

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE OF KEYS (QUESTIONS)

**Douglas, Tuesday, 1st April 2003
at 10.05 a.m.**

Present:

The Speaker (the Hon. J A Brown) (Castletown); Mr D M Anderson (Glenfaba); Hon. A R Bell (Ramsey); Mr R E Quine OBE (Ayre); Mr J D Q Cannan (Michael); Mrs H Hannan (Peel); Hon. S C Rodan (Garff); Mr P Karran, Hon. R K Corkill and Mr A J Earnshaw (Onchan); Mr G M Quayle (Middle); Mr J R Houghton and Mr R W Henderson (Douglas North); Hon. D C Cretney and Mr A C Duggan (Douglas South); Hon. R P Braidwood and Mrs B J Cannell (Douglas East); Hon. A F Downie and Hon. J P Shimmin (Douglas West); Capt. A C Douglas (Malew and Santon); Hon. J Rimington, Mr Q B Gill and Hon. P M Crowe (Rushen); with Mr M Cornwell-Kelly, Secretary of the House.

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**Immigrants and Asylum-Seekers –
Placement on Offshore Islands –
Question by Mr Houghton**

Question 1. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Houghton) to ask the Chief Minister:

Will you make an up-to-date statement on what you have been able to discover about the Conservative Leader, Ian Duncan Smith's comments in a recent Sunday newspaper where he favoured the Australian method of dealing with immigrants and asylum-seekers, which includes placing them to offshore islands, what effect this may have for the Island, and have you asked the Lord Chancellor to intervene on our behalf?

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Houghton.

Mr Houghton: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name, sir.

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member for Onchan, Mr Corkill, the Chief Minister.

Mr Corkill: Thank you, Mr Speaker. As hon. members will already be aware, I wrote to the leader of Her Majesty's official Opposition, Ian Duncan Smith, on 11th March with regard to media comments attributed to him in connection with his party's immigration and asylum policy. I received a reply on 25th March which I circulated immediately to hon. members and in which Mr Duncan Smith stated categorically that the term 'offshore havens' does not mean the Isle of Man.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Houghton.

Mr Houghton: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the hon. Chief Minister for taking such rapid action and getting the reply circulated amongst all members. May I ask him if he can inform all members of Tynwald immediately if he is ever approached by the United Kingdom authorities with regard to the provision on the Island of asylum-seekers, sir?

The Speaker: Chief Minister to reply.

Mr Corkill: Certainly, Mr Speaker, if the government was contacted on this issue I can assure hon. members absolutely that I would keep this House properly informed.

Mr Houghton: Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

Mr Henderson: Gura mie eu, Vainstyr Loayreyder. Will the Ard-shirveishagh give some sort of comment on the letter from the Right Hon. Ian Duncan Smith in as much as it is only a six-line letter, and is he content that that is a categorical assurance from the Conservative Party and that he is happy with it?

The Speaker: Chief Minister to reply.

Mr Corkill: Mr Speaker, I would expect the letter to be short because there are no shades of grey in the letter, it is a statement of fact and therefore only needs a short response, I would suggest, so the fact that it is not a lengthy letter, I do not think, should concern us.

**Immigrants and Asylum-Seekers –
UK Government Strategy –
Question by Mr Henderson**

Question 2. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Henderson) to ask the Chief Minister:

Will you seek clarification of the British Government's strategy on immigration and asylum-seekers and make a further statement in this House when you have this information and what are, if any, the possible impacts on the Isle of Man?

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

Mr Henderson: Gura mie eu, Vainstyr Loayreyder. Ta mee shirrey kied yn eysht y chur ta fo my ennym.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Onchan, Mr Corkill, the Chief Minister, to reply.

Mr Corkill: Mr Speaker, there has been no suggestion that the British Government's strategy on immigration and asylum-seekers will impact on the Isle of Man as suggested by the hon. member. Any proposals emanating from the United Kingdom Government which would have an impact on the Isle of Man would, as I have indicated previously, be subject to prior consultation with the Isle of Man Government and may also require legislative change. In the event that the government is contacted on this issue, as I have already said, I will certainly make sure that hon. members are informed.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

Mr Henderson: Gura mie eu, Vainstyr Loayreyder. Will the Ard-shirveishagh agree with me that my question is not indicating that there is an

impact on the Isle of Man but the possibility of that, and will he seek clarification from Her Majesty's Government on the same so that this House and Tynwald and the people of this Island can be assured?

The Speaker: Chief Minister to reply.

Mr Corkill: All I can do is reiterate, Mr Speaker, that there is no indication whatsoever that the British Government strategy on immigration and asylum-seekers will have an impact.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Houghton.

Mr Houghton: Thank you, Mr Speaker. With regard to the United Kingdom's strategy on asylum-seekers, can the Chief Minister advise this House whether the Isle of Man Government has a strategy to oppose and, if they do not, will they formulate such a strategy to oppose, sir?

The Speaker: Chief Minister to reply.

Mr Corkill: I do believe, Mr Speaker, that the supplementary question really is hypothesising on a situation to have a strategy against something where there is no need to have a strategy.

Mr Houghton: Forewarned is forearmed!

Mr Corkill: As I have said, I have made it quite clear what the situation is. The hon. member is suggesting to create a strategy against something which does not exist and is not likely or, indeed, could not exist without consultation with the Island anyway.

I can understand the hon. questioner's concerns in this matter. Can I reassure hon. members that in fact there are regular discussions between officers who deal with our immigration issues here on the island and immigration in the UK on a wide-ranging number of issues and that therefore I would not wish it to be thought that there is no dialogue and no contact; there are ongoing discussions about a number of issues.

I would just like to remind hon. members also that a letter has been sent to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor outlining proposed changes to the legal framework for immigration on the Island, including the government making the immigration rules and that the government will strongly resist any future proposals for the dispersal of asylum-seekers to offshore islands. (**Members:** Hear, hear.) So that has already been put in place, Mr Speaker.

