropriate expertise should be available within HCS so that the weaknesses that I have observed in the NHS stop being repeated in Jersey.

A further issue which I have encountered on several occasions is recruitment and the extraordinary length of time it takes to recruit senior managers. The process often takes so long that excellent candidates who would contribute very significantly are lost to Jersey.

A second issue in recruitment is a commonly stated view that it is important that candidates have Jersey links, and it is implied that these candidates should be favoured. I have seen this approach before, particularly in the Middle East. I can understand the feeling, but I think Government should lead and make explicit whether their desire is to appoint the best candidate, irrespective of their background. or whether they regard links with Jersey as more important. There is also, I assume, a legal view.

I hope that these observations are constructive and helpful. In my view they point to the need for some changes to be made which would both enhance performance and improve the reputation of Jersey.

Yours sincerely

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Chair of the Health and Community Services Department Advisory Board

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