

2019.03.12

18 Deputy K.G. Pamplin of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the action to be taken in response to ‘Assessment of Mental Health Services’ (S.R.4/2019): [OQ.71/2019]

Further to the report of the Health and Social Security Scrutiny Panel’s work into mental health, presented this week, will the Minister assure the Assembly that improvements to mental health services will be made as a matter of urgency; and will he provide the timetable for such improvements to be made?

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

As the Deputy has pointed out, the Scrutiny Panel’s excellent report was only published last week, and he will be aware that it is normal to allow up to 6 weeks for a response to a Scrutiny report and, therefore, I wonder if the Deputy is seeking a quick preview. But, nonetheless, I very much welcomed the report, it was a thorough, hard-hitting, report. I will be working closely with clinicians and officers over the coming weeks to carefully reflect on the numerous findings and recommendations and to prepare, with them, a full and detailed response. But I can assure the Assembly today that improvements to mental health services are being made and will continue to be made. Many of the issues identified in the report are part of a current Mental Health Improvement Plan, which is being driven by a Mental Health Improvement Board, which covers a number of agencies. The key priorities for that board and the executive team are a strategy to improve our mental health facilities; a recruitment campaign to fill vacancies; a focus on crisis prevention and intervention and investment in clinical and professional leadership roles. We started addressing many of the issues raised in the report and I can say we have a plan under development to replace Orchard House within 18 months and by this summer we will have a new place of safety, in the hospital, to assess patients in crisis. Further detail on that and all other recommendations will be provided in response to the panel’s findings and recommendations.

6.18.1 Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

I thank the Minister for responding. I am fully aware of the rules of engagement as a new politician here, but I stand on my feet as a matter of urgency. In 2014, the then Minister for Health and Social Services said Jersey would build a new mental health unit for young people; it never happened. The former Minister for Health and Social Services last March said that plans for a mental health facility at Overdale was coming; it has not happened. So, will he go one step further to ensure that absolutely there will not be a need for another report this damning, that is causing so much damage to our loved ones and Islanders in 3 years, 6 years, or 30 years’ time?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I absolutely share the Deputy’s concerns and, not just me, but it is the resolve of the whole Council of Ministers, which has placed greater emphasis on mental health in its Strategic Policy; all of us are determined to achieve a parity of esteem, demonstrating that we value mental health equally with physical health and provide equal access to effective safe treatment and care. I see things happening and I see leadership coming forward from within the clinical and professions. That is inspiring workers. We have independent advocacy organised and we are addressing those estate-related issues and, as I have said, we have an 18-month plan. There has also been good investment in the first months of this year. I understand there are new digital services available to those seeking assistance and we are constantly working trying to improve the offering of Jersey Talking Therapies. There is much going on. We absolutely recognise the importance of improving services, getting this

right for our people in this Island and I look forward to working with the Scrutiny Panel and reporting to it and this Assembly in the coming weeks.

6.18.2 Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

I thank the Minister for that. During our report and, as our report alludes to, there are many interim roles still in place, and I refer to Deputy Le Hegarat's question about this in the written questions. But, can he confirm and will he be able to provide, maybe, in a written response to all Members, and especially us today, the status of those interim roles, including the Interim Director of Quality Governance and Nursing in mental health?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

All that is being addressed under the target operating model. As to interims, or delivery of services by *locums*, I can say that we have recently recruited 4 new psychiatrists, on a permanent basis, into the service. They are already beginning to make a huge difference and encouraging the workforce who work with them.