

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY S.Y. MÉZEC OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 26TH SEPTEMBER 2017**

Question

Following reports in the ‘Independent Jersey Care Inquiry Report’ (R.59/2017) of claims that, historically, finance-industry-related legislation was prioritised above legislation relating to children's services, what consideration, if any, has been given to the resourcing of the Law Draftsman's Office and what plans, if any, does the Chief Minister have to ensure that adequate provisions are in place to enable Jersey to develop finance legislation simultaneously to the advancement of important social legislation faster than has been done previously?

Will the Chief Minister advise what consideration has been given to requiring the Law Draftsman's Office to record how much time it spends on different categories of legislation?

Answer

There is a substantial programme of social legislation underway, dealing with housing and care standards, charities, marriage reform, mental health and capacity, and criminal justice. There are more policy officers employed to develop the various strands of social legislation than financial and the resources of the Law Draftsman's Office are monitored to ensure drafters can respond effectively and quickly to prevailing policy priorities.

Legislation can take longer than expected, generally because of the time required to resolve technical and legal complexities, challenging policy issues, or changing priorities. Developing draft legislation is a collaborative effort that requires sufficient policy capacity as well as law drafting resources.

The establishment of Community and Constitutional Affairs has improved the coordination of policy development across government by combining different policy officers into one department. Building this capacity is a more effective way to deliver both social and financial legislation than using a time recording system.

The Care Inquiry recommended that the Island should develop a more effective mechanism for developing legislation, policy and practice for children and young people. The policy capacity of government is likely to need to expand to address this need, and this will feature in the Government's forthcoming response to the Care Inquiry's main recommendations.