2026.09.08

5.4 Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South of the Minister for External Relations regarding expired bank cards (OQ.67/2026).

Will the Minister advise whether he is aware that banks allow money for subscriptions to be paid out on expired bank cards and, if so, what action does the Minister intend to take in respect of this practice?

Senator I.J. Gorst (The Minister for External Relations):

I am aware that payments of subscription services can continue after the card originally used to set up the subscription has expired. Automated services such as Visa account updater and the Mastercard automatic billing updater should securely share updated bank card details with participating merchants when replacement cards are issued; for example, when a card has expired or been stolen. This system is used in many jurisdictions and helps to ensure that payments for reoccurring bills can continue to be processed without interruption, avoiding the unintended loss of access to a subscription service. So I am not aware of any concerns having been raised by Islanders regarding this service, but if the Deputy is aware of any I am happy to consider them.

5.4.1 Deputy T.A. Coles:

Well, unfortunately this happened to me, so I will raise my concern right now as I was unaware that an expired bank card was able to still process payments. This led me to have £62 taken from my bank account without my knowledge or consent, whereas if I had walked into a shop with that card I would not have been able to purchase something. So does the Minister believe that this system provides an adequate level of protection towards a consumer with regards to these financial transactions?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I think it does. The position is that it is in place to benefit the consumer. In certain instances, of course, if there has been fraud on the card then a different approach is taken. As I understand it, these structures or organisations or one's banking institution, one can opt out from these services. But I would caution very strongly any individual before doing such a thing because what it would probably mean is that all of their payments that they may have through the card, if they have authorised it through the card, would stop being made and they could find themselves in debt in certain areas. So I do think that the system as currently stands is appropriate but, as I say, individuals can opt out.

5.4.2 Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central:

In light of the fact that many more people are now taking out subscription services, and given that there are more protections perhaps offered by credit cards in relation to this matter, would it be appropriate for Government to undertake some form of communications to let people know what protections are in place with a credit card as opposed to a debit card?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I am not sure that it is the Government's job to do that. I think that credit card providers do a very good job of that, because it is one of the major selling points of having a credit card. It is not the credit, because credit on credit cards is relatively expensive to other forms of credit, but it does provide this extra security for all sorts of reasons. Individual users of banking facilities of course have got to balance up. With a credit card you get a large bill at the end if you have used it, whereas if you are using it on your debit card then it is coming directly from your current account, therefore you may consider that you can manage your expenses more reasonably. But I do not think this is an area for Government to issue communication. What is an area for Government to issue communication, and it does in conjunction with the banking sector and the regulator, is around fraud and how all of these instruments could be used for fraud.

5.4.3 Deputy T.A. Coles:

The Minister in his response to my first supplementary was around that a consumer might find themselves in a level of debt, but of course if the card is allowed to take money without pre-authorisation or additional authorisation off the new card then that debt could accumulate. Is it not better or is it the Minister's opinion that it might be better to lose services every 4 years and have to reconsider whether you still want your subscription rather than to have it automatically renew without your consent?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I am not really in a position to second-guess what is in the best interest of any individual using such a service. From my personal perspective, the less I have to fiddle around with standing orders and direct debits and subscription services the better, because otherwise it means the children are logging on to Netflix and all of a sudden they cannot access it because something has happened at the bank which cannot be resolved very easily. It is a balance. Education is important. As we have just said, that is a job for the banking community and also for regulators and the provider of these products.