

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY SENATOR J.L. PERCHARD
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 11th MAY 2010**

Question

“Would significant savings be achieved if Jersey and Guernsey shared a Medical Officer of Health and, if so, will the Minister undertake to hold talks to this effect as early as conveniently possible with the Guernsey authorities?”

Answer

There are a number of professional advisors to the States of Jersey Government who advise the Jersey Government and implement change within Jersey Legislature. If the Islands were to share a Medical Officer of Health, the postholder would be likely to face challenges with responding to two different Governments with two different sets of laws and regulations.

On the matter of making savings it is worth remembering that the Island spends relatively little on public health and prevention in comparison to the UK, Europe and other parts of the developed world. Reaping the benefit of organised prevention bringing better health and reduced pressure on hospitals makes good sense in value for money terms. Whilst sharing the cost of a Medical Officer of Health could save money in the short term, this would most likely become a false economy as the pace of preventative initiatives slowed, meaning that more Islanders would suffer from chronic illness requiring costly treatment.

The Medical Officer of Health plays a central and valuable role at the heart of the local community. They advise Government on the health status of our population, health inequalities, illness prevention, protecting the community from communicable diseases and environmental hazards and recommends how to achieve improvements in the quality of health care.

HSSD are working with Guernsey representatives to optimise the provision of health services for the Islands for the benefit of their populations. With regard to Public Health specifically, the Jersey and Guernsey teams are working together and will continue to work to optimise the value added by Public Health Doctors, Nurses and other Public Health Professionals. The Jersey Department has also twinned with the Dorset Primary Care Trust and linked with Scotland and the South West Public Health network.