

20.11.02

**6 Deputy I. Gardiner of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the staffing of the General Hospital during the winter period (OQ.292/2020)**

Will the Minister advise what plans, if any, are in place to ensure that there are sufficient staff employed at the General Hospital to deal with winter admissions and any potential rise in the numbers of COVID cases?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen (The Minister for Health and Social Services):**

I thank the Deputy for her questions and would refer her to my answer to Written Question 423 asked by her, which covers similar ground. The safety of patients is a top priority for me and Health and Community Services and so a daily operational hub is in place to ensure that no areas are under-resourced. This is managed by the flexible use of the entire workforce in responding to need each day. In addition, the department has in place a winter and COVID preparedness plan that has been refreshed for this winter, agreed by the department's executive team and communicated with all staff.

**4.6.1 Deputy I. Gardiner:**

I thank the Minister and I would like to explore further data. We have 57 nurses, which is 13 per cent vacancies, can the Minister advise what is the current sickness rate for the staff at the hospital and how the Minister plans to manage staff illness on top of the vacancies?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

I cannot immediately advise but we will attempt to advise the Deputy. There are always vacancies in any healthcare operation but the fact that vacancies exist does not mean that those posts are not staffed, because we have a healthy number of staff members working on bank duties who fill many of those vacancies day by day and therefore keep the health service operational and safe.