Immigrants and Asylum-Seekers – UK Government Policy – Offshore Islands? Exemption – Question by Mr Henderson

Question 3. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Henderson) to ask the Chief Minister:

Will you arrange to have a question asked on behalf of the Isle of Man Government in either Westminster Hall or the House of Lords to have placed on record current UK Government immigration and asylum-seeker policy and an assurance that offshore island British dependencies adjacent to the UK do not figure in any such UK policy?

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

Mr Henderson: Gura mie eu, Vainstyr Loayreyder. Ta mee shirrey kied yn eysht y chur ta fo my ennym.

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member for Onchan, Mr Corkill, the Chief Minister, to reply.

Mr Corkill: Mr Speaker, at no stage has there been any suggestion in the media or anywhere else that the offshore island British dependencies adjacent to the United Kingdom will figure in the United Kingdom Government's immigration and asylum-seeker policy. I wish to make that clear. As I indicated to Tynwald last month, speculation about the dispersal of asylum-seekers to offshore islands arose following comments attributed to the leader of Her Majesty's official Opposition, the Conservative Party. There has been no such speculation in respect of Her Majesty's government. Accordingly, I do not see what benefit might be served in arranging for such a question to be asked either in the House of Commons or, indeed, in the House of Lords.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

Mr Henderson: Gura mie eu, Vainstyr Loayreyder. I thank the Ard-shirveishagh for his answer, but can he clarify, please, that what we are seeking here is to have a public statement made? And will he also agree with me that the leader of the Conservative Party in fact recommended that the UK Government take on board the Australian method of immigration and asylum-seekers which included the offshore islands? I think, really, we do need to have some clarification, and certainly would the Chief Minister agree with that?

The Speaker: Chief Minister to reply.

Mr Corkill: I think, Mr Speaker, I would be cautious about the suggestion of raising something in this fashion. I do not believe it is appropriate that we arrange for questions to be put in this way bearing in mind that (*Interjection by Mr Karran*) there are no indications whatsoever from the UK Government about policy changes which might affect us in the way that it is being suggested. In fact, I will go on to say, Mr Speaker, that raising the issue in such a manner might actually have an adverse affect, and so I will be cautious in that respect.

A Member: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

Mr Henderson: Gura mie eu, Vainstyr Loayreyder. Would the Ard-shirveishagh agree with me that in fact the issue has been so fully highlighted that it could not be highlighted any further, and the whole purpose of this question is to put the matter to rest, and that my issue is quite simple and straightforward and would actually assist the Island and the UK Government?

A Member: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: Chief Minister to reply.

Mr Corkill: It has certainly been highlighted within our shores, Mr Speaker, but I do not believe it has had a great deal of publicity in the adjacent islands. I think we are sensitive to a comment that has been made by the Conservative Party and reinforced by the leader of the Conservative Party and I think a number of hares have started to run since that statement, quite understandably so because it is a serious issue that is being discussed but, bearing in mind a lot of this was media comment and the fact that there is no back-up and no comments or, indeed, it is just not on the radar with regard to the United Kingdom authorities, I really do feel that we are making an issue when there is not one.

**Water Treatment Plant –
Withdrawal of Petition of Doleance –
Question by Mr Cannan**

Question 4. The hon. member for Michael (Mr Cannan) to ask the Chief Minister:

- (1) *Can you confirm that the Council of Ministers have issued a notice of direction to the Isle of Man Water Authority to withdraw their petition of doleance in respect of the planning refusal for the water treatment plant at Greenfield Road, Douglas; and*

- (2) *what advice has the Council of Ministers given to the Water Authority as regards seeking planning approval for an alternative site?*

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member for Michael, Mr Cannan.

Mr Cannan: Mr Speaker, I beg to ask the question standing in my name.

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member for Onchan, Mr Corkill, the Chief Minister.

Mr Corkill: Mr Speaker, the first point that I would like to make is that the Water Authority has not served a petition of doleance in respect of the planning refusal for the water treatment at Greenfield Road, Douglas. And I will repeat that: has *not* served a petition. The Water Authority issued a letter of intent, following which the Council of Ministers invited the members of the Water Authority to attend Council in order to carry out a formal consultation with them as provided for under paragraph 12(1) of schedule 1 to the Statutory Boards Act 1987. This consultation has taken two or three weeks longer than I had hoped for. Paragraph 12(1) provides the Council of Ministers with the power to direct the board if Council considers that it is in the public interest to make such a direction.

Council considered carefully the outcome which the Water Authority was seeking to achieve from its proposed petition of doleance. This was primarily clarity with regard to permitted noise levels. Being mindful that the petition of doleance would consider only the process of the planning application and not matters of fact, Council concluded that it was not in the public interest for the petition of doleance to go forward and therefore directed, and I quote, 'The Isle of Man Water Authority not to proceed with issuing and/or prosecuting a Petition of Doleance against the Minister of the Department of Local Government and the Environment in respect of the minister's decision on appeal to refuse consent to the planning application 01/0509, approval reference 1991, of the said authority.'

Council further expressed the opinion to the Water Authority that full consultation should take place between the Water Authority and the Director of Planning in determining the best way forward to achieve a new water treatment works. However, I feel that it is important to make a point here that, notwithstanding any consultations which may take place, decisions are made in the first instance by the Planning Committee after giving consideration to representations received from those who may be affected by a particular proposal. Therefore, whilst consultations are helpful, they do not guarantee approval by the Planning Committee.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Middle.

Mr Quayle: Thank you, Mr Speaker. With the planning application refusal in mind, could I ask the Chief Minister: what are the implications for the future provision of much-needed housing, particularly affordable housing to cater for first-time buyers, for our young people, and would the Chief Minister care to comment, in light of the statements made by the chair of the Water Authority, as to future utilisation of land in the Isle of Man and whether or not in fact the Water Authority are having a veto, or a possible veto, over any future planning?

The Speaker: Chief Minister to reply.

