

2.8 Senator B.E. Shenton of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding health risks connected with mobile phone use:

Given the announcement of the World Health Organisation's International Agency for Research on Cancer that mobile phones may cause glioma, a type of brain tumour that starts in the brain or spine, will the Minister give assurances that she will keep Islanders fully informed of any health risk connected with mobile phone use?

Deputy A.E. Pryke of Trinity (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

I can assure Senator Shenton and Members that my department will keep Islanders informed of any identified and known risks associated with the use of mobile phones.

2.8.1 Senator B.E. Shenton:

Does the Minister monitor incidences of cancer tumours to identify possible clusters around mobile phone masts locally? Do they keep a location map of where the tumours are occurring?

Deputy A.E. Pryke of Trinity:

I do not have that information, but I would very much doubt it. I can check for the Senator.

2.8.2 The Deputy of St. John:

Is the Minister aware among their records at the hospital or through the Planning Department that I objected to telephone masts on the ground of brain tumours and the like through evidence given to an inquiry, so much so that the company concerned withdrew their planning application - I presume on the grounds that they did not want this to get into the public domain - and does she work closely with Planning and Environment to agree the location of any of these mobile telephone masts?

Deputy A.E. Pryke of Trinity:

It is straying a bit, but I would have thought Health and Social Services is a statutory consultee in any planning applications and I would assume that that information will be given.

2.8.3 Deputy D.J. De Sousa of St. Helier:

The Minister, in her reply to the second question from the proposer of this question, replied that the department probably do not do mapping. Will the Minister ensure that she goes back to her department and makes sure that this mapping is done so that we know if there are clusters of cancer cases around telephone masts?

Deputy A.E. Pryke of Trinity:

I can ask and I could come back to you but just to quote from the Interphone Study of the World Health Organisation, which has been quoted in the media. It concludes: "Overall, no increase in risk of glioma or meningioma was observed with the use of mobile phones. There were suggestions of an increased risk of glioma at the highest exposure levels but biases and errors prevent a causal interpretation. The possible effects of long-term heavy use of mobile phones require further investigation." I know the department works with the U.K.'s health promotion agency which, in turn, gets advice from the W.H.O. (World Health Organisation).

[10:30]

The Deputy Bailiff:

Senator Shenton, do you have a final supplementary?

Senator B.E. Shenton:

It was just to point out to the Minister that one of the reasons I asked the question is because I am aware of a high incidence of cancer cases around one particular mobile phone mast and I will have a chat with the Minister afterwards concerning this.

The Deputy Bailiff:

We come to question 10, which Senator Le Gresley will ask of the Minister for Social Security.