

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 25th SEPTEMBER 2018**

**Question**

In respect of mental health services, will the Minister –

- (a) inform members what targets, if any, he has for increasing the number of mental health nurses, therapists and doctors in child and adult mental health services in Jersey;
- (b) state what vacancies are currently being carried in these services and what the current vacancy rate is; and
- (c) state what measures, if any, he has in place or under consideration to improve recruitment and retention in mental health services, especially such services for children and young people?

**Answer**

- (a) Workforce supply in this area of practice is challenging and reflects a similar position in the UK for talent and skills in this area. There are no specific targets as recruitment is against funded establishments. Significant efforts continue to source a permanent sustainable workforce within current funded establishments for nurses, doctors and therapists. Recruitment is “always on” to ensure that any interest in vacant posts is responded to quickly.
- (b)

**Nursing:**

There are currently 21.4 nursing posts which are not filled by permanent nursing staff but are filled by temporary staff from either the nurse bank or agency until a substantive appointment is made. There are currently 11 people going through the recruitment process to fill some of these posts on a substantive basis. The current vacancy rate relating to permanent nursing posts stands at 16.8%.

There are currently four students accessing the pre-registration mental health nursing degree programme in Jersey. Two students are in their second year of the three-year degree programme and two students are in their first year. The students attend the theory/classroom component at the University of Chester and return to Jersey for their practice placements, supported by Health and Community Services higher education department staff. At the end of their training we aim to recruit these graduates into our local services.

**Doctors:**

A national shortage of psychiatrists and the small size of the department requiring generalists rather than subspecialists means that there are currently 5 Consultant posts not filled by permanent doctors, but which are all filled by temporary locum staff. The current vacancy rate relating to permanent doctors stands at 12.7%.

**Therapists:**

There are currently 9 therapist posts which are not filled by permanent therapy staff but, as with nurses and doctors, we rely on the use of temporary locum/agency staff to cover these posts until a substantive appointment is made. The current vacancy rate relating to permanent therapist posts stands at 9.9%.

(c)

A number of measures are in place currently to address the workforce position. The “always on” campaign provides an online recruitment platform for potential candidates interested in working in Jersey. Enquiries are responded to immediately with timely follow up by the department. In addition, attendance at recruitment fairs in the UK provides opportunities to attract and source potential candidates and an ability to match job offers to existing vacancies at the time. Social media is also used as a measure to advertise posts as well as existing staff using their professional networks to seek out and source potential candidates.

Opportunities for personal development, practice supervision and growth are promoted as part of the recruitment process along with explaining the benefits of living in Jersey. Vacant posts are also analysed to consider if the introduction of new roles and ways of working will address requirements and boost opportunities for filling the post substantively. An attractive relocation package and access to temporary accommodation also assists candidates to transition to employment in Jersey.

Work is also underway to produce an Improvement Plan for Mental Health which will consider and include plans for the mental health workforce in the future.