

2016.02.23

3.17 Deputy J.A. Hilton of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding regulatory standards for residential and nursing homes:

Can the Minister advise Members how many of the current registered residential and nursing homes meet the regulatory standard laid down by the department and, with regard to those that do not, what plans, if any, are in place to replace them with ones which do? Can he further state whether there is currently enough choice in the private sector to satisfy public demand for nursing beds?

Senator A.K.F. Green (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

Apologies, before I start, for the length of the answer, but there are 3 questions in here, and I will try and rattle through them as quickly as I can. Since 2000, any new care home opening on the Island is expected to be fit for the intended purpose and designed appropriately to meet the needs of the people who will be using the service. There are, however, a number of care homes registered historically when the current 1995 legislation was brought in that cannot be retrospectively required to make improvements that may not be up to modern standards. It is intended that regulations and standards of the Regulation of Care (Jersey) Law, which will be implemented in mid-2017, will apply to all care homes registered under the law. Once the regulations are approved by this Assembly the responsibility for the standards will lie with the independent commission and consequently these standards are still to be determined. It is not possible therefore to be definitive at this time about the number of non-compliant homes, as this will only become evident once the inspections have been carried out under the new regulatory regime. It is proposed that, for any structural improvements that are identified, the provider will have time to complete the work. There are 14 registered homes for residential care, one for nursing and 9 dual-registered for both residential and nursing care for older people. Additionally, there are 19 residential registered homes for people with learning difficulties and one dual-registered nursing residential home for people with physical disabilities. The department collects figures on a weekly basis of the total number of beds available from independent care providers involved with homes for people in residential and nursing homes. The total number of nursing beds available in the independent sector is 280, with 733 residential beds, and further homes are due to open shortly. One would expect fluctuations on a week-to-week basis. On 15th February there were 4 nursing beds, 25 residential beds, 2 dementia beds, 2 respite beds and 2 step-up-step-down beds available. To conclude, it would appear that there is enough choice in the private sector to satisfy public demand.

3.17.1 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

The reason I have asked this question is because a couple of weeks ago I had to ring around the nursing homes to try and find a nursing bed and, on that particular Friday afternoon, I could not find a single nursing bed available in the Island. Really, it is following on from the Minister announcing that The Limes was going to close down. In response to my original question, he has said that he believes there is enough capacity in the market, but I would challenge that. On the occasion that he said there was enough capacity, he talked about a nursing home that was available in the north of the Island, and that nursing home is still not open today, so I question whether there is enough capacity for people. Is it not the case that some of the homes registered for dual care are not seeking to make the change from residential beds to nursing beds because there is a difference in the system which Health and Social Security use, which means that funding available for public patients from Social Security simply does not cover the cost of caring for them, therein making it financially unviable for the homes to provide nursing care?

The Bailiff:

That concludes the time for question time, 2 hours has passed. No doubt the Minister would like to circulate Members with his answer to that question at a later stage.

Senator A.K.F. Green:

It would be a pleasure, Sir.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Sir, could I ask the Minister to give me his answer to my question 19, in his own time?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

Yes, Sir.