

2024.06.25

### **3.4 Deputy J. Renouf of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the Mortality Learning Review (OQ.121/2024)**

Will the Minister provide an update on the results of the Mortality Learning Review being conducted following the death of patients treated by the Rheumatology Department in the last 3 years, and will he also provide details on any other patient safety reviews taking place in the Health Department?

#### **Deputy T. Binet (The Minister for Health and Social Services):**

The Mortality Learning Review is actually an ongoing process that will take some time to complete. There is no conclusive or meaningful information available at this time, but an interim report will be compiled over the next month for presentation at the Health Advisory Board at the end of July. What I can say about this issue is that 5 cases to date have been referred to the Viscount. It is well known that all areas of the hospital will be reviewed over the course of time and it is inevitable that more problems will be found in certain areas. There are no new reviews underway at present but we have identified the next area for review, and that process will begin in the next few weeks. Given, as I have already stated this morning, that the first rule of good health, certainly in my view, is to put the patient first, I do not feel that it would be appropriate to broadcast what particular area this will be. In the event that little of substance is found to be wrong, all we would have achieved is to cause a great deal of unnecessary stress and anxiety to recent and current users of that service. I do not think that would be a very helpful approach.

#### **3.4.1 Deputy J. Renouf:**

The Deputy Medical Director told Scrutiny on 6th June that 90 patients had been reviewed to see if their deaths were linked to treatment. Can the Minister say how many of these the expert panel thought should be referred to the Viscount?

#### **Deputy T. Binet:**

They are going through that process to refine how many get sent. As I have already mentioned, 5 have already been sent to the Viscount. It is quite possible that more will be sent as well.

#### **3.4.2 Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

The Minister committed earlier this year to an action plan to deal with the Royal College of Physicians report by the end of June. Is he on track to deliver that action plan?

#### **Deputy T. Binet:**

That is probably going to be slightly delayed.

#### **3.4.3 Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

There are 23 recommendations in the Royal College of Physicians report. Can he confirm, first, if he has read the report and if he accepts all those recommendations? Will he be actioning them according to the timetable set out in the report? If not, which recommendations does he not agree with?

#### **Deputy T. Binet:**

That is a whole series of questions. The full radiology report, I have to confess I have not read, I have read the summary. Sorry, could I ask for the second part of that question?

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

If he is accepting the recommendations and will he be actioning them according to the timetable that is set out in the report? If not, why not?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

Certainly it is beyond my pay grade to argue with recommendations from people at the Royal College, so the answer to that is yes. As far as whether we are going to get everything done in accordance with that timetable, I would have to go and ask that question. I will happily let the Deputy know how that is progressing against the stated timetable.

**3.4.4 Deputy I. Gardiner:**

When does the Minister expect the Mortality Learning Review to be completed?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

Sorry, which review would that be?

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Mortality.

**Deputy T. Binet:**

There will be an update on that given in July. That is not going to be ready for some time. As I say, it is an ongoing process that is quite complicated and it is expected to run for some time. I will repeat that there will be an update on that at the next board meeting at the end of July.

**3.4.5 Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Would the Minister present to the Assembly the findings and action plan, and would the Minister be ready to answer the Assembly questions on the facts as required?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

I think that is an obligation on me, so the answer to that would be yes.

**3.4.6 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson:**

Can the Minister set out his understanding of the role of a Minister in relation to leading a department when such a review is ongoing and when other patient safety reviews may be ongoing?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

I do not think that is an appropriate question. It is not something I could answer properly in this sort of setting. I could provide a written answer to that. That is something I would need to give some thought to.

**The Bailiff:**

The answer is you are not in a position to answer that question at the current time, is what you are saying.

**Deputy T. Binet:**

I think that is safe to say, yes.

**3.4.7 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson:**

So, just for clarity, our Minister for Health and Social Services cannot explain what his understanding of his role is in relation to leading a department when we have a Mortality Learning Review going on.

**Deputy T. Binet:**

If I may say, I do not think that is a very sensible question to be asking in this setting.

**The Bailiff:**

Well, I have to say, Minister, you are responsible for your Ministerial office and it is not unreasonable to ask what your understanding is of the areas that you should cover and be across, and the things that you should do. I do not think that is outside the ambit of that or the question in connection to the Mortality Learning Review.

[10:15]

**Deputy T. Binet:**

I will attempt to answer on the balls of my feet. These are very complicated. As a layperson, one comes to this job with a view to playing a political role. The first thing that I tend to do is to assess the people that I am working around, whether I trust them or not. At this particular point in time, I trust the team that are doing the work and I play, what I consider to be, an appropriate political role in working with those people to make sure that the best outcomes for the patients are achieved.

**3.4.8 Deputy J. Renouf:**

This is a Government committed to openness and transparency according to their Common Strategic Policy. I raised with the Minister the point that the next board meeting is, I believe, after the Assembly has finished sitting. Therefore, will he commit to bring those recommendations or the reports rather of the Mortality Learning Review for discussion to the Assembly, as the Ministerial Code of Conduct suggests it should do in terms of being brought before the Assembly before it goes to the public, so that the Minister can answer questions about it in this place?

**Deputy T. Binet:**

Certainly that will depend entirely on whether it is ready and prepared in time.