

New Brunswick language commissioner reviews complaints of English-only service

Description

- Two commissionaires have been removed from their jobs in Moncton, and the City of Fredericton is reviewing its social media accounts, following separate complaints of government bodies failing to provide equal service in French and English in New Brunswick.

In a statement Katherine d'Entremont, the commissioner of official languages, said she is investigating a complaint concerning the lack of security services in French at the Moncton Community Health Centre.

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D'Entremont won't comment further because her investigation is not complete, but in March, her office published a report on security services in government buildings.

"That report noted that it is essential that security guards who greet the public be bilingual. These guards generally work alone and must therefore be able to provide the public with information in English and French," she wrote.

Health network admits there was an issue

The Vitalite Health Network issued a statement saying it agrees there was an issue.

"There was a deficiency in the contract regarding the offer of services in both official languages," says the statement. "Public service to health care patients should, at no time, be deficient in either official language."

The health network says it was informed by the Commissionaire service that corrective measures would be taken.

In an email, Pieter Kramers, the CEO of the Commissionaire service for New Brunswick said bilingual commissionaires are now being provided.

"We continue to look after the best interests of all our commissionaires, including those that are displaced by changing client requirements. Unfortunately, at this time, alternative opportunities are limited," Kramers wrote.

Meanwhile, d'Entremont confirmed she has completed an investigation into two complaints concerning English-only communication by Fredericton's Water and Sewer division, and by Fredericton Fire Department's use of social media.

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"Although the report has not been published, the investigation report concludes that under the Official Languages Act, the City of Fredericton must communicate public information in both official languages," d'Entremont wrote.

She has recommended that the City of Fredericton give itself the means to issue public information simultaneously in both languages.

Fredericton spokesman Wayne Knorr says the complaint is still being processed by city staff.

<http://globalnews.ca/news/2695237/new-brunswick-language-commissioner-reviews-complaints-of-english-only-service/>

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