



Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Quarterly Hearing

Witness: The Minister for Home Affairs

Tuesday, 26th May 2020

Panel:

Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier (Chair)

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour

Deputy T. Pointon of St. John

Deputy R.E. Huelin of St. Peter

Witnesses:

Connétable L. Norman of St. Clement, The Minister for Home Affairs

Deputy G.C. Guida of St. Lawrence, Assistant Minister for Home Affairs.

Mr. J. Blazeby, Director General, Justice and Home Affairs

Mr. R. Smith, Chief of Police

Mr. P. Gavey, Chief Ambulance Officer

[15:30]

Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier (Chair):

Welcome to the quarterly hearing of the Minister for Home Affairs with regards COVID-19 and some other topics. I will get everybody to introduce themselves briefly. I am Deputy Robert Ward, and I chair the Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel. Perhaps we would like to go through the panel first and then with the Minister and their officers and the Assistant Minister.

Deputy T. Pointon of St. John:

I am the Deputy of St. John, Trevor Pointon, a member of the panel.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour:

Deputy Louise Doublet of St. Saviour.

Deputy R.E. Huelin of St. Peter:

Deputy Rowland Huelin of St. Peter.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Constable Len Norman, Minister for Home Affairs.

Assistant Minister for Home Affairs:

Deputy Gregory Guida of St. Lawrence, Assistant Minister for Home Affairs.

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

Good afternoon. Julian Blazeby, director general, Justice and Home Affairs.

Chief Ambulance Officer:

Good afternoon. Pete Gavey, chief ambulance officer.

Chief of Police:

Good afternoon. Robin Smith, chief of police.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think that is just about everybody. Scrutiny officers tend not to introduce themselves but we will get started. Deputy Doublet, I believe you are going to start us off with some questions with regards domestic abuse situations, et cetera. Would you like to start?

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Thank you. Minister, what support is available to families dealing with domestic violence as a result of the current situation?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

The full scope of services provided by the States has been available during lockdown, during the COVID epidemic, and will continue to be as it was beforehand. That is everything for the Children and Families Hub, the Youth Enquiry Service. They of course have the Connect Me initiative, which has been very successful. The Jersey Women's Refuge has been operating at full pelt along with the Sexual Abuse Referral Centre, the S.A.R.C. The support in this area has been maintained at the highest possible level because it was recognised at the very beginning with lockdown there was a threat to increased domestic violence and the States, the Government, and the police responded very positively to that threat.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Indeed. A campaign has been initiated asking Islanders to report domestic abuse. Has this been engaged with at all and to what level, and how many reports have you had since that campaign was initiated?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

You are quite right. That was the campaign at the beginning of the lockdown to ask the public to be our ears and eyes in this situation. I do not know if Robin has more detail numbers-wise on that particular issue as a result of that campaign or generally on the numbers.

Chief of Police:

It is not directly on the eyes and ears campaign although I am sure we could get that specifically referenced. Since the stay at home order from around 30th March to today's date, in terms of actual incidents we have seen an increase of up 10 per cent, so that is from 182 to 200 - that compares the period of last year to the period of this year - we have seen an increase in incidents. In terms of crime as a result of those incidents we have seen a 37 per cent reduction. To give you a sense of the numbers, that is 103 in the same period in 2019 to 65 in the period of what some people call lockdown. But I treat those numbers with a high degree of caution. The reason for that is I still think that there could be a number of legacy issues as we ease our way out of lockdown and we are likely to see more historical reports as well as the here and now.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

In terms of the sources of complaints and referrals, has there been any change in terms of where the reports are coming from?

Chief of Police:

Not that I have got any different avenues of information coming in. As the Minister has explained, there are lots of opportunities, whether it is via the S.A.R.C. or whether it is with Women's Refuge or our I.D.V.A (Independent Domestic Violence Advisors) service, there are lots of services that have been publicised over the period of lockdown and beyond to really provide the very best service to our Islanders.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

You mentioned that although the reports were increased by 10 per cent, the actual crime levels were lower. Can you just explain what exactly that means please, "the crime levels"?

Chief of Police:

It might be that we go to an incident but it may not be that a crime has occurred. Sometimes arguments happen, I guess. But if there is a crime, i.e. someone has been assaulted, as you can imagine, that reporting is less than it was compared to the same period last year.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Why do you think that is?

Chief of Police:

It could be a number of answers there, I guess. I still say though, I am looking at these numbers with a good degree of caution, as we ease our way out of lockdown, in the same way that I think we could see historic reporting. I think there is a potential that we could see historical reporting for sexual offences as well. So we keep as close eye on that in addition to domestic abuse.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Can I just go back to the Minister? Minister, you mentioned the Women's Refuge. As I understand it, the Women's Refuge as an organisation were already calling for increased levels of support from the States, even before we had lockdown measures. Can you just explain whether you have had any dialogue with them about perhaps increasing resources or support to them, given that there is an increased level of referrals?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

There certainly has not been any request at my level. Whether there has been anything from the Building a Safer Society level; whether there has been a request there I am not sure. But any request would clearly be dealt with sympathetically and positively. No question about that. Nothing has come to me yet. Whether it is on its way, whether it is being dealt with at another level, I am yet to find out.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I can see Mr. Blazeby nodding there. I wonder if he wants to come in on that.

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes, thank you. There has been a business case before for some additional funding for the Refuge and also other emergency accommodation. So to deal with category 5, which is vulnerable groups, whether those members of the public who are suffering from domestic abuse as victims or as drug and alcohol challenges, there has been a business case put forward. The Government have provided additional funding for additional space to enable the Refuge to operate at maximum capacity and create additional appropriate housing where applicable for victims or those people who are struggling.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Thank you. Can you give any further detail on the contents of that business case, including the additional funding and space that is being looked at please?

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

I have not got the figures to hand in terms of the amount of units but I think it is upwards of around 30 units have been provided. I think the sum is in the region of £100,000, which will provide 3 months' worth of additional capacity in the system that will see us through, particularly in the next stages of stay at home orders, which should then release pressure on the system to enable things to return back to whatever a new normal looks like.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Minister, just to come back to you, are you able to reassure Islanders that where there is a case of domestic abuse in the home that if housing is needed in the long term that people have a right to be housed, even if they do not have housing qualifications?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I am not responsible for the Housing and Work Law. All we can do is provide the essential immediate need and clearly what is needed in the longer term has to be resolved in a wider forum than just my department.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Yes, I understand that. Just going now to services and how they are being co-ordinated. Can you give an overview of the different services that are responding to issues of domestic abuse at this time and how they are working together please?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

The Safeguarding Partnership Board, the police, the domestic abuse support are all working together with the Children and Families Hub to make sure there is information, there is support, and people who do need assistance can easily find out the right route for their particular circumstances.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Who has ultimate oversight of this work please?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

The Safeguarding Partnership Board is the ultimate authority in this area.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

In terms of ministerial oversight, who is the Minister in charge of that board?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

To be honest with you, I am not too sure. I am not sure if that is the Minister for Children and Housing or does it come under ... I am sorry, Deputy. I have to check that out.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Perhaps you could get back to us on that.

