

2.1 Deputy S. Power of St. Helier of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the demand for respite care beds.

Can the Minister confirm whether the department is experiencing an excess of demand over the supply of respite care beds?

Senator B. Shenton (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

I would like to hand over to my Assistant Minister to answer this question. Out of courtesy, I did clear this with the Deputy before the States convened.

Senator J.L. Perchard (The Assistant Minister for Health and Social Services - rapporteur):

I am assuming the focus of the Deputy's question is upon respite care beds for older people rather than the general question concerning respite, as respite also relates to other client groups such as those with special needs and those with physical disability. At Little Grove Nursing Home there are 5 respite care beds for those older people who require nursing care as part of their respite stay. The current occupancy rate for this service is approximately 80 per cent with obvious variation depending on needs of clients at any time. At the Pinewood Residential Home there are 2 respite beds for those older people who do not require nursing care as part of their respite package. The occupancy rate for this service is currently 90 per cent, again with understandable variation. Respite care beds is not synonymous with the respite care strategy, Sir. In this respect, the service is deficient in some areas. One of the great deficiencies is the lack of provision for carers who require access to short respite. In other words, respite of such duration to enable a carer to go shopping, to enjoy some personal time or, indeed, to look after his or her own health and wellbeing. I am pleased to inform Members and the questioner that I am currently chairing a steering group involving stakeholders that will develop a carer strategy for all client groups. A report with recommendations will be submitted to the Council of Ministers before the year end and the Minister for Health and Social Services and I intend to share the report with Scrutiny in the New Year.

2.1.1 Deputy S. Power:

Could I ask the Assistant Minister to give a little more detail in the deficiency he referred to in the provision of beds for carers so that they can have a break? Can he give an indication of the extent of the problem?

Senator J.L. Perchard:

I beg the pardon of the questioner if he misunderstood. The deficiency is not about beds for carers. It is support for carers, and that is where we consider the service to be deficient. So we support carers, enabling them to continue to provide support for, usually, their loved ones.

2.1.2 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of St. Saviour:

Does the Assistant Minister believe that there is, in fact, a highly suppressed demand for this service and would he outline, Sir, what is going to be in his department's view the role of the private sector in the provision of these services?

Senator J.L. Perchard:

There is no evidence, as I demonstrated, that there is a highly suppressed demand for this service. It is the department policy, as the questioner well knows, to engage public/private partnerships with the provision of respite care wherever possible.

2.1.3 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the Assistant Minister outline whether this care in the private sector is being offered at full cost or whether there is provision to help people who struggle in meeting the costs?

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Again, the questioner well knows the answer to this question. There is support to the level of 100 per cent for those that are unable to afford respite care support.

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

It is well known that confused elderly patients are better kept in their own surroundings. What provisions will the Assistant Minister be making in this area?

Senator J.L. Perchard:

I refer the questioner to my answer in that I am chairing a carers group and we will be developing a strategy to provide support to carers and the strategy will be presented to the Council of Ministers before the yearend and shared with Scrutiny at the earliest possible opportunity next year. The idea of this strategy is to do exactly what the questioner has identified is a recognised weakness of our service, is that we are able to support carers to enable them to continue caring for people that need care in their own environment.

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

The Assistant Minister said that he is chairing a carers group. Could he confirm who is sitting on this group and that they have sufficient experience?

Senator J.L. Perchard:

The steering group is a co-ordinating group. We will be inviting up to 60 stakeholders to a development day which I will be announcing shortly. It is in October. I cannot remember the exact date. These invitations have gone out and 60 people have accepted, and they represent service providers, service recipients, cared for and carers, including all the agencies that have an interest. We will be working together to identify the weaknesses of that current service provision and to develop the strategy which I will be taking forward to the Council of Ministers and, as I say, sharing with Scrutiny in the New Year.

2.1.6 Deputy I.J. Gorst:

Could he then confirm that on the steering group there are both carers and cared for?

Senator J.L. Perchard:

No, on the steering group organising the strategy we have just one representative from the Jersey Federation of Carers and other than that it is a small group of me and 2 other executives from the department.

2.1.7 Deputy D.W. Mezbourian of St. Lawrence:

The Assistant Minister took on responsibility for the social services side of the Health Department. Will he tell the House how he prioritised his work and whether he will reach his targets by the end of the year?

The Deputy Bailiff:

I think, Deputy, that is a little too far removed.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I beg your pardon, Sir, I will change that question. Will he tell us what priority he gave to dealing with respite care?

Senator J.L. Perchard:

I gave this important subject every priority. The questioner will know that the department has been very busily prioritising its agenda, the children's service and the deficiencies in the respite service not only for older people but we do have deficiencies in the provision of respite for other client

groups which we have urgently prioritised. We will be seeking to provide solutions which will require resources, unfortunately, in the next year.

2.1.8 Deputy A.E. Pryke of Trinity:

Could he confirm if Health and Social Services provide any respite beds within their care homes, and also just another quick question regarding the steering group, if there is a representative from the Carers Federation on that group, please?

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Yes, I did confirm to Deputy Gorst, who asked that question, there is a representative from the Carers Federation at the steering group. Yes, there is. I can confirm that Health and Social Services do not provide respite care beds for the elderly in-house.

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

Is the Assistant Minister aware of a report that was compiled by the Jersey Carers Association I think only in the last 12 to 18 months? Is he absolutely determined that he is going to push this strategy through and it is not going to turn into another talking shop?

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Yes, I am aware and have been in dialogue and have attended the A.G.M. (annual general meeting) of the Jersey Carers Federation recently. I am in dialogue with the chair and members of that Federation and no, this is not a talking shop. I know there has been an impasse at Health and Social Services over the last decade. I think there is a momentum now to move things on. Less of the talk, more action will be what you can expect from the Minister and I.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Deputy Power, do you wish to ask a final question?

2.1.10 Deputy S. Power:

If I may, Sir, thank you. Could I ask the Assistant Minister to clarify; I may have missed the detail. In one of the answers he referred to the number of beds that are available to those elderly that allows their carers to have a break or respite. Can the Assistant Minister indicate the number of beds that are currently available, the deficiency and the location of those beds? Thank you, Sir.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

I am not aware of any new question here. There are 5 nursing beds available at Little Grove and 2 at Pinewood for care beds. I do not really understand the extra question being put to me.

Deputy S. Power

I am happy with that; I do not want to go on and ask for further detail. Thank you, Sir.

Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier:

Can I ask a point of clarification from the chair, Sir? When a Member is absent for oral questions, is it normal practice that any written work prepared for that answer is passed directly to the questioner? Is that the default position? If not, can I seek assurance from the Ministers for Treasury and Resources and Social Security that they will pass on any prepared answers to Deputy Pitman?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

I am perfectly prepared to send Deputy Pitman a copy of what I was going to say had I been asked the question.

Senator P.F. Routier:

Yes, I would be prepared to do that as well, Sir.

