

2.1 Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central of the Minister for the Environment regarding targeted inspections on agricultural staff accommodation (OQ.36/2026):

Will the Minister advise whether targeted inspections are taking place in relation to agricultural staff accommodation, and, if not, will he explain why and advise whether there is a plan to address this as a matter of urgency?

Deputy S.G. Luce of Grouville and St. Martin (The Minister for the Environment):

I can say to the Deputy that at present we are not conducting targeted inspections of agricultural staff accommodations, but I am committed to safety standards of agricultural staff accommodation, and I will work collaboratively with the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs and the Jersey Farmers Union to establish a prioritised inspection plan over the summer that ensures that minimum housing standards are met. My officers carry out targeted inspections of all rented dwellings, including staff accommodation, when either complaints are received or when licence applications are made, and for lodging houses.

2.1.1 Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Would the Minister agree that there is and has been for some time an urgent need to examine the standard of farm worker accommodation, if there is any intention to reduce risk of harm and death to people, and why was this not prioritised sooner?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

My officers have undertaken inspections of some agricultural staff accommodation as part of their routine work. Until the tragic event that occurred recently, my officers had no reason to target this industry as a whole. Therefore, I do not have in front of me any urgent need to look specifically at this type of accommodation.

2.1.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

Can the Minister tell us how many inspections there have been in the last year of farm worker accommodation?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

At this stage I cannot provide a specific figure because the inspection records do not categorise visits by accommodation type. Officers do not make a note of specifics. I made a commitment in 2024 that the application form, when we introduced renter dwelling licences, would be as simple and as possible as it could be. I specified that non-essential information would not be requested, such as property type. However, I can say to the Assembly that I will be reviewing the application form before the end of my term of office, so it may well be that future applications will need to specify that information.

2.1.3 Deputy J. Renouf:

In his answer to Deputy Catherine Curtis, the Minister said that inspections had taken place at farm worker accommodation. How does he know this if the data was never recorded?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I am sorry if there has been confusion. I did say that farm workers' accommodation had been inspected routinely but that numbers had not been recorded. I have not got a number in front of me of how many units of staff agricultural accommodation have been inspected recently.

2.1.4 Deputy C.D. Curtis:

The Public Health and Safety Law 2018 states that landlords and employers are responsible for making sure that accommodation is fit for purpose. Can the Minister say whether anyone responsible for work permit accommodation has been prosecuted under that law?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I do not have an answer to that question, so I cannot give the Deputy a proper answer. But I will get back to her with that information.