The Deputy of St. John:

If I can be of help here. The Safeguarding Board chair was responsible directly to the Chief Minister in the past. I would imagine that is the case currently.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

That sounds logical.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Thank you, Deputy Pointon. So on that, how is the work in this area being monitored to ensure that it is effectively supporting individuals and families?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

What we are doing is seeing the actual results. As the Chief of Police was saying a few minutes ago, while we are seeing an increase in reports people coming forward to the police and the partnership, that gives us the confidence that it is working well. We are getting the reports even if we are not necessarily - and perhaps it is a good thing, perhaps it is not a good thing, depends which way you look at it - we are not getting the criminal activity that might have been expected.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Is there a mechanism whereby you obtain feedback from victims on how their case was dealt with?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

That would be a matter for the police, for S.A.R.C., for the agencies themselves.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I ask a quick question, Louise, just before ...

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Yes, go ahead.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just to chip in. There was a mention of a drop in reported domestic abuse crimes and yet at a particular time like this with lockdown, does that not concern you quite significantly that we have seen a drop where you may well expect a rise given the pressure that people are under, which could be a catalyst to these sorts of behaviours? Particularly I am thinking in controlling behaviour within a family, which is a serious issue in domestic abuse, which is not so obvious. What can you do or what is being done to try and uncover or to look at that situation in the circumstances we are in now?

Chief of Police:

Thank you, Deputy Ward. I think the simple answer to your direct question is: does it concern me? The answer to that is yes. We are of course talking about a 3 or 4-week period compared to the 3 or 4-week period over in 2019. However, while the numbers are relatively low, 37 per cent decrease is very large, I would suggest. So the answer to your question is yes. What are we doing about it? Because as I mentioned before both with this and indeed the reporting of sexual offences, I think we should look at these numbers with a degree of caution. Largely, because I think we could get some historical reports over the next coming weeks. Certainly those ambient numbers of reports have started to increase since the stay at home order has been eased.

[15:45]

A number of incidents over the weekend. But as the Minister has already referred to, within the first couple of weeks of the stay at home order you may have seen the eyes and ears campaign, which I thought was very good. That was out of social media as well really to tell potential victims that we are still here, we are here to listen and we are here to respond. Importantly, all of those services, and indeed policing, did not stop as a result of lockdown and that is what that campaign was trying to do.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

It is probably worth noting that all of our social habits have changed over the last 6 to 8 weeks. The night-time economy has changed totally from bars and restaurants and so on to beach parties. There is a different dynamic going on, which would have an effect on this sort of crime or this sort of incident. But we also know and believe that this sort of incident is under-reported. It is still under-reported and that is why I am very keen, which we were working on before all this happened, the new Domestic Violence Law, which I am still hoping we will be able to bring before the Assembly before the end of the year. You mentioned coercive and controlling behaviour. That is all part of that, which is very important.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Can I just go back to the Chief of Police please? In terms of reporting domestic abuse, I think we have discussed in other contexts families that do not have access to the internet and issues around accessing home schooling but it occurs to me that if a family does not have access to the internet or possibly a phonenumber, and an individual is isolated in the home without these communication routes, how can we encourage or enable people to have ways to report that do not use the telephone or a computer? Are there any ways that the police are facilitating that?

Chief of Police:

I think what we have seen as a result of the crisis is that there is a greater, if you like, neighbourly spirit. I think there are more people talking to each other, maybe it is across the fence these days. I think probably families are talking more than they used to. So I think that is one of the options we have got. Of course to reinforce the point you have made, we would get a number of reports by the schools as well, whether it was about domestic violence or sexual offences. That sort of adds to the concern because that would be another very, very good route and very well-considered route, speaking to trusted people. My expectation is that when the schools reopen carefully and safely we again could see quite a spike in reports, some of which will be domestic abuse related.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Will you be doing any work with children in the schools to try and ascertain whether children have been witnessing abuse or victims of abuse?

Chief of Police:

My senior team are working with C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills), with Mark Rogers' team and Mark Owers, where we have set up a team - it is not a safeguarding team - where we are looking at what can we reasonably expect when lockdown reaches its various sort of end stages and how prepared are we for that? Some of that, with Mark Owers' team particularly talking about young people in this regard, is how we ready ourselves for it. We have only had one initial meeting but the discussions have been had now for a number of weeks.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

You mentioned about people talking to neighbours. Can you just reiterate the advice please on what people should do if they either have a disclosure from a neighbour or if they witness something next door?

Chief of Police:

The important advice on all of these things is just to keep it simple. I think people instinctively know what they are being told. Sometimes it could be sort of discreet pleas for help but go ahead, contact the police. There are other numbers and I appreciate not everybody has access to the internet. Indeed, not everybody wants to ring the police. The Minister has explained a number of other places where you can ring but those members of the public and Islanders that are watching this, I would say contact the police and we will deal with that information carefully, sensitively and deal with it.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

So it is okay for somebody to call ... is it 999 you want them to call or is it the 612612, if they witness something but they are not 100 per cent certain that it is abuse but they just have a concern?

Chief of Police:

I think, unless it is an emergency, and sometimes it will be an emergency, then dial 999. Alternatively if it is a sharing of information, which we need to respond to, it is the 6 number you just mentioned.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

That is helpful, thank you. I had a question about the S.A.R.C. What procedures are in place in that facility that will protect staff and victims and ensure that the service can operate effectively?

Chief of Police:

I do not know how many members have been to the Sexual Assault Referral Centre. I visited it a month or 2 ago before lockdown. It is hard for me to recall a time when I have not met with more professional people who are sensitive and caring. They were busy contacting previous victims, and you mentioned earlier about how do we assess what our service is like. One of the members of the team was actively ringing victims to provide them with additional support, some of whom were cautious and reluctant and needed additional support and they got that. I invite anyone to go there to see the professional job that they do. They are true professionals.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I am nearly finished in this area. I just wanted to go back to Mr. Blazeby, who was talking about the business case for the Women's Refuge. Is there a date whereby a final decision will be made on that business case and who is it that makes the final decision please?

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

My understanding is that the decision has been made. It was through the competent authorities meeting and the Emergencies Council meeting, along with a number of other business cases in response to COVID to Government, have had the opportunity to share those business cases with

those relevant Ministers at those meetings and get those decisions supported or indeed decisions made. That has been through that process.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

What was the decision?

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

Sorry, yes. I missed the obvious answer to that. In the affirmative. So, yes. It was agreed and supported.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Can details of that extra support be forwarded to the panel please?

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes, indeed.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

When will those details be made public?

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

I can find out. I can get the details for the panel, I can share that through the Scrutiny officer and I will look at when those details can be made public, and let you know.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just to ask: is that funding just for one year?

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

No, that business case was for 3 months, as I mentioned earlier, just to see those services and wider support agencies through the particular demand, as we move through the various stages of stay at home. The expert advice from those involved in policy making and those from an operational point of view is that 3 months' worth of funding should take the pressure out of the system and enable those people who require emergency accommodation particularly to get back to a steady state. Clearly that will be kept under review if that pressure remains beyond 3 months.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

And that would require another business case?

