

23.04.18

1 Deputy L.J. Farnham of the Chief Minister regarding perfluoro octane sulfonate in St Ouen's Bay (OQ.65/2023)

Can I thank the Chief Minister for taking this question? Perhaps it could have gone to the Minister for Health and Social Services. But will the Chief Minister provide the Assembly with an update on matters relating P.F.O.S. (perfluoro octane sulfonate) and the historic plume in the St. Ouen's Bay area and, in particular, the outcomes of the health testing that was instigated by the previous Government?

Deputy K.L. Moore (The Chief Minister):

I am pleased that this Government has started to make some real progress in supporting and getting answers for Islanders who have had their water polluted by P.F.O.S. A total of 88 people were tested and the results indicate that 30 per cent of the people in the plume area had higher values than 95 per cent of the people tested in a U.S. (United States) reference pollution for P.F.O.S. This increased by 70 per cent of people tested for another P.F.A.S. (perfluoroalkyl substances) compound. The implications of P.F.A.S. in blood on health is an emerging area of science and is highly specialised. In recognition of this Public Health are setting up a Scientific Advisory Panel who will provide advice and guidance to the Government about what interventions should be undertaken to reduce the blood levels of P.F.A.S., what the health harms might be and to advise on environmental matters also. A chair has been appointed and recruitment is underway for panel members. The panel will have their first meeting in May. In addition, environment studies are ongoing across 2 water catchment areas in St. Ouen's Bay and at Pont Marquet to assess P.F.A.S. migration, potential risks and to inform additional management or remediation options. I have left my glasses at home, Sir, I apologise. The study will work alongside and compliment current work by Ports of Jersey to investigate and remediate P.F.A.S. and airport perimeter and inform public water treatment and supply work.

4.1.1 Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I welcome the fact that some plans are being formulated to provide advice and guidance to those impacted and this might be a question for the Minister for Health and Social Services next time. What tangible support can the Government give to those people who have been infected and do have high levels in their blood?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

As I identified in the answer there, the health harms are as yet unknown, which is one of the reasons why we have created the Scientific Advisory Panel with an eminent chair but also, of course, the local people who have been engaging with Public Health I think will be able to testify that we have a talented Public Health team led by Dr. Peter Bradley, and they have been very grateful for his wise input and any advice he has been able to give to date.