

**REPLY BY THE MINISTER OF
THE PUBLIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT
TO A QUESTION ASKED PURSUANT TO RULE 6 OF THE
RULES OF PROCEDURE BY DEPUTY MARY LOWE**

Question

1. From the cruise liner schedules 2008-2015 shown (..), it appears the number of days cruise liners arrive has increased rather than a huge increase in the number of passengers, therefore if Guernsey could handle safely 6 days per month with 'x' number of cruise liner passengers embarking/disembarking why are they not able to handle 14 days with the same number of passengers?

Answer

I don't wish to argue about the term huge, but to me an increase from 36,701 landed passengers in 2009 to an estimated 130,000 in 2015 is huge. The numbers of ships increasing from 38 in 2009 to 110 in 2015 likewise seems a huge increase to me.

Fig 2 shows this considerable increase in the industry, from the numbers of ships visiting to the number of passengers disembarking and the numbers of passengers returning to their vessel on a daily basis.

St Peter Port Harbour is now the busiest cruise liner tendering operation in Europe.

In 2009, there were 8 days when vessels with a capacity of more than 2500 passengers visited our shores, whilst this year we can expect around 36 occasions when that number visit – which is nearly half of all cruise visit days. So what we are experiencing now, in terms of larger visitor numbers, is much more common place.

In summary, both the number and size of cruise ships visiting the island has increased significantly in recent years, and so too has the number of passengers coming ashore. This summer we hope to welcome up to 130,000 visitors – which is more than double the number who arrived in 2012.

Your question suggests that there was little risk to cruise passengers disembarking and embarking at the Inter-Island Quay area in 2014 and previous years. In fact, the increase in numbers caused an increasing concern about the volumes of foot passengers disembarking and queuing to embark on tenders, close to a busy commercial port area. Risk assessments carried out caused us to understand that changes needed to be made for the arrangements in 2015.

Question

2. In your letter (of the 22nd June) you state '*a return to the White Rock would mean a curtailing of numbers and an increase in risk*', as it appears the increase materialises from the number of days cruise liners have been arriving safely with the increase mostly since 2012, why would a return to the White Rock result in curtailing numbers?

Answer

As stated above, the increase in visitor numbers is due to the volume of passengers coming aboard the ships and the increase in size of the visiting ships, rather than merely the increase in the number of days cruise liners arrive. We could cope with an increase in overall passengers more easily if they came on different days but the trend is for larger ships, with a greater number of passengers on board who wish to disembark on any one particular day. This is a significant factor in terms of risk.

Following the Health and Safety Risk Assessment, which included the disembarkation arrangements for cruise passengers at the Inter-Island Quay area and a review of the numbers of cruise passengers visiting Guernsey, the level of vehicle and commercial traffic at the White Rock/Inter Island Quay, the busy commercial port operations, including freight movements which are close to the Inter Island Quay area, it was clear we were unable to safely accommodate the increased volume of passengers in 2015.

This was particularly pertinent when considering the increase in days necessitating landing visitors from these larger passenger-capacity vessels and when more than one visit at the same time. We would either need to restrict the number and potentially the size of vessels that can visit in order to continue at the White Rock, or move the operations to an area of the harbour where these risks could be eliminated altogether or mitigated more successfully.

The Albert Pier provides improved pedestrian accessibility for very large volumes of passengers needing to disembark, embark and sometimes queue whilst waiting to re-join their ship via a tender vessel. The levels of risk have been greatly reduced and whilst some other issues have arisen, in overall risk terms the Albert Pier now provides a satisfactory risk profile.

Feedback has indicated that passengers, tour operators, guides and ship crew alike prefer the access into Town via the Albert Pier and the visitor experience is better, as it is a more pleasant part of the Harbour for foot passengers.

Question

3. Did PSD carry out any Health & Safety and/or Risk Management Reports before a decision was taken to move from the Inter-Island Quay to the Albert Pier, and if so, will these reports be published in full on the Government website?

Answer

Yes is the answer to the first part of your question. .

Public Services do not intend to publish the reports on the States of Guernsey website. It is recommended practice for States of Guernsey's risk assessments not to be released into the public domain, as these documents by their nature, contain sensitive information. This is no different to the approach that any private sector, commercial operator would accept. This recommendation was extended in regard to these reports by a senior expert officer, and the States insurers, and my Board has accepted that advice. The Public Services Board has been provided with copies of the operational risk assessments and is satisfied with their content, in line with discharging their mandated responsibilities.

In the same way, I am sure, the Home Department, on which you sit, would not release risk assessments for law enforcement activities nor would this be prudent for other Departments.

