

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
BY DEPUTY R.G. LE HÉRISSEIER OF ST. SAVIOUR  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 10th MARCH 2009**

**Question**

In the light of his recent comments in the Assembly on 3rd February 2009, in response to my oral question regarding the undertaking of private practice by Hospital Consultants, will the Minister confirm whether or not he will be changing policy in this area and, if so, how ?

**Answer**

As Minister, I am committed to ensure the safety of Health Services and improving the quality of care for patients.

I am in the process of finalising the detail of an independent review into the circumstances surrounding the tragic death of Nurse Rourke, which is to be undertaken by Verita. I will be instructing Verita as part of their Terms of Reference to advise on what actions can be taken to improve the safety and quality of Health Services in Jersey. Should this investigation identify any issues relating to private practice undertaken by Consultants I will, of course, need to consider whether there will be a requirement to revise the current arrangements.

At this time, I remain satisfied that the long standing arrangements in place continue to work well and are of benefit to both public and private patients in Jersey. As we are a community, with only one general hospital, it currently makes good sense for us to use the facilities that we have for the benefit of all islanders requiring treatment.

Health and Social Services derive annual income of approximately £3 million from Private Patient's services and this resource is ploughed back into improving patient services at every opportunity. Within the terms of service outlined in consultants' contracts allowance is made, in respect of their on call commitments, for consultants to take some time off to undertake private work, including limited sessions for private consultations in their rooms.

The service is proud of the very significant achievements made in abolishing waiting times for periods in excess of three months. In reality this means that the vast majority of public patients are seen within weeks, rather than months, and islanders will be aware of this from their own experiences. These achievements have been made possible through the hard work and commitment of many staff and through the application of strict scrutiny, in relation to the management of public waiting lists for all specialities, so as to ensure that urgent, soon and routine cases are not compromised within the system as currently organised.

The harmonious co-existence of public and private patient care works well and continues to be a factor in attracting high calibre clinicians to live and work in Jersey through the provision of sufficient interest and variety in the work that they can be expected to undertake within the current system.