

3.7 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding what measures, if any, he was considering to ensure continuity, or a replacement, of domestic care services: [1(300)]

Given that a majority of Family Nursing and Home Care domiciliary care workers have rejected new terms and conditions offered by its management and the potential impact this could have on the delivery of the domestic care service, will the Minister advise what measures, if any, he is considering to ensure continuity of or a replacement for this service, as previously assured?

Senator A.K.F. Green (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

I am pleased to report that Family Nursing and Home Care have been working hard, supported by staff from my department, to deal with the situation outlined by the Deputy should it arise. The priority is to ensure patient safety and continuity of care and it is clear from my discussions with Family Nursing and Home Care that the bulk of the hours of care required can be covered by staff who have chosen to stay with Family Nursing and Home Care.

3.7.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does that mean, as the Minister must be aware, that the vital elements of continuity in the relationship between care worker and client on such things as getting people dressed on ailing people, continuity of people is vitally important in ensuring that clients feel comfortable with the service he provides?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

As I said in my previous answer, the priority is to ensure patient safety and continuity of care. Family Nursing and Home Care have advised me that they will be able to provide that. I would like to thank them for their proactive approach and thank my officers for continuing to support Family Nursing and Home Care as it transitions towards a new service model.

3.7.2 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

The Minister said that he was satisfied after talking with Family Nursing and Home Care that there would be sufficient workers to do what is required. Will he tell us the percentages of the workers? Is it 10 per cent going to be doing the work of 100 per cent or is it 20 per cent doing the work of 100? What numbers is he talking about and can he ensure that they can do that care?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

I cannot tell him the percentage but I can tell the Deputy it is changing every day as people consider their options and then sign up.

3.7.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Is the Minister aware that the figure quoted by officials in the Union is that two-thirds of domestic care workers who were affected by the change of terms and conditions of employment have refused to sign contracts? Can he assure this House, can he guarantee this House, that he will be able to, through Family Nursing, deliver the same service with one third-third of the staff?

[10:30]

Senator A.K.F. Green:

It is not me that will be delivering the service but it is Family Nursing and Home Care and they have assured me that the situation is changing daily and that they can ensure their priority for patient safety and continuity.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does he guarantee that?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

I am working with Family Nursing and Home Care. If there were a problem there are another 20 providers to help pick up the slack.

3.7.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

What does the Minister understand by the idea of the “race to the bottom” and does he believe that the terms and conditions being imposed or suggested at Family Nursing and Home Care are an example of this?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

No, I do not accept that, and I also do not accept that the floor of this Assembly is the place to negotiate wages and conditions of any organisation.

3.7.5 Deputy M. Tadier:

What about the first part of the question? What about the idea of the “race to the bottom”? Does the Minister know what that is and what does he think about it?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

I thought I had already said I do not accept that it is a race.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Point of clarification, if I may, before I have my final supplementary, if that is what I am on.

The Bailiff:

You are about to be.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

I missed what the Minister said, something around 20 people or 20 ...

The Bailiff:

Twenty other service providers.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Again, Sir?

The Bailiff:

There were 20 other service providers who could step in if Jersey Family Nursing ... as I understood it.

3.7.6 Deputy G.P. Southern:

In which case, my final supplementary is obvious. So he cannot guarantee continuity in any shape or form because he is going to use one or several of the 20 other providers with different staff in order to prop this service up, is that the case?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

Absolutely not. It is not: “I am going to use.” If there is change, members of the public who need services choose who they wish to provide their service. My officers, if there is a need to

change service provider, must work very closely with them to ensure patient safety and continuity during the transition but I am advised that it is unlikely that we will need to do that.