Mr Corkill: Certainly when planning applications are considered, Mr Speaker, the availability of all utilities is an issue for the planning process to take account of. I would also like to say that if this particular planning application had been successful, we would not have seen a new water treatment works before the year 2005 in any event. We would still have been maintained on the old processing treatment works, and therefore I think it is important that people are not too concerned. Now, having said that, there is an urgency to renew the water infrastructure - I think we are all aware of that; I am sure the community is aware of that - and there is an obligation, I believe, on government, on statutory boards working as government, to actually deliver that, and it is a difficult road sometimes, as we have all come across planning disappointments from time to time. So there is an urgency to get on with the job, to get our water to a better quality and provide for future generations. I am quite confident that that will happen. It is just that this particular hurdle has not been successfully negotiated at this time.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Ayre, Mr Quine.

Mr Quine: On how many occasions since the creation of the ministerial system in 1987 has the Council of Ministers issued a direction under the Statutory Boards Act 1987? And at the meeting of the Council of Ministers at which the decision to give this direction to the Water Authority was taken, was the Minister for Local Government and the Environment present and did she contribute to the deliberations?

The Speaker: Chief Minister to reply.

Mr Corkill: The hon. questioner raises an interesting question and one that I asked for legal advice on myself. As the hon. member for Ayre will be aware, the Attorney-General sits with the Council of Ministers to give legal advice, and indeed he said quite clearly that it was quite an order for the Minister for Local Government and the Environment to be present because quite simply the planning process that was being discussed has come to an end; it has been through the processes. Now, I think it is quite clear that

the minister listened rather than contributed and made very few comments towards the situation, but nonetheless the minister was quite entitled to be there and legal advice was sought on that point.

With regard to the number of occasions that a directions has been given to a statutory board since ministerial government was set up, I have not got the answer to that question, Mr Speaker. I could research that if the hon. member thinks it is important.

A Member: None.

Mr Corkill: The hon. member says, 'none'. I want to make sure that hon. members realise that Council's decision was based purely and simply on public interest issues and on no other aspects whatsoever.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Michael, Mr Cannan.

Mr Cannan: Will the Chief Minister agree that the present high cost of water rates payable by all householders throughout the Island will be further increased, caused by the extra cost to the Water Authority of seeking an alternative site for a water treatment plant, and therefore would it not have been in the public interest to contain the increases in water rates rather than by actually increasing them so that the minister would have been better advised to have approved the original planning decision?

The Speaker: Chief Minister to reply.

Mr Corkill: I think we should just wind the clock back a few weeks and months, Mr Speaker, in as much as the independent planning inspector made a judgement on this particular application and the minister agreed with it, which is often the case with planning situations. The issue of national interest which the hon. member for Michael alludes to was taken into account in that report. It is referred to in that report. If hon. members who have had copies of that report will read it, they will see references to the national interest. Notwithstanding those references, the inspector came to the conclusions he came to, which, at the end of the day, is an opinion based on a number of situations and a number of facts. The minister agreed with that.

With regard to the cost of the water rates the hon. member for Michael is now becoming site-specific with his question, and I do not wish to pre-empt any debate or discussion on a future planning application because I am sure there will be another application for a water treatment works somewhere. Can I say that it does not preclude an application being submitted to the same site? That is not excluded from the options that are available to the Water Authority.

So on the one hand we have the balance of the rights of individuals who have, under our legislation of

planning, the right to object and to put their case forward - and hopefully in a small place like the Isle of Man we can respect the rights of individuals who have valid objections with regard to their planning applications on their doorstep, and that has happened in this case.

The hon. member refers to higher water rates. Yes, the new infrastructure has to be paid for and it is Tynwald policy, which was approved some years ago now, that with the infrastructure with the bond in place being repaid by the water rate it was understood that water rates would rise in the short-to-medium term at levels above inflation, and that is the process that we are in at the moment and have been for a few years.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Onchan, Mr Earnshaw.

Mr Earnshaw: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I think the Chief Minister may have answered part of this in a roundabout way, but perhaps this is an opportunity to be a little bit more specific and it is following a recent interview given by the chairman of the Water Authority and I would ask: could the minister determining the appeal have refused the appeal without prejudice to the submission of a fresh application by the Water Authority?

The Speaker: Chief Minister to reply.

Mr Corkill: I think I have perhaps already said, Mr Speaker, that when a planning process comes to an end as this one has at this stage there is nothing in normal circumstances to preclude a fresh application. That application obviously would have to take account of the reasons why the previous application had failed. That is a normal planning process. I do not believe that that would have to be specifically referred to in any minister's judgement; in fact, it would not be normal to do that. It is inherent in the legislation and the rules that we have.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Ayre, Mr Quine.

Mr Quine: Does the direction given by the Council of Ministers to the Water Authority under the Statutory Boards Act 1987 remove from the Water Authority their statutory duty under section 13 of the Water Act to provide a supply of wholesome water sufficient for domestic and other purposes, and has the Council of Ministers obtained legal advice on the impact of their direction in this regard? If so, what is the substance of the advice?

The Speaker: Chief Minister to reply.

Mr Corkill: We certainly took a view, Mr Speaker, that to go down the petition of doleance route and end up in court to try and have the court overturn a valid planning process might be a very

lengthy one indeed and could be very disruptive to the very statutory duty that the authority does have, which is the provision of wholesome water. On the one hand that has to be balanced against the time it would take to promote a fresh application. So there is the judgement. I do not believe you need a lot of legal advice to actually help you make that judgement.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Rushen, Mr Rimington.

Mr Rimington: Thank you, Mr Speaker. As has been stated by the chairman of the Water Authority, is it true that the minister determining a planning appeal could have granted approval but with conditions restricting the size of the proposed water treatment planned and potential noise pollution?

The Speaker: Chief Minister to reply.

Mr Corkill: I do not believe it is possible, Mr Speaker, because any change to the design of the proposed development would require the submission of a fresh planning application so that the details could be properly considered by the planning authority and other interested persons could have had the opportunity of making representations. I do not believe the minister at that point could have amended the planning.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Rushen, Mr Gill.