Question

4. Will PSD publish as soon as possible after each cruise liner visit during 2015, how many passengers came ashore, how many had pre-booked tours & how many were independents?

Answer

Cruise Liner passenger numbers are already published on a quarterly basis in the 'Visit Guernsey' Visitor Exit Survey. Public Services already has plans in place to publish the number of passengers coming ashore to Guernsey on a regular basis via social media. We have also issued a press release to the local media with an update on the season up to June and will publish a summary of these figures on our website.

The Department will not be publishing information regarding tour data, as this extends beyond the remit of the Public Services. I am advised by the Commerce and Employment Department that we do not currently collect information regarding how many passengers go on pre booked tours. This intellectual property sits with the four excursion agents, Bailiwick Tours, Excursions, Intercruises and European Cruise Service and is commercially sensitive. The Commerce and Employment Department will seek to obtain data from these agents at the end of the season.

Question

5. Do PSD have the data asked for in question 4 above for the last 5 years, and if so what are they, as in your letter it states ‘Arrangements are working well and we are able to handle greater numbers of passengers than previously at significantly lower levels of risk’.

Answer

I can confirm that the new arrangements are working well, whilst we will continue to review how we may improve on them. The table in Figure 1 shows the number days for each band of cruise vessel size for the last 5 years and those scheduled for 2015¹. In addition, Figure 2 provides the published figures for cruise passengers coming ashore from 2009 to 2015.

In the cruise passenger season for 2015 to the end of June, 54 cruise ships have visited Guernsey, and 59,627 passengers came ashore and 55 more cruise ship visits are scheduled from July to the end of this year..

Question

6. It is very clear the headline growth in passenger figures are to be welcomed but as the actual number of daily cruise ship passengers has changed very little, will PSD reconsider moving back to the Inter-Island Quay and enhancing the area by moving the new pontoon from the Albert Pier to the Cambridge Pier, giving double the access for tenders to operate?

Answer

Figure 1 Shows how scheduled daily cruise passengers arriving at our shores have grown: steadily in the period 2009 until 2012 and then a considerable jump in 2013, again in 2014 and once more in 2015.

In 2009 there were only 8 days where above 2,500 passengers arrived, this year 36 such days are scheduled.

In 2009 we had one day with over 4,000 passengers, one day in 2010 and no days in 2012 but this year we have 17 days where there are vessels with over 4,000 passengers. The assertion therefore, that the number of daily cruise ship passengers has changed very little is incorrect.

The trend is for busier days than heretofore and this trend correlates with the overall direction of the cruise liner industry with larger vessels being built. Things are likely to only get busier on a daily basis.

The increase in the numbers of cruise passenger visitors to Guernsey shores is an important aspect of our visitor economy.

¹ For example, in 2014, 23 vessels with a passenger capacity of 2,500 *and above* were scheduled to visit (which includes vessels in the higher capacity bands of 4,000, 5,000 and 6,000). Where information is available, those vessels scheduled to visit that were subsequently cancelled, have been removed from the data for 2009-2014.

We will review arrangements and make any reasonable adjustments to ensure that people using the Albert Pier have the best experience possible, whilst being safe. However, the decision to relocate from the Inter-Island Quay area at the White Rock to the Albert Pier remains unchanged.

Recent stakeholder meetings, including those with local tour guides, felt the relocation of the tender docking area to the Albert Pier was a good move and that it had been very well received by the cruise passengers.

Date of Receipt of the Question: 30th June 2015

Date of Reply: 14th July 2015

Fig 1: Extract of the number of occurrences (in days) of cruise vessel sizes (including peak numbers) for scheduled Cruise Liner Visits

	Peak	2,500+	4,000+	5,000+	6,000+
		Days	Days	Days	Days
2009	4002	8	1	0	0
2010	4179	5	1	0	0
2011	4338	10	2	0	0
2012	3780	13	0	0	0
2013	6849	28	7	2	0
2014	6155	23	4	3	1
2015	7972	36	17	5	3

Source: Spreadsheet held by Guernsey Harbours - 'St Peter Port and Bailiwick Cruise Liner Visits 20xx' including Scheduled Vessels (according to their passenger capacity)

Fig 2: Number of Passengers Coming Ashore from 2009-2014

<i>Year</i>	<i>PAX landed</i>	<i>Ships</i>
2009	36,701	38
2010	44,382	49
2011	53,758	62
2012	54,588	51
2013	113,380	84
2014	105,419	89
2015	130,000(estimate)	110 (estimate excluding cancellations)

Source: Table produced by Guernsey Harbours -

(Note: Estimated numbers of passengers coming ashore are provided to Port Control by the cruise liners via Guernsey Shipping Agents)