



States Greffe: Scrutiny

Deputy Richard Renouf
Minister for Health and Social Services

By email

16th March 2022

Dear Minister

**Economic and International Affairs Scrutiny Panel
Seasonal Workers and the Rural Economy Review**

I write to you in the context of our review into Seasonal Workers in the Rural Economy.

As part of our review, we are looking at the rights of seasonal workers on a 9 month contract with regards to social security and health care. We have written to the Minister for Social Security regarding seasonal workers eligibility to access the social security system and, in her reply, she suggested we contact you with regards to the rights of such workers accessing the health care system.

As you may be aware, under current rules, seasonal workers in the agricultural industry are permitted to work for 9 months in 12 then have to leave the Island for 3 months before they can return to work on the Island. We are mindful that all new employees to the Island cannot claim social security contributions for the first 6 months of employment: however, we have been made aware during the course of our review that any workers in the agricultural industry who return following the required 3-month break, have to make payments to the social security scheme as completely new employees and work for 6 months before being eligible for social security benefits; in short, any contributions previously made by a 'returning employee' are ignored for this purpose. We have been informed that, to mitigate this, employers have to pay for private health insurance for the first 6 months not only of the initial period of employment but also of subsequent periods as well.

We would be grateful if you could provide us with the terms under which seasonal workers are classed with accessing the current health system. In particular, we are interested in how they access the hospital following an emergency, should they need to be admitted. We understand from our evidence gathering that seasonal workers are not eligible for subsidised hospital care and are responsible for full payment but we would appreciate it if you could clarify the precise terms applicable to such workers.

We would be grateful if you could provide a response by Friday 25th March to enable us to continue with our evidence gathering as part of our review. We thank you in advance for your co-operation and if you have any questions regarding this or any of our work, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Deputy David Johnson
Chair
Economic and International Affairs Scrutiny Panel