

2020.05.12

17 Deputy K.G. Pamplin of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding how the Mental Health Service is coping during pandemic (OQ.122/2020)

Will the Minister provide an assessment of how effectively the Mental Health Service is operating during the COVID-19 pandemic, and confirm whether both mental health patients and front line staff are being tested for COVID-19?

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

May I ask my Assistant Minister, Senator Pallett, to answer this question?

Senator S.W. Pallett (Assistant Minister for Health and Social Services - *rapporteur*):

To ensure all service users under the Mental Health Service receive the care that they need under the current circumstances, we have had to reshape how we deliver our community care, community contact and our outpatient appointments. I believe this reshaping has been effective in supporting those in need during the pandemic. We have developed 3 services, which will work with each other to ensure that service users receive the right level of input as identified by their review care co-ordinator and case manager and these 3 services are the Mental Health Liaison Team, the Home Treatment Team and the Mental Health Contact Team. The Mental Health Liaison Team has been established to ensure there is provision for people who may be experiencing mental health difficulties while the Island's health and social services are facing increased demand because of the global COVID-19 pandemic. The Home Treatment Team is available to support all existing service users known to the Jersey Adult Mental Health and Older Adult Community Mental Health teams. We will respond and provide urgent intervention to service users in mental health crisis of such severity that without a response significant harm to themselves or others or an admission to an inpatient ward is improbable. Finally, the Mental Health Contact Team supports existing service users that are already known to the Jersey Adult Mental Health and Older Adult Community Mental Health teams, Jersey Talking Therapies, psychology and drug and alcohol. In terms of the other part of the question around testing, a planned programme of testing for COVID-19 commenced for all patients being admitted to Jersey's mental health inpatient wards from Monday, 4th May 2020. This brings mental health inpatient areas in line with the testing carried out across general hospital settings across the Island. In order to effectively complete testing reliably it is necessary to ensure existing patients are tested before the testing of new admissions commences; this being consistent to the process for testing of patients admitted to the Jersey General Hospital and the planned rollout of additional testing as part of a wider strategy.

The Bailiff:

Could you bring your answer to an end; you are 30 seconds over the normal limit.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

I am just about to finish. Testing of patients being admitted to mental health inpatient units was not introduced as a result of an increase in admissions.

4.17.1 Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

I thank the Assistant Minister for his answer. I note it is International Nurses Day and we pay tribute to all nurses, especially our mental health nurses. Does he agree with me that the need for our mental health services will only increase to support all Islanders going forward that he can reassure all of us that the budget that was agreed in last year's Government Plan is safely secured going

forward in the new Government recovery plan and that in fact maybe more resources are found to support all those who support those with their mental health needs?

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Dealing with the last point first, I have no reason to believe that the resources that were going to be put into mental health services are not available. I am certainly going to be championing to ensure that the resources are made available. As I have already said to the Deputy that, if further resources are required, we find those resources. In terms of service currently, we have not really seen an increase in numbers at the current time but from third sector agencies it is clear that there are concerns out there with the public in all sorts of areas that may well put strain on mental health services moving forward.