

**REPLY BY DEPUTY AL BROUARD, ON BEHALF OF
THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
TO A QUESTION ASKED PURSUANT TO RULE 6 OF THE
RULES OF PROCEDURE BY DEPUTY M.P.J. HADLEY**

Question 1

Why were three members of the implementation team for the EHSCR who left in 2012 not replaced?

Answer 1

With many long-term programmes, there is naturally some staff turnover during the life of programme; and the Electronic Health and Social Care Record (EHSCR), which is in its eighth year, is no different.

The figure of 3 staff leaving EHSCR comes from media and political enquiries, rather than from HSSD. HSSD agrees and has confirmed that 3 technical staff did leave the project during 2012-2013, and that their departure did not lead to the current bid for additional resources.

However, for the avoidance of misunderstanding, the Department would emphasise that the situation is not as straightforward as 3 people leaving EHSCR, with 3 vacancies left open as a consequence.

The kind of roles required to deliver EHSCR have varied over time, depending on the different modules being implemented and the overall progress of the programme. This means some staff have been employed on short- or medium-term contracts for a specific purpose, and some staff have moved into different roles over the life of the programme.

On close examination, the net effect of staff changes during 2012 and 2013 appears to have been a reduction in headcount of at least 3, and possibly up to 6, staff who might be classed as 'technical' or 'implementation' staff. Of these, at least two roles related to specific modules of EHSCR, rather than to the programme as a whole. The Department cannot give too much information about specific posts because of the risk of identifying individual post-holders, but the project documentation from the time indicates that the majority of those who left in 2012 or 2013 were on contracts which were due to come to an end, in any case, in the coming weeks or months.

While some of these staff members left earlier than planned, their roles were not replaced. This was because some functions were no longer required, while others could be carried out by other members of the EHSCR team, with some reorganisation.

Question 2

What has been the impact of the vacancies?

Answer 2

When it became known that staff members were planning to leave, this was flagged as a risk and monitored by the EHSCR programme board. Steps were put in place to reorganise working arrangements, as described above, to make sure that essential functions could continue to be carried out, and to support knowledge transfer. This put additional demands on the project team, but minimised the overall impact of staff members' early departure.

Question 3

Why did you claim one of these posts as an FTP saving?

Answer 3

One post was funded from HSSD's revenue budget and fit the criteria for the FTP as a recurring annual saving. Since the introduction of FTP targets in 2012, HSSD has banked any recurring revenue savings it has made.

HSSD has previously explained that a ring-fenced revenue budget for the EHSCR programme has never been set up. This means that the revenue costs of EHSCR have been included in HSSD's overall revenue budget; while efficiency savings arising from the programme have just helped to contain HSSD's overall expenditure. Revenue savings from the project to date have not been "recycled" back into the project to help in paying for its continuation to completion. The decision to bank this post was therefore consistent with the way that revenue expenditure on EHSCR has been dealt with to date.

Question 4

What has happened to the salaries for the two other posts?

Answer 4

It appears that the majority of those who left were on contracts that were due to end shortly in any case, and therefore the budget for those posts would have expired in due course. One of the module-specific posts was being funded from capital, and the capital funding would have ceased once the post-holder left.

With the exception of the post discussed in Question 3, none of these departures were identified as potential FTP savings. However, as explained above, the post-holders' departure would have had a positive impact on HSSD's in-year financial position, but would not have created 'spare funding' for EHSCR, because the programme budget is not ring-fenced.

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Date of Reply: 21st August 2014

Staff hours (approx)	8
Cost (approx)	£320