

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY DEPUTY R.G. LE HÉRISSEIER OF ST. SAVIOUR**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 20th JANUARY 2009

Question

How many people have utilised the Independent Complaints Procedure and is the Minister content with the manner in which it is working?

Answer

The Health and Social Services Department has a well established and robust complaints procedure based upon best practice in the NHS. The procedure has two aims. The first is to provide arrangements for the prompt, fair, and confidential resolution of complaints from aggrieved patients and clients. The second is to identify areas for improvement and for learning, in large part to prevent similar failings or deficiencies arising in the future.

In December 2007, the Minister agreed to arrangements which established an independent 'second stage' Complaints Procedure. The 'independent' component is provided through a reciprocal agreement with the Guernsey Health and Social Services Department by the use of an Independent Review board which has lay representation. The Guernsey Health and Social Services Department ratified this reciprocal arrangement in October of last year.

From December 2007 no complaint has been lodged as requiring a second stage review. There have been two occasions in this period when the local Complaints Procedure was not appropriate, but rather than have recourse to a second stage complaints process, independent experts from the mainland came to adjudicate on the grievances raised by the relatives of two deceased patients. In other words, whilst Guernsey did not ratify the reciprocal arrangements until October last year, this has not meant that aggrieved patients, clients or their representatives have not had recourse to expressly independent adjudication.

It is not expected that there will be a large number of second stage complaints. If there were then this would mean that the Complaints Procedure itself was failing. In 2008 the Health and Social Services Department received 172 formal complaints, 95% of these were acknowledged within two working days and over 80% resolved within 22 working days which complies with the onerous standard required.