Mr Gill: Mr Speaker, could the Chief Minister advise: has the Water Authority investigated possible use of land in government ownership nearby to the site in question and, if they have, when did that commence?

The Speaker: Chief Minister to reply.

Mr Corkill: I do not want to be specific about the Water Authority's task of the next stage, Mr Speaker. Can I just say that the Council of Ministers is committed to helping the Water Authority. I personally have already made that commitment and have had meetings with the Chief Executive of the Water Authority to say that we will be as constructive as we can with fresh applications and with dealing with the issue that the Water Authority now find themselves faced with as a result of this planning application having failed.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Onchan, Mr Karran.

Mr Karran: Vainstyr Loayreyder, would the Ard-shirveishagh explain when he says that they had to abide by the independent inspector's decision? Is that not an inconsistency when they were quite happy to ignore the independent inspector's decision as far as

the Pulrose Church was concerned? Would the Ard-shirveishagh also assure this hon. House there is not a certain amount of politicking on both sides as far as this issue is concerned, and how can he assure members of the public outside when articles appeared in the press some time ago and supporters of mine said, 'Your water treatment plant has been lost at that point before anything was made public,' Vainstyr Loayreyder?

The Speaker: Chief Minister to reply.

Mr Corkill: I do know that there is comment, Mr Speaker, in the press about this. I do know there is comment that perhaps the decision was cast at a time when the detailed design was so much bigger than what had been approved at the planning in principle stage. That is all subjective at this stage now because a decision has been made. Can I say that the minister does not have to agree with what the planning inspector has recommended but, as we know by other situations at this time, when a minister goes against those recommendations there have to be justifiable reasons put forward, and I know that the hon. minister looked for those reasons and there were none available.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Middle, Mr Quayle.

Mr Quayle: Thank you, Mr Speaker. As the provision of a quality supply of water is vital to existing householders as well as to new ones, could I ask the Chief Minister if he accepts that we are in a dangerous situation if the Water Authority are in a situation where they are implying that they will not be in a position to supply new housing until the new treatment plant is in operation and that this will exacerbate the existing housing problems that we have?

The Speaker: Chief Minister to reply.

Mr Corkill: I do think I have already answered that question, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Michael, Mr Cannan.

Mr Cannan: In a previous answer the Chief Minister stated that the planning inspector took into account the national interest. Will the Chief Minister tell us, who actually determines what is the national interest of the Isle of Man? Is it a UK planning inspector or is it the local government minister or does the local government minister take the advice of a UK planning inspector as to what is the national interest of the Isle of Man?

The Speaker: Chief Minister to reply.

Mr Corkill: I am sure every member of this House and of another place takes into account the national interest on a regular basis, Mr Speaker, and it is certainly not the inspector's duty to rule on the national interest, but he did examine the issue of the national interest in relation to this application. He obviously, as an inspector, was aware of how important a treatment works such as this is to the community of the Isle of Man. Notwithstanding that, he had severe reservations which he listed, he made recommendations and the minister agreed with those recommendations. Under the planning legislation it is not for any member of this House or another place to interfere with that minister whilst she is making that decision. In fact, it would be contrary to our law for someone to intervene at that point.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Ayre, Mr Quine.

Mr Quine: Yes, can the Chief Minister confirm that if the petition of doleance had been proceeded with and the minister's decision to reject the appeal had been set aside, there would have been the prospect of the urgently needed water treatment plant being constructed within two years - that is one scenario; secondly, that a fresh application for the present site, almost inevitably reduced in size, would not produce the required water treatment plant for at least three to four years; and the third scenario: that a new planning application for another site, assuming such a site can be found, is unlikely to produce the required water treatment plant for some five to six years? So should the national interest factor not be put to the top of the agenda and not pushed sideways, as happened in this case?

The Speaker: Chief Minister to reply.

Mr Corkill: The hon. member in his questions has timescales there and has obviously briefed himself or been briefed with regard to those timescales. I would not wish to comment on those, other than to say that obviously this issue is a priority and it will have a commitment from this government to make sure it is delivered. Can I also make the point that had it been the case that the Greenfield Road site was the only practical and technically acceptable site and that the proposed plant was the only effective plant on that site, no doubt the Water Authority would have argued, probably successfully, that the national need should warrant setting aside the reasons for refusal, but that was not the case.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Peel, Mrs Hannan.

Mrs Hannan: Thank you, Vainstyr Loayreyder. Could I ask the Chief Minister if he will circulate the names of the members of the Planning Committee

when this particular issue was discussed and their interest in this site?

The Speaker: Chief Minister to reply.

Mr Corkill: I can certainly do that, Mr Speaker. I do not know the purpose behind the supplementary question. I am very happy to speak the hon. member about that. I am not aware that there is any conflict of interest in this situation, but certainly the Planning Committee has an independent rôle and I will gladly circulate that part of the minutes of the meeting as to who was there.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Michael, Mr Cannan.

Mr Cannan: What guarantee can the Chief Minister give that a new planning application and the timescale it will take to put it in will not at the end of the day be refused like this one, or is he saying that while this one is refused he will make sure that the next application is approved in the national interest?

The Speaker: Chief Minister to reply.

Mr Corkill: If the hon. questioner is saying that we should approve a future planning application come what may and regardless of other people's interests, then the answer quite simply is I will obviously not give that guarantee. That is not how planning works, particularly in a small community such as ours. It is very well for hon. questioners such as the hon. member for Michael talking about a planning application on the other side of the Island from his own constituency, and I can just imagine the outcry if this had happened, perhaps, nearer to home.

Employment – Proposals for New Act – Question by Mr Henderson

Question 5. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Henderson) to ask the Minister for Trade and Industry:

Will you make a statement with regard to the new proposals of the forthcoming Employment Amendment Act specifically with the difference your department sees between 'a statutory right to be accompanied at a disciplinary or grievance hearing by a trade union representative or fellow worker' and 'the right of representation at such hearing' and which your department is supportive of?

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

Mr Henderson: Gura mie eu, Vainstyr Loayreyder. Ta mee shirrey kied yn eysht y chur ta fo my ennym.

