

2016.05.24

3.1 Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the payment of medical bills by former residents of The Limes Nursing Home:

Will the Minister advise whether residents who were moved from The Limes Nursing Home will be subject to G.P. (General Practitioner) and other medical bills at their new nursing home and will he liaise with the Minister for Social Security to ensure that this is not a recurring problem?

Senator A.K.F. Green (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

Residents that have moved from The Limes Nursing Home will be subject to G.P. and other medical bills at their new nursing home, as is the case for all other residents in all other establishments. However, if they are claiming means-tested long-term care benefit to assist with the payment of their care home fees then they, like others in the home, may be entitled to support from Social Security with their G.P. costs.

3.1.1 Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I think this is where the confusion arises. People were under the impression that if they moved from The Limes that their G.P. bills would be covered. I only have one parishioner who is suffering with this but I know there are many around the Island. Will the Minister agree to liaise with the Minister for Social Security to make sure that this confusion is cleared up?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

Personally, I apologise if there was any confusion. It was quite clear that the residents were told when moving that the costs for them in terms of their residential or nursing care would not change. I am sorry if it was not made clear about the G.P. bills. I do not need to liaise more than I already have with the Minister for Social Security because those on limited means who are getting support through the long-term care scheme may be, depending on their assets, entitled to support from Social Security.

3.1.2 Deputy J.A. Hilton of St. Helier:

Can the Minister confirm whether the rules have changed since any of the residents left The Limes and were the residents in receipt of free G.P. care before they left the Limes, so that something has changed in the meanwhile?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

The rules have not changed but the place of residence has changed. For example, the people in nursing care in Sandybrook still receive free G.P. care and that is done by the basis that it is convenient for us to have one contract with a group of G.P.s to provide that service. But those living in nursing homes and residential homes outside of Health's care provide payment for their G.P. unless they are entitled to assistance because they have limited means, limited assets. If they are entitled to assistance from Social Security then they will get it.

3.1.3 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

Can the Minister confirm that there were some residents of The Limes, who previously were in receipt of free G.P. care, are now having to pay?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

I thought that is what I have been saying all along, yes.

3.1.4 Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondré of St. Lawrence:

To be clear, residents at The Limes were previously in receipt of free G.P. care and are now having, as a result of the move, and no other change, are no longer in receipt of that free G.P. care?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

Yes, those residents who have sufficient assets will pay for their G.P.

[9:45]

Those who have not can access that through the proper channels through the targeted support at Social Security.

3.1.5 Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondré:

In what form was it made clear to them of that financial change?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

I am not sure. I have to be entirely upfront and honest on this, I am not sure if the G.P. aspect was properly explained. Every member has now been written to - about 10 days ago - to explain that. I apologise if it was not clear, but I cannot hand on heart say that it had been made absolutely clear, that one aspect.

3.1.6 Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondré:

Can the Minister confirm that before residents left it appears they were not written to and it was not explained clearly to them the financial consequence of this matter?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

I did not say that, I said I cannot be sure that it was explained clearly. What they were told is that the cost of their nursing care would not fall to them but I am not sure that the aspect around the G.P. was explained. But if a person has sufficient assets in order to pay for their G.P. they should be treated the same as all the other people in nursing and residential homes in the private sector. If they have not, that is what the social security system is there for.

3.1.7 Deputy R. Labey of St. Helier:

Let us be clear, the Minister was asked by Deputy Hilton if the rules had changed for the residents of the Limes specifically. The Minister brought in Sandybrook, *et cetera*, but we were not talking about that. Can the Minister be clear: the rules have now changed from the residents who were in The Limes to where they are now?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

If you want to be pedantic, the rules have not changed because the rules in the private sector, in the nursing sector, were that G.P.s were paid for by the resident. That remains. The Limes no longer exists therefore the rules in The Limes are not applicable.

3.1.8 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

Can the Minister inform Members under what order were the rules changed?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

The rules have not changed insomuch as the provision for care in the public sector.

3.1.9 Deputy R.J. Rondel of St. Helier:

Would the Minister advise how many people this affects?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

I do not have that figure to hand. From memory I seem to think it is something like 20 residents that were being transferred.

3.1.10 Deputy K.C. Lewis:

The rules may not have changed but the goalposts have certainly moved. For the residents who moved from The Limes, it was not of their choosing. They had to move, they did not have a choice. So just to clarify, there were people at The Limes who were receiving free medical care who will no longer receive that medical care. I am not sure of the exact numbers. The total number is 20 but how many were receiving free medical care who are no longer receiving free medical care? Would the Minister please clarify?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

I do not have the answer to that because that information would be based on a means-tested assessment carried out by Social Security. The basis is that The Limes had to close because it was no longer fit for purpose. We worked very hard with families to find suitable accommodation for them and I apologise, again, if it was not made clear about the G.P. practice. But they are being treated in line with all other residents in the Island. If they have assets and are able to pay for their G.P. they do. If they cannot there is a very good system available through Social Security.