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes, that is correct.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

That is helpful, thank you. My final question is: does the Minister have any other information in relation to domestic abuse that he would like to highlight to the public?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

No, I think we have gone through this with you pretty thoroughly. We have given you the numbers that we have but it is something that we take extremely seriously. I have said to the panel before, the new Domestic Violence Law is right at the top of our priorities. Unfortunately with everything else it has been put back a few months but I am looking forward to bringing it to the States hopefully before the end of the year.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

That is helpful, thank you.

The Deputy of St. John:

Could I come in there just for a moment? Two things: one, I trust that the new law will not be a domestic violence law but a domestic abuse law?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Absolutely right, yes.

The Deputy of St. John:

Secondly, can I go back to what we were saying about housing for those people who are the victims of domestic abuse, whether they be male, female or otherwise, and they do not have housing qualifications? My wife is a psychotherapist. It would not be giving any confidentiality away to let you know that there are several of her clients that have experienced such a circumstance in that there has been a marriage breakdown and the partner has not had the housing qualifications and puts that individual into a dilemma in relation to accommodation, both for herself and for children. Would it be in relation to the declared policy that we do not want to work in silos be appropriate for Home Affairs to work very closely with the Minister for Children and Housing to put a proposition together that works for these people to relieve them of the acute stress they experience and the fact that they are often put out of their family home as a result of a breakdown? A hugely important area for probably a very small number of people.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

What I can say, Deputy, is in the present crisis that the Justice and Home Affairs Department, through the director general and the Minister for Children and Housing, have been working very closely together on emergency accommodation for all sorts of people who need it. But you are quite right. I do not want to feel that anybody would be trapped in an abusive relationship and not leave that relationship will not get support out of that relationship because of fear of housing qualifications. This is something which once this crisis is over we can look at in some detail. I would be quite happy to do that.

The Deputy of St. John:

Thank you, Minister. I have to declare to the chair that I am having an acute problem with my battery and I may be forced to move out of this meeting. I do not know.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

You are definitely frozen, Deputy.

The Deputy of St. John:

Yes, I am having extreme difficulty, but there you go. I may have to absent myself because of technology.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I know Deputy Doublet has to leave in a moment for another appointment and if that is the case then we would not be quorate, I believe, so we may have to suspend the meeting until you come back. So that is hopefully encouragement to your battery to carry on working.

The Deputy of St. John:

I simply cannot get it to charge. I do not know why. Everything is plugged in but it will not charge. We are down to a minimum level. We will carry on until I disappear.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Deputy Huelin, I think you have got the next set of questions.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

This is on lockdown, Minister. Can you please confirm how many individuals have been arrested to date for breaching any rules in relation to lockdown?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

The last thing I had for arrests, and no doubt the Chief of Police could update me if it is different, was 19.

Chief of Police:

That number of total enforcements has just gone up to 21. It was 19 until a couple of days ago, Minister.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

So a quiet weekend. What has been the outcome of those arrests insofar as fines, et cetera, the ongoing process?

Chief of Police:

As you may have seen in the very early days of the arrests that we made throughout prior to even lockdown, it has been important that we have worked closely, as you may have seen with our honorary colleagues, and we have tried to make clear that our stance has always been that we are policing the virus as opposed to policing Islanders. The vast majority of which I think everybody accepts and even the information and the data that has come out from the modelling that Islanders absolutely understood the importance of some form of isolation, et cetera. However, there have been those individuals over time that, if I am being probably brutally honest, would probably have been arrested had there not been any form of lockdown, some of them in particular. As you may have seen, the first few went before the Magistrate and were fined some significant amounts of money in the region of around £500.

[16:00]

Some of those that have been arrested have not gone to court where there is not necessarily the evidence to support what we have tried to do. But what is important is that everyone that has been arrested has previously been warned 3 times. I have even heard it myself, listening to the police radio, that they will check on our database to see whether a certain individual has already been given words of advice. In fact, I have got the information here. Since the period of stay at home we have given words of advice to 1,513 people. The vast majority of those, Deputy, have listened very carefully and adhered to the advice. A very small number, I would suggest, with the numbers of arrests but as we may move on to enforcing the restrictions now, the regulations now, is becoming more and more tricky as we ease out of lockdown. There is a, if you like, to use a phrase, a growing minority of those that are not listening particularly to the social distancing regulations and requirements coming out of Ministers and indeed from doctors.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

1,500 of words of advice down to 22 arrests. Specifically, this is a bit tactical but of those £500 fines how many have been fined and how many have just been warned after arrest?

Chief of Police:

I have not got all of that information to hand but I can certainly get it for you probably fairly quickly, but I can give you a breakdown of each of those 20.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

It is not that important. It is more out of interest really. How many reports are the police receiving on a daily basis in relation to potential breaches? So how many phone calls are coming in, et cetera, to the police of concerned citizens?

Chief of Police:

As of this weekend we had 23 calls that were described as COVID-related, 24 alcohol-related, but the issue here of course is as we have eased out of lockdown we have also now reached ambient levels of crime and demand. So where as you have seen in some of the information I previously provided, frankly crime and assaults effectively fell off a cliff. Crime was down at one stage approaching 60 per cent at the height of the lockdown period compared to the same period last year. But what we are seeing now is not only COVID-related incidents, and predominantly they are concerned members of the public who are contacting the police to advise us of concerns largely, I have to say, with groups of people on beaches and in parks. But we are also dealing with what you would call normal business or what I might describe as normal policing business, some of which is young people, some of which is mental health, some of which is crime, et cetera.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

You said 60 per cent - which is a very interesting stat at the outset - do you see that as we are easing out that that is increasing? What I am aiming at is there becoming a degree of - I do not want to put words or ideas - a bit more apathy towards these restrictions?

Chief of Police:

I think it is a really good question. What was approaching a 60 per cent reduction in reported crime, certainly during the height of the lockdown, that has steadily increased as correspondingly the Government have gone through the stages and the lockdown has been eased. For example, in May, just as we come towards the end of May, reported crime is probably at the end of May going to be on a similar maybe just under crime reported in 2019. So it has steadily gone up and I would think if there was a graph, the graph will show as we have eased lockdown crime and reported incidents have gone up as well as people have come out. I think that that was entirely predictable. I do think though that there is a view, you may have heard me say this before, that the regulations have been eased but they have not been ended. I think we should all be very cautious about thinking that they have been ended, which is some of the reasons why we have taken some enforcement

action over the last couple of weekends, which you may have seen, largely, almost exclusively, around social distancing.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

You said the 60 per cent has gone after some parity as we approach the end of May. Do you see that graph extending in its route or do you see it flattening to be back to the norm?