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member for Douglas West, Mr Downie, Minister for Trade and Industry.

Mr Downie: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Firstly, I would point out that the former member for Ramsey, Mr Singer, did in fact both explain the difference between the two concepts and set out the department's stance regarding these matters in this House on 4th March. Nonetheless, I will seek to enlighten the hon. member for Douglas North once again.

In 2002 the department published a consultative document entitled 'Review of Legislative Changes' which is intended to proceed a new Employment (Amendment) Bill, and this includes many proposals to reform the Island's employment laws. The document contains a proposal that workers should for the first time have a statutory right to be accompanied at a disciplinary or grievance hearing by a trade union representative or fellow-worker and notes that workers in the United Kingdom have enjoyed such a right since September 2002. The department proposes that the chosen companion should be entitled to address the hearing, confer with the worker and play an active rôle in the proceedings. I understand that the United Kingdom Government has recently reviewed the operation of the new rights and has concluded that in general it has worked well since it was introduced. What the department has proposed represents a significant extension of existing rights.

That said, however, a companion is not a representative, nor is a right of accompaniment the same thing as a right to be represented. The main difference between the two concepts are that a right of accompaniment stops short of permitting the companion to answer questions on behalf of a worker or to attend the hearing in his place.

As in so many aspects of employment law, the department is striving to balance the interest of the workers and employers. In our view the provision of a right to accompaniment will achieve the optimum balance. On the one hand it will provide workers with protection from any intimidation, assist those who might have difficulties in defending themselves and ensure that workers have a real opportunity to represent their case. On the other hand the new rights will not allow the companion to substitute for the worker, will not obstruct employers from actually managing their staff and will not lead to any unwarranted interference by outside individuals in an employer's business. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

Mr Henderson: Gura mie eu, Vainstyr Loayreyder. I thank the shirveishagh for his answer, but I am afraid I am still somewhat confused with the information he has given. Perhaps he could give further clarification, please, especially with regard to representation at a grievance or disciplinary hearing for a staff member? Could he clarify that that will be a representation whereby a companion accompanying a staff member to such a hearing is what his department is seeking whereby that companion can actually have some sort of input and assist the worker, whereby in the other scenario the companion is just that and has no input into that particular hearing? Can he clarify which is which for me, please, Vainstyr Loayreyder?

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

Mr Downie: Yes, I thought I made the situation absolutely clear. Just for the sake of regularity, the department contains a proposal that workers should, for the first time, have a statutory right to be accompanied. This is not having a situation where someone comes along and represents a person. At the end of the day when we are dealing with issues like this, it is important that the person who has had the complaint made against them has an opportunity to discuss this with his employer and the person who accompanies him is there to give advice and not to deal with that issue on this other person's behalf. What I do not want to see is a situation develop in the Isle of Man where we finish up at these tribunals by having an advocate representing the employer and an advocate or a senior trade union official having to turn out and represent the employee. We are trying to bring this back to provide a basic situation where rights to be represented are quite clear, they are not complicated and they do not involve a lot of money.

Just in winding up I will explain to the hon. member the existing Isle of Man code of practice. At present it has been established since 1992 and on the disciplinary practice and procedures in employment, which states that the disciplinary procedure should give individuals the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee of his or her choice where a union is recognised by a trade union representative whilst failure to observe the code does not of itself render a person liable to proceedings, the provisions of the code are admissible in evidence and may be taken into account in determining any question arising in proceedings before the Employment Tribunal. The department states its intention to revise the code, so what we are trying to do is move along from that but still have a situation where the procedures are easy to follow and they are not being conducted by very senior people on behalf of employers or employees and they do not involve getting into a legal dispute every time there is an issue like this that needs to be resolved dealing with the workplace.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

Mr Henderson: Gura mie eu, Vainstyr Loayreyder. I thank the shirveishagh again for trying to place some clarification on what I am after, but I am seeking disciplinary issues within the workplace, not a legal or employment tribunal situation. Could the shirveishagh focus in on what I am seeking in my question, which is the fact of this accompaniment issue? Now, he has clarified that it is a right to accompaniment now; my supplementary is: will that accompaniment mean that, under those sets of circumstances, that person will be able to help and assist a staff member who is, at the end of the day, in an extremely stressful situation and will not be able to represent themselves to the best because of the stress in the situation? Will the friend accompanying them, or staff-side member, be able to help them ask questions or answer questions and so on?

The Speaker: Minister for Trade and Industry to reply.

Mr Downie: Yes, as far as I am concerned the person who is accompanying the employee at one of these hearings will be in a position where he can advise or give support or assist the employee, but at the end of the day he is not there to represent him. It is very similar to a situation that the hon. member will be familiar with with the planning system where an applicant can come along to a planning review, he can be accompanied by a friend or a member of a local authority or, in this case, a member of this person's trade union or a trade union representative and they are there to give advice, encouragement or support, and really we do not want to see develop a court of law situation where the person who is doing the accompanying is actually putting and answering the questions and then calling on the employee in a third party position just to obtain an overview. We are trying to keep this issue as level as possible and at the same time bear in mind that some of these companies where a dispute could take place are not all large companies; they might only employ half a dozen staff, so we have to have a system that is fair, honest and equitable but at the same time gives both sides an opportunity to put their points of view. Most important of all, an employee should not feel intimidated (**Mr Henderson:** Hear, hear.) and this is why we are progressing this right to be accompanied and we are trying to make it as easy as possible for a person who perhaps feels that it is quite formidable to attend one of these hearings so that they have somebody with them and they can give them advice and support about the various issues that are under discussion.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

Mr Henderson: Gura mie eu, Vainstyr Loayreyder. Again, I thank the shirveishagh for his positive answers, but can he just clarify for me, or is he aware, that in fact some companies do not actually allow any staff members to be accompanied to formal proceedings and they are literally thrown to the wolves? And further to that, would he acknowledge that what I am seeking to achieve here is not to actually disrupt the workings of any particular company at all but to put the balance on a level playing field as he wishes because, at the end of the day, it is a stressful situation for an employee to find themselves in?

