

**REPLY BY THE MINISTER OF
THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
TO A QUESTION ASKED PURSUANT TO RULE 6 OF THE
RULES OF PROCEDURE BY DEPUTY H. J. R. SOULSBY**

Question

At two recent presentations that were held in relation to the proposed tobacco licensing regime, those in attendance were advised by the Medical Officer of Health that it costs the States of Guernsey £14.25 million per annum to treat those affected by smoking-related illnesses.

Are you able to provide a breakdown of the figure of £14.25 million, analysed as follows:

- 1. by types of treatment and other associated services; and*
- 2. by numbers of people being treated for each type of treatment and service as set out in 1 above?*

Answer

The £14.25 million estimate discussed by the Medical Officer of Health at a recent consultation meeting was a synthetic estimate for Guernsey of the total cost of smoking to society, not just the health service. The estimate is based on UK research published in 2010 by think-tank Policy Exchange (Nash and Featherstone 2010), who estimated the annual cost of smoking to the UK at £13.74 billion. If Guernsey local costs were of a similar proportion to those in the UK, then the annual cost of smoking to the islands would be in the region of £14.25 million [1] approximately double the amount currently collected through tax (see above).

Multiple societal factors taken into account by Nash and Featherstone include the cost to health care services of treating smokers, loss in productivity due to smoking breaks, increased absenteeism, the cost of cleaning up cigarette butts, the cost of smoking-related fires, loss of economic output from those who die prematurely, or become unable to work as a consequence of smoking-related disease or death and benefit payments to those incapacitated by smoking-related ill-health. Calculating estimates of societal smoking costs are not easy, and do require assumptions.

In Nash and Featherstone's estimate, the cost to the NHS of treating smokers was estimated to be just less than the 20% of the total societal cost. Applied to the estimated local figure of £14.25 million this would equate to a cost to Guernsey in the region of £2.85 million. Many of the treatments will be for people suffering from heart and lung diseases and cancer. The societal costs are whole population costs. We are not able to readily provide more detailed breakdown of these healthcare costs without significant further research on the details of the UK calculations.

[1] Based on population estimates of 62.3 million for the UK in 2010 (www.ons.gov.uk National Population Projections 2010-based Statistical Bulletin) and 64,625 for Guernsey plus Alderney (States Policy Council Research Unit)

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Date of Reply: 11th January 2013