

2020.06.16

1 Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding contracts between the Island's G.P.s and the Department of Health and Community Services (OQ.158/2020):

Is it the Minister's assessment that the current contracts between G.P.s (general practitioners) and his department (that were introduced to enable the Island to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic) fully meet the terms detailed in P.125/2019, agreed by the Assembly in January 2020; and if not, what further provisions, if any, does he have under consideration for when these contracts end?

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

I refer Members to my answer to today's Written Question 228 from Deputy Southern. That question covers similar ground to this. The current G.P. contract was put in place rapidly when the pandemic meant that the market for primary care may have collapsed and action was taken to ensure that a vital part of the health system was not incapacitated. Our current contract for G.P.s, while not achieving all that P.125 might have wanted to achieve, took us much further than we have ever been towards fulfilling its principles. Barriers to access to the service were dropped so, for example, direct proactive fee consultations for clinically vulnerable groups and cost barriers were lowered universally and standard rates applied. Socially vulnerable groups also benefited from the rapid deployment of tele and video consultations and from G.P.s being more active in community settings. With the expiry of the temporary G.P. contract in August, officers are currently working with G.P. colleagues to learn lessons on the real practical experience we have all had of working differently. As negotiations for the next phase are under way we cannot prejudge the outcome but the principles of P.125 in the Jersey Care model will be addressed.

3.1.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

When is it his intention to sit down with G.P.s on the Island and discuss what comes after this August? Can he explain what he sees as the next stages because I understand G.P.s have asked to talk to the department but have yet to receive a date.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Negotiations have started. Negotiations are going on at this moment. They started in May and they are active so I do not know what the Deputy has been hearing. I know meetings have been taking place. We want to achieve a better integrated service between primary and secondary care. I believe that objective is shared and we will try and move towards that goal.