

STATES OF JERSEY

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MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES: VOTE OF CONFIDENCE

Lodged au Greffe on 23rd August 2007
by the Minister for Health and Social Services

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

that they have confidence in the Minister for Health and Social Services.

MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

REPORT

This report and proposition is, of necessity short. I have unfortunately been left with no choice other than to lodge this proposition at extremely short notice.

I was preparing a range of evidence to put to the Council of Ministers at the agreed, scheduled meeting date of 6th September. However – on the basis of five days' notice – the Council of Ministers has decided to hold an 'extraordinary meeting' at which they will discuss my dismissal as Minister for Health and Social Services. This fast-tracked process has been adopted notwithstanding clear and reasonable requests from me to allow sufficient time for me to prepare my case.

I have, therefore, no choice other than to lodge this confidence proposal as Minister for Health and Social Services.

The present controversy concerns child-welfare and protection issues. I have had increasing reason to become dissatisfied with the senior management of several different agencies in the field. That my concerns are justified is well-evidenced.

However the Council of Ministers has decided to rush into their attempt to remove me, without waiting to receive that evidence, especially recent evidence.

Indeed, it is very difficult to see the actions of the Council of Ministers as anything other than an attempt to remove me speedily precisely in order to prevent me from accumulating, and having an opportunity to furnish them with, relevant evidence.

As is abundantly clear from the reports and comments from the Council of Ministers that their principle objective is attacking and removing me. Much of what they are asserting against me is inaccurate, biased, and partial – and in several cases simply wrong.

Members can be assured that I will be producing a detailed response to all these issues closer to the debate. This will be in the form of a further, detailed report.

I apologise to members for not being able to present such detail in this document, but the actions of the Council of Ministers has determined that the available time is too short.

As stated above, I will be dealing with the specific concerns of the Council of Ministers closer to the date and in a further report.

But this confidence vote is not based specifically upon the concerns of the Council of Ministers.

This is a confidence vote that I am seeking based upon the totality of my time in charge of Health and Social Services and all that it has succeeded in doing so well for this community during that time.

Considering the work I have put into the task, the least I should be allowed is for any debate concerning my leadership of the organisation to be based upon a broad consideration of the general success of Health and Social Services (H&SS).

I have had responsibility for H&SS during what have been some difficult years. Not least the financial constraints the States of Jersey has found itself under.

But notwithstanding such difficulties, the Department, under my leadership, has achieved great things. I do not seek to draw all the credit for this success to myself; H&SS is a team and it has required the dedicated efforts of staff in all areas to make the service as good as it is. I would like to put on record my thanks and acknowledgment of our Health and Social Services staff. The Island can rightly be proud of its health service.

The following are just some of the accomplishments which we have achieved –

- Consistently high clinical outcomes.
- Consistently high patient satisfaction.
- Dramatically reduced waiting times.
- A highly trained and dedicated workforce.
- Clear respect and affection for our Health service on the part of the community.
- We have consistently delivered balanced budgets – in spite of tremendous pressures.
- We have actually improved the range and availability of services notwithstanding such pressures.
- We have consistently delivered our capital development projects on time and on budget.
- Jersey Health and Social Services standards of clinical and holistic care are consistently higher than those in the NHS. This is demonstrated by patient commendations and by the Picker Survey which always places Jersey General Hospital in the highest quartile of best performing hospitals.
- Certain waiting lists in Jersey have dramatically reduced to short time periods that are beyond the dreams of most other public health services. Many operations are taking place within weeks and not months. In some specialties we cannot reduce the waiting times any further, because some patients are being called for operations faster than is convenient for their own domestic and professional commitments.
- We have two of the finest nursing homes in Jersey under our direct management. These are The Limes and Sandybrook. They meet the needs of highly complex patients.
- We have introduced on-Island cardiology – thereby removing the anxiety and logistical nightmare of many patients having to journey to the mainland for certain diagnostic and investigative procedures. On-Island Cardiology will grow and develop in future years.
- We have secured charitable funds for the redevelopment of Orchard House at St. Saviour's Hospital. This is a state-of-the-art acute psychiatric facility.
- We have secured the latest high-technology diagnostic equipment which includes MRI and CAT scanners. As technology advances these machines – and other machines – will be replaced by capital funds that have already been secured and planned into the programme of works.
- We have constructed and opened a new Day Surgery Unit, which will reduce waiting times even further (in some specialties) and this surgery will be provided on a day-case basis which is cheaper for the taxpayer and more convenient and less onerous for the patients themselves.
- The Special Needs Service has been so successful in providing normalised environments for clients that the last special needs client left St. Saviour's Hospital over 2 years ago.

Whilst no health and social care system can be perfect, the achievements I describe above are of such tremendous quality and excellence as to be the envy of any jurisdiction.

Again, I must thank the staff who work for our health service. Such success does not happen by accident – to produce such high standards requires constant effort from all involved.

Jersey Health and Social Services as an organisation is a tremendous success. I ask you to compare our success with the difficulties experienced by the average NHS trust, should you be in any doubt.

Health and Social Services is an immensely successful organisation. I am proud to have played my part in that success. It is entirely reasonable that I be judged on this broad picture, given my many years of hard work and the obvious success of Health and Social Services.

Financial/manpower statement

There are no financial or manpower consequences for the States arising from this proposition.