The Speaker: Minister for Trade and Industry to reply.

Mr Downie: I want to give the hon. member a commitment, really, that we are continuing to monitor any amendments that have been put forward in the UK to exercise the right of accompaniment, and we are trying to include these in our new Employment (Amendment) Bill or a revised code of practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures as appropriate. It is very important that we do have this framework together so that, when a grievance arises or there is a disciplinary matter, both sides can be properly represented and the whole system does not get too onerous. It is the way we deal with issues in the Isle of Man. We need a simple system and one that is credible, and I hope that the hon. member, when seeing what we are trying to roll into the Employment Act, will see that this framework should stand us in very good stead for years to come and it will make sure that people in the workplace are aware of their rights and are not intimidated in any way.

Parking Spaces for Disabled – Question by Mr Gill

Question 6. The hon. member for Rushen (Mr Gill) to ask the Minister for Transport:

- (1) *What are the criteria for the allocation of a 'disabled' parking space;*
- (2) *how many such spaces are currently allocated;*
- (3) *how is the use of such spaces enforced; and*
- (4) *what measures does your department take to review the appropriate use of such spaces?*

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member for Rushen, Mr Gill.

Mr Gill: Ta mee shirrey kied yn eysht y chur ta fo my ennym.

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member for Douglas West, Mr Shimmin, Minister for Transport, to reply.

Mr Shimmin: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The criteria under which disabled parking places are allocated are that they should be adjacent to public facilities such as libraries, chemists, toilets or doctors' surgeries or that they should be within or adjacent to shopping areas and, where possible, placed at the end of a row of parking or when the department receives a request from interested stakeholders such as the DHSS or a disabled motorists' association.

In answer to part (2) there are approximately 102 disabled places - that is, 50 in Douglas and 52 elsewhere with two more currently being proposed.

In answer to part (3) the usage of the places is enforced by the Isle of Man Constabulary.

Finally, the department does not take any special measures to review the appropriate use of the places although discussions are undertaken with local authorities, the police and traffic wardens, and if a place has become obsolete it would be taken away.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Rushen, Mr Gill.

Mr Gill: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Just one supplementary. Could I just ask the minister if he could advise: how should his department respond to advice that a specific place is no longer required?

The Speaker: Minister of Transport to reply.

Mr Shimmin: It is unusual for a disabled place to be no longer required, but if it were the case that the various bodies we consult brought that to our attention then it would be removed, being painted over and taken out of operation. It is not a common occurrence for disabled parking; indeed, the movement is in the opposite direction: to actually allow greater facilities in those areas where it is most in need.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Middle, Mr Quayle.

Mr Quayle: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The hon. minister will be aware of my questions to his department concerning the provision of dropped kerbs, and I have been most appreciative of the replies from the hon. member for Malew and Santon, Capt. Andrew Douglas. I wonder if the minister then would take this opportunity to make a statement concerning the provision of dropped kerbs, because it actually is very much related to the disabled parking situation. Thank you.

The Speaker: Before the minister replies, I have to say I do not see it very directly related to the question on the order paper, and I have advised hon. members before not to introduce matters that are

nothing to do with the question. I do not think it is appropriate to answer but if the minister wishes to, I will allow him to.

Mr Shimmin: I would be grateful for the opportunity, Mr Speaker. It has been brought to my attention that on occasions people using wheelchairs, disabled access requirements do not find the mechanism of getting from the place where they may park through a dropped kerb to have mobility around the area in question. The department, as you will remember, has got a policy of introducing dropped kerbs where pavements are being reconstructed and we are looking at extending that as part of government's key policy of inclusion for members of society. We have got a lot of ground to make up, but certainly, as more and more people are able to be mobile whilst having some disability, we will be endeavouring to try and increase the number of dropped kerbs. We have not got it right yet but we are working towards that, sir.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

Mr Henderson: Gura mie eu, Vainstyr Loayreyder. Could the shirveishagh confirm that his department will be seeking to increase the spaces for the disabled over the future months and years to come rather than any sort of decrease? If he could just give that commitment?

The Speaker: Minister for Transport to reply.

Mr Shimmin: Mr Speaker, there is certainly no intention to remove the disabled parking spaces; indeed, we do have many requests for reserved parking places which are a different category of parking provision, more to do with residential areas. Certainly it is a concern to the department that parking throughout the Island is limited. There is a demand for disabled persons and people with disabilities to have access to their own properties and the rest of the Island. We will endeavour to try and get the balance right, but certainly our experience is that there is an ever-increasing demand for these facilities. We have to try and balance the needs and the appropriateness of the places we put them.

It is also an opportunity to encourage the members of the public to use the parking spaces appropriately. It is a disgrace that still on the Isle of Man we have able-bodied people using up the small number of disabled parking spaces (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.) and any encouragement from the public to report persons who offend in that way would be greatly appreciated.

Police – Head of Corporate Services – Question by Mr Houghton

Question 7. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Houghton) to ask the Minister for Home Affairs:

In respect of the Head of Corporate Services (IOM Constabulary):

- (a) *what was his total period of service;*
- (b) *was a function held to mark his service;*
- (c) *if so, where and how many people attended;*
- (d) *what was the total cost of the function; and*
- (e) *who paid for it?*

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Houghton.

Mr Houghton: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name, sir.

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member for Douglas East, Mr Braidwood, Minister for Home Affairs.

Mr Braidwood: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The previous Head of Corporate Services was appointed to the Isle of Man Constabulary on 8th June 1998 and he tendered his resignation with effect from 31st December 2001. He was therefore Head of Corporate Services for approximately two-and-a-half years. A small luncheon was arranged to mark his departure from the constabulary and this was held at the Max Restaurant, and 11 people attended. The luncheon cost £284.95 and the constabulary met the costs on the authority of the Chief Constable.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Houghton.

Mr Houghton: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the hon. minister for his forthright response to this. So it begs me to ask the question that why has a civilian with only two-and-a-half years service been adorned in this way when officers with long and loyal service have been ignored?

