

### **3.7 Deputy R.G. Le Herissier:**

Would the Minister confirm whether staff in the health service enjoy full protection in terms of whistle blowing?

#### **Senator S. Syvret (The Minister for Health and Social Services):**

Yes. All Health and Social Services staff are covered by the Corporate States of Jersey policies, namely reporting serious concerns at work and bullying and harassment; both of which can be found on the States intranet Café Cyril web site. These policies provide a secure and, if necessary, anonymous means of expressing concerns at work regarding the conduct of others. I have been advised by the Chief Internal Auditor of the Treasury that there are no records of concerns being raised by Health and Social Services staff using either of these routes. Doctors, nurses, social workers and professions allied to medicine have strong protection when whistle blowing as they have, in fact, a professional responsibility to report any concerns that they have in the workplace. This is particularly important in the post Harold Shipman environment. If, for whatever reason, reporting internally within the Health and Social Services organisation was not deemed appropriate, all health professionals will have a duty to report externally to the Nursing and Midwifery Council, the General Medical Council or other appropriate professional bodies. Additionally, Health and Social Services has recently entered into agreement with NCAS, the National Clinical Assessment Service, to provide external expertise in supporting alleged poorly performing doctors. Should Health and Social Services doctors or nurses find themselves the subject of whistle blowing, as well as receiving appropriate managerial guidance, they are also entitled to support and representation from the British Medical Association and the Royal College of Nursing respectively.

#### **3.7.1 Deputy R.G. Le Herissier:**

I thank the Minister, Sir. I have raised this issue before as he knows, and I wonder if the Minister could confirm that one of the aspects that deters people who wish to whistle blow, as the phrase has it, is that they do indeed have to see people in the Civil Service hierarchy. I wonder if he could confirm whether that is the case and whether he feels that should be changed.

#### **Senator S. Syvret:**

As I explained there is an over-arching States of Jersey policy on the subject outside of the ambit and control of Health and Social Services to which staff can report concerns in complete confidence, security and confidentiality if that is their wish. So that degree of protection does exist. If the Deputy is asking me, "Do I think that goes far enough?" personally no, I do not and this is why I am preparing a proposition that will seek the agreement of the Assembly to establish a Jersey version of the United Kingdom's Public Interest Disclosure Act.

#### **Deputy R.G. Le Herissier:**

I thank the Minister and I look forward to that.