Chief of Police:

Another really good question. We always see increased crime, certainly from looking at projected figures, which we look at quite regularly in terms of our performance meetings. Crime will increase into the summer months for reasons that people will understand. We will see decreases in pubs and clubs but, as the Minister neatly described, the night-time economy has changed. So we still have a night-time economy but probably more importantly it is an unregulated night-time economy. In pubs and clubs there is a degree of regulation, the licensee's and the staff will stop serving drink to people when they have had enough. What we are now seeing is people buying alcohol and then going to, whether it is in their homes or more specifically, as you may have seen in the media, they are going to the wonderful beaches and consuming alcohol in groups there. So the night economy has shifted. To answer your question specifically though, I see reported crime going back to what I would describe as the ambient levels. As we move into June I expect the levels of crime to be identical, if not slightly more in June, because we could see some reporting from, as I have already mentioned, historical reporting. But effectively while we are at 6 hours that really has just not changed crime. Crime is now back. Crime and incidents are back to its original levels.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Do you see a trend perhaps of the change of the way people enjoy themselves whereby we all know it is very expensive to drink in the nightclubs and bars of Jersey? People are now buying off-licence alcohol, which by definition is going to be considerably cheaper, and enjoying that on the beaches. Do you see a bit of a migration in that direction which could change the way you have to police?

Chief of Police:

Again, I think we need to be alert in all kinds of different crimes and incidents how we might see what you described as a migration or a change in people's behaviour and activity as a result of the virus. It is something that we need to be alive to so my team have just finished the first draft of a crime prevention strategy, which is looking through the lens of COVID-19 to say what has changed and what is different. It is also to look ahead to see whether there might be some strategic and tactical advantages we might have as a result of this. Do we want to go back to the night-time economy where lots of police officers would be out and about on particularly a Friday and Saturday night effectively patrolling pubs and clubs? Is there a better way of doing that? I do think the majority

though, to answer your question specifically, will go back to the pubs just because of that social interaction when of course that is safe to do so. But I dare say the legacy will be there will be drinking as well on our beaches.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Just a quickie on the words of advice that have been given out, and I cannot remember the number, it was over 1,000, I think. Do you have a breakdown of those? I am particularly interested in how many of those were given to children.

Chief of Police:

We might have a breakdown in children because when we have an interaction with children we fill in a particular form just because we have spoken to a young person. So we might be able to find that information. In terms of a wider breakdown, I think that is unlikely in terms of age or ethnicity, et cetera. I think it is likely we have got that information. That of course is over the period of the lockdown including ourselves and our Honorary Police colleagues.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Thank you. If that could be passed to the panel, if that is available please. Just to go back to the enforcement policy that the police stated of engage, explain, encourage, enforce; is that still the policy and how is that working with children as opposed to adults? Are children complying at the early stages?

Chief of Police:

That policy is still in force and I think it is as valued now and as important now as it was when we first introduced it a good number of weeks ago now. I think the step up is understood and the escalation is good to the extent that we very rarely have to get to the enforcement stage, if you like, and I think that that is testimony to some really good policing and a good use of discretion as well. In terms of young people, I would say certainly in the last few weeks most of our interactions are with young people, particularly on the beaches and in the parks. I will not say exclusively. But I would say a large proportion does involve young people. Just before this meeting I was looking at some C.C.T.V. (closed circuit television) footage and indeed some body worn video from police officers. It is almost exclusively young people and they would, would they not, of course go to the beaches and enjoy this beautiful Island. The problem is of course when they do not social distance.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Young people, is this under 18 or are we talking about that next gap of young people, say 22, 23?

Chief of Police:

I would say some of them are under 18, maybe as young as 14, 15. Then moving up maybe into the early to mid-20s for some of the sort of barbeque type events that we are seeing. It is not very scientific but that is more or less what I am seeing.

The Deputy of St. John:

I have got a question because what we are talking about here is statistics. We are having to ask the question in raw form rather than having some evidence presented to us. Your colleagues in the social services are producing for us on a weekly basis a dashboard which tells us what issues have been occurring within the social services over that period of time. I wondered if this might be something that you could collaborate with them on in terms of producing statistics that we could see on a regular basis that would not necessitate necessarily a public hearing. It might inform a public hearing but would give us an almost real-time idea of what is happening out there in the Island. After all, we eventually are going to have to take the decisions about how we will respond to what is happening out there in the Island.

Chief of Police:

We have got a lot of management information which we could legitimately share. Since the very first day when the regulations came in we have recorded every interaction, every vehicle that has been stopped. As I have already mentioned, every premises that we have been to so we can happily provide any of that information.

The Deputy of St. John:

That is why I suggest the idea because I have knowledge of the fact that the police, like the Army and other uniformed organisations, capture information and keep it to themselves generally. Could we perhaps have some of this information regularly transmitted to us in draft form, in data form, in whatever form is thought to be most helpful.

Chief of Police:

Very happy to do that. We can talk about what elements of the information you would like. I am sure we can cut it anyway you like and provide some form of dashboard, which would help inform the panel.

The Deputy of St. John:

Great. A question for the Minister here, and you may wish to pass it on. In relation to the draft law that we are going to be debating very shortly about social distancing, how are you going to manage that from an enforcement point of view?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

That is a very interesting one because the way I see it, and Robin Smith will no doubt comment as well, is it is changing the dynamics considerably because if that is approved tomorrow, in fact we are going to be debating it ...

The Deputy of St. John:

So soon.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I believe so. Then it will no longer be illegal to enter somebody else's property, somebody else's house. It will no longer be illegal to stay out for longer than 6 hours.

[16:15]

It will only be illegal not to physical distance if you are requested to do so by a police officer and then refused to do so. So the dynamics are going to change but the policing currently will be exactly the same as it is now. The only sanction the police will have will be to arrest someone who refuses to physical distance, hold them in a police cell, call down a Centenier to make the charge and the Centenier will then have to make the decision whether to send that person to court or to a Parish Hall Inquiry.

The Deputy of St. John:

That is interesting because that is your spin on the idea but it would seem the Minister for Health and Social Services has a completely different idea and is suggesting that tickets to instructing an individual to attend a Parish Hall Inquiry would be an appropriate way forward and that they would, at the Parish Hall Inquiry, be given an opportunity to explain themselves and a range of fines up to £200 would be available to the Centenier to levy, if necessary.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I thought that is what I said, the Centenier would decide when he makes the charge whether to refer to a Parish Hall Inquiry or to court. If it goes to a Parish Hall Inquiry the alleged perpetrator would have the opportunity of agreeing that he was in the wrong and accepting a fine from the Centenier or the Centenier might just give words of advice or a caution, or if he does not accept the ruling of the Centenier it would then go on to court. One of the problems is, at the moment, of course there are no Parish Hall Inquiries. They are not expected to restart probably until September so there would be a difficulty there. But the Centenier would have the ... if the law was passed as amended tomorrow, the Centenier would have the choice of Parish Hall Inquiry or court.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Could I just let Louise finish her question and we will probably come back to that topic anyway? Do you want to just jump in quickly, Louise, because I know you have to leave?

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Yes, I was questioning the Chief on the “engage, explain, encourage, enforce”, just to clarify “words of advice” where does that sit on those 4 levels. Is that explain or encourage?

Chief of Police:

You know, it probably is all of the first 3 to be fair. It is all about trying to persuade people not to do whatever they are doing against the restrictions. So I would say all 3 and by the time we have done all 3, well we are at 4 and then persuasion has gone by.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

You said that the words of advice that you had given in the majority were to young people and children. Does that have any permanent record when you have given words of advice?

