

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM,
SPORT AND CULTURE**

**BY DEPUTY R. LABEY OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 23rd FEBRUARY 2016**

Question

“Can the Minister advise what action, if any, he will be taking to ensure that Condor resolves the following issues –

- (a) how frequently Condor cancels travel bookings to Jersey at short notice;
- (b) how frequently clients are unable to contact the company by telephone to change bookings;
- (c) the disruption caused by altered travel arrangements which often oblige Condor clients to travel to a different point of departure from the one anticipated and involve early morning crossings which require an overnight stay in a hotel; and
- (d) the frequent rejection of customer compensation claims towards hotel costs, citing EU Passenger Rights Regulation 1177/2010 (that the relevant circumstances causing the cancellation were beyond the company’s control)?”

Answer

- (a) Statistics provided by Condor Ferries indicate that overall fleet reliability is only just below 2014 levels despite the introduction of the new vessel. The majority of cancellations are due to weather. I understand that Condor provide 24 hours’ notice of weather cancellations. I further understand that Condor proactively contact all customers by email or text whenever there is a cancellation or even a delay.
- (b) I am aware that there are times when it is not possible to get through to Condor by phone. One disrupted sailing can affect several hundred people, so it is inevitable that there will be times when people cannot get through. I have urged Condor to do all it can to ensure maximum resource is available at difficult times. They have informed me that standard hours for its central Reservations office have, as of last month, been extended to 8pm on weekdays. Having asked Condor directly about this issue, I have seen reporting which shows a significant reduction in ‘abandoned’ calls compared with last year.
- (c) The only time when customers might be asked to travel to or from a different port is when high speed sailings are cancelled and passengers instead have to travel on the Clipper to/from Portsmouth. This is usually because of weather disruption. If the disruption is Condor’s responsibility, the company pays for customer hotels as well as transport (or vehicle mileage) to/from the alternative port
- (d) I have been categorically reassured by Condor that Condor always meets its obligations under the EU Passenger Rights Directive. Not only does Condor adhere to the EU Directive, but thanks to the published Operating Agreement, they also pay out on inter-Island travel – which is not covered by EU Legislation.

I can reassure the Deputy and the Assembly that my Department and Ports of Jersey will continue to work closely with Condor to ensure that both operational performance and customer satisfaction are improved.