

4.4 Deputy R.J. Renouf of St. Ouen of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the feasibility study examining the requirements for Jersey's mental health estate: [1(548)]

Further to information provided to the Health and Social Security Scrutiny Panel on 23rd February 2017 that a feasibility study examining the requirements for the Island's mental health estate would be completed by September 2017, will the Minister state whether the study will identify a site for the location of mental health services, explain why the study is delayed and give an updated timetable for its completion?

Senator A.K.F. Green, Minister for Health and Social Services:

My Assistant Minister, Deputy McLinton, will answer this question.

Deputy P.D. McLinton of St. Saviour (Assistant Minister for Health and Social Services - rapporteur):

I am pleased to confirm that good progress has been made with the feasibility study into the requirements of the mental health estate. An initial draft of the study was presented to the H.S.S.D. (Health and Social Services Department) strategic estates meeting by Jersey Property Holdings in September as planned. At that meeting a number of matters were identified as needing further consideration and this is currently underway. It is anticipated that it will be presented to the senior management team of H.S.S.D. for approval towards the end of this month. I believe there are a couple of dates possible in the diary. The feasibility study has been informed by a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, patients, voluntary and third-sector partners and a citizens' panel to ensure that views are sought and listened to. The feasibility study is considering what is in scope and how the estate should be configured and designed to support best practice and integrated working that benefits patients and families. This will include an appraisal of where the estate is best located.

4.4.1 The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Would the Assistant Minister specifically state whether the study will identify a single site for the location of mental health services or will the study attempt to put forward a short list of sites and then we get into the scenarios we have had with the General Hospital? Will the Assistant Minister be specific in that respect?

Deputy P.D. McLinton:

It is very hard to be specific about a study that is incomplete as yet, so I am afraid we are going to have to wait until we have the results of the feasibility study which I am sure will be able to keep the Deputy in the loop coming the end of this month.

4.4.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

Does the Assistant Minister agree that the building that may be used for part of mental health services provision is only a very small part, although an important one, when it comes to treating mental health issues? Does he agree that we have serious problems that need addressing in dealing with mental health issues across the board in terms of Housing, Criminal Justice, Health and Social Services and Social Security so there is more joined-up thinking in all of those areas to be sensitive to the needs of those who may suffer from mental health issues?

Deputy P.D. McLinton:

Absolutely. There is a very wise saying that goes around that there is no health without mental health. I am very pleased this has become something that has been more and more talked about in society in general. It is not that there is less mental health, it is just that more people are prepared to talk about it. So, yes, the very fact that we have an excellent mental health strategy

helping us move forward and that everything is being considered is something I am very proud of and I know the Minister is as well. So, yes, the feasibility study will inform exactly how the mental health estate is positioned. Again, we will be able to inform Members of this Assembly in the very near future exactly how that works out.

4.4.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

Would the Assistant Minister on behalf of the Minister agree that we need an independent review of mental health provision in Jersey more generally to tell us what the areas are that perhaps need attention?

Deputy P.D. McLinton:

I am sure that the Minister and the department will discuss the possibility of an independent review but we have an immense amount of work. I do believe that many other mental health services across the U.K. are looking to us for the work that we are doing which is very inclusive. All interested parties are talking together and, I have got to say, an annual event I am very, very proud of when people from all over the Island come together to talk about how best to tune the service that we have. So it has been extraordinary so far and anything that can help move mental health services, on this Island and anywhere, forward to a better conclusion to help more and more people is fine in my book.

4.4.4 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does the Assistant Minister accept that the identification of a new site whereby integrated services can be co-ordinated is essential to solve some of the recruitment problems that we have got in the mental health service?

Deputy P.D. McLinton:

The feasibility study about the property and the mental health strategy is all about integrating services and it is about working together. So absolutely, yes, I entirely agree that working together into the future is absolutely the way to go. It will be great if more and more people did it within various States departments.

4.4.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:

In terms of recruitment, will the Assistant Minister say what levels of recruitment are currently established in the mental health services; how many people are basically not occupying or are temporarily appointed?

Deputy P.D. McLinton:

Again, there is a struggle across the board, across the world, in recruiting people into mental health services. We are trying our very best. I do not have the figures at hand but I am certainly very happy to circulate them.

4.4.6 Deputy J.A. Hilton of St. Helier:

In the Care Inquiry report it stated: "While the current C.A.M.H.S. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) system appears well integrated into safeguarding systems, even today, its essential work appears to be undervalued as it struggles with heavy and increasing demands while operating from premises ill-suited to the needs of children and families." Can the Assistant Minister tell Members whether the C.A.M.H.S. building is under consideration for a move to more suitable premises?

Deputy P.D. McLinton:

I am very pleased to confirm that this is under consideration. Having visited the C.A.M.H.S. building, quite right, certainly the current building is not suitable for purpose and it is as important maybe in many ways to value the staff within C.A.M.H.S. as it is to help the people who need the service. So, yes, very pleased to report that we are very close to a solution to the C.A.M.H.S. problem.

4.4.7 The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Officers told my Scrutiny Panel that this study began in 2013. So, does the Assistant Minister agree that members of the public, let alone States Members, will find it incredulous that this work has taken over 4 years and there would be fears about wasting public funds? So, does the Assistant Minister have ideas that would inject confidence of the public into this process?

Deputy P.D. McLinton:

I am going to focus on the good news that the process is well underway. We have ourselves an excellent mental health strategy and the feasibility study is just about ready for fine-tuning shortly. So, yes, we are moving in the right direction and, although I do appreciate it has taken a while, these things do, but we are very, very nearly there.