

2019.07.16

6 Deputy K.G. Pamplin of St. Saviour of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the introduction of carers and care legislation: (OQ.187/2019)

When does the Minister plan to introduce carers and care legislation, identified as the first 'key gap in the system' in the 2017 Jersey Carers Strategy?

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

The carers strategy was developed and published by the Jersey Association of Carers Incorporated in June 2017, shortly after the Government had published the first disability strategy for the Island. The disability strategy includes a section on supporting carers and includes an action to review Government support provided to carers and work with carers groups to ensure this support is timely and well targeted, including consideration of whether the rights of carers should be set out in law, including the right to a carer's assessment and support package. The timing of this action, in the disability strategy, is given as long-term. Both strategies have been fully considered by Ministers in the development of the Common Strategic Policy and the forthcoming Government Plan. As Minister for Health and Community Services, I have supported the allocation of resources within the draft Government Plan towards these important areas. The Government Plan will be published next week and more details will be available at that time.

5.6.1 Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

I thank the Minister for his answer; however the answer to the written question in relation to this question, I almost, like Deputy Morel, ask you to have a look at, because I was asking for an update on the 2017 care strategy. So, I use this opportunity now to push the Minister further again that 2017 is 2 years since the strategy, in conjunction with Government at the time, to look at the key gaps in the system, which was identified as 6, is has there been any other progress in the past 2 years that he can identify?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

The strategy has close connections with the disability strategy, which is a Government strategy, of course. That disability strategy, having previously sat in the Chief Minister's Office, I understand in very recent months has moved across to the Minister for Social Security; I will be working with her, as our term progresses on the implementation of it. But I can say that we have had no meetings, as yet, to discuss the actions arising out of the disability strategy.

5.6.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Can the Minister inform Members when we are likely to see the Ethical Charter for Domiciliary Care enacted, as that has already been accepted by this House and we await its implementation?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I thank the Deputy and, yes, some time ago I did have a meeting with the Deputy, who had brought forward the Proposition. We remain in some difficulty in that the Deputy's Proposition asked that the matter be placed in legislation and, of course, legislation requires very precise parameters, whereas in the U.K. the strategy, or the charter he has spoken about, the Ethical Care Charter, is just that, it is a charter that is chosen to be adopted as a matter of policy. So, sometimes it is difficult to turn those good intentions expressed in the charter into a legislative framework. So, we continue to work on those difficulties and I am happy to meet the Deputy at some time soon to discuss our progress.

5.6.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Supplementary if I may and that will come as a surprise to me that there were problems in implementing what has been fully accepted by this House. I think it was voted for unanimously; I am not sure. The Minister seems to be avoiding implementation of something, which has directly been before this House and accepted by this House. Why?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Certainly not avoiding it and, if I recall correctly, I voted in favour of the Deputy's Proposition and would still do the same. Of course, there are difficulties in taking what is a statement of high principle that carers should receive due recognition, for example and turning that into a statutory provision. But, as I have said, we continue to work on it and I am happy to report back to the Deputy in detail should he wish.

5.6.4 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Many people, who are engaged in care, are below the radar. What figures did the Minister base his proposals on in trying to deal with this problem? In other words, what are the estimates the department has of those engaged in care and, therefore, the level of provision you intend providing in the future?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

It is true that it is probably difficult to arrive at a figure representing all carers, because these things tend to grow up and one becomes involved in a care situation involuntarily and without Government knowing about it necessarily.

[10:30]

I would have thought the department that might have had a better sight on this would be the Customer and Local Services and the former Social Security functions in it, with the administration of the long term care scheme and carers' allowances and such things. As for myself, I presently have no figures as to the number of carers in the Island with me.

5.6.5 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Given that the suffragettes' theme was 'Action Not Words', can I ask the Minister whether the Ethical Care Charter will be in the Government Plan, or as a separate piece of legislation and the timescale of it?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

The Government Plan is being published next week and I am not in a position to give advance details of it.

5.6.6 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Has the Minister not considered asking about how many people are guardians for people who need caring, because that will give a good idea of some of the population that need caring?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I take it the Senator might mean guardians under the Mental Health Law and, yes, guardians under the Children Law possibly, or Mental Health Law, those figures would be known, I agree and could be ascertained.

5.6.7 Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

Does the Minister agree with me that the reason why there is not much detail in my written question and the oral question to the thrust of what I am asking today that financials - how to obtain them and how they will be used to evaluate what is in an achievable outcome - are absent from the strategy; that this is not acceptable and going forward with further strategies from his department will have this included in the future, so we are not still waiting for further things to be coming through?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

It certainly is the desire of myself and my department and expressed in the Strategic Policy, to put patients' families and carers at the heart of Jersey's health and care system. We are intending to develop programmes within the Government Plan, which would give funding to the system, additional support and recognition of carers. I would urge the Deputy to examine our Government Plan, to see what can be done within it.