

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 19th FEBRUARY 2013**

**Question**

Further to the response given by the Minister for Social Security on this issue on 15th January 2013 in which he stated that the Household Medical Account provision was part of the review of primary health care being carried out in conjunction with the Health and Social Services Department, will the Minister inform members whether she is aware of problems those on low incomes have in paying for GP consultations?

Will she further state what research she has commissioned or will commission to examine the extent of the problem?

Does she intend bring forward proposals to deal with this issue

- a) in the long term as part of her review of health service provision, and
- b) in the short term to ensure that access to GP services is affordable to all , and if so when will these proposals be lodged for debate?

**Answer**

As members will be aware, GP practices in Jersey are private businesses and charges are made for consultations. Once an individual has been living in Jersey for at least six months, they are eligible to receive a subsidy from the Health Insurance Fund in respect of the cost of the consultation. Currently this is set at £20.28. Households that have been in Jersey for at least five years and have a low income may be eligible for income support through the Social Security Department, which provides a range of financial support including general assistance with GP costs and extra help targeted at those with long term medical conditions. As the Minister for Social Security confirmed to the Assembly on 15th January, the household medical account is a type of savings scheme which helps income support households budget for their medical bills.

1. As the Minister for Health and Social Services, I am aware of problems those on low incomes have in paying for GP consultations. This was noted a number of times during the consultation on the Green Paper and the White Paper. The Hospital also experiences a high volume of Emergency Department attendances which could have been seen by GPs. This is why P82/2012 specifically proposed that the Council of Ministers brings forward proposals for a sustainable model of Primary Care by September 2014.
2. I am currently in the process of commissioning work to examine the extent of the problem and to produce proposals for sustainable Primary Care. It should be noted that primary Care comprises General Practice, Dentists, Optometrists and High Street Pharmacists. The scope for this work is being agreed with the Ministerial Oversight Group.
3. (a) As part of the debate on P82/2012, the Council of Ministers has been tasked with bringing forwards proposals for sustainable Primary Care by September 2014. I am

working with colleagues in other Departments, including Social Security, to progress this.

- (b) Social Security have no plans to change the ways in which Primary Care is funded in the short term, and have no plans to change the Household Medical Account in the short term.