

STATES OF JERSEY



CUSTODY VISITOR SCHEME (P.122/2009): AMENDMENT

Lodged au Greffe on 25th August 2009
by the Minister for Home Affairs

STATES GREFFE

CUSTODY VISITOR SCHEME (P.122/2009): AMENDMENT

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For the words “1st February 2010” substitute the words “1st May 2010”.

MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS

REPORT

I welcome this Proposition, which has the beneficial effects of –

- (a) assisting the police by helping to ensure that they are providing the service that is expected of them;
- (b) helping to ensure people in custody are getting the right standard of care; and
- (c) increasing the public's confidence in the police, as it demonstrates that they are open to independent outside scrutiny.

For the Scheme to work properly, it will need to be seen to be independent of the States of Jersey Police. The Proposition suggests that the Custody Visitors would initially be appointed by the Minister for Home Affairs. I am content with this, provided that the Members of the States are satisfied that this provides sufficient independence. The alternative would be for the Custody Visitors to be appointed by the States on the recommendation of the Minister for Home Affairs.

Issues arise as to the way in which the secretariat to support the Scheme should be provided. It will take some time to investigate whether this is best provided directly by the Home Affairs Department or through the Police Complaints Authority, or otherwise. In the medium term, once a Police Authority is established, the secretariat supporting that body could also support the Custody Visitors.

It will take some time for the Scheme to be properly set up, and this at a time when the Home Affairs Department are already under considerable pressure of work.

For this reason, I have lodged the Amendment in order to give both my Department and myself an additional 3 months in which to ensure that the Scheme is properly set up, and to ensure that the other important priorities of the Home Affairs Department can be satisfactorily completed.

Financial and manpower implications

There are none arising from this Amendment. The estimation of additional resources set out in the Proposition is accurate, but the Home Affairs Department can find this within the existing budget.