

5.6 The Deputy of St. John of the Minister for Economic Development regarding the provision of passenger information airside:

Would the Minister advise whether passengers have a point of contact with airline staff or airport personnel once past security (airside) other than an unmanned telephone to deal with queries or complaints, and if not, will he consider providing an information desk similar to that based in the external departure hall, particularly when there are delays due to inclement weather?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean (The Minister for Economic Development):

Yes, passengers do have a point of contact airside. As part of the refurbishment of the airside passenger facilities in 2009 a dedicated passenger assistance desk was created for use by airlines to allow them to communicate with their passengers. The desk is manned during periods of flight disruption by staff employed by the airlines' appointed ground handling agent. I am not in a position to commit Jersey Airport to the cost of establishing and manning a second information desk airside. However, airport staff do work airside and part of their role is to offer their services to passengers who may require assistance or specific information. The courtesy telephone that the Deputy refers to is a direct line to the landside information desk, which is always manned during airport opening hours and, once again, assistance is offered to passengers that require it.

5.6.1 The Deputy of St. John:

Given the Minister's reply, which I think is very shoddy to the travelling public, will the Minister review the working practices at the airport given an experience I had in which I had to call his Assistant Minister on the issue on 13th December. I am given to understand since the ash cloud of last year and all the other delays we have had, through to the snow in November, et cetera, it is quite common that there is nobody outside of, shall we say, 9.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. manning this desk and you have to go to the telephone to try and get information. It is far from acceptable. Will the Minister review his procedures at the airport? He has an Assistant Minister, possibly he might want to do spot checks.

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

I take exception to the suggestion my answer first of all was shoddy. I think it was a perfectly factual and accurate answer. I can assure Members that practices at the airport are continually reviewed to ensure that we deliver a sound and fair and reasonable service to members of the public. It is absolutely essential that we do that, and I am convinced that that, in the majority of cases, is absolutely right. I suspect, it may well have been the Deputy who felt that he himself received less than satisfactory answers to a stream of questions that he was able to ask to a customer service adviser, in fact, the manager, who attended to him at the time that he was delayed at the airport for a considerable period. I understand all his questions were thoroughly answered.

The Deputy of St. John:

On a point of order, the Minister is totally incorrect. No customer service manager attended on me. They telephoned me. They did not come down to see the problems they telephoned me, so will the Minister withdraw those remarks?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

I made the remark that a customer service manager had spoken at length to the Deputy, I did not specify how that conversation was undertaken, if indeed it was undertaken by phone, I believe that is absolutely correct, and I accept that point. But nevertheless a stream of questions were put forward by the Deputy about concerns he had. Each of his queries were, in many cases, corrected and answered.