

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 18th JUNE 2013**

Question

Prior to her decision to lodge P.72/2013 on the reintroduction of hospital prescription charges, ('Hospital Outpatients- re-introduction of prescription charges') what consideration, if any, did the Minister, in conjunction with the Minister for Social Security, give to measures to address the underlying problem of the high cost of accessing primary health care through GPs and, if none, why not?

As part of the longer term plans for the reform of primary care will the Minister work with the Minister for Social Security so that appropriate proposals can be brought to the States to address the issue of prescription charges?

Answer

The cost of GP consultations is not within the scope of this proposition, but the Minister for Social Security and I are both committed to working together to develop a more sustainable future model for primary care, which includes the cost of accessing GP services.

The reintroduction of community prescription charges will be considered as part of that wider review of primary care, agreed as part of P.82/2012: *Health and Social Services: A New Way Forward*; which will be undertaken in collaboration with Social Security and other stakeholders, as appropriate.

In this sense the two departments will continue to work together on prescription charges, just as they have during the development of this proposal, in arriving at the list of exemptions which might apply to those on low incomes or other vulnerable groups.

It is important to remember that a number of exemptions to Hospital Pharmacy Outpatient Prescription Charges have been agreed between HSSD and Social Security, including:

- Individuals who receive a personal-care component under the income support scheme
- Individuals who receive assistance from Social Security with their Residential Care fees
- All children under 16 years of age
- Vulnerable groups such as some psychiatric patients

In addition, certain medicines would also continue to be free for all people, including:

- all cancer treatments
- those prescribed for public health reasons