

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS
BY THE DEPUTY OF ST. MARTIN
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 20th APRIL 2010**

Question

“On 11th September 2009 the States unanimously approved P.122/2009 and agreed to establish an Independent Custody Visitor Scheme to commence no later than 1st February 2010; will the Minister inform members why the Scheme is not operating yet and when is it likely to commence?”

Answer

Following a necessary period of research and liaison with the Independent Custody Visitors Association (ICVA) in the UK, the Department advertised for volunteers in the Jersey Evening Post on 29th October 2009 with a closing date for applications of 13th November.

Twelve members of the public applied and all were short listed. A formal interview process took place. To allow for the Christmas and New Year break, two interview sessions were held on 22nd December and 19th January. Three people withdrew before the interviews and one subsequently; the remaining 8 were considered suitable for the role and come from a range of backgrounds, ages, etc. which will make the group reasonably representative of Jersey society.

Although security clearances were applied for after the interviews, they inevitably take some time to be carried out in some instances; the final one was returned in mid-March. Successful clearances are a key factor in determining whether the required training would be viable.

To allow for the availability of all volunteers and to allow sufficient time for the Department to complete work on the Scheme Handbook, Saturday 5th June has been booked for the trainer to come across from the ICVA. There were earlier dates available in May but they coincided with bank holiday weekends when volunteers are likely to be occupied.

Although I withdrew my amendment to P122/2009 which would have recognised that an additional 3 months would be needed to implement the scheme, my initial thought was right in that a reasonable length of time was always going to be required for a proper recruitment process; the setting up of a new scheme for Jersey; and to allow for the imposition of a new task on a small Department which is additional to the 2010 Business Plan and therefore unresourced. I am grateful to the Deputy of St. Martin for his assistance in relation to the setting up of the scheme but, notwithstanding that, it has taken longer than he and I hoped.