

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 14TH NOVEMBER 2017**

**Question**

In light of figures provided to the Health and Social Security Scrutiny Panel in respect of nursing vacancies (presented on page 12 of 'Staff Recruitment and Retention at the Hospital' (S.R.1/2016)) and the figures given in response to Written Question 1(256) on 2nd May 2017, will the Minister –

- (a) account for the discrepancies in these figures, in particular the figure given on 2nd May 2017 of 521.3 in 2017 for budgeted head count for hospital nurses;
- (b) provide a monthly breakdown for the number of shifts which needed bank nurses on overtime (4,731) and those filled by agency nurses (5,011) over the first three quarters of 2017;
- (c) inform members what the cost of bank and agency shifts in 2017 were, how the stated reduction in cost was achieved and advise whether this involved the closure of beds and/or wards, stating whether staffing levels were maintained at recognised safe levels throughout;
- (d) provide further details in respect of his statement that when the 29 new starters, 32 offers and 23 interviewed applicants are in place a full complement of nursing staff will have been achieved?

**Answer**

[a] Rather than there being any discrepancy between the two figures referred to, the fact is that they are inevitably different because they are describing very different groups or staff at very different periods in time.

In terms of time, the data presented on page 12 of the Scrutiny report was as at 31/12/2015; the data included in the 2017 response was from March of each year, so understandably they are different.

However, the far more important explanation for the difference between the figures is that they are answers to two completely different questions.

The numbers on page 12 of the Scrutiny Report clearly and appropriately relate to all qualified nurses, midwives and Health Care Assistants across the whole of the Health & Social Services Department.

In written question 256, answered on May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017, the specific answer is explicitly described as being in relation only to qualified nurses in the hospital. This figure does not therefore include midwives, Health Care Assistants or qualified nurses based outside the hospital.

[b] Bank staff and agency nurses are not employed on overtime

[c] From 1 January 2017 to the end of September 2017, the General Hospital spent £765,790 on hospital bank nurses and £1,272,035 on external agency nurses. There have not been any bed closures due to staffing shortages.

[d] My statement regarding the impressive number of starters, job offers and active candidates was made in order to share and celebrate the achievements by the nurse leadership and recruitment staff in what has almost certainly been the most successful summer and autumn for nurse recruitment at the Hospital in recent times. Regarding the reference to full establishment, the reality is of course that alongside recruitment, turnover is always occurring due to resignations and departures so my comment should be

taken in that context i.e. that I was referring to only half of that equation and full complement is rarely if ever achieved in such a large and complex workforce in any sector due to recruitment cycles being longer than notice periods.