

2024.04.30

3.13 Deputy I. Gardiner of the Minister for Social Security regarding the hosiery dressing scheme (OQ.73/2024)

Further to the adoption of P.72/2023 as amended, will the Minister advise what progress, if any, is being made in extending the hosiery dressing scheme to include wound dressings to those with medical needs?

Deputy L.V. Feltham (The Minister for Social Security):

As I hope the Deputy is aware, the funded dressing scheme is one of my key priorities and I am pleased to report that we are now making good progress. There is now a dedicated team allocated to this project who are providing me personally with feedback on developments, and I am continuing to monitor this progress very closely and I will be providing updates as soon as they become available. The Assembly has agreed that funding should come through the H.I.F. (Health Insurance Fund). This does require that appropriate governance and legal frameworks are in place before funds can be released but the team is doing everything that they can to implement an initial phase of the scheme as quickly as possible. We have spoken to key stakeholders, Family Nursing and Home Care and pharmacy contractors and we are looking to launch the first stage of the scheme through a number of local pharmacies as soon as possible.

3.13.1 Deputy I. Gardiner:

I thank the Minister for her answer, it is reassuring that it is progressing. Can the Minister confirm that she has full backing from the Minister for Treasury and Resources and the Chief Minister with the £1 million funds that was allocated to this scheme?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

The funding has been allocated through the Health Insurance Fund and we have backing through the Assembly, as this amendment was approved as part of the Government Plan in December and the budgets approved within the Government Plan, but of course, as Minister for Social Security, I am responsible for the Health Insurance Fund.

3.13.2 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

Can the Minister say what recent communication she had with the pharmacies to see how they can collaborate in order to be able to deliver through them such a scheme as soon as possible?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

My team has been involved in active workshops with both Family Nursing and Home Care and has been in close dialogue with pharmacies. The first phase that we are looking at in the first instance will focus on existing Family Nursing and Home Care clients, as the evidence suggests that those clients have the more longer-term need for dressings and the dressings will be provided from a local pharmacy. We are still working on contractual details but we are aiming to get that stage launched within the coming weeks.

3.13.3 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Just for clarification, the Minister responded that the Assembly obviously approved the budget in the Government Plan, does she have full support from the Minister for Treasury and Resources, Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers to use these funds?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I am confident that I do have the support of my fellow Ministers in relation to these funds.