

2024.10.01

3.8 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Chief Minister regarding curbing public sector growth (OQ.187/2024):

Will the Chief Minister advise what further plans, if any, he has to curb public sector growth beyond the current Civil Service Grade 11 and above recruitment freeze?

Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter (The Chief Minister):

May Deputy Ferey take this question in his role as Vice-Chair of the States Employment Board?

Deputy M.R. Ferey of St. Saviour (Vice-Chair, States Employment Board - rapporteur):

The short answer is there are currently no plans to extend the recruitment freeze to further grades.

3.8.1 Deputy M.B. Andrews:

There has been much attention about head count and payroll expenditure reduction; however, what actions is the Chief Minister taking, alongside the Council of Ministers, to reduce non-payroll expenditure?

Deputy M.R. Ferey:

As well as the £15 million payroll savings for grades of 11 and above, there is also looking at not relying on consultants, as has been the case in the past. Also, we currently have 1,000 vacancies that have been removed from the system. This allows us to report more effectively on actual vacancies across departments and get a clearer picture of where our workforce is.

3.8.2 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

As we heard that it was confirmed there is no freeze on recruitment for grade 11 and under, would the Assistant Chief Minister clarify if it includes people who are retiring, taking redundancies or being promoted from the front line from grade 11 and under to grade 11 and above? Would these positions be advertised and recruited?

Deputy M.R. Ferey:

I thank the Deputy for the question. It applies across the board for grade 11 and above but, of course, front line services and essential roles are excluded from that freeze. Yes, there will be some exclusions on that recruitment freeze but broadly it is to make sure that we continue to make those payroll savings and that we are able to redeploy staff who find themselves wanting to move from one department to another, and allows us to make better use of the workforce.

3.8.3 Deputy I. Gardiner:

I will try again and I will try to be more clear, grade 11 and under, not 11 and above, people retired, taking redundancies, moving up the grade. Will all positions for grade 11 and under be open for recruitment or is there a freeze as well there?

Deputy M.R. Ferey:

Yes, I think I made that clear in my answer to the initial question that grade 11 and under are unaffected.

3.8.4 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

The position with regard to grade 11 and above is that there will be a recruitment freeze. What work has the Government done to ensure that critically-important projects, risks and so on are not handicapped by the fluke occurrence of somebody leaving who is occupying a role where currently critical work is being done on, for example, matters that might attract considerable risk to the Government if they were to leave and not be replaced?

Deputy M.R. Ferey:

I thank the Deputy for the question. Critical and front line services are particularly excluded, so there are lots of safeguards in place to ensure that where work is critical, particularly to the work of the Government over this next 2 years, that they are excluded from that freeze.

3.8.5 Deputy J. Renouf:

Can I just confirm, does that mean they are excluded in that they would not be allowed to take redundancy should they wish to go or excluded in the sense that if they are allowed to go that there will be recruitment allowed to fill in behind them?

Deputy M.R. Ferey:

It is both of those things, but I would just like to reiterate that anyone can ask to be released at any stage. That would include grade 11, above and below, and those will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Question 10, Deputy Doublet will put to the Minister for Social Security.

Deputy K.L. Moore:

I think Deputy Doublet is at her doctor's appointment she mentioned earlier.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, she may be. Thank you very much.