

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 23rd OCTOBER 2012**

Question

Following her responses to an oral question on funding the costs of travel to and from medical treatment off-Island on 9th October 2012, and in the light of her plans to make increased use of service level agreements with off-Island organisations to deliver specialist treatments, will the Minister –

- (a) inform members what the level of funding of patient travel for off-Island treatment was in 2010 and 2011;
- (b) state what growth in off-Island treatment is predicted in 2013, 2014 and 2015; and,
- (c) assure members that sufficient funding has been built into the patient travel budget for 2013 and into the MTFP for 2014 and 2015?

Notwithstanding the pending review of travel costs, will she further assure members that:

- (i) when wheelchair users have to travel off-Island for treatment, the travel costs of their carer/companion will also normally be met;
- (ii) when an early morning appointment cannot be avoided, reasonable overnight accommodation costs will be met, including those for a carer;
- (iii) the reasonable travel costs to and from airport and hospital will include the use of taxis; and,
- (iv) where hardship can be shown, travel costs will be paid in advance?

Answer

HSSD plans to ensure that all service level agreement provide value of money. This will not necessarily result in any increase in the number of such agreements.

- (a) The level of patient funding for off-Island travel was £1.42m in 2010 and £1.6m in 2011.
- (b) The 2013 budget for UK Treatments is forecast to be £11.3m. An increase over the 2012 budget of £1.3m (13%).
- (c) As part of HSSD's budget setting procedures funding for patient travel has been built into the budget 2013, 2014 and 2015. In accordance with standard practice levels of funding are forecast based on analysis of previous activity and the assumptions about future trends.
- (i) As set out in the HSSD Travel policy, each individual, whether or not a wheelchair users, is assessed by the treating clinician to determine whether an escort is required for off-Island travel. This decision is based on clinical findings. Should an escort be required their travel costs will be met in accordance with the criteria set out in the Policy.

- (ii) HSSD's own booking procedures ensure all off-Island appointments are made for the late morning or the early afternoon. This is done in order to negate the requirement for overnight accommodation.

HSSD cannot recall any incident over the last 2 years when an appointment has been made by HSSD which has necessitated a patient and escort to stay overnight prior to an appointment. Although, some have as a matter of personal preference.

Should a patient require two appointments on two consecutive days, then accommodation costs will be funded, should the individual meet the criteria set out in the Policy.

- (iii) HSSD will not reimburse taxi fares in Jersey, either to the Hospital or the Airport, except in exceptional circumstances where there is no viable alternative transport. Any refunds will be in accordance with the criteria set out in the Policy.

HSSD does not accept that taxi fares are an appropriate or proportionate use of funds, where use of a taxi is based on patient preference.

- (iv) HSSD does not have the systems or facilities in place to fund travel costs in advance. In the case of extreme hardship, if an individual should require funds in advance, HSSD's Travel Office will advise the individual to seek help from the Department of Social Security.