

## Manx Care - a portly White Elephant?



“Last spotted happily taking people for a ride in Braddan”.

### **BOGOF** (Buy One Get One Free)

It always brings a smile to hear about a buy one Hawaiian pizza get one free from *Domino's* or buy one tub of Evening Primrose oil from *Holland & Barrett* and get another one complimentary or buy one Margarita cocktail during Happy Hour at *Uncle Ped's Bar* in Benidorm get another one on the house.



“The drinks are on the Council of Ministers”.

But what about something very different, just the opposite in fact, namely paying twice for the same thing?

We recently submitted Freedom of Information requests about the cost of Manx Care. Up until 2021 all health and social care services on the Isle of Man were provided by the Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC).

However, in April 2021, Manx Care was created as a body to separate the delivery of primary care services from the DHSC. The strategic aim and responsibility was to reduce costs and improve services. Manx Care is a statutory board headquartered at Nobles Hospital Estate, Braddan.

But what is the cost of Manx Care, has the cost of the DHSC reduced and what is the overall combined cost of Manx Care and the DHSC?

The surprising answers from the Freedom of Information responses are as follows:-

- i) The cost of the DHSC on the Isle of Man for the period April 2020 to April 2021 (before the creation of Manx Care) was **£225,906,000.00**.
- ii) The cost of Manx Care for the period April 2021 to April 2022 (its first year in existence) was **£305,615,262.00**.
- iii) The cost of the DHSC for the period April 2021 to April 2022 was **nil** (in other words all health and social services were covered by the Manx Care budget).

Effectively, this means that a massive *extra* **£79 million** was spent last year (the first year of Manx Care) on health and social care on the Isle of Man, despite many surgical procedures and operations being cancelled because of Covid.

Put simply, the creation of Manx Care has certainly not resulted in any reduction in net government expenditure on health and social care, but arguably has contributed in part to the overall budget ballooning by £79 million.



"A very warm welcome. Please use the hand sanitiser provided and leave your incredulity at the reception desk".

If, for example, breast cancer screening or hip operation waiting lists had reduced, more consultants and nurses been employed, the quality and nutritional content of patient food in Nobles Hospital improved, pharmacy prescriptions delivered more promptly, the number of face to face appointments with local GP's increased and the Hospital complaints procedure simplified, perhaps no one would be concerned about this huge extra expenditure. Most residents, of course, would be very pleased.

Sadly, what we hear from users is just the opposite. Screening and A & E waiting times have grown, 25% of doctors and nurses posts were empty as at July 2022, disgracefully most GP appointments are over the phone rather than in person, delays at pharmacies growing (particularly in Ramsey) and the Health Minister Mr Rob Callister MHK comically even admitted in November 2022 that a fifth of health letters were waiting more than one month just to be typed up and sent out after being dictated by consultants.

An elderly friend of mine who has waited patiently nearly two years for a cataract operation on his left eye sums it up by saying simply, "*They're in a hopeless mess*".

### Why is this?

A clue – have a look at the Manx Care "Organisational Structure Chart" taken from its own website (see attached hyperlink).

<https://www.gov.im/media/1377979/202234-manxcare-structurechart.pdf>

You will see from the *Organisational Structure Chart* that there is the following hierarchical managerial superstructure:-

- i) Chairman.
- ii) Chief Executive Officer.
- iii) **5** Non-Executive Board Members.
- iv) **4** Executive Board Members (voting).
- v) **7** Executive Board Members (non-voting).
- vi) **9** members of the Executive Leadership Team.
- vii) **19** members of the Executive Support Team.
- viii) The Care Group Reporting Team (which includes **6** general managers).
- ix) **8** Clinical Directors.
- x) **9** Associate Medical Directors.
- xi) The Senior Operational Team.
- xii) The Senior Governance Team (which includes job titles such as Business Case Review and Commissioning Group Chair, and Non-Clinical Quality Group Chair).

Literally layer upon layer and dozens upon dozens of managerial roles created by Manx Care (some salaried others generously remunerated by fees). Whilst there is no criticism of any particular individual, clearly this edifice of officialdom is ludicrously top heavy.

Crucially, all this is at exactly the same time that the DHSC retains its own management structure of Chief Executive Officer, Executive Team, Quality Safety and Engagement Team, Strategy and Commissioning Team and Corporate Services Team.

In other words, whereas before the creation of Manx Care there was just one managerial structure for health and social care on the Island, there are now two sets of bureaucracies simultaneously managing health and social care services, a bit like identical twin barbers cutting the same customer's hair twice.

Manx Care cost the taxpayer millions last year alone, despite having an explicit statutory duty and mandate to achieve financial savings. Who knows what its budget will be next year and each year thereafter?

Is this a case of parallel management or a case of Manx Care living in a parallel universe?



**“So that’s where value for money disappeared!”**

A **Black Hole** in which there is no shame in squandering taxpayers’ money, where the left hand has no idea what the right is doing, where corporate pass the parcel is a game not just for Christmas, where more time is spent in meetings and duplicating spreadsheets than on personal care for the sick in hospital beds, where the organisation resembles a State sponsored job creation scheme, where there are more layers of red tape than in a Japanese *KinBaku* session and where Lesson One from the **Harvard Business School**, “*First let’s fire all the managers*” must never ever be uttered.

## Conclusion

Maybe the era of **BOGOF** has passed. Maybe it is acceptable to pay twice for the same thing. Or maybe not and actually these extra millions expended on Manx Care would be much better spent for example on a new High School in Castletown, on repairing roads and footpaths around the Island, on funding a night shelter for the homeless or a grant to the *Food Bank*, rather than on a bloated Civil Service.



**“Many hands make light work”.**

*See our Freedom of Information page for full details.*