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ME/CFS service will soon be in place in island

There are renewed hopes for a service to help those suffering with Myalgic encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS) and Long Covid in the island.

Garff MHK Daphne Caine had submitted a question to Tynwald asking: 'What progress has been made towards the establishment of a Myalgic Encephalomyelitis and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome service?'

In a written response, former Health Minister David Ashford said: 'Since the launch of Manx Care on the April 1, 2021, significant progress has been made in the establishment of an ME/CFS and Long Covid service in the Isle of Man. A business case has been developed to seek funding for the recruitment of a multidisciplinary team to offer a comprehensive ME/CFS and Long Covid service.'

The team will be comprised of specialists including an occupational therapist, a physiotherapist, a dietician and a respiratory clinical nurse specialist.

According to Mr Ashford, the business case for the service 'has been approved internally within Manx Care and within the DHSC and is awaiting consideration at Treasury board alongside other revenue bids for 2022/23.' He said: 'Creating a high-quality service catering to the varied needs of both patient groups is a top priority and the feedback received from international experts consulting on this project has been very positive. Implementation of the full-scale service will require recruitment and reorganisation of resources, but steps have already been taken to ensure the first patients can be admitted to the service as soon as possible. It is envisaged that an interim service will be created before the end of the calendar year by reallocating existing resources and funding, allowing for a seamless transition to a full service when the revenue bid is authorised and funding released. Progress is being made around development of job descriptions which will be used to recruit the new posts that will work within the service.'

He added: 'Some initial clinical pathway design is underway being led by on-island clinicians who have an interest in ME/CFS. This is being supported by off-island specialists who have offered to help with the establishment of the Isle of Man ME/CFS and Long Covid service.'

Juan Corlett, has suffered 'severely' with ME since 2018 and is a committee member with ME Support IoM. He responded to the news of the planned service, saying: 'I am delighted to see a timeframe publicised for an interim service. The charity's discussions with Manx Care regarding long-term strategy have been encouraging and short-term measures to build the foundations are very much welcomed. We eagerly await further announcements confirming Treasury approval and the first referrals to the new service.'

The new health Minister, Lawrie Hooper, has been a vocal supporter of the campaign to get a service established in the past.

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