

2019.04.30

**5 Deputy K.G. Pamplin of St. Saviour of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the measures being taken to ensure sufficient recruitment to his Department: (OQ.112/2019)**

In light of the issues which can affect recruitment, such as the cost of rental accommodation and Brexit, is it the Minister's assessment that measures currently being taken to ensure sufficient recruitment to his department are succeeding; and what further measures, if any, are under consideration?

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

Mindful of time constraints, I will answer on the basis that the Deputy is seeking information about recruiting from outside of the Island, although, of course, we also do recruit from within. Recruiting outside the Island remains challenging, but there have been recent advances. We are now able to advertise our vacancies on the N.H.S. (National Health Service) jobs website, which was not the case previously. We also worked with a recruitment company, which has arranged that when people are searching on the internet they will see Jersey opportunities very quickly, featuring in the top 10 of sites. How we manage candidates has also changed. We try and adopt a timely and personalised approach. Once they submit their C.V. (*curriculum vitae*) we try and make personal contact, have a conversation with them very quickly, putting them in touch with the professional lead. Welcome Jersey has meant that all prospective candidates are now provided information about the Island and decisions they may need to make for themselves and their family about relocation and we will expand that further to include a bespoke relocation service, supporting applicants to source schooling, housing and healthcare. There have been changes around key worker accommodation and further accommodation is coming on board. Quality accommodation available. We have made a recent change to the Control of Housing and Work Order, which will allow children and partners of those employed in a registrable health occupation to be able to access all categories of employment in Jersey in the future.

**4.5.1 Deputy K.G. Pamplin:**

I thank the Minister for his answer. I just want to refer to the aspect of my question about the cost of rental accommodation. Given what the Minister has just said, his input would probably be very beneficial to the Housing Policy Development Board, especially the impact that the cost of renting accommodation could have in the world of Health and Social Services. Would the Minister, in reflection of this, think on about this and seek to himself, or one of his 3 Assistant Ministers, be part of this very important Housing Policy Development Board?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

I fully accept the importance of the Board and look forward to its work as it moves forward. I will input in whatever way the Board may feel appropriate.

**4.5.2 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:**

Does the Minister believe that if we can give tax breaks to so-called high net-worth individuals - a term that I do not particularly like to use myself, but that is the chosen nomenclature of Government - to move to Jersey as incentives, can we do the same to much needed healthcare workers, to help recruit them to the Island?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

It is difficult for me to expound on tax policy, but I can say that we give relocation grants and assist healthcare workers in similar ways around getting to the Island and paying for certain travel costs and moving their possessions here.

#### **4.5.3 Deputy G.J. Truscott:**

I can appreciate the Minister's dilemma: you are trying to recruit in a very tight market. The N.H.S. in the U.K. (United Kingdom), I believe, have vacancies for nurses in the region of 40,000, so we are having to compete and attract people in very difficult conditions. Is the Minister convinced that we are doing enough to grow homegrown nurses and social workers and so on, or does he feel that we could pour more resources into that area?

#### **The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

It is a constant attempt to try and maximise our efforts. In respect of growing our own, there is a total of 24 trainee nurses currently on the programme. There is a limit to how many trainee nurses we can train in the Island, because there are professional limits on how many trainees can work with fully trained staff. If we had a much bigger hospital, then we could have more trainees in it. I think we are nearing the maximum at the moment. There is funding now to enable trainees to train as mental health nurses, without that impacting on their own pockets and there is the ... the Deputy asked about social care, there is a social worker training programme commencing this September, I believe.

#### **4.5.4 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Could I ask the Minister to give a context to the issue he is facing here with recruitment? Can the Minister give a number to the number of vacancies that are currently available in the Health Department?

#### **The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

I do not immediately have a number across the whole department, but I am aware that, within our mental health nursing, we have 31 vacancies for nurses and healthcare assistants in our mental health sector. As a sign of the advances in recruitment, I understand officers have interviewed 26 persons for those roles recently. So, if all those 26 were found acceptable and accepted their offers, that would clearly fill a great gap in our provision.

#### **4.5.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Given the high costs of living in Jersey and moving to Jersey, does the Minister believe it is time to reinstate some form of Jersey premium on salaries being paid for these vital jobs?

#### **The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

The question of key workers and incentivising all key workers needed in the Island remains a matter that the Council of Ministers want to address. I note there is a question about it later on in the list. It is something to be considered, though I would not want to consider it for the health service in isolation; it should be considered in the context of education also, perhaps, and all of our key workers. So, a wider question for consideration.

#### **4.5.6 Deputy K.G. Pamplin:**

I thank my colleagues for joining in what, I think, is a very important issue. I want to refer to the other part of my original question: Brexit. This question really came from my recent experience spending time at the hospital and speaking to specialist consultants that there could be an

opportunity missed in terms of the uncertainty in the United Kingdom with Brexit, where Jersey is in a much safer, stronger place, because the impact is not the same, clearly. We are in a very strong position and the work undertaken by Senator Gorst and his department is that more could be done to say the uncertainty in the mainland is not going to be here and there could be an opportunity. I would ask the Minister if he agrees with that.

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

I did ask about this question, because, from time to time, people ask me whether we have considered recruitment in the Philippines. It is the case that many nurses in the N.H.S., I understand, do come from the Philippines. However, it is likely that they would first register with the N.H.S. - that is the usual route for us attracting medical staff from places further afield than the E.U. (European Union) - because, in the case of nurses, they do need to be registered with the Royal College to work here. They are likely first to go into the N.H.S. and then from there look at the possibilities of moving to Jersey.