

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 25 May 2015

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(BE15/155) - Service Provider Vetting and Conduct - Programme 1.3: Compliance and Detention

Senator Hanson-Young, Sarah (L&CA) written:

- a. What is the vetting process for Serco officers?
- b. How many cases of anti-asylum seeker sentiment/other inappropriate attitudes expressed publicly by these officers are you aware of in the past year?
- c. How many have been disciplined or stood down for this?
- d. How are processes being improved to prevent this in future?

Answer:

- a. Candidates for Serco Detention Service Officer roles undergo a number of checks and examinations before being offered the role. These include:
 - Telephone screen interview
 - Psychometric testing
 - Assessment centre
 - 100 point identity checks (eg passport, driving licence)
 - Proof of right to work (including citizenship or appropriate passport/visa)
 - Declaration of any history of detention or relationships with detainees
 - Satisfactory Australian Federal Police check
 - Working with children check (where relevant and in accordance with State legislation)
 - Two employment reference checks

Once employed, Serco Officers undergo five weeks' intensive training which, as well as technical and first aid training, leads to the award of a Certificate II in

Security Operations. The training includes:

- Professional boundaries
- Bullying, harassment and discrimination
- Cultural awareness
- Mental health awareness
- Psychological support program
- Conducting interviews
- Manage conflict through negotiation
- Working with families and minors
- Migration Act and associated legislation

Duty of care to persons in immigration detention Officers also then undergo annual refresher training which includes much of the above content. There is additionally an annual Australian Federal Police check. Working with children checks are also updated regularly in accordance with state legislation. Toolbox

talks, with diverse subjects such as Social Media Behaviour, are delivered regularly to all operational staff across the network.

- b. Two – on both occasions Serco dealt with the matter in an expedient and appropriate way.
- c. Two - In both cases the employees were subject to a disciplinary process – one was terminated and one was given a final warning. Serco promptly investigates and acts on all such allegations in accordance with their disciplinary procedures. Disciplinary action is always taken by Serco in response to this kind of conduct.
- d. The recruitment and training processes used by Serco are kept under a constant state of review to ensure best practice and to minimise the risk of employing unskilled or inappropriate staff. Serco has a professional and experienced in-house recruitment team.

Serco recruitment processes have evolved and become more robust over time and have developed improvements in the training regime in consultation with the Department. For example, Serco are currently introducing an annual mental health refresher training session for all staff with detainee contact.

Serco takes a zero tolerance approach to any of staff found to have engaged in publicly expressing inappropriate attitudes - they are immediately subjected to a rigorous disciplinary policy of which all staff are made aware.