

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER CENTRAL
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 10th OCTOBER 2022
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 17th OCTOBER 2022**

Question

With regard to patients requiring ophthalmic treatment, including simple cataract operations, will the Minister –

- (a) state whether there are currently any delays for such treatment; any instances of operations being indefinitely postponed; and whether there exists a ‘waiting list’ to join the standard waiting list for such treatment;
- (b) if any of the circumstances described in paragraph (a) exist, explain how such a situation has arisen; and
- (c) advise what actions, if any, she either has in place or proposes to put in place to rectify the situation in both the short and long term?

Answer

- (a) There are no instances of any operations being indefinitely postponed, other than corneal transplants which are not performed on island because of a lack of appropriate tissue available. Patients requiring this treatment are being referred off island to receive this treatment in the UK.

When a referral for ophthalmic treatment is received at the General Hospital, they are clinically triaged by the ophthalmology consultants as either, rejected, urgent, soon, or routine. Patients are then added on to the appropriate outpatient waiting list dependant on both clinical priority and sub speciality.

All patients are seen in outpatients by a doctor before they can be listed for ophthalmic treatment or surgery. If a patient requires any other ophthalmic treatment within the outpatient department they are then listed as a follow-up patient to the appropriate clinic, such as retinal, adnexal, glaucoma, IVT, laser, botox, general follow up. If the patient requires a surgical procedure, they are then added to an inpatient waiting list either as urgent, soon, or routine, by both clinical priority and sub speciality.

As of Friday 14 October 2022, the average wait for a clinically triaged routine outpatient is 200 days and the average wait for a clinically triaged routine inpatient is 144 days.

- (b) See above.
- (c) A substantial financial package has been invested in the ophthalmology department to support the high number of referrals and high throughput of patients. Part of this reduced the outpatient ophthalmology waiting list post Covid in August 2021. The financial package contains funding for the staffing/refurbishment of clinical space and equipment.

There is ongoing recruitment for substantive posts, with a new Doctor starting in November 2022 and interviews taking place in November 2022 for further multidisciplinary appointments.