Chief of Police:

We certainly make a record of when we have given words of advice, we do not always necessarily ... I would have to just check on this whether we take names, dates of birth and all the rest of it but we have certainly got a record of every time we have had an interaction, both ourselves and our Honorary Police colleagues. The reason why I asked for that to be done was particularly for this sort of scrutiny so that we can say what we have done during the period of the regulations, justify what we have done in a completely open and transparent way so that we can justify that to you. I will have a look at the additional levels of detail we have around the words of advice. One thing is true, though, that the majority do listen to the words of advice. But I think that this is going to become more and more tricky as we go into the summer months, the words of advice may not cut it.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Thank you for that explanation. So the words of advice would not necessarily ... if a young person received those words of advice that would not impact on their future life opportunities in any way?

Chief of Police:

Absolutely not.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Just on the final level, the enforce level, have any children - I mean under-18s - have you had to go to that level with any under-18s?

Chief of Police:

I am just going to check through my numbers so I give you exactly the right answer. I believe there are some under-18s that have been arrested but I just need to check to be absolutely right.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

If that is not readily available now then perhaps it could be forwarded to the panel.

Chief of Police:

Yes, of course. It is a small number but I do not want to say yes or no until I am absolutely certain.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, if that could be forwarded because I am conscious of time and we need to move on. Deputy Huelin, have you got much more on this topic to cover?

The Deputy of St. Peter:

One of things we were going to talk about is ensuring these measures are being enforced consistently across the board. What are the police doing to ensure that?

Chief of Police:

Of course discretion is everything but very, very early in the laws the police set up what we described as a gold group, members may be familiar with that, and in that gold group were a number of my senior team but also Danny Scaife to represent our Honorary Police colleagues. Why we saw that was important is that there is a consistency in the way we deliver the 4 Es throughout the period of the stay at home order, otherwise known as lockdown. That is how we policed that over the last few weeks. For example, you may recall that it coincided with the first Easter break and I know we were all nervous about what the first Easter break might bring and it turned out to be very good, despite the fact the weather was very good. A lot more cars were stopped in the first few days because what we were trying to do was help Islanders adjust, set the new battle with them, adjust behaviour in a sensitive way and we did that very closely with our Honorary Police colleagues. In fact they did the lion share of the car stops and the advice that was given, for which I am enormously grateful. We work very closely together to try and provide a consistency of message to help and support Islanders.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Can you share with us what advice was given in the first instance to anybody that needs challenging, shall we say, for breaching lockdown?

Chief of Police:

It is not particularly scripted, it does not go to that particular level, because we just adopted the 4 Es and indeed in the first few days, indeed on the first day I was out with some colleagues stopping members of the public, and the vast majority were there prepared, they knew the regulations. I cannot deny that some looked a bit embarrassed and I think that that is where we have had ... you know, the social conscience, the public conscience of this is where I think the greatest success has been had. People know when they are slightly breaking the rules. You may recall that, of course, we could go shopping and there were a couple of times where I stopped a member of the public and the first thing they did was pull out a shopping bag as if it was, if you like, a passport to travel. We sort of smiled at each other and I said: "Well, if we are going shopping then that is one thing." It is not scripted but we look to explain and engage and, largely speaking, the vast majority have listened to it.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, we seem to have lost Deputy Huelin so that means for the moment we are not ... sorry, Deputy Pointon. Andy, I think we will need pause.

Scrutiny Officer:

I cannot pause the ... I might just have to check one thing, one second.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We will just see if we can get Deputy Pointon back. Bit of a technical issue here.

Scrutiny Officer:

Unfortunately I cannot end the ... there is no pause button, if I press end that is it, it is ended.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can you contact Deputy Pointon and see whether ...

Scrutiny Officer:

I will see if I can invite him again.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

What are the ramifications of continuing?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We need to be quorate for the public record. We have quite a few questions to go so ... I think the fact that we go ...

The Deputy of St. Peter:

I think it is important to the Island, so that is why we have been spending a lot of time on it.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think the issue is going to be technical ... we have been relatively successful so far in getting everybody connected in and it just so happens at this time we have got a bit of a technical issue elsewhere. Can I ask you to bear with for one moment?

Scrutiny Officer:

I am just trying to invite Deputy Pointon back in, just so you are aware. It is coming up saying no response from Deputy Pointon, so I assume he is having some form of technical difficulty. Generally speaking, the procedural advice that I would be giving at this point, if this was a physical public hearing in Le Capelain or Blampied Room, would be that panel could not continue because it is inquorate. I think given the circumstances and that it is obviously a technical issue here and it may be possible to get Deputy Pointon back in the not too distant future ... I will continue trying to contact him, I think ultimately it is a decision for the panel and Minister to decide whether or not the Minister is comfortable to continue the hearing given the circumstances.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think this is the situation we had before when somebody was not very well. Can I ask the Minister, are you happy to continue just with the 2 of us?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Very happy, Chair.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Then, in that case, I think we would be happy to continue as well because this is on the public record and we have shared questions and so on so we can cover other people's questions. Okay, Deputy Huelin, do you want to continue quickly?

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Consistency of advice. One thing, for the draft regulations to be debated tomorrow, how are you going to ensure that I think it is up to level 1 fines are going to be again consistently administered? What advice would you be giving to the Centeniers and the Honorary Police?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

It is not a matter for the police to give fines. The only people who can give a fine is the court or the Centenier at a Parish Hall Inquiry with the agreement of the alleged offender. The police cannot issue fines.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Sorry, I did not say that very well. I remember my days as an Honorary you could ... say for a speeding offence, there is a guide, a chart that is clearly laid out that you charge a fine at an amount over and above the speeding offence and the Centeniers knew those guidelines. So the question is what guidelines will be given to the Centeniers to ensure there is consistency of fines for any of these breaches of regulation?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Normally in these situations the Attorney General gives a general guidance to the Centeniers so there is consistency throughout the Parishes and indeed the Centeniers within the Parishes. But nevertheless the Centeniers do have the discretion to amend those recommendations depending on the type of offence, the severity of the offence that might be before the Centenier and the Centenier could refuse to take jurisdiction and refer it to the Magistrate's Court in any event. So, yes, there would be guidance, as there is with other offences, but the Centenier retains discretion. As you know, at a Parish Hall Inquiry if the alleged offender does not accept the decision of the Centenier they can have it arbitrated by the Magistrate's Court anyway.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Are you happy with the ... sorry, is that Trevor back again?

The Deputy of St. John:

Yes, but I am not happy, it is not charging.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

While you are back shall we go forward to your next section? Sorry, Chair, to make that suggestion.

The Deputy of St. John:

I am not able to do that because I am having to keep my finger on the ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay, I will tell you what, we will carry on, Trevor, whether you are here or not, we have agreed with the Minister that we can continue with just the 2 of us. So we will crack on with the questions.

The Deputy of St. John:

Fair enough, if I resolve this problem I will let you know and I will come back in.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is brilliant. It was about the Minister's assessment of how the lockdown is being observed, I believe that you were talking about. How would you assess that, Minister? Your assessment effectively of how the lockdown has been observed in general.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

In general, I think, and my view is backed up by the police and certainly by the Honorary Police, the vast majority of people have responded extremely well and positively to the stay at home rules and regulations.

