

2016.02.23

3.16 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of the Chief Minister regarding the gender pay gap:

Can the Chief Minister advise whether any data is collected that could inform us whether there is a gender pay gap in Jersey?

Senator I.J. Gorst (The Chief Minister):

As part of its extensive programme, the independent Statistics Unit produces a range of data on income and earnings, but this information is gathered for households and companies as a whole; they do not collate this data for individual workers.

[11:30]

Interestingly, the Jersey Annual Social Survey shows that people do perceive there to be a pay difference generally, although they say they do not experience it in their own workplace. It, of course, has been unlawful to pay a woman less than a man, or *vice versa*, for work for equal value since the introduction of sex discrimination regulations in September of last year.

3.16.1 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Could the Chief Minister undertake to do some work to start collecting the data on whether there is a gender pay gap in Jersey given that the issues go deeper than just the issue of whether there is equal pay for equal work? There is a more nuanced debate to be had, which Deputies Labey, Martin and myself learnt about on the recent Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Conference that we attended in Guernsey. So would the Chief Minister undertake to look a bit deeper into this issue, please?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Yes, I will. The Deputy is aware, and I spoke to her earlier this morning, that the situation has not changed from when the question was asked of the then Chief Minister in 2010, other than we have got further information coming from the Jersey Annual Social Survey. I will speak to the Statistics Unit, but I know that there are many pieces of work that they would like to do to add to our statistical data so that we could make informed decisions. It is an important area. Living in the age that we do, it cannot be acceptable that people are paid anything other than equal for equal work of equal value, and we within the States are going through a programme to try and ensure that that is the case as an employer as well, and I would hope that all employers were doing the same. That seems only fair and reasonable. We will certainly go away and see if there are other easy ways of collecting more extensive data to be able to make informed decisions into the future.

3.16.2 Deputy M Tadier:

Is the Minister aware that women are more likely to be carers than men and that, when it comes to those who care, particularly for family members, that the compensation that they receive, if anything at all in some cases, is an area which maybe needs to be looked at if we are to also close the gender pay gap?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Of course, we do not have the information. I know ... I have forgotten the name of the organisation now, did some research in Jersey into carers. I do not have the results of that analysis to hand. I have seen a copy of the presentation that the Deputy has received and the conversation that they had while they were in Guernsey, and it covers some of these areas: that female members of our

community are more likely, if you look at data from elsewhere, to have more than one job, to be carers, to be the main provider of care for children as well. Some of that may, of course, be by choice, and that is appropriate, but some of it may not be by choice, and it is that particular area that we need more information on to be able to make policy decisions around it so that people have the freedom, ultimately, to make that choice.

3.16.3 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I thank the Chief Minister for his answers and I look forward to seeing how he will be reviewing his policies if and when the Statistics Department does do that work. I wonder if the Chief Minister has considered, on the flip side, how traditionally men's work, or roles and professions that are traditionally seen as men's work, that there is a perception that there is not the same access to flexible working, part-time working and possibly parental leave, as women do. How is the Chief Minister addressing this perceived inequality as well?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

There are some days when I return to the Gorst family home and I wish that I was the carer for my delightful children, but the serious point that I think the Deputy is making is that we do need to have the information in order to make the policy decisions that I think provide people with appropriate choice and their own flexibility to make those decisions. The issue of parental leave, both male and female, those issues are, of course, being addressed and in some cases have been addressed by the Minister for Social Security, and she is committed to ensuring that the discrimination legislation that she has responsibility for continues to move forward, and she will bring the other facets in early order.