

5. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Minister for Health and Social Services

The Bailiff:

Very well, so that completes questions on notice so we now come to questions to Ministers without notice and the first period is for the Minister for Health and Social Services.

5.1 The Connétable of St. Mary:

Will the Minister please advise whether the department's travel policy precludes payment for those who are participating in clinical trials and if so, why?

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

Yes, it does preclude those who are in clinical trials. The reason why I cannot remember, but it does mention that on our travel policy which is for patient information which I am very happy to send to her.

5.1.1 The Connétable of St. Mary:

Does the Minister not believe that where clinical trials are supported and recommended by our respected consultants and clinicians that this is an excellent way for patients to access expensive drugs at no cost to the Island's authorities and would not the *quid pro quo* for that be to enable people to travel for these trials? My understanding is that all other off-Island expenses are covered by the cost of the trial.

The Deputy of Trinity:

I am happy to look at that.

5.2 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

On 31st January in the Magistrate's Court, it was reported in the *Jersey Evening Post* that an individual was convicted of committing a grave and criminal assault on a woman at a local care home. Can the Minister tell the Assembly whether this assault was on a member of staff or on a resident in care there?

The Deputy of Trinity:

The department was notified by the manager of Lakeside in November last year about the alleged assault on a resident that was carried out by a carer working at the home. The incident was reported to the home manager. She immediately informed the police and referred it to Adult Safeguarding. The member of staff was immediately suspended from duty. A disciplinary investigation was carried out by the home. The member of staff was dismissed and is no longer working in the home.

5.2.1 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

Can the Minister confirm, in light of the conviction, that this particular individual will be struck off from working in care homes in Jersey and also the relevant authorities have been notified in the U.K.?

The Deputy of Trinity:

I do not know about being struck off because if a person did go and ask for a job at any resident or nursing home, they would have to provide their C.V. (Curriculum Vitae) and on that C.V., I would expect, especially here and I would expect the same in the U.K., are any police convictions and if that they know the person over here, and as I have mentioned before in previous questions, if they are aware that he or she is working in a care home or a

residential home, then we raise that awareness and. if necessary, we will put in a request for disclosure with the States of Jersey Police.

5.3 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

With regard to travel and the return of patients back from the U.K., would the Minister like to tell the Assembly what improvements there have been in the communications system so that Jersey knows when to expect patients back and they do not just arrive back and disappear into limbo?

The Deputy of Trinity:

That is a very important issue and it was raised here, as well as from other patients, and now we have much more vigorous commissioning and one of those is really putting in place what happens when a patient is discharged. The information goes back to the G.P. (General Practitioner) but it also goes to the clinician who referred that patient to the hospital in the U.K. So it is much tighter and it is put in the Service Level Agreements that we have with hospitals in the U.K.

5.3.1 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

So we can be sure that when a patient comes back from the U.K., that somebody will ring up the following day and say: "Are you back? Are you okay? Do you need anything?"

The Deputy of Trinity:

I do not know about ringing up next day but I can check up on that policy and come back to the Senator.

5.4 Deputy S. Pinel:

Does the Minister accept that the potential delivery of the disability strategy in 2016 is delaying this important work for far too long?

The Deputy of Trinity:

Yes.

5.4.1 Deputy S. Pinel:

Could not the funding, estimated to be approximately £80,000, be found to progress this disability strategy sooner?

The Deputy of Trinity:

We have many challenges on our budget, new services, new drugs, new requests for consultants, and we all look at our business plans and it is done on a clinical basis ... is done on corporate management and they are done in a good robust procedure. I am sure that one is there and it will go through the due process but our budget is fixed for the next couple of years and we know that in the new few years in the Medium-Term Financial Plan, the cost of health services across the board is going to increase and it is going to request more funding.

5.5 The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Could the Minister advise the Assembly are all the care homes in the Island checked and how frequently this is done?

The Deputy of Trinity:

Yes all the residential care homes are registered with the department. There is a regulation and inspection arm of the department. They are checked at least once a year routinely and

they are informed that they are checked and that they also go in unannounced. If there is any concern raised in between visits or any complaint that comes through or any concern at all, they will do more frequent visits.

5.6 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

How many consultant posts, if any, are currently vacant?

The Deputy of Trinity:

None that I am aware of.

