

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
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ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 12th JUNE 2012**

Question

When will the project to implement IT links between General Practitioners and the General Hospital be fully implemented and what has it cost to date?

Answer

There are currently three IT projects underway which, whilst they do not directly establish links between GPs and the Hospital, will enable those links to be introduced in the future. These include:

GP Central Server: This is an IT project led by the Social Security Department and funded via the HIF in accordance with propositions P36/2010 and P125/2010. The aim is to provide a central recording system for GP patient information which will also enable:

- a link between GP Practices and the GP out-of-hours service;
- gathering of statistical information about primary care and disease registers
- gathering of GP performance information as required as under the Quality Contract.

The GP Central Server is expected to “go live” by the end of 2012.

OmniClient Version 10: This is software upgrade currently underway in the Pathology Department. It will enable integration of the existing pathology IT system with TrakCare - the new Patient Administration System. It is an enabling project for implementation of OrderComms (see below) and any future IT link to GPs.

OrderComms: This is a Hospital IT project that will commence shortly and will enable the electronic ordering of tests and electronic receipt of results between hospital doctors, the Radiology Department and Pathology Department. OrderComms, which is expected to be completed by summer 2013, is also an enabling project for any future IT links to GPs.

Once these projects have been completed and successfully bedded down, HSSD will consider options relating to the development of direct links between GPs and the hospital. As outlined in the White Paper there will be a cross cutting Technology workstream which will scope options and funding requirements related to the provision of IT infrastructure (Page 27 of White Paper)

In 2011 a trial was undertaken to see if pathology test results could be transmitted electronically between the Pathology Department and one or more GPs. This trial cost approximately £10k. A number of problems were encountered during testing that could have affected patient safety. Hence the project is not being progressed until the three enabling projects outlined above have been completed and until funding options have been considered as part of the Technology workstream.