

**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

Following the recent departure of senior staff members, including from the Child and Adult Mental Health Service and Orchard House, can the Minister advise whether –

- (a) the department finds it difficult to recruit and retain staff (i) under the constraints of States Employment Board policies relating to terms and conditions and (ii) given the high cost of living and accommodation;
- (b) advise what engagement there has been with the States Employment Board to ensure that Jersey can attract high quality staff for essential services;
- (c) state what gaps have been left in the social service provision and how positions vacated will be replaced.

Answer

- (a) There has been no pattern of departures of senior staff from the Child and Adult Mental Health Service or Orchard House. There are particular challenges for recruitment and retention of some professionally qualified staff. These challenges were also raised in the report of the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry published on 3 July 2017 and attention was drawn to some of Jersey's policies. The cost of living and availability of affordable, appropriate accommodation is often raised as a barrier to recruiting and retaining staff as is the negative impact of housing and employment legislation on spouses, partners and children of candidates. These matters were also extensively covered in the review into Staff Recruitment and Retention at the Hospital by the Health and Social Services Scrutiny Panel in 2016, and the response by HSSD.
- (b) The States Employment Board is supportive of any P59 applications for appropriately attractive salary packages for such key posts and has approved considerable flexibility in the use and deployment of recruitment agencies and strategies. SEB continues to support the development of key worker strategies.
- (c) There have been no gaps in social services provision as a result of departures in Child and Adult Mental Health Service and Orchard House. There are vacancies in social services' posts (predominately in Children's Social Work, including the senior management post of Head of Children's Services) which are currently back-filled to ensure an appropriate operational service is in place. There has been ongoing recruitment to attract staff to Jersey and a campaign is currently underway. Staff are attending a UK social work recruitment fair in November and work on developing an on-island social work degree continues.