

2024.02.27.

13.4 Deputy K.M. Wilson of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding reduction in costs of employing locum and agency staff (OQ.29/2024)

Could the Minister advise how he intends to achieve a reduction in the costs associated with employing locum and agency staff in his department?

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

As the Deputy will, I am sure, be aware, H.C.S. (Health and Community Services) are already working to implement solutions that aim to reduce the spend and the cost associated with the local and agency staffing. That is through the implementation of the financial recovery plan. This work is already underway. As far as my own intentions are concerned, I will be looking to facilitate changes that make H.C.S. more efficient, which in turn will help make it a better and more consequently more attractive place to work. These changes include efforts to make H.C.S. more self-sufficient in areas like human resources, information technology, finance and procurement. I will also be involved in shaping the proper workforce strategy to ensure that we offer both prospective staff, both local and from overseas, an attractive and competitive employment package.

13.4.1 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

That is welcome to hear that some of the work that was started to allow H.C.S. to be self-sufficient is continuing. Could I ask the Minister also what impact the locum situation is currently having on service continuity and delivery of front line care?

Deputy T. Binet:

It is difficult to articulate that precisely, other than to say that we know full well that when you have a very stable ongoing workforce your care is bound to be better than when you have people coming and going. In terms of a way of quantifying that, I am afraid I cannot, but I am sure we would all accept the general principle.

[11:30]

13.4.2 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Has the Minister discussed these concerns around locums and the plans that he has outlined with S.E.B. (States Employment Board) and, if not, will he endeavour to do so and when?

Deputy T. Binet:

I certainly have not to date, but am very happy to do so at the earliest sensible opportunity.

13.4.3 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Will the Minister consider making any cuts to services if there is any further demand to increase resources to cover the cost of locums?

Deputy T. Binet:

It is a slightly imprecise question. I certainly will not be looking to cut any services at all if I can possibly help it.