



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Member of the
Association of Jersey Charities

20 January 2006

Deputy P Ryan
Isola Verde
La Rue du Samares
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JE2 6LZ

Dear Deputy Ryan

Following the recent debate in the States regarding the Sexual Offences Act, and Deputy Reed's comments in the JEP giving Brook's figures, I felt it would be beneficial to write to you with several comments.

I understand that this act has now been forwarded to scrutiny and advice will be given back to the ministers to make a decision to lower the age of homosexual activity from 18 to 16.

Whilst Brook would support equal ages for both sexes, I feel there are several important points that need to be raised.

The current law as it stands, states that it is illegal for a man to have a homosexual relationship with a young man under 18. As far as I'm aware the only illegal act is if the young man is not consenting. The law does not allow a prosecution by the police or a parent if the young person does not wish to pursue with a complaint amounting to a statement to the police and a video interview. This is also the situation with young women who are under the age of 16. Again if this is a consenting relationship with no evidence a so called 'blind eye' seems to be the order of the day. I myself have been in the position of referring such cases to the Child Protection Team from Brook, and have only ever had one prosecution in the 10 years that I have been in this job.

I therefore feel it is probably just as important to look at the present law because actually at the moment this amendment won't really make any difference whether the age is reduced from 18 to 16 as it is almost impossible to police.

Another important point to highlight if the law is changed to 16 is the need for the expansion of such services as Brook to provide the support and testing that these young men will require. We have been continually asking Health for further money to operate infection testing for both sexes but to date, have been unsuccessful.

I hope that the above points will be helpful.

Yours sincerely

**Ms Bronia Lever
Manager**

Cc Deputy B Hill

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