

2018.07.10

3.13 Deputy M. Tadier of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the future of the Little Sisters of the Poor care home: [OQ. 91/2018]

What talks, if any, has the Minister, or his department, had with Little Sisters of the Poor and the Parish of St. Helier with regard to securing the future of their care home?

Deputy R.J. Renouf of St. Ouen (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

The head of Professional and Care Regulation was advised of the announcement by the Little Sisters of the Poor that they were planning to withdraw from Jersey in a letter that was hand-delivered on 27th June. In a telephone call later that day with the head of Professional and Care Regulation, the Mother Provincial gave an assurance that they were committed to their residents, they were looking for an organisation to continue to run the Jeanne Jugan Residence as a care home. It was said that they were very much at the beginning of negotiations and there were no immediate plans, or dates, set. Furthermore, the Order gave an assurance that the sisters will continue to manage the home until such time as a suitable alternative provider is found and they will ensure that any transition is made as smoothly as possible. Following the announcement, one of the officers from my department has visited the home and the team will continue to monitor. The Little Sisters have also assured us that they will keep the department informed of any developments. I, as Minister, have also since received a letter from the Little Sisters of the Poor, repeating all of that and offering the same assurances. As to the question whether talks have taken place with the Parish of St. Helier, there have been none.

3.13.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

I am sure the Minister and Members might wish to join me in saying that Little Sisters provides an excellent service [**Approbation**] both in terms of the Order that has been running it for a long time and also, of course, the civic staff who run that on a daily basis. It is a community and not simply just another care home. Particularly, on the last point, with the discussions with St. Helier, does the Minister agree that we also have some very good examples in Jersey of care homes that are run by Parishes and should it be in need of securing a future to an appropriate organisation to take that over? Would the Minister encourage and discuss with St. Helier, given the fact that they have had some of their care homes in the Parish closed recently, whether they might be an appropriate organisation to take over the running of that home?

Deputy R.J. Renouf:

First of all, I would absolutely concur with the Deputy's opening remarks: the Little Sisters of the Poor have been a very valued part of our community in the Island and have looked after some very vulnerable and special people, as members of our community grow older and we are immensely grateful to them. We are sad to see them go, but we understand the reasons they have expressed. If the Parish of St. Helier has an interest in taking over, or negotiating, the acquisition of the home, then I can assure the Deputy that my department will engage wherever necessary. The Parish is, of course, a registered provider already, insofar as it provides a residential and nursing facility at St. Ewolds, so there is a good track record there. But, it is for the Parish of St. Helier to make contact with the Little Sisters and my department will give whatever support may be necessary, bearing in mind it will also need to, perhaps, support other parties who may be interested. It will take an even-handed approach, I am sure.

3.13.2 Connétable K. Shenton-Stone of St. Martin:

I was not sure whether the Minister and the Deputy are aware that a very robust committee has been formed with the Little Sisters to preserve the amazing work that they do, so it may be worth

contacting them. The chair of the committee is Ben Shenton, my brother. But, anyway, it is a very robust committee and they have some very good people on it. I just was not sure if you were aware.

Deputy R.J. Renouf:

I am grateful to the Connétable and I am now aware and we will pass that on to the officers concerned.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Final supplementary, Deputy Tadier?

Deputy M. Tadier:

No, I do not, but just to thank the Minister for his ongoing concern in this area and I look forward to hearing back.