The Speaker: Minister for Home Affairs to reply.

Mr Braidwood: Mr Speaker, long-serving officers who retire or resign have not been ignored. As I have said in another place, they are invited by the Chief Constable to his office with the spouse or the wife and there are presentations made there. The Chief Constable took the view with the Head of Corporate

Services that it was rather an unusual case, that the person had only been here for two-and-a-half years. Generally officers who resign or retire have many friends and colleagues in the police force and normally a celebratory lunch is held there. So therefore it was up to the Chief Constable and it was his decision that he thought that a lunch should be held, although a small one, for the retirement or the resignation of the Head of Corporate Services.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Houghton.

Mr Houghton: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The minister refers to this being an unusual case; it is. It is unusual in so far as somebody who has spent such a tiny amount of service to this Island gets treated in this way. Would he not agree that it really is unusual that a senior officer with almost 39 years service was just completely ignored? That officer must remain nameless, but does he not agree that there is a disparity here in the treatment of both a senior officer with exemplary service on this Island to somebody who has only been here five minutes?

A Member: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: Minister for Home Affairs to reply.

Mr Braidwood: Mr Speaker, I do feel it is totally inappropriate to speak on individual persons, and the only comment I can make is that the only luncheon which was held previously was for the Deputy Chief Constable when he retired and, as I have said previously, the officers are normally invited by the Chief Constable to his office for the presentations.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Houghton.

Mr Houghton: Thank you, Mr Speaker. A final question, sir, to the minister. Can the minister therefore put matters right and invite those officers whose names I have given him in the past, to a luncheon and treat them accordingly, sir?

The Speaker: Minister for Home Affairs to reply.

Mr Braidwood: Mr Speaker, as I have already said, the only person who was invited to a luncheon - and that was by the Lieutenant-Governor - was on the retirement of the Deputy Chief Constable. As far as I am concerned, the officers who Mr Houghton has mentioned - and he has given me the names - were invited by the Chief Constable to his office for presentations.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Michael, Mr Cannan.

Mr Cannan: I was going to ask the minister, does he consider it appropriate that such matters in this question should be asked in a national parliament?

Several Members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: Minister for Home Affairs to reply.

Mr Braidwood: Mr Speaker, it is up to any individual member in this hon. House to ask any questions which he feels appropriate.

The Speaker: And just to add to that, I can confirm to the House that if a question was out of order it would not appear on the order paper.

Several Members: Hear, hear.

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders – Issue of – Question by Mr Houghton

Question 8. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Houghton) to ask the Minister for Home Affairs:

- (1) *How many anti-social behaviour orders have been issued by the courts since the Criminal Justice Act came into force; and*
- (2) *when was first anti-social behaviour order issued and what areas of anti-social behaviour do such orders cover?*

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Houghton.

Mr Houghton: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name, sir.

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member for Douglas East, Mr Braidwood, Minister for Home Affairs.

Mr Braidwood: Thank you, Mr Speaker. To my department's knowledge there have been no anti-social behaviour orders made by the courts since the Criminal Justice Act came into force. With regard to what areas anti-social behaviour orders cover, it is fair to say they cover any act that is considered anti-social, which in terms of what the Act says means a manner that causes harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons. It should be noted, however, that for an order to be made, it must be seen by the courts to be necessary to protect any person from further anti-social acts. As the hon. members knows, these orders have been used sparingly in England and Wales, so it was a reasonable assumption that the take-up rate would be slow on the Island. Again, as the hon. member knows, these orders can only be applied for by a defined number of

agencies and would be used only where they seem a practical response to the problems occurring in any specific community. The court will be seeking information from sources named in the Act and may well decide that some other penalty action may be appropriate. The department has met its responsibilities by enacting the desire of this hon. Court, but it is not the department's rôle to interfere with the independence of the judiciary, who will make anti-social behaviour orders where they feel it is appropriate to do so.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Houghton.

Mr Houghton: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The minister will be aware that one of the relevant authorities who can put to the court those offenders who can be subject to an ASBO – an anti-social behaviour order – is indeed the Chief Constable. Now, bearing in mind that I am sure every hon. member in this House has good knowledge in their own constituencies of nuisances in their area who need to be tacked under this Act, can he advise as to whether his police officers are bringing forward such actions in collaboration with other departments and local authorities, sir?

The Speaker: Minister for Home Affairs to reply.

Mr Braidwood: Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is a matter for the Chief Constable and individual officers to decide on when an anti-social behaviour order should be applied for within the day-to-day running of the operations of the police force. As I have already said, it is really up to the local authorities in whose area those anti-social behaviours are occurring to apply to the courts, and each individual local authority was sent a letter in November 2002 about how to apply for anti-social behaviour orders.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Rushen, Mr Gill.

Mr Gill: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Does the minister agree with the principle of affording our courts as many sentencing and disposal options as possible?

Mr Houghton: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: Minister for Home Affairs to reply.

Mr Braidwood: I can totally concur with the sentiments expressed by the hon. member for Rushen, Mr Gill.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Houghton.

Mr Houghton: Thank you, Mr Speaker. In view of the fact that we are going to have yet another long hot summer coming up –

Mr Cretney: We hope so!

Mr Houghton: - with this nuisance behaviour during longer daylight hours, more specifically in housing estate areas and the like, this matter is a very serious issue. Can I ask the hon. minister if he would, indeed, put his weight behind in the promotion of ASBOs on these sorts of people before the matter goes yet again out of hand and it is too late before anything can be done, sir?

The Speaker: Minister for Home Affairs to reply.

Mr Braidwood: Thank you, Mr Speaker. My department will be quite willing, again, to write to local authorities –

Mr Houghton: Thank you.

Mr Braidwood: - saying to them how they can apply for anti-social behaviour orders. May I also say that my department is looking at the new legislation which has been introduced in the UK on anti-social behaviour orders under the Police Reform Act.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Peel, Mrs Hannan.

