

20.10.20

11 Deputy I. Gardiner of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the condition of the Nightingale Wing of the Jersey General Hospital (OQ.267/2020):

Will the Minister update the Assembly as to the current condition of the Nightingale wing of the Jersey General Hospital?

Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour (The Minister for Infrastructure):

It is worth noting that my Department oversaw the provision of the facility in response to a statement of need from the Health Department, and that the medical operation of the facility is not my responsibility. We are, however, supporting the Health team and have been attending some minor remedial works to mitigate leaks that have occurred during the recent heavy wind and rain.

[11:00]

Although there was a small amount of ingress this was on the inner side of the outer walls and did not affect the ward areas. We are in the process of completing additional sound attenuation works on the oxygen generators in order to be good neighbours and reduce the impact of noise generation. The original requirement for the building was for a short period of time however for medical reasons that has been extended as an insurance policy. As the building was not originally expected to be used over the winter we will retrofit a heating module to the existing air handling system which has been ordered and will be installed on arrival.

4.11.1 Deputy I. Gardiner:

I would like to emphasise that my question was around infrastructure of the Nightingale wing and not necessarily the medical operation, so my follow-up will be: what are the ongoing costs, if any, in keeping the Nightingale wing open and ready for admissions?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I do not have the costs with me but I can provide that to Members. I believe that was released in a previous question, but I can get the cost to Members.

4.11.2 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is the Minister confident that the Nightingale wing will be fully operational throughout the winter, even if we have a severe winter?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, indeed. The specification is quite high for what is basically a temporary structure. The roof and outer walls are a double skin, especially on the roof, so even if heaven forbid it should snow the air pump through the roof lining is heated so that would melt any snow that lands on the roof. Plus we have the additional benefit of the Nightingale unit being at sea level, which is always slightly warmer than the upper levels of the Island. It is relatively sheltered there; the wind does come off the sea but that has all been attenuated.

4.11.3 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Given that we have had to retrofit a heating system, does the Minister understand concerns that the hospital is not designed to work through a winter period, or is he still confident that that will be fully operational even in the severest of weather?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

The Deputy is quite right, we did not anticipate running the Nightingale unit through the winter but, as I previously stated, a heating unit will be arriving shortly and will be fitted as a priority. So the unit will be operational as soon as possible. As soon as our colleagues in Health call upon it to be used it will be up and running.

4.11.4 Deputy I. Gardiner:

We do have infrastructure in place; have any other strategic functions been considered for the Nightingale wing including but not limited to an inoculation centre, for example? So we will use already built infrastructure for other purposes if we do not need to currently use it for the COVID cases?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

While it was built and designed for COVID-19 any other uses will be a matter for our colleagues in the Health Department.