[16:30]

There is not any question about that. There have been some obvious examples of people who have not, some quite high profile ones, and those have been dealt with as best as possible by the States Police and the Honorary Police. But, in the main, the vast majority of people have responded extremely well and that is proven by what has happened with a number of cases. If you go back to the end of March, if we had not done the things we have done, and we were projecting quite a significant number of people with the virus, a huge number of people off work, the policy of the Government and the reaction of the population has put us in a very good place now.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Do you think there could be any improvements to the tone and frequency of these communications as we learn, as we are going along in these extraordinary circumstances?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I am not quite sure what you mean about that but certainly the information put out on social media, the traditional media, by the press conferences of the Chief Minister and his colleagues have put a tremendous amount of information out there and the population have reacted very positively to it.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

I think the vast majority have, I think that is a given absolutely. What is your advice to members of the public when they observe breaches in light of this ever-changing advice?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I think it is the same advice as we gave at the very beginning. If you are noticing certain situations of not observing physical distancing and so on, do send a message to the notisolating.gov.je email

address and that will give you information. If it is an emergency situation, in an emergency situation ring 999 or if it is between the 2, ring the police on 612612. Do not use the emergency lines, 999, and block that up for anything that is not an emergency because that can cause problems not just to the police but to the fire and ambulance services as well. That is very, very important.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Before moving on to the next point, I will put it on record that Islanders have behaved absolutely fantastically during this and we are dealing very much with a very small minority that we need to reach out and ensure that they play their part in getting over this pandemic and crisis. Thank you. Over to you, Rob.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I will ask some of the questions that Deputy Pointon was going to ask about drugs and alcohol policy and situations. Have the police seen an increase in drug and alcohol-related offences in the home as a result of lockdown? There have been some interesting reports from the U.K. (United Kingdom), for example. Is that reflected in Jersey?

Chief of Police:

The answer to that is no. Getting a sense of some of the issues and concerns that the panel would want to ask, we have seen no notable increase in the number of drug and alcohol-related offences during lockdown. I guess I think I would have probably expected to see a greater increase from an alcohol point of view and maybe less from a drug's point of view. I am willing to put my neck on the line here and say drug importation may have dropped quite significantly since the lockdown period. No startling information there for any of our journalists listening, I guess. We have done a number of drugs warrants in the last week or 2 to use some of the intelligence that we have had before but, no, the answer to that question is we have not seen a significant increase.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

In terms of those who are addicts who may have continually found themselves in breach of lockdown requirements, have you had conversations with Public Health with regards that and what sort of support has been offered to those people so that they can stay safe?

Chief of Police:

Certainly during the lockdown period our drug and alcohol referrals; we continued to do that through our custody centre via our engagement officers to advise those agencies that can provide support and assistance to our drug addicts. I cannot say that we have seen a notable increase in that either.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is there an increased sensitivity perhaps when dealing with those who are known addicts on the Island in the current circumstances? I do not know whether this is the right wording; is this an opportunity to perhaps engage more given perhaps the difficulty in obtaining if there are less drugs imported? It might be an opportunity to break a cycle every so often. Can you see that happening?

Chief of Police:

Absolutely I can and I think it is ... having been in the police service 30 years, while drug enforcement absolutely is vital, is an important tactic, the long-term health issues are the ones where you can make the real significant differences. This is an addiction and illness which, as a result, as Members will know, leads to crime. That is where I get involved. So, yes, I do think there is an opportunity to break the cycle, maybe, hopefully, a once in a lifetime opportunity to break a cycle because it would have disrupted routine behaviour whether you were a drug addict or otherwise.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

It might be worth mentioning, as Rob intimated there, the traditional route of importing drugs by air or by sea have virtually disappeared so our colleagues at Customs and Immigration have found an increase through Jersey Post. They have intercepted a lot more than they would do in that area. I am not sure if Julian wanted to say something on this.

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

Thank you, Minister. Just in relation to the question from a public harm point of view, not on the enforcement element, that is Robin's job. I think I mentioned previously, Chair, that I have been chairing a meeting with mental health colleagues and other agencies, drug and alcohol as well, to understand and share information as to how those agencies are adapting and working in this current environment due to COVID. Certainly the drug and alcohol services are suggesting that they have seen an increase of about 20 per cent in terms of consumption, particularly from an alcohol point of view. Obviously a lot of their services are now online, as indeed is mental health, so they are ringing people and having online conversations through the use of technology as opposed to face-to-face meetings. So they are adapting to the current environment. But I think the understanding is they are seeing much more drinking within the home because obviously the opportunity outside has been much restricted. So that is quite a challenge and then obviously there are people who are not known to the services or are new to services, an identified increase.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is the sensitivity I was talking about in dealing with people and their backgrounds, for example. I think it is one of the concerns behind the social distancing regulations. I am conscious of time and getting on to some very important topics as well - not that the ones we have covered are not. If I can move on to P.P.E. (personal protective equipment) and testing, which I think will be hugely

important to a lot of people on the Island. What P.P.E. is being provided to police and other enforcement services - and I will come on to ask about the ambulance service as well - when undertaking their roles?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

This is something, obviously, I have been very interested in from day one and I have kept a regular check with the heads of services, police, customs, prison, ambulance, fire. All the heads of services report to me that the levels of personal protection equipment that they have is adequate for their requirements. Peter and Robin can speak for themselves but my understanding is that they have no complaints about the level of equipment they have been provided with. Peter and Robin can speak for themselves on that.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Do you want to add anything to that?

Chief Ambulance Officer:

Certainly. I can say that we have had the same levels of P.P.E. as issued to all colleagues in health. Level 2 P.P.E., which is a slightly lower level that is used for the majority of jobs, and level 3 P.P.E., which is a higher level of mask. We let the staff carry out a dynamic risk assessment that allows them to decide if the higher level of P.P.E. is required for any of the particular jobs they are doing. Particular jobs that have close work with respiratory efforts such as resuscitation would require level 3 P.P.E. We have sufficient stocks of all of that.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is there a suitable mechanism, if you have any concerns, that you can raise rapidly? Because obviously situations, I would imagine, could change rapidly as well, particularly within the ambulance service. Within the police service as well obviously.

Chief Ambulance Officer:

Yes, we have regularly updated the advice and guidance as it has been updated to us. We have a P.P.E. cell that is working within Health and Community Services that we are in regular contact with that reviews national guidance, local guidance and therefore we can report any concerns through there. There is an emergency stock also that we can access if required, and there is a central organisation in Government now for supplying the P.P.E. to us regularly as we require it.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Before I go to Rowland, can I just get in there about who controls that strategy then? The overall strategy of P.P.E. within the police, ambulance now. Is that a clear line of sight as to the person making that overall decision?

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

The current demand profiling and distribution, purchasing of P.P.E., as Pete Gavey mentioned, is co-ordinated centrally through the P.P.E. cell. I have oversight of that on behalf of Government. We have very good stocks of P.P.E. across the board currently. Those stock levels and the demand levels are published to Ministers twice weekly at the moment, either at the competent authorities meeting or the Emergencies Council, so Ministers have ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I just interrupt? When you say you have oversight, does oversight mean responsibility, i.e. the final word, or is oversight a collective among that cell, as you called it, which would then have a collective discussed response to the need?

