

2025.03.18

**4.4 Deputy I. Gardiner of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding PFAS testing (OQ.69/2025):**

Will the Minister advise what considerations, if any, has been given to offering P.F.A.S. testing for residents outside of the 2 plumes in the St. Ouen's Bay and Pont Marquet areas?

**Deputy T.J.A. Binet of St. Saviour (The Minister for Health and Social Services):**

As the Deputy knows, we have an independent Scientific Advisory Panel that has been established to provide evidence-based advice on P.F.A.S. so that we can make informed decisions in the best interests of Islanders. The panel has already completed 2 reports and their third report, which is due for completion at the end of June, will make recommendations on how we might test more widely across the Island and what interventions we might use to reduce levels of P.F.A.S. in blood. I hope the Deputy agrees that issues of this sort are best dealt with on the basis of independent scientific advice.

**4.4.1 Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Thank you to the Minister. My question was prompted by attending a public event at St. Peter where it was confirmed that none of the areas of Jersey are excluded currently. We do not know what is included, but we currently cannot exclude any of the areas. I understand that we are waiting for the report, and I would welcome the report.

[10:30]

What consideration has the Minister given to offer testing for people that think in experience and the symptoms from poison P.F.A.S. or at least test around the Island to understand the position where we are at?

**Deputy T.J.A. Binet:**

I accept there is a little bit of dilemma in this regard. It is a difficult one. People are obviously concerned. I do not think we can just have a random approach to this. It is tricky. The tests are £220 each, not £20 as was cited in the media. They have to go to a specialist laboratory; I think somewhere in Germany. There are not many laboratories that can deal with this. If we take a random approach to it, you could have 100,000 people demanding that they get equal treatment and that everybody gets a test and simple arithmetic tells me that would cost about £22 million. It would be unmanageable. There would not be a laboratory that is capable of doing the tests so what we have decided to do is to wait for the panel to come up with a recommendation as to how we might go about this in an orderly way so that we can get some further test results from around the Island. I think it would be difficult for us to take that decision.

**4.4.2 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:**

I can see that this whole process is fraught with problems, for example blood tests from around the Island, you do not know where people have lived. It is just a snapshot at any one time but leaving that aside, the question, I guess, is who pays for the independent scientific advice?

**Deputy T.J.A. Binet:**

That scientific advice is being paid for by central Government at this point in time.

**4.4.3 Deputy M. Tadier:**

I am tempted to invoke the adage: "He who pays the piper calls the tune", but I am not sure if that would be understood necessarily if it is parliamentary, but can I ask the Minister perhaps the more important question: is really once the blood tests have come back and they show that individuals in Jersey have a certain amount of P.F.A.S. in their body, the question then, of course, is how it got there in the first place and could the Minister say whether he is thinking ahead to that point? Because, of course, that is the point at which scientific evidence could diverge with the Government on the one hand saying: "It

is not our fault. That came there through other sources”, whereas those who have been affected, perhaps living in those areas, might wish to start making claims saying: “We believe that Government is responsible for this.” What is the action plan in that regard?

**Deputy T.J.A. Binet:**

I think that spells out why we are using scientists to advise us. I think we are pretty much at the forefront of investigating this. There are not many other countries that are on the front foot and spending as much money per capita as we are on this. Some of the advice that we are getting already suggests that P.F.A.S. (a) is everywhere, and (b) can be taken into the system by various means. My understanding is that fish and particularly meat have high concentrations of P.F.A.S., so I think until we can establish where the concentrations of P.F.A.S. emerge from, we are in quite difficult territory. That is why we are having to be extremely careful about how we proceed.

**4.4.4 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:**

Can I offer my support to the Minister for his backing of the scientific committee, which I think is doing an excellent job and indeed that is a very good way to proceed, but can he then say whether he is prepared to make any commitment to definitely implement the findings of the scientific committee and/or other when it comes to report?

**Deputy T.J.A. Binet:**

Once again, it is hard to provide an absolute commitment because we are not quite sure what those recommendations are going to be. I should imagine that in the main that we would. We then have to look at the costs and the political implications of those recommendations. All I would say is let us wait until those recommendations come through and we will make those decisions at that time.

**4.4.5 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:**

As the Minister mentioned that the P.F.A.S. might be sourced in the various fish, meat and other, maybe in the meantime the Minister can encourage Public Health to put proper communication to the public about P.F.A.S., sources of P.F.A.S., what to look out for because I think there is lots of, maybe, misconception or right conception going around so we are all learning it as we progress. Whatever is known to the Public Health now can be put in some shape or form to the wider public of Jersey.

**Deputy T.J.A. Binet:**

I think to the best of my knowledge, any conclusive evidence that we have is probably in the public domain already. We are reliant on this team of scientists to provide that information and when that information comes out, that will all be in the public domain and, as I say, I do not think it is up to us as politicians to pre-empt that.