

2020.01.21

10 Deputy K.F. Morel of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the cost of domiciliary care services to elderly Islanders: (OQ.4/2020)

Is the Minister aware of any firms offering domiciliary care services to elderly Islanders that have raised their prices this year by more than inflation, citing increases in fuel costs or administrative requirements arising from the Health and Community Services Department; and if so, what measures is the Minister taking to mitigate these costs for vulnerable Islanders?

[11:30]

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

Having consulted with officers of my department we are aware of firms which have raised their prices by more than inflation. However, we believe that those rises are not prompted by actions of my department because my department does not regulate domiciliary care and does not control the prices set by homecare providers. Notwithstanding this however, we recognise that domiciliary care is an important part of the Jersey Care Model and I am acutely aware of the recruitment and retention challenges facing the sector. We are giving consideration to developing a workforce strategy to help ensure that homecare services can continue to be delivered safely into the future.

2.10.1 Deputy K.F. Morel:

While the Minister may not have direct responsibility for the pricing of these services, given the importance of domiciliary care to the Future Jersey Care Model, and understanding that things like fuel rises and increase in administration regulation fall from the Council of Ministers of which he is a member, will the Minister for Health and Social Services be paying more attention to those actions of the Council of Ministers which have a direct effect on the price of domiciliary care services to Islanders?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

We will always take all matters into consideration and I am always very ready to hear from those in the care sector and States Members or any interested party on how we can ensure the delivery of care to vulnerable people in the Island. I spoke recently with our head of social care about this issue. I have met with the head of the Jersey Care Federation. It is a matter under constant consideration.

2.10.2 Deputy K.F. Morel:

Given these increases in costs, will the Minister commit to speaking to the relevant Minister, in this case the Minister for Social Security, to analyse how the long-term care benefit can be altered in order to provide Islanders with the requisite recompense for these increases in prices that he has admitted have taken place?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I will commit to doing that and I believe Government always has to keep the level of long-term care benefit under review and it is reviewed annually. There has recently been an increase in the levels of payment that are made under the long-term care scheme but it is true that costs can exceed the benefits payable and that the Government must always consider how we address and support people who cannot meet any additional costs.