

4.6 The Connétable of St. John of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding JT's fault reporting service:

On 13th May a senior citizen reported a fault to Jersey Telecom (at the time of submitting this question the fault continued) and a number of requests from residents, the Parish Hall, from myself, and others have fallen on deaf ears. Will the Minister ask J.T. (Jersey Telecom) to implement an on-Island fault reporting service that is easy to use by vulnerable people, rather than have to call a U.K. (United Kingdom) call centre?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):

I would like to thank the Connétable of St. John for this question. While clearly an operation matter, because it clearly deals with a senior citizen, so I have taken the opportunity of thoroughly investigating this matter. I can inform the Assembly that J.T. do not use a U.K. call centre to handle faults but deal with all of them locally using local agents that are based at Minden Place premises.

The Connétable of St. John:

Can I correct the Minister if you would allow me?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

Sorry, I think I am allowed to make the answer. In this particular case, the fault was not dealt with in accordance with the J.T.'s normal operating process, which resulted unfortunately, due to J.T.'s own internal scheduling, in a delay in it being resolved. However, the issue was resolved last week. J.T. have apologised to the customer for the error that was made in the first instance. I can also inform the Assembly that a mobile phone was given to the customer in the short term while the land line was out of order.

4.6.1 The Connétable of St. John:

Can I correct the Minister, because one of the persons that made a call to J.T. Telecom was myself. I was put through to a place in Wales and I spoke to the lady and I asked her where she was and she said she was in Wales. She asked me who it was I was trying to contact and I said: "Jersey Telecom", which I was taken aback that it was not a call centre solely for Jersey Telecom, but they were dealing with a number of other calls. So therefore, will the Minister confirm that they do use U.K. call centres at times because I spoke to the person in the U.K. personally. That being the case, will the Minister ensure that in future, given we have approximately 2,000 people unemployed, that any call centre is manned in Jersey if it is transferred from their own local people to another local call centre and not off-Island.

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I will urgently check with J.T. on the fact, because I have been told by J.T. that they do not use a U.K. call centre. The Connétable may be referring, I am aware from just personal experience interacting with J.T., that on occasion a U.K. call centre may be used for the installation of, for example, broadband, but I have been advised, and I have sent an urgent message to J.T., and they have told me that they do not use a U.K. call centre and I will clarify later in the morning if that information that was given to me is incorrect.

4.6.2 The Connétable of St. John:

Will the Minister ask the regulator to review the workings of Jersey Telecom?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

No, I do not think this is a matter for the regulator; I think this is a matter for the board. I took the question that the Connétable asked with a degree of seriousness because obviously it dealt with an 86 year-old and I spent a number of hours yesterday with my Assistant Minister discussing this with the department and indeed spoke even late last night with J.T. so that I had a

full understanding of the issue. I have to say that I have been impressed with the answers that J.T. have given me in relation to what they do with faults. Faults will of course occur from time to time and the majority; I am advised there are some 8,000 faults that are reported every year.

[10:30]

This will of course improve with the new infrastructure investment when fibre no longer causes difficulty, for example, with seawater or water getting into systems or indeed causing issues such as lightning. But I am satisfied from what I have understood from J.T. that they have robust procedures in place and they also do, for example, where a household does not have access to a phone, they do, as I have explained, put a mobile phone system in place if there is a continuing delay with the supply.

4.6.3 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

I wonder if the Minister could advise whether the initial fault was on a copper line or a fibre one?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am advised that it was in fact a failure of fibre to the cabinet, which of course fibre to the cabinet has been one of those issues that has improved the reliability of phone lines; on this occasion there was an issue with the light, I am advised, going down the fibre. But that should not be taken ... fibre is going to solve the issue of faults, not make them worse, in the longer term.

4.6.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

As a former employee of Jersey Telecom, I can also confirm that all the mobile and faults and broadband inquiries do get handled locally on the phone, so will the Minister perhaps ask the Connétable whether he is referring to perhaps a directory call service, which does get put through to the U.K., to clarify what we are talking about here?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I did not know the Deputy had such talents. I knew that he had worked for Jersey Tourism, but I did not know that he had worked for Telecom, so I am grateful for his clarification. Clearly the 118534 directory inquiries is handled by the U.K. and perhaps I will investigate what the Connétable has asked. I have sent a message to J.T. to urgently clarify that because that is not what they informed me yesterday.

4.6.5 The Connétable of St. John:

Subsequently to this, to me putting the question in, I had delivered at one of my premises yesterday a new 2013 telephone directory and I had a look at Fault Reporting, which is very, very unclear to say the least, Minister. Will you please, in particular for vulnerable people, ask for nice bold lettering to be placed in any telephone directory so that fault reporting can be picked up within the front of the telephone book on the first page, and not have to go through the service level agreement and all the rest of it to find the information you need. Would the Minister please ensure that from here on we have it easily inscribed in the front of the book?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am happy always to deal with these issues, but I have to say that I do not think we should make a mountain out of a molehill here. Clearly, there is a number in the front of the phone book about reporting faults. It is quite simple: you pick up the phone or find a mobile phone that works and you report a fault. Jersey Telecom has procedures in place, they have explained them to me, and they are certainly satisfactory arrangements. I should also point out to the Connétable that we have one of the highest penetrations of mobile phone networks of any jurisdiction. Therefore, while it is regrettable that obviously a fault occurs in a residential home, the vast majority of consumers are also equipped with a mobile phone which certainly helps. But if he

has any difficulties then perhaps he could see me separately and I am happy to meet with J.T. in order to resolve any outstanding issues that he has.