

2024.06.25

### **3.1 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the work of the P.F.A.S. Scientific Advisory Panel (OQ.118/2024)**

Will the Minister provide an update on the work of the P.F.A.S. (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) Scientific Advisory Panel, with specific regard to the presence of P.F.A.S., concerns raised by Islanders about P.F.A.S., and any findings or recommendations that have been made by the panel to date?

#### **Deputy T. Binet:**

It is quite a comprehensive question so I am going to ask whether you can provide a small extension to the usual response time?

#### **The Bailiff:**

Well, usual response time is one minute and 30 seconds. It is often honoured in the breach rather than the observance so we do not go on to 3 minutes or 2 minutes.

#### **Deputy T. Binet:**

I will answer it as quickly as I can, Sir.

#### **The Bailiff:**

Then let us try and get through it.

#### **Deputy T. Binet (The Minister for Health and Social Services):**

The P.F.A.S. Scientific Advisory Panel has been in place for about a year and they are currently preparing a series of reports in order to make recommendations for the Government. The first report has been finalised and that recommends implementation of a therapeutic phlebotomy service. That service is now in development. Report 2 focuses on the health effects of P.F.A.S. and that is currently in preparation with recommendations due to be discussed by the panel in public towards the end of June. Islanders will be consulted on the report's findings in September with a publication plan for the fourth quarter of this year following the incorporation of the consultation feedback. The report takes into consideration Islanders' concerns regarding health conditions they believe to be related to P.F.A.S. exposure and seeks to provide evidence for each disease area. Report 3 will review potential interventions to reduce P.F.A.S. levels and advise on the testing and retesting of Islanders. Work on this report started in June with the launch event and a call for Islanders to provide evidence. The finished report is due to be shared with Islanders just towards the end of the year and published early in 2025. Now, the panel has not started work on report 4 yet, but when it does it will look into the impacts of P.F.A.S. on the environment. At recent consultation meetings, concerns have been raised in relation to the presence of P.F.A.S. in substances such as soil and mains water, and it is intended these matters will be investigated during the preparation of report 4 in order to address these concerns. No environmental recommendations have been made by the panel at this stage and that is because a series of robust evaluation methods will need to be determined and followed in order to establish the facts that will give rise to them.

#### **The Bailiff:**

That was well within the time, Minister.

#### **3.1.1 Deputy K.M. Wilson:**

Can the Minister outline what he believes the impacts are on the individuals who are affected by this contamination, with particular regard to their health needs?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

I am not aware that anybody has been particularly badly affected. As I say, I am not a clinician, I am not qualified to answer that question. That is why we have this report; these series of reports being compiled.

**3.1.2 Deputy M. Tadier:**

This has been an issue which has been raised over many years, not least by constituents in the west of the Island, St. Peter, St. Brelade being 2 significant Parishes where there has been concern raised by members of the public. I had contact from somebody who was very concerned that her breast cancer may be linked to P.F.A.S. She does not know that for sure, but she is looking for answers, as are many members of the public. The lack of answers may well give rise to what the Minister spoke about earlier, panic among the public when this matter does not seem to have been resolved. Can he give an assurance that at some point very soon that there will be answers to those many people in the Island for whom this is a current issue?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

I must admit to being at a bit of a loss in this regard. There seems to be a number of people that think that when things come to the public's attention or come to the attention of people that have to deal with it that things can be resolved overnight. Unless I am wrong, I have just given a fairly comprehensive outline of 4 reports that are currently being undertaken. I certainly cannot pre-judge what they are going to say. I think the team are working on this as quickly as they can and the outcomes of those reports will be made available as soon as possible.

**3.1.3 Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

Could the Minister advise if he will be putting forward funding in the Government Plan for 2025 in relation to supporting any recommendations that come out of this scientific advisory panel, both for environmental but also for health issues?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

Another opportunity for me to say that I do not know what is in the Government Plan for this. At this point in time, I do not know what is in the Government Plan for P.F.A.S., but I shall certainly find out and let the Deputy know. I have to say I am not a walking encyclopaedia.

**3.1.4 Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

Will the Minister confirm if he will be prioritising putting funding into the Government Plan 2025?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

I will be taking a balanced approach to how we deal with all of the funding in these areas.

**3.1.5 Deputy K.M. Wilson:**

Given the Minister's comments about he does not know what impact this has had on individuals' health, would he undertake to meet with those affected to gain a better understanding of their concerns?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

Among the many other things that I do, I seek to meet just about everybody that asks for a meeting with me. Nobody has been in touch with me about this to date. But like I do with virtually every other request, I am very happy to meet people who have concerns. As I say, unless I have missed something, it is the intention of these 4 reports to actually ascertain what the problems are.