

21.02.09

19 Deputy K.F. Morel of the Minister for Social Security regarding the role of the Government of Jersey in the regulation of the cost of private care for the elderly (OQ.28/2021)

Will the Minister explain what role, if any, the Government has in regulating the cost of private care for the elderly, whether in a person's home or in a residential home; and furthermore, will she inform Members how the Government ensures that any increase in long-term care payments is not taken by the care sector as a signal to increase their charges?

Deputy J.A. Martin (The Minister for Social Security):

Long-term care is for all adults over the age of 18 who require care, not just for the elderly. The Government does not regulate the cost of private care. Care homes are private businesses who set their own fees. Social care for adults in Jersey is provided by the Health and Community Services Department, some Parishes, commercial companies and also charities. The Government does not control the cost of fees charged for social care. Social care providers are regulated by the Jersey Care Commission, which requires a scale of fees to be published.

6.19.1 Deputy K.F. Morel:

I take it from the answer that, as well as the Government not regulating the cost of care, the Care Commissioner also does not regulate the cost of care, only requiring a scale of fees to be published. Would the Minister explain how then Islanders are protected from care providers overcharging or charging unreasonable sums for their care?

Deputy J.A. Martin:

I will try to answer that question. At the moment, we know that the highest fee, which is the £1,094.52, we can still find places for people in the care section. The question asked is do we interfere or not; that the long-term care payments are not taken by the care sector as a signal to increase their charges? I understand where the Deputy is coming from, where I take the first question from the Deputy today. If the Deputy wants to sit down with me, if our model is wrong, I would love his input as the Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture.

6.19.2 Deputy R.J. Ward:

I would like to ask the Minister, have you not just demonstrated that what we have is a free-market free-for-all in the provision of care for our elderly community and for perhaps any of us who may find ourselves in that situation? It is creating real hardship and people having to put vast amounts of money in. Is it not time that there is some regulation of these costs, urgently?

Deputy J.A. Martin:

That would be true if the Deputy's statement were completely correct that there is not care places out there that people can afford under the amounts of money they can get on long-term care. I am not saying I am being complacent. I can absolutely look into this and I have just given an undertaking to Deputy Morel, who, as I say, if we need to look at the economic model and there is more we need to regulate. But, again, these are private companies and most private companies for services that they provide are allowed to charge the going rate.