

2.7 Deputy A.E. Pryke of Trinity of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the move of patients from the Leoville and McKinstry Wards at Overdale:

Would the Minister inform Members whether all the patients from Leoville and McKinstry Wards at Overdale have now moved and, if not, how many are still in the wards and what plans are in place as to when and where they will be moved?

Senator S. Syvret (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

Before the transfer process began there were 47 continuing nursing care beds in Leoville and McKinstry Wards. In addition there were 7 respite beds, 4 of which were for patients who required nursing care and 3 of these respite beds were for patients who required care from support workers. Working with the residents, their families, and caring staff, my department has transferred 25 continuing care patients to the Silver Springs Nursing Home. All of the feedback we have received from residents and their families is that the quality of the service at the Silver Springs Nursing Home is everything that we expected it to be: excellent. The remaining 22 continuing care patients reside in McKinstry Ward. This ward is the least bad of the 2 wards in the short-term. The aim is to transfer the 22 patients to private sector institutions as quickly as possible and I have charged my Chief Officer with the task of bringing this about. For respite patients not requiring nursing care, care continues to be provided in the short term on McKinstry Ward. It is anticipated that this will continue for a few weeks before the service transfers to a private residential facility. As negotiations have not been completed in this regard, I am afraid I cannot name the institution. For respite patients requiring nursing care, this facility is now provided from Little Grove Nursing Home on a trial basis, supported by a service level agreement between this institution and my department.

2.7.1 The Deputy of Trinity:

Can the Minister inform the House what was the reason for the delay, please?

Senator S. Syvret:

Yes, Sir, the reason for the delay is a lack of availability of these kinds of beds in the private sector. For reasons outside of our control, institutions such as the Lakeside Home have not come on-stream in the way in which we hoped. Therefore, our plans have, indeed, been put back and we are behind schedule. It is regrettable under the few observations in the Scrutiny Panel report on the Overdale and McKinstry Ward - to which I would say I agreed with in an unqualified sense - was the target for completion of the move was too optimistic and so it has proven to be.

2.7.2 Deputy I.J. Gorst of St. Clement:

Could the Minister confirm the number of contract beds in the private sector, whether all these beds are currently occupied and if there is a waiting list for any of them?

Senator S. Syvret:

I do not know the precise detail of all of the contract beds we have within the private sector. I can get that information later if the Deputy wishes me to do it. My understanding is that all of them are full at the moment and there is not space available. This is why we are having difficulty finding placements for those patients remaining at McKinstry.

2.7.3 Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Will the Minister advise the House what effect this delay is having upon the patients and their families?

Senator S. Syvret:

It certainly is not good. As I said very early on in this process, living in a hospital ward-style environment as a permanent residence is far, far from satisfactory. Patients and their families have no privacy. It is not really what you could describe as a home-like environment. Therefore, that

will be affecting patients' quality of life. As I have already said, it is regrettable, but because of factors outside of our control we were not able to meet the completion target dates, but we are doing the best that we can.

2.7.4 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Can the Minister confirm that he is able to maintain the high level of services he provides because he refused cuts to accommodate the R.P.I. (Retail Price Index) pay award for 2007 and achieved additional funding from a central resource?

Senator S. Syvret:

There was some discussion over the funding of the pay award. My department has made some contribution to funding that pay award, but not the amount that was requested from the centre. As it were, the cost to do so would have made cuts that I was not prepared to make. In any event, even had the whole amount requested by the centre been made over to them and taken off the Health Department's budget, this would not have impacted on elderly continuing care. It has to be said this is a priority service and will continue to be funded.

2.7.5 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Could the Minister give us the actual deadline by which the wards at Leoville and McKinsty will be empty and all the appropriate transfers have taken place?

Senator S. Syvret:

I am afraid I cannot give that precise deadline. All I can inform the Assembly is that I have requested my Chief Officer and his team to do all that they possibly can to complete the transfer process at the earliest possible opportunity. At the moment we are stymied by the lack of availability of suitable beds in the private sector. This is not a matter directly in our control, so I could not guarantee a precise date.

2.7.6 Deputy S.C. Ferguson of St. Brelade:

Would this not cause the Minister to revisit his original decision to cancel the building of the facility at Belle Vue?

Senator S. Syvret:

The decision to not build the facility at Belle Vue was not just my decision, it was a decision made by the old Health and Social Services Committee; moreover it is a decision that was endorsed by this Assembly when the then current Business Plan was passed and the capital programme was clearly laid out in an annexe to that report. I would be more than happy to build a new residential care home - one that would be built and run in the public sector - very, very happy indeed. If the Deputy and others would like to persuade my colleagues in the Treasury and elsewhere to make the funds available, I would be absolutely delighted.

2.7.7 Senator T.J. Le Main:

Could the Minister confirm that with an increasing ageing population - which will double in size by 2030 - that the situation will get very much worse on demand for care beds? Has the Minister any figures and has he any worries on this increasing ageing, medically unfit population?

Senator S. Syvret:

Yes, Sir, I have a lot of worries. I do not know the precise figures that the Senator is requesting, but it is true to say in general terms that we have an ageing population, in common with all of the rest of the developed world. More and more people are living longer and, it has to be said, healthier lives in many cases too. So it is not necessarily the case that simply as people age they always become in need of care. But the basic point is correct: there will be a growing need for

residential care home placements and, indeed, nursing home placements. This is very much a strategic priority that will feature in the forthcoming Health and Social Care structure.

2.7.8 Deputy J.B. Fox of St. Helier:

Minister, is the question of shortage down to a price factor at all between what the public sector is prepared to pay or what are the demands of the private sector? There is a proposal for the redevelopment of Westmount which will include some residential care facilities. Does he have any knowledge of this and would he support such a proposal? Thank you, Sir.

Senator S. Syvret:

I was vaguely aware that there might be such a proposal involving properties concerning the Parish of St. Helier. I do not yet know the details, but as for the creation of any new modernised care home facility, I would be more than happy to see it take place. As far as price is concerned, I hesitate to answer the question because the current situation is not caused by pricing difficulties, but on the other hand, I certainly could not say - because it would not be the case - that price is no object. We have to be in a position where we strike a reasonably good bargain with these private sector providers.

2.7.9 Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

The Minister has told us that the delays are indeed having a detrimental effect upon the patients of Overdale, and a number of us have been contacted by family members of some of those patients. We all have concerns at this situation, but I would like to know how specifically is the problem for the patients being addressed by Health and Social Services? What is being done to improve the patients' current situation?

Senator S. Syvret:

Improving the patients' current situation will be very difficult within that building. But as is always the case at this facility, the standard of care, as has been widely acknowledged, is extremely high. The staff who work there do absolutely all they can to improve and make as good as possible the quality of life of all the patients there. The place is kept warm, dry, and clean. There are facilities of a limited extent for the clients of that facility but, ultimately, the building is profoundly unsatisfactory in that it is an old hospital ward-style type of environment. Really, the kind of quality in improvement of the care that we wish to give these patients will not be able to happen in that building.