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes, I am responsible for the co-ordination of P.P.E. across government. I have been asked to do that. Then there is the cell that is set up, which has got a number of different people in it from a procurement point of view, from a clinical point of view, from a logistical and distribution point of view. Everybody accesses that cell, requests are put in and stock is delivered appropriately.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That cell would advise and you would make the final decision overall?

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay. Rowland, did you have a question?

The Deputy of St. Peter:

It is a bit tactical really. Should the ambulance teams be wearing P.P.E. at all times? What is their guideline as to when they do and they may not have to wear it?

Chief Ambulance Officer:

The guidance comes out centrally, as we have just mentioned. It comes from the P.P.E. co-ordination group and the P.P.E. that they are wearing is required when they attend a job with a

patient. All other times social distancing is important and therefore is important to our crews to keep apart. Where they are in contact in the front of vehicles for any time then they have surgical masks to wear. So they are provided with all the equipment they need when they need it.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

So they are wearing it at all times when they are in the front or with potential patients?

Chief Ambulance Officer:

When they are in contact with patients, yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

How is the priority for emergency workers decided upon? It is clear that ambulance staff have P.P.E., either level 2 or level 3, which they can access quite successfully - I think is what you were saying - that is same for the police? So if they are attending an arrest they would have the appropriate P.P.E. that they need? I recognise that would be a very difficult situation.

Chief of Police:

To add to that, it is worthwhile just remembering where we came from and where we have got to. You imagine certainly in the U.K. P.P.E. became a highly political issue and a big concern. To share both Julian and Pete's view, we have access to all the P.P.E. that we need. Yes, it was difficult in the first few weeks because there were concerns but then large orders arrived. The difference with policing, as may occasionally be different with the ambulance services, is sometimes we are going through a door where the public do not want us.

[16:45]

They do not want us to be there. That exposes officers to greater risk, for reasons you will understand. We have adopted the guidance from the National Police Chiefs Council, which is underpinned by Public Health England, where it provides very useful guidance around different scenarios whether we will use particular equipment. But there is the obvious example, of course, that sometimes we have to lay hands on people who do not want us to put our hands on them. That provides greater risk for officers and I do not think, short of a full suit, there is ever going to be anything that I can do to absolutely completely protect them, which is the reason we want to avoid those arrests unless we absolutely have to.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That leads us on to testing of employees.

The Deputy of St. John:

Chair, my battery indicator tells me there is some charge in the battery now. Can I go back to Peter ... hello, Peter, we have not said hello for a long time. Would you be able to explain to the public what the various levels of P.P.E. are?

Chief Ambulance Officer:

Certainly. Level 2 P.P.E. is a plastic apron, surgical mask, gloves - examination gloves that they would wear routinely - and then the availability of a visor based on a risk assessment by the crews. When we say level 3 P.P.E. we are talking about for any procedures that produce aerosols and for those sort of procedures, level 3 is then moved up to a surgical gown or what we call a tie back suit and a FFP3 mask, which is a high-level mask, to prevent those aerosols being breathed in.

The Deputy of St. John:

So that is the extent of your protection, and of course protection to the patient as well. How does that translate into the police force, because we are talking about surgical gowns and so on and so forth? If you are involved in an incident on the street, you are called to an incident on the street, how do you then gear up to the potential for a high aerosol contact with the general public?

Chief of Police:

It is one of those areas that has caused a good deal of discussion over the last few months for the reasons that I just described. Often when the police service turn up and the ambulance service turn up, they are welcomed with open arms and, of course, there is the example, which is a really good one and a very practical one, it is not always the case. All of our officers have access to the disposable gloves, disposable aprons, goggles, the various solutions that can be used to disinfect hands, et cetera. There is a simple practicality to some of this, that even if one of Pete's staff ended ... which would not necessarily be unusual when dealing with a patient in crisis, there is the inevitability that people could get exposed because of a confrontational situation. We understand that, we accept that but we provide as much of the protective equipment as we possibly can, as has been described by Pete.

The Deputy of St. John:

Thank you.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

There were just a couple more things, these are your questions, Deputy Pointon ... no, they are not, they are my ones. How many staff across the emergency services have been signed off due to COVID-19 matters, illness or caring for loved ones, et cetera?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

It has been relatively small. I think there have been 2 or 3 at the ambulance station. One at fire, 2 at police and I do not think any at prison or customs and immigration. To the best of knowledge, and Peter and Robin will talk about their own staff, all have now recovered. There might be one or 2 still self-isolating. There were 3 or 4 officers in ambulance and in police who tested positive, self-isolated and recovered and are now back at work.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just to talk about testing, there is a testing regime for essential workers, are you gaining access to that? Are you finding that useful and what is your timescale for testing your staff, how you will be using that?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

It is something I have pushed very hard for and now the P.C.R. (Polymerase Chain Reaction) testing has started for front line staff, which includes ambulance and police but also fire, customs and immigration and prison. I believe that has just started. We are - and I am sure Peter and Robin will confirm - encouraging our staff, it is a voluntary thing obviously, to take advantage of this facility.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is P.C.R. testing, is it?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

That is P.C.R. testing for the emergency front line services.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I would be interested from Peter and Robin whether that is working for you?

Chief Ambulance Officer:

As the Minister mentioned, it is fairly new, just started. The P.C.R. testing has been offered out on a voluntary basis to all staff. If they test positive to that then they would be immediately into isolation. There is also serology testing, which is the antibody testing that is also being rolled out to various areas and available to staff as well at the same time.

Chief of Police:

From a policing point of view, and you may wish to invite Julian in because it has been his team that have done a lot of this organising. Exactly the same as Peter, we have also been very keen to get testing done for our officers who we think have been exposed. For example, I was briefing the Minister earlier on an incident that happened over the weekend for which we would seek to get an

officer tested very, very quickly. I went to get a P.C.R. test on Sunday morning and it was very effective, very efficient, they knew I was coming, I was there probably less than 3 or 4 minutes, had the test done and left. That was at the one at the airport. Chair, Julian may wish to share a view about some of the organising he has done.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am conscious of time and we have some more questions. Can I just ask the key question: what is the turnaround time for those P.C.R. tests? Are they 24-hour tests?

Chief of Police:

I think it is 48 hours.

Chief Ambulance Officer:

They are coming back, though, fairly quickly. I had one myself some time ago and they were turned around within about 6 to 8 hours.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

They are being done on-Island, are they?

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

There is a mixture. Some have been done on-Island and some have been sent away just because of numbers.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

There is testing that has taken place for basically all government employees who have interaction with the public, and that is taking place at Les Quennevais Sports Centre and Springfield, for the sake of argument. Which testing are we talking about for your front line officers. Is it that test or is it the other P.C.R. test which is laboratory-based?

