

3.7 Deputy J.A. Hilton of St. Helier of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding reductions to the waiting time for those seeking adult psychological services:

What action, if any, is the Minister taking to reduce the 9-month long waiting time for those seeking adult psychological services?

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

The Deputy will be aware that I have answered a similar written question from Deputy Tadier. My department has just last week advertised to recruit some 13 staff for a new Jersey Talking Therapy Service. It is hoped that all or some of these staff will be in place in the next few months. This will help manage and reduce current waiting time within the Psychological Assessment and Therapy Service. Health and Social Services is also employing a full-time locum psychological therapist who is due to start this month. This ought to reduce the waiting list.

3.7.1 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

When the Health White Paper was agreed in October 2012, the proposal was to indeed invest in adult psychological services the Minister has just outlined. Can the Minister explain to Members why it has taken since October 2012 to the current time to advertise these posts?

The Deputy of Trinity:

As I said, this is a new service. Working closely with a wide range of stakeholders has been critically important and I approved the service specification in June last year. Since then a wide range of both professionals and the voluntary sector have been working hard to design and agree the exact way the new services will be delivered. The services must be accessible and non-stigmatising, and the level of detail is really important.

3.7.2 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

We are given assurances that the waiting lists are coming down and so forth. When all these measures are in place, what will the waiting list be? Has the work been done to estimate this?

The Deputy of Trinity:

I am sure it has. The most important thing is going to be, as I said, this is a new service. It is also early intervention and that is where the greatest need will be. As I said, there are about 13 staff that are going to be recruited and it will be accessible within the community setting.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Supplementary, Sir. I asked a simple question: how long?

The Deputy of Trinity:

Nobody has crystal ball. All the evidence has been done and it does show that obviously it will cut down waiting list times.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Excuse me, Sir. I asked a very simple question.

The Bailiff:

Yes, and she said that she cannot look into the future.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Well, the work has not been done, I presume, Minister.

3.7.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

Has the Minister looked into how local private practitioners, for example, therapists, counsellors, *et cetera*, might be able to be used either in the short time or in the longer term to fill the demand for Talking Therapies, *et cetera*?

The Deputy of Trinity:

I am not certain, but all I can say is that this is a new service and we are recruiting, as I said, 13 staff and an extra £700,000 investment is put into the service. There will be better outcomes as the service begins.

3.7.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I ask for clarification? The written answer ... and the Minister has again talked about 13 staff, 8 of which will be for psychological services. What are the other 5 staff? Are they related in any way to Mental Health Services?

The Deputy of Trinity:

Yes. All the staff are involved in this new psychological Talking Therapies.

3.7.5 Deputy S. Power:

In relation to the response to Deputy Hilton, can the Minister explain to the Assembly the overhaul that is needed in terms of attention to acute and urgent intervention for those seeking immediate assistance with their psychological problems? I know that the Minister would say that there is an A. and E. (Accident and Emergency) situation, but once they have dealt with A. and E. is there a mechanism to improve acute and urgent care for psychological care, because a number of us are aware of cases where that does not appear to be available.

The Deputy of Trinity:

That is why, as I said, the psychological therapies is not an emergency service. If someone needs that emergency care it is either to A. and E. or through their G.P. (General Practitioner) and on assessment they will get referred into the appropriate route.

3.7.6 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier:

My question is not too dissimilar from what Deputy Power has just asked. I know of examples of people who, because of their mental health problems, have attempted suicide and have not been able to see their allocated specialist for sometimes months afterwards. Is the Minister satisfied with that, and does she accept that because of the nature of mental health problems there should be no such thing as a waiting list for someone in those sorts of circumstances? If she does agree that there should be no waiting lists, why are there? Is it an issue of funding?

The Deputy of Trinity:

The ideal is if there is no waiting list, but that is in the ideal world. We have recognised that there is a need and that is why the Jersey Talking Therapies is essential. It will receive non-stigmatised service treating patients with anxiety, depression, with or without alcohol issues. It is a variety of ways of face to face, individual groups, counselling and working with their G.P. It is low level which is the most important and it is early intervention

3.7.7 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

Of course I welcome the news of 13 additional staff delivering Talking Therapies and a locum psychologist who is going to be taken on very shortly to try and help reduce waiting lists. But I am disappointed to hear and to know that by the time those posts are filled it will be around September time; that it has taken almost 2 years to deliver this new service from

the time the States Assembly agreed to it. The question I wanted to ask the Minister is: how confident is she that the mental health review that her department is undertaking which comprises of 4 different strands will be delivered in a timely fashion?

The Deputy of Trinity:

Any new service does take time to set up because, mostly importantly, it is working with the voluntary sector and the G.P.s and it has to be right because it is going to be bolted-on to current services. So it has to be right, right from the word go. Alongside some of this as the Deputy said, she is quite right, there is going to be a mental health service review. It will be done by the end of this year. But also we are doing a review into the mental health estates and also looking at the mental capacity law. So it is a very busy time for mental health services, but a very positive way forward.