Mrs Hannan: Thank you, Vainstyr Loayreyder. Would the minister also write to local authorities and ask them to provide facilities for young people and older young people who do not have facilities at present (**Mr Houghton:** Hear, hear.) to provide meeting places and to provide other facilities for them so that we are not all the time complaining about them but at least doing something about helping them to enjoy themselves?

The Speaker: Minister for Home Affairs to reply.

Mr Houghton: It will save them from being a nuisance.

Mr Braidwood: Mr Speaker, I think it is up to all individual members of this hon. Court to raise the matter with local authorities because local authorities come within their constituency, but I will be quite happy to put into the letter going to the local authorities hoping that they have facilities available for younger people.

Mr Houghton: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: Hon. members, that concludes item 1 on our order paper, questions for oral answer. Item 2 on our order paper is questions for written answer, of

which there are three and they have been circulated in compliance with our standing orders.

**Civil Service – Courses at Sunningdale –
Graduate Entries –
Question by Mr Cannan
for Written Answer**

Question 1. The hon. member for Michael (Mr Cannan) to ask the Chief Minister:

- (1) *Is it the policy of the Council of Ministers that chief executive officers and senior civil servants should attend professional development courses at the Civil Service College at Sunningdale; and*
- (2) *does the Council of Ministers have a specific policy for graduate entry to the civil service and, if so, what are the terms of entry?*

Answer

- (1) The Council of Ministers agreed the Isle of Man Government Employee Development Policy on 29th June 2000. A copy is attached for information. This policy recognises the importance of training and development.

The Personnel Office has a training division which provides a comprehensive framework of management and skills courses for the development of staff. However, this division cannot meet all development needs without support from elsewhere.

In instances where they do not provide training themselves, and a training need has been identified, they will help and advise officers as to the most effective provisions available elsewhere.

The Civil Service College at Sunningdale is one of a number of establishments which support the professional development of individuals.

- (2) The Council of Ministers and Civil Service Commission support fully the aim of increasing the numbers of graduates entering the civil service. A considerable amount of work has been carried out by the Personnel Office with the objective of making the civil service more attractive to graduates, and this work is ongoing.

**ISLE OF MAN GOVERNMENT
EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

The Isle of Man Government is committed to a policy of providing training, development and career

opportunities across the public service to all its employees. It recognises the importance of training and development in providing skilled, flexible, well motivated employees to deliver a wide range of high quality public services which meet the current and future needs of the Island's population.

The implementation of this policy involves everyone within the organisation:

Members of the Government, Chief Officers and Senior Managers: in providing and communicating the objectives and goals of Government (both the overall objectives of IoM Government and the specific objectives of departments, boards and offices); and in supporting staff development by the provision of resources and encouragement.

Line Managers: in providing support for development by identifying skills and competencies required for both the current job and future development; identifying targets and objectives; agreeing personal development plans; providing support and assistance to implement the plans; and providing recognition of achievement through appraisal, feedback etc.

Individuals: by taking ownership of their development by actively contributing to the creation of their personal development plan; and following the plan to meet targets and objectives.

Staff will be encouraged to take responsibility for their own development. Government will provide support and actively encourage learning and development opportunities aimed at continuous improvement for all its employees by:

- * Appraisal and discussion between managers and staff on development needs.
 - * Ensuring the provision of a range of assessment, training and development activities to develop the skills and competencies required for the employees current job and for career development.
 - * Providing information and support for flexible career development across the range of jobs in Government.
 - * Recognition of achievements.
 - * The provision of an employee development strategy which supports this policy.
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Police – Retirement Presentations to Officers – Question by Mr Houghton for Written Answer

Question 2. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Houghton) to ask the Minister for Home Affairs:

- (1) *How many police officers retired from service in the last three and a half years;*
- (2) *how many of those were invited to attend an official presentation to receive their end of service certificates together with a citation reflecting their service; and*
- (3) *how many of those attended a private presentation in the Chief Constable's Office?*

Answer

In the last three-and-a-half years a total of 21 police officers have retired from the constabulary.

The opportunity to have their service certificates presented personally by the Chief Constable was given to all retiring officers. It is, however, possible in the first few months of the Chief Constable's arrival in 2000, whilst the new procedure was being put in place, that an officer may not have been invited although there is not record of this occurring.

Ten of these officers elected to have their certificates presented personally by the Chief Constable.

DHSS – Doctors 'On Call' – Question by Mr Cannan for Written Answer

Question 3. The hon. member for Michael (Mr Cannan) to ask the member for Health and Social Security:

- (1) *Will you specify in detail the arrangements covering the whole of the Isle of Man for the provision and availability of an 'on call' doctor(s) (GP) for the period 6.00 p.m. to 8.00 a.m. on weekdays and throughout weekends with effect from 1st April 2003; and*
- (2) *will you arrange for public notices in the media (newspapers and radio) advising the public of these arrangements?*

Answer

- (1) With effect from 1st April 2003, general practitioners will relinquish the 24-hour responsibility for patients. Their normal hours of work will then be 8.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. Monday to Friday, excluding weekends and all bank holidays.

During the period when general practitioners do not have responsibility for their patients, the DHSS will provide an emergency doctor service based at Noble's Hospital. This service will cover the whole Island, and the duty doctor arrangements will be as follows:

Week Nights and Weekend and Bank Holiday Nights

6.00 p.m. to midnight	- 1 doctor - (second doctor on call)
Midnight to 8.00 a.m.	- 1 doctor - (second doctor on call)

Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holiday Days

8.00 a.m. to noon	- 2 doctors
Noon to 6.00 p.m.	- 2 doctors

Services will be supported by a receptionist except on the night shift (midnight to 8.00 a.m.) where contact will be direct with the doctor. A car and driver will be available to assist with any home visits required.

- (2) Information to the public will be available through the media and other appropriate outlets such as GP surgeries.

Patients of practitioners not previously covered by the MannDoc out-of-hours co-operative will receive a letter explaining the new arrangements. The practices concerned are Ramsey, Laxey and Southern Practice (Port Erin)