WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY DEPUTY L.V. FELTHAM OF ST. HELIER CENTRAL
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 19th OCTOBER 2026
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 26th OCTOBER 2026

Question

"Further to the response to Written Question 194/2026, will the Minister provide the following information regarding all essential worker accommodation owned, leased, funded or otherwise held for his department's use (including at Hue Court, Westaway Court and Plaisant Court) and accommodation managed on its behalf by another department or body –

(a) as at 30th September 2026, the total number of accommodation units, broken down by site and bedroom size, separately identifying rooms in shared accommodation, and stating how many were occupied and how many were unoccupied, including those reserved for future occupants;

(b) for those unoccupied units, the duration and reason for each vacancy, whether the accommodation was habitable, and any confirmed or anticipated occupation date, distinguishing accommodation reserved for incoming health staff from any held for hospital construction workers;

(c) the total rent, service charges and other costs incurred during periods of vacancy between 1st January and 30th September 2026, broken down by site and type of expenditure, together with the ongoing monthly cost of the units unoccupied on 30th September; and

(d) what assessment has been made of the number of units required to meet forthcoming staffing needs and the value for money of retaining unoccupied accommodation?"

Answer

Taken as written, this question demands, in parts, a degree of detail that seems both unreasonable and unnecessary.

Whilst the democratic right to information must be upheld, given that our government information structure is not yet highly digitised, these questions require some information that would not be possible to collate in the time available and, furthermore, the process would prove expensive. Enhanced digitisation is an objective I am pursuing across the Health Department.

In order to substantiate this, the following information and comments are provided on each of the sections requested –

(a) as at 30th September 2026, the total number of accommodation units, broken down by site and bedroom size, separately identifying rooms in shared accommodation, and stating how many were occupied and how many were unoccupied, including those reserved for future occupants;

The total number of accommodation units – see table (a) below

Accommodation units broken down by site – see table (a) below

Bedroom size – the accommodation portfolio consists of 388 units. No record of bedroom sizes is known to exist. This part of the question would require each of the bedrooms to be physically measured. This would be time consuming, expensive, and arguably, produce information of no useful value.

Units occupied and unoccupied on 30th September 2026 – see table (a) below

Units reserved for future occupants – see table (a) below

(b) for those unoccupied units, the duration and reason for each vacancy, whether the accommodation was habitable, and any confirmed or anticipated occupation date, distinguishing accommodation reserved for incoming health staff from any held for hospital construction workers;

Duration and reason for each vacancy of each unoccupied unit – see table (b) below

Is accommodation habitable - see table (b) below

Confirmed or anticipated occupation date – N/A

Reserved for incoming health staff or held for hospital construction workers - see table (b) below

(c) the total rent, service charges and other costs incurred during periods of vacancy between 1st January and 30th September 2026, broken down by site and type of expenditure, together with the ongoing monthly cost of the units unoccupied on 30th September; and

Total rent, service charges and other costs incurred during periods of vacancy between 1st January and 30th September 2026, - this is not available in the form requested, in the time permitted

Ongoing monthly cost of the units unoccupied on 30th September – see table (c) below

Please note that specific accommodation site addresses have not been included. This is to protect the privacy of those living in that accommodation and so as not to publish details about vacant accommodation which could prejudice the public interest.

Table (a)

Accommodation type	Units	Occupied	Unoccupied	Of which reserved
Rooms in shared accommodation	124	64	60	6
Bed-sits	81	57	24	11
1-bedroom	99	95	4	3
2-bedroom	58	33	25	5
3-bedroom	18	10	8	0
4-bedroom	2	1	1	1
5-bedroom	1	0	1	1
Bedroom size not specified	5	4	1	1
Total	**388**	**264**	**124**	**28**

Table (b)

Property	Duration of Vacancy	Reason	Habitable (Yes/No)
Property 1	2 months	Held for construction worker accommodation	Y
Property 2	2 months	Held for construction worker accommodation	Y
Property 3	1 year +	Awaiting refurbishment	N
Property 4	1 year +	Awaiting refurbishment	N
Property 5	1 year +	Awaiting refurbishment	N
Property 6	1 year +	Awaiting refurbishment	N
Property 7	1 year +	Awaits refurb to office accommodation	N
Property 8	1 year +	Awaiting refurbishment	N
Property 9	1 year +	Awaits refurb to office accommodation	N
Property 10	1 year +	Awaits refurb to office accommodation	N
Property 11	1 month	Awaiting refurbishment	Y
Property 12	1 year +	Awaits refurb to office accommodation	N
Property 13	1 year +	Awaits refurb to office accommodation	N

Table (c)

Property	Unoccupied units	Recorded ongoing monthly cost
Property 3	1	0
Property 4	1	0
Property 5	1	0
Property 6	1	0
Property 7	1	0
Property 8	1	0
Property 9	1	0
Property 10	1	0
Property 11	1	£1414.66
Property 12	1	0
Property 13	1	0
Property 14	1	£1,345.00
Property 15	5	£3,315.35
Property 16	7	£4,469.64
Property 17	2	£1,260.72
Property 18	4	£7,210.08
Property 19	5	£6,607.91
Property 20	18	£23,005.40

Property 21	9	£9,367.41
Property 22	8	£13,919.08
Property 23	10	£8,787.96
Property 24	7	£4,773.02
Property 25	3	£1,897.83
Property 26	24	£24,900.10
Property 27	2	£1,829.06
Property 28	6	£8,226.82
Property 29	4	£3,420.44
Property 30	6	£5,682.71
Total	**121**	**£131,433.19**

(d) what assessment has been made of the number of units required to meet forthcoming staffing needs and the value for money of retaining unoccupied accommodation?

The accommodation provision is retained as part of our overall workforce strategy to support the recruitment and retention of staff, particularly those relocating to Jersey where access to suitable and affordable housing can present a significant challenge. The availability of accommodation helps ensure that the organisation can attract essential workers in hard-to-recruit roles and respond flexibly to changing workforce demands.

While some accommodation units may be temporarily unoccupied at any given time due to maintenance, refurbishment, tenant turnover, or alignment with future recruitment plans, the value-for-money assessment considers the wider benefits of maintaining housing capacity. These include reduced recruitment risks, improved staff retention, lower reliance on temporary agency workers, and the ability to support service continuity during periods of workforce pressure. The number of units required is kept under regular review through workforce planning processes, and occupancy levels are monitored to ensure that accommodation stock remains aligned with current and forecast staffing needs and represents an appropriate use of public resources

Historically HCJ, struggled to recruit in a number of areas and had to rely heavily on Agency and Locum staff which necessitated the need to increase its property portfolio. Over the last 2 years Agency usage has significantly dropped with no Agency nurses being utilised at the General hospital and medical vacances currently at 24, the lowest it has been for a number of years.

A new Acute Hospital will provide islanders with critical infrastructure. Whilst there will be opportunities for local companies be part of the supply chain, as well as for islanders to work directly for the main contractor (or other organisations), it is anticipated that additional, off-island and specialist workforce will be required.

As a result, HCJ and other government departments have been planning with the NHFP to allocate unused properties to construction workers. This provides a self-evident value for money solution since it covers the cost of any unoccupied stock as well as avoiding higher construction costs (as the main works delivery partner priced in the risk and cost of accommodation on island). It will also provide an opportunity for HCJ (and other GoJ departments) to prepare to rationalise accommodation portfolios once the peak for NHFP construction workers has passed.