

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
BY THE DEPUTY OF GROUVILLE  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 31st MARCH 2009**

**Question**

Following the expiry of the Health agreement with the United Kingdom on 1st April 2009, would the Minister explain -

- a) how the decision that the agreement should not be renewed was arrived at, and the consequence that Jersey residents should in future take out their own health insurance before travelling to the United Kingdom (UK)?

**Answer**

On 15th May 2008, Senior Health and Social Services Officers travelled to the Department of Health and were informed that providing free emergency healthcare for UK visitors to the Channel Islands was no longer the policy of the UK government and have given notice to that effect. This notice is operative from 1st April 2009 for Jersey and Guernsey and 2010 for the Isle of Man. It is the policy of the UK Government that all its citizens who fall ill or sustain an injury whilst travelling overseas, should take out appropriate travel insurance which should include medical evacuation.

Importantly, the final letter from Rt Hon Dawn Primarolo dated 25th February clearly states that the reciprocal agreement is "to terminate on 31st March 2009". Obviously it is now impossible for Jersey to have a reciprocal agreement where the UK does not wish to reciprocate.

**Question**

- b) what steps, if any, the Minister has taken to research and introduce an All Island Collective Travel Policy for Islanders which would cover costs of treatment and admission in UK hospitals and repatriation where necessary and, if not, why not?

**Answer**

As Minister for Health and Social Services my primary task is to ensure high quality health and social care for islanders within available resources. The Health and Social Services Department does not have the expertise, nor can it envisage the circumstances whereby it possess the expertise, to manage a travel insurance business which involves commercial risk taking, underwriting and knowledge of the local and global insurance market. For this reason, Jersey is adopting the same approach as the Isle of Man and Guernsey which is to allow the travel insurance market to create cost effective and competitive policies for Jersey residents.

**Question**

- c) whether family members, who were born and brought up in Jersey and come back to the Island to visit their relatives, are entitled to free treatment in Jersey's hospital?

**Answer**

If an individual is ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom, by definition they cannot be considered ordinarily resident in Jersey as well. By defining themselves as ordinarily resident in the UK they enjoy the benefits of "free" healthcare via the National Health Service rather than free healthcare via Jersey Health and Social Services. In the circumstances described, individuals born and brought up in Jersey, who then choose to reside overseas but then come back to the Island to holiday or visit their relatives will not be entitled to free healthcare as they are not ordinarily resident in Jersey.

**Question**

- d) what provisions, if any, are being made by the Health and Social Services Department for those persons over 80 years old, if insurance companies do not cover them?

**Answer**

No provisions are being made by the Health and Social Services Department for those persons over 80 years old regarding travel insurance.

**Question**

- e) what would happen if a Jersey person was taken ill in the UK, repatriated to Jersey and then had to be sent back to the UK by Jersey General Hospital for treatment that was not available here?

**Answer**

A Jersey person, falling ill in the UK would receive free care in the Accident & Emergency department of the UK hospital but would then be liable for further treatment costs up to and including repatriation to Jersey. In the unlikely event that they were then required to be sent back to the UK for further specialist treatment, this would be free to the individual as Health and Social Services pay for treatment at specialist UK centres where the patient has been referred by a Health and Social Services consultant.