

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY DEPUTY M.R. HIGGINS OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 26th FEBRUARY 2019**

Question

Further to the response to Written Question 93/2019, which revealed that there are currently 650 people on G.P. records with a diagnosis of dementia and that it is estimated rates will double by 2039, will the Minister explain –

- (a) what the current policy is to assist those suffering from this disease and their families who have to look after them; and
- (b) why, in light of the estimated increase, there are “*no plans to extend government-provided nursing homes for dementia patients*” and does he not consider that this will lead to an over-reliance on the private sector and relatives to care for those afflicted with the disease?

Answer

- a) The current mental health strategy includes a number of services for dementia:
 - provision of assessment and support for people with dementia by the Department has increased over the last two years with the introduction of the primary care-facing Mental Health team, and the enhancement of the Memory Assessment Service to include pathways for younger people experiencing the condition, and their carers
 - in turn, this has led to timely diagnosis and assessment, and coordination of the provision of packages of support that enable people experiencing dementia to live in their chosen environment wherever feasible. This supports a person-focused approach centred on the individual, which is regarded as best practice within dementia care, and is delivered via an increase in the availability of domiciliary care to support packages of care at home.
- b) As stated above, best practice is to support people in their own homes and we are working with local providers to offer this support. The States currently provides assessment, intermediate and ongoing care beds to people with dementia who have associated behaviours that challenge those around them, as there are no independent nursing home providers currently accommodating higher thresholds of complex need. The number of these beds comfortably meets the demand from people meeting this criteria.

The refresh of the mental health strategy will either include dementia or recommend a dementia strategy. Much of this is likely to focus on dementia-friendly communities, which is best practice elsewhere, rather than bed-based services.