

4.11 Deputy S. Pitman of St. Helier of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the average waiting time for an appointment to see a psychologist:

What is the average waiting time for an appointment to see a psychologist?

Deputy A.E. Pryke of Trinity (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

Currently the wait for initial assessment appointments following a referral to the Psychology Assessment and Therapy Service is 16 weeks.

4.11.1 Deputy S. Pitman:

Does the Minister for Health and Social Services think this is adequate, given the nature of the people with depression, anxiety et cetera? Some people by this time could commit suicide.

The Deputy of Trinity:

If I answer the last bit of the question first, all referrals are triaged and regarding suicide, if it is identified that it is urgent they will be seen as urgent and as soon as possible, in a very short space of time. Is it satisfactory that there is a waiting-list? No, it is not, and that is why we are investing in psychological therapies as part of the White Paper and next year, as part of this White Paper the initiative Jersey Talking Therapies are recruiting more staff to support it and the position will increase significantly.

4.11.2 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

With regard to the answer just given by the Minister for Health and Social Services, could she clarify what is the waiting-time for what she described as urgent cases?

The Deputy of Trinity:

I cannot give the exact time, but if a referral is made by the G.P. (General Practitioner) to a psychologist and it is marked urgent they will be seen. That is a clinical decision.

4.11.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

Will the Minister for Health and Social Services agree that diagnosis is an issue for psychological illnesses and that not everyone who is suffering from a psychological illness will know about it? What other mechanisms are there in place to make sure that other frontline staff, not simply at the hospital but maybe teachers et cetera are able to pick up on the signs and refer people who may fall through the hoops of a G.P.'s visit?

The Deputy of Trinity:

I know that a lot of education updating is done across education as well as the other parts of the community and social services, as well as within the acute hospital setting. I have not got the exact details of what it involves but if the Deputy wants some more information I am quite happy to provide that.

4.11.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

A supplementary, if I may. Is there to be a review of mental health provision in general, which would include psychological assessments? If so, when will that take place and who will be undertaking the mental health review?

The Deputy of Trinity:

There will be a mental health review taking place and that will include looking at the estates, the updating of the mental health law, and a whole review of the services. Who is undertaking that, I have not got that information at the moment.

4.11.5 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

The Minister for Health and Social Services said services would increase significantly. Could she tell us what the current number of psychologists is, what is the number that will appear after the significant increase, and can she buy-in service, should there be a spike in demand?

The Deputy of Trinity:

The Jersey Talking Therapies is a community-based service working with G.P.s and working with the voluntary sector with Mind Jersey to deliver that as well as social services. It is helping people to understand more about themselves and their reaction to the challenges that they are facing and there will be more trained health professionals and this will include clinical psychologists, therapists and mental health care primary workers.

4.11.6 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Deputy Le Hérisier mentioned part of what I was asking. How many psychologists have we got? That is the question. How many psychologists does the Health and Social Services Department have? Let us put these figures in perspective. We talk about a 16-week waiting-list. How many people are on their waiting-list to see these psychologists? How many psychologists, and how many people are queuing up to see them?

The Deputy of Trinity:

I have not got exact figures, but if a referral is urgent that will be done within a short space of time. The psychologists we have are working extremely hard, but once you have made that initial assessment then it depends on what type of service you need after that, whether it is one-to-one counselling or whether it is a self-help book scheme or computerised behaviour therapy. All that is done on the initial assessment.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Sir, could you ask the Minister for Health and Social Services to answer the question, please? It is quite specific. How many psychologists have you got in the Health and Social Services Department and how many people are on the waiting-list to see them?

The Deputy of Trinity:

Sir, I have not got the information but I am happy to send it.

4.11.7 Deputy S. Pitman:

Could the Minister for Health and Social Services inform Members how long a child has to wait to see a child psychologist?

The Deputy of Trinity:

Again that depends on the initial referral from the G.P. or any other professional. If it is an emergency it is well within 24 hours. If it is an urgent one it is within a 2-week period. We know that C.A.M.H.S. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) has had an enormous number of extra referrals this year and I am pleased to say there is going to be some investment in that area.

4.11.8 Deputy S. Pitman:

I have had it from a doctor within the hospital that the average waiting-time is 38 weeks.

The Bailiff:

So your question, Deputy, is?

Deputy S. Pitman:

Is that correct and if she does not know that information will she look into it?

The Deputy of Trinity:

The information I have is what I have just said. If the Deputy has got that information I am quite happy to look at it and come back to her, but I would need the specific person, really.