

5.9 Deputy S. Pitman of St. Helier of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding financial support for trainee nurses.

Could the Minister advise whether the next intake of trainee nurses will be given financial support by her department and if not, would she explain why?

The Deputy of Trinity (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

I am very delighted to be able to confirm that 18 local students will start their nurse training in Jersey this September. Health and Social Services and Education, Sport and Culture have been working in partnership to develop this programme, which is known as the partnership scheme. Financial support is provided by Education, Sport and Culture who will fund the university fees for the programme, which is delivered by Open University. This funding is not means tested. The partnership scheme course is 26 hours per week, which has enabled all the students to register on the nurse bank to work and be paid as healthcare assistants. This is a positive blend for on-job experience and study which will enhance their nurse training.

5.9.1 Deputy S. Pitman:

A supplementary. The funding that I am talking about, which I have not made clear to the Minister, is maintenance because a trainee nurse that I have spoken to was told by her department that they should go to Income Support for financial support. So, could the Minister explain why her department is not giving financial maintenance support?

The Deputy of Trinity:

As I said in the question, financial support is provided by Education, Sport and Culture and I understand the students are being treated in the same way as students if they were undertaking full-time nurse training in the U.K.

The Bailiff:

Sorry, I will come back to you Deputy.

Deputy S. Pitman:

The Minister did not answer the question. I did say it was maintenance, financial support for maintenance, everyday living. She did not answer that question.

The Deputy of Trinity:

As I understand, the other students who are training in Jersey do not get the maintenance.

5.9.2 Deputy A.E. Jeune:

I am just picking up on something that the Minister said in her answer. Could she just explain the time spent by the student nurses where they are employed as healthcare assistants, does that practical experience go any way towards their training?

The Bailiff:

I am not sure that relates to the question.

The Deputy of Trinity:

I am sure it does because, as the Deputy knows being a previous nurse, in our day it was you learnt on the wards, so any practical training will enhance your nurse training, definitely.

Deputy A.E. Jeune:

But they are paid, are they not?

5.9.3 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Can the Minister confirm that in building up a cadre of local nurses that, in fact, her department and/or E.S.C. (Education, Sport and Culture) are also supporting nurses who are training in the U.K. and are not able to get, shall we say, highly subsidised training through the N.H.S. (National Health Service)? Are U.K. based nurses who, of course, are broadening their experience and that is helping the Island, are they being supported equally?

The Deputy of Trinity:

Yes, I would take it that they are, but I am very proud that we are able to offer on-Island nurse training and it really is a good news story.

5.9.4 Deputy D.J. De Sousa of St. Helier:

This is a really important question because most of our nurses, as we know, are brought in from the U.K. and there does seem to be a disadvantage to the local nurses, and part of the financial side of it is the fact that local cadet nurses are not able to access the accommodation as well. I did speak to the Minister about this. Is she going to work to try and address this issue?

The Deputy of Trinity:

We just need a level playing field across the board for all students, and we work very closely with Education, Sport and Culture, and I am sure if there is an issue ... but we have very limited accommodation and, as you know, some of it leaves a little bit to be desired, but I will look at it and see if we can do something.

5.9.5 Deputy S. Pitman:

As we all know there is a shortage of nurses who are, as we know, essential employees for this Island; does the Minister not agree that it is not acceptable that such cadet nurses are told by a department that if they want to live while studying and training that they have to go to Income Support?

The Deputy of Trinity:

I value every nurse whether they are a student nurse or whether they are qualified. They are an asset to the service as well as to our Island, but, as I said, all of our student nurses are encouraged to go and I think all of them are on the nurses' bank, and they can earn part-time because the nurses' course is 26 hours a week and they are encouraged to go on the nurses' bank where they do earn a wage.