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

If I can help maybe. The priority that was pushed very strongly by the Minister was to get all the front line services, particularly emergency services, tested for P.C.R., the swab test that the chief of police and the chief ambulance officer just referred to. So that is now available for all those staff. Very similar to that, last week we announced the antibody test, the serology test as well, to those people who qualify, which is anybody who has worked away from the home for 5 days since the stay at home order. That also includes emergency services as well. The priority was to get the P.C.R. done, as you know, Deputy, that indicates whether somebody has COVID-19 now but I think what we will find is both those tests have been utilised by the emergency services.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

The P.C.R. test, the swab test, which I am familiar with, which is laboratory-based, if you take the pinprick test that is taken at Les Quennevais and Springfield, that also initially has a test whether you have COVID or not at that time, it then goes on to look at whether you have any antibodies to it.

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

It gives you 2 results, does it not, I.g.G. (Immunoglobulin G) and I.g.M. (Immunoglobulin M)? If you are the latter one, it does not give you 100 per cent. It says you may have COVID, you then have to have a P.C.R. test and self-isolate.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

That is what I am coming to, is to make sure that it is the swab test that the front line officers are having not the 3-letter acronym that you have at Springfield and Les Quennevais that public servants are being invited to have. It is clear to me but I am just not sure it is clear to the outside world.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We will move forward. We have some questions on the target operating model but we will put those in writing as we will focus on questions around COVID. In general, one of the questions we wanted to ask is how many prisoners have been released on licence during this outbreak to create capacity and social distancing to be allowed in prisons? Do you have number for that?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes, none. The change in the prison rules was to enable release on licence if it became necessary. So far the prison is COVID-free and therefore there is no need to use that provision. I have to say we are grateful to prison management and staff for keeping it that way and reacting very quickly when COVID arrived by stopping visitors, introducing video links for the courts and indeed to replace visitors. At this moment in time the answer is none but the facility is there should the worst happen.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is reassuring. Are you due to bring forward any additional emergency legislation for the COVID-19 crisis given that we seem to be moving away from lockdown a little and, with any luck, touch wood, we will not see a second wave, which I am sure we all hope we do not have to go through that? Any other emergency legislation that we might need to know about that is in the pipeline?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

There are 2 things. I do not know if you could call it emergency but it does need to be done, but it is phase 2 of the Marriage and Civil Status (Jersey) Law and Civil Partnership (Jersey) Law, the change of rules about how those marriages can take place from 1st July to incorporate physical distancing and so on. I will be bringing forward something on that fairly shortly. The other thing, we are still in discussions with the police, Council of Ministers and appropriate officers about fixed penalty notices because, as mentioned here before, the only sanction that we have if there is a suggestion of a break in social distancing or the other rules, the only sanction we have is to arrest, put in a police cell, bring in a Centenier to charge and then go to court or Parish Hall Inquiry when they eventually come about. I still believe the sanction of a fixed penalty notice will give the opportunity for a perpetrator to discharge their liability for an offence without having to go to court or Parish Hall Inquiry. That is something which is still under discussion. We did provide you with a draft of the law but we still need to move that on.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think there will be further discussion on that. I am conscious we are coming to the end of time. Rowland, do you want to ask a quick question and then Trevor has one.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

We adopted the Unlawful Public Entertainments legislation in March and we made a recommendation that that should be time limited, like most other regulations, to terminate on 30th September. Minister, you were going to bring an amendment to that effect. Where are you on that?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Sorry, I missed the beginning of that one, Deputy?

The Deputy of St. Peter:

The Unlawful Public Entertainments legislation in March we adopted and the recommendation from our panel was that that would be time stamped, i.e. terminate on 30th September, which is in line with virtually every other emergency legislation that we have passed through the Assembly. Our recollection was you were bringing an amendment to that effect and we were wondering where that is, where you are with that process?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Thank you for reminding me about that one, Deputy. I shall have to check that one out.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Thank you for that commitment.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is why I wanted to get that question in. Thank you very much. Trevor, do you want to ask a quick question?

[17:00]

The Deputy of St. John:

It is very quick. We are going back to this business of the debate we are going to have tomorrow about a proposition to introduce a Centenier-led prosecution in that law. If adopted, would that law negate the need for a fixed penalty notice?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

No, not in my view, Deputy, because the same process would need to be followed whether the Parish Hall Inquiry facility is there or not. The police will still have to arrest. The police would still have to keep in the police cells, the Centenier would still have to go to the police station to make the charge, the Centenier would then need to make a decision, as I mentioned before, whether to refer to a Parish Hall Inquiry, which would mean waiting until September at the current time, or to go to court.

The Deputy of St. John:

Can I introduce the idea that police would have the facility of issuing a notice to an individual to attend a Parish Hall Inquiry, which they should be able to do given the relaxation of the current association laws? The association advice says that up to 5 people currently are able to get together. Why would that not apply in a Parish Hall?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Because you still have to keep 1 metre apart from anybody else.

The Deputy of St. John:

I think 2 metres.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I beg your pardon, 2 metres.

The Deputy of St. John:

Surely most of the Parish Halls have a very large auditorium in which they would be able to achieve those distances?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Indeed, that might be physically practical in some areas. At the present time the advice from the Attorney General was there would be no Parish Hall Inquiries until September. That may well change. I welcome the Minister for Health and Social Services bringing this in but, of course, we still have the other laws as well, the workplace law and the construction law which does not have that facility.

The Deputy of St. John:

I have to say, without discussing this in detail as we are short of time, that some of the proposals coming forward seem to be entirely contradictory. I will not go into that at present but they do seem to be and we have had long discussions today about those contradictions.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Sorry, are you talking about the law being proposed tomorrow?

The Deputy of St. John:

That and others coming forward perhaps on 2nd June. The civil marriage and the limitations on gatherings and so on and so forth. There are a lot of contradictions in this new legislation coming forward.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I am sure you will bring that to our attention.

The Deputy of St. John:

I am sure.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think I would finish off by saying that there certainly needs to be an awareness of different Ministers having pieces of legislation that overlap. It is certainly an issue that we have faced in Scrutiny and sometimes it has been difficult because they do overlap and we need to be aware of that. Can I finish with one question, because I know we are out of time for the Minister? Given the outstanding work that has been done by our services - police, ambulance, fire, all of those public services - I take it that the Minister will be encouraging a decent pay rise this year. Will you be pushing for that?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

You know, Deputy, that really is a matter for the representatives of the services and the States Employment Board. You could not expect me to possibly comment on such a suggestion.

The Deputy of St. John:

Minister, we are in unusual times, we should be taking unusual steps.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Can I say to you, Chair, and your colleagues, that I have nothing but the highest respect and highest regard for all of our front lines services? They have done a terrific job, particularly the 2 guys who are with us today, leading their services in very difficult circumstances and they have come up trumps. I have the highest regard and respect for them and their staff.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We absolutely share that regard.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I am sure you do.

The Deputy of St. John:

We do, absolutely.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Unless there is anything else that anyone wants to ask or if you have any questions for the panel, then we have run over a little but we had a few technical gremlins, which we have solved, I think quite calmly. We kept calm and we carried on. I will call the hearing to an end and say thank you very much for your time and, again, thank you to all those services that are keeping us safe. Thank you very much.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Thank you, Chair.

[17:05]