

4.1 Deputy T.M. Pitman of St. Helier of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding hospital waiting times for psychology services:

What is the current waiting time for people urgently waiting to see a psychologist?

Deputy A.E. Pryke of Trinity (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

Adults currently wait approximately 6 to 8 weeks for psychological assessment. After assessment those that require counselling can access a programme after approximately 4 to 6 weeks. Those who have more complex needs and require one-to-one therapy are currently waiting between 3 to 6 months. For older adults the wait is approximately 2 months for counselling and for older adults the wait is up to 6 months for one-to-one therapy.

4.1.1 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

With due respect to the Minister, waiting 3 weeks to hear back after your doctor writes and then 5 weeks for an appointment in such an affluent island, what use is that for someone who is at serious risk of suicide from depression?

The Deputy of Trinity:

The referrals are done by a clinical decision. If there is a crisis point then I am sure the consultant will see that patient very soon. It is not acceptable and that is one of the reasons why we have, as part of our White Paper, identified the needs to improve psychological services. That is one of our 5 main key areas for the next 3 years.

4.1.2 Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier:

Could the Minister state whether these times have increased over recent years and could she inform the House whether there are any problems recruiting in this particular area?

The Deputy of Trinity:

There is an increase as there is an increase in demand over all areas of our use of the hospital. That is why the White Paper and our redesign of Health and Social Services is so important. Part of it has been due to staff shortages but it is not due to lack of recruitment.

4.1.3 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I am well aware from a previous profession that young people waited a very long time indeed, so clearly - I appreciate this is not all the Minister's fault - things are not exactly improving. What assurances can she give the House that steps are being taken very urgently to rectify this?

The Deputy of Trinity:

As I have said, in the White Paper with the redesign of Health and Social Services, improved access to psychological therapies is one of our 5 key aims. That has got a resource factor to it. It is going to redesign that with a view of being more out into the community, being able to access it out in the community, more stepped care, more input put into psychological wellbeing workers, and high intensity workers. So we identified that it is a problem and it is a big problem; that is why it is one of our key main areas.