

2.19. Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding I.T. links between G.Ps and the Health and Social Services Department:

When does the Minister anticipate that I.T. (information technology) links between G.P.s (general practitioners) and the Health and Social Services Department will be fully operational?

The Deputy of Trinity (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

A secure network known as GPNet is already in place and has been in place for a number of years. This allows for the secure exchange of information between G.P.s and between G.P.s and States departments. I understand that the GPNet is currently used by G.P.s to send billing information to the Social Security Department. GPNet is also being used for a trial project to facilitate the delivery of results from the hospital's pathology service to Island G.P.s subject to the successful completion of this trial. It is hoped that we will then be in a position to start developing the roll-out plan during 2011.

2.19.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the Minister acknowledge that this project has perhaps taken longer than the building of the pyramids and when would she identify it as having started and as being fully completed?

The Deputy of Trinity:

The actual GPNet has been in place for many years, as I have said in the answer to the oral question, what the Deputy might be also mentioning is the G.P. Server Project which is also I.T.-linked. That has been with the Health and Social Services; it is not related to our department but is sponsored by Social Security and that is part of the Health Insurance Fund. Importantly, it will enable G.P.s to connect with each other and that is especially important, for example, in G.P. out-of-hours service.

2.19.2 Deputy A.E. Jeune:

Given that the Health Department has been working on computerised links with G.P.s since the 1990s, would the Minister be willing to provide Members with the cost to date of this project, what the outcomes have been, and to identify whether it would have been more cost-effective to have outsourced this work.

The Deputy of Trinity:

I just want a bit of clarification; is the Deputy talking about the GPNet or the subsequent G.P. Server Project? We have also got other projects like the RIS/PACS and the Pharmacy System, which is another I.T. system; I just want a bit of clarification.

2.19.3 Deputy A.E. Jeune:

I am happy to do that; it is the integration and interfacing of G.P. systems to the Health Department Systems.

The Deputy of Trinity:

That is GPNet.

The Bailiff:

So, what is the answer to the question?

The Deputy of Trinity:

Yes, if it can be worked out, because, as I said, it has already been in place for quite a number of years and I will see if that can be done.

2.19.4 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Can the Minister explain to what extent I.T. changes are reliant on linking fully with the Population Register with its unique identifier, in order that it may successfully deliver the promised improvements to primary healthcare by 2012?

The Deputy of Trinity:

As I understand it, part of the migration policy is that there will be information being made available - secure information about people's details - so that we would know exactly how many people can be registered within G.P.s. But the G.P. Central Server project is vitally important because it will allow G.P.s to liaise with each other by computer, so that they will know exactly how many patients are on the system within each surgery and, hopefully, the different chronic diseases.

2.19.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Can the Minister give assurance to this House that such links will be in place by May 2012, with the new system of delivery of primary care?

The Deputy of Trinity:

With the G.P. Server project and within May 2012; I certainly hope so. As I said in last week's debate; it is a very tight timescale that this project is being sponsored by Social Security Department input.

The Bailiff:

I think you are saying, you hope so; is that right?

The Deputy of Trinity:

I hope so. I live in hope.

2.19.6 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

An integral part of the system is the unique identifier. Can the Minister confirm that the Health Department owns the unique identifier? Secondly, will G.P.s on the out-of-hours service, now get full medical records of people they are about to visit.

The Bailiff:

Those are 2 separate questions; so just one.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Full medical records.

The Deputy of Trinity:

That is part of the G.P. Server project, which hopefully, as I say, is coming next year. That is important, because if you are a G.P. out-of-hours, you need to have some liaison back to the surgery.

The Bailiff:

Very well. We come to the next question, which Deputy Tadier will ask the Minister for Treasury and Resources.