

2020.06.16

8 Deputy K.G. Pamplin of St. Saviour of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the number of healthcare and social care workers employed by the Government of Jersey (OQ.154/2020):

Will the Minister provide details of the total number of healthcare and social care workers currently employed by the Government of Jersey?

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

Health and Community Services employs 2,104 people within the categories of healthcare and social care workers. A further 53 employees are within children's social care. These figures do not include bank nurses, locums or agency workers.

3.8.1 Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

Given the issues that we highlighted last year in September that the department was working on in terms of recruitment, can the Minister give us an update on how they have been affected because of the pandemic from the last 3 months?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Permanent staff have remained and have been redeployed to do other work dealing with the COVID emergency. It is probably the case that recruitment efforts have been affected by COVID but we will be trying to resume them as soon as possible. We have of course also had an amazing response from people who wish to return to practice and they have picked up their training and qualifications once again. We have had a number of employees who previously worked in the hospitality industry who have rapidly been trained as healthcare assistants. We have had a number of volunteers come forward and receive training when the Nightingale hospital was built.

3.8.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Can the Minister inform Members how many agency nurses he is currently employing and how many care assistants have been employed but are on zero-hours contracts awaiting being deployed following the building of the new temporary hospital?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I do not have the precise figure of the number of agency nurses currently employed but I will let Members have that figure as soon as I can obtain it. The Deputy also asked how many care assistants are on zero-hour contracts. The fact of the matter is that every healthcare worker working on the bank is employed for bank work under zero-hour contracts because that is the only way a bank can work, I believe. I will do my best to answer that question by making enquiries and we will see what information can be obtained. So it may be how many care assistants are registered on the bank. I will try and get that information to Members.

3.8.3 Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

Last September we discussed the situation as described as being in the red zone when almost 200 positions at the hospital were unfulfilled. That number slightly decreased given some effort towards the end of the year. Is the Minister concerned that because of the COVID situation that if a situation is not discovered to substantially recruit and support staff across not just the hospital, all of healthcare, by the end of this year we could find ourselves in a tricky position?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

We have good numbers of permanent staff in the hospital services. With such a vast number of staff there will always be vacancies. There will be a turnaround of staff on a continual basis. But we are not in a bad position. We are in a better position than so many N.H.S. (National Health Service) trusts in the U.K. (United Kingdom) and, as I outlined in my first answer, we have that initial capacity from people who have come forward in the Island for which we are immensely grateful.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Deputy Southern again. I am afraid I have got a technical problem. I failed to engage my microphone when I was seeking to ask a supplementary. Is it possible to still do it?

The Bailiff:

I am afraid not, Deputy. We have called the final supplementary and that has to bring this question to an end. But of course you do have questions without notice to all Ministers and you can renew your enquiry at that point.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

I have got 6 on that list already.