

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 5th APRIL 2011**

Question

Will the Chief Minister inform members why the pay and conditions offer under discussion with nurses representatives is limited to Grades 5 and above when retention rates for grades lower down the scale NM1 and NM3 are almost as high as that for NM5 (15%)?

Will he further explain why no offer is under discussion for grade 3 nurses (Staff Nurse) when the differential in pay at this grade (including housing costs) is greater than that for grades 5 and 6?

Answer

The main point to emphasise in responding to this question is that the current review of nurses' and midwives' pay is not a general pay review: that takes effect from January each year and nurses and midwives received a 2% general pay award on 1 January 2011. Rather the current review concerns recruitment and retention problems being experienced with the registered workforce within this pay group.

Income Data Services (IDS) do not propose an increase in pay for grades 1 and 2, where Health Care Assistants (HCAs) are placed, because we do not have a recruitment problem in these Grades.

For example, a recent advert for Grade 1 and 2 HCAs attracted 150 applicants for 5 FTE posts. Although HCA turnover is high, this is not an unusual phenomenon as this part of the non registered workforce are often older females who are part time and more likely to be second income generators within households.

Some younger Grade 1 or 2's use the role before they move on to undertake professional health and or social care careers as Health and Social Services is often able to move them into Grade 1 and 2 vacancies as a result of partnership work with other departments, for example Social Security and ESC.

Further, we have experienced no difficulties in recruitment to Grade 3 posts which are newly qualified registered nurses and in general the posts are filled by locally trained people.

The recruitment problem in particular is experienced at Grades 4 and above and this is where IDS have concentrated their attention in their recommendations.

I should add that at this stage no final decisions have been made on the IDS recommendations.