

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION 105/2010

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The Opposition have received complaints from tenants that one of the two lifts at Referendum House is again out of action. The tenants claim that the faulty lift has not been repaired despite various reports that have been made by them to the housing department in the last few days and they are understandably concerned that many people will be left stranded if the only remaining lift were to break down as well.

The story of the lifts at Referendum House is a long and complicated saga. The Opposition has received many complaints over the years regarding the functioning of these lifts and it is unacceptable that the complaints should continue within weeks of both lifts having been replaced by new ones. Indeed, the Ministry for Housing reporting office, according to data supplied by the Government, has received 90 reports about the lift at Referendum House since 2007. In 2010 up to June there have been 9 reports, 6 of which were made in May and June. The second new lift was installed in May 2010.

In answer to questions at the last meeting of Parliament, the Government said that 30 lifts are included in the contract held by Otis for the repair and maintenance of lifts in Government housing estates. They added that the four lifts at the Tower Blocks were under warranty and therefore not included in the contract as yet. The Government also said that since Otis undertook responsibility for the repair and maintenance of lifts in Government housing estates, the taxpayer has paid £273,345 for this service. When asked by Shadow Housing Minister Charles Bruzon how many times the lifts in Government housing estates required preventive maintenance in each financial year since the contract with Otis commenced, the Government response was that there was no record of the number of times that this has occurred.

The Opposition is concerned at the reports that it continues to receive regarding the lifts at Referendum House. The latest complaint indicates that one lift is out of order and that the other is operating in a bumpy and shaky manner. There are many tenants who will find access to their homes extremely difficult if both lifts were to break down.