5.7 Deputy T.A. Vallois:

In our ever fast-moving world and the comments made by the current Hospital Director, could the Minister advise what the budget currently is for information computer technology in the Health and Social Services Department and whether the Health Service has an I.T. (Information Technology) health strategy in place to deliver that going forward?

The Deputy of Trinity:

When the Hospital Director spoke to the Institute of Directors last week, one of the questions was asked about the I.T., and going forward it is going to be an important part of the new hospital. We just have to look at the cardiologist on the *J.E.P. (Jersey Evening Post)* on Saturday night. Regarding the budget with the new hospital, I have not got that information. I think that is still being worked up as we go into the feasibility stage.

5.7.1 Deputy T.A. Vallois:

Can the Minister advise whether she is confident that the £12 million we have already spent on I.T. infrastructure in the health system is somewhat a way to improve on the I.T. system or whether there is still a significant amount to come?

The Deputy of Trinity:

The £12 million has been a significant investment and has proved very, very effective with the TrakCare coming online and Order Comms coming online. There is still more to do because the next stage, A. and E. (Accident and Emergency) and Maternity, as I understand it, have got electronic patient records and that is the next stage that we need to go to so we become paperless. Is more needed to be invested? Yes, because we are working in a digital world and we are working with Digital Jersey into looking at these different issues.

5.8 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

When will the Minister be bringing forward proposals currently under consideration as to the future of G.P. services in the Island?

The Deputy of Trinity:

Yes, that is a challenge. We have been working with the G.P.s over the last year and it has been a challenge but we have, over the last couple of months especially, worked very well with them in finding a way forward. This process is being negotiated, worked with at this present time and hopefully some more positive steps forward will happen in the next month to 6 weeks' time.

5.8.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

So more precisely, could the Minister tell us what structured G.P. services her department is proposing or promoting?

The Deputy of Trinity:

We have not got to that stage yet because we are still working out a design for the right model and working with the G.P.s on how there is a sustainable way forward for Health and Social Services, for the G.P.s, but more importantly for the people of Jersey.

5.9 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

The Health, Social Security and Housing Scrutiny Panel are currently undertaking a review into the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and during the recent public hearing with the Detective Superintendent with responsibility for such matters, he said it would benefit the police to have access to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service staff 24 hours a day to assist those young people held in custody. He said that it would not be an unreasonable expectation. Will the Minister consider this statement with a view to introducing such cover as soon as possible?

The Deputy of Trinity:

I hear what the Deputy said and I look forward to very much with their review and having not heard what the police inspector said, it is very difficult to comment on. I also say that if a young person is admitted into A. and E., they have access to mental health services and if they need admission over the weekend, because if they do admissions over the weekend it is for emergency and they have access to mental health workers there. But I await the Scrutiny Panel's review and I shall look at the police inspector's comments.

5.9.1 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

The question was in relation to young people being detained at Police Headquarters. During the review, the Detective Superintendent said that it was an unsuitable place to detain young people but it would have been of benefit if they could have had access to C.A.M.H.S. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) staff so it was not about being detained at A. and E. It is due to be being detained at Police Headquarters and the benefit of having C.A.M.H.S. staff available 24/7.

The Deputy of Trinity:

In that case, having a young person detained at Police Headquarters is definitely not the right place because of the conditions and the need for a new Police Headquarters, and it is not the right environment either. Again, I shall look at the inspector's comments and take it from there.

[11:45]

5.10 Deputy M. Tadier:

Can the Minister give us an update on her plans to inspect owner-occupied homes ostensibly on the ground of health reasons?

The Deputy of Trinity:

That is the Housing Dwelling Law, I take it? Yes? Yes, it is out to consultation and, suffice to say, it was very wide from people who thought that the department should not be doing this to people who thought that they should be doing that. At the moment, a report is being produced. Whether it is progressed within the next 6 months or so, I cannot guarantee that.

5.10.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

To avoid any duplication of work that may be concurrently going on with the Housing Department in respect to establishing minimum standards, what assurance can the Minister give us that both departments are working together so that there is no duplication?

The Deputy of Trinity:

The Environmental Health Department works very closely with Housing and indeed is there to offer anybody any help and support that is required to make sure that their house/flat, whatever, is appropriate for them to live in. That does not stop. That happens every single day of the week and anybody can access the Environmental Health Department for advice and support.