

22.09.20

**10 Deputy R.S. Kovacs of the Minister for Social Security regarding ...**

Will the Minister advise what proposals, if any, she has to replace the Jersey Dental Fitness Scheme to ensure good dental health for our young people; and will she state what funding allocation she is seeking in order to deliver high-quality dental care for young people during her term of office?

**Deputy E. Millar (The Minister for Social Security):**

Thank you, Deputy, for the question. As I have already indicated, I will be committing to review all benefits in my Ministerial plan. Access to dental care for children is, I believe, very important and I have already held preliminary discussions with the Minister for Health and Social Services on this issue. I do wish to improve access to dental services and funding for that will have to work in conjunction with the reviews and in parallel with the reviews being undertaken in Health and Community Services and Public Health.

**9.10.1 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:**

Can the Minister answer when is it most likely we would see the start of a new dental scheme?

**Deputy E. Millar:**

I cannot confirm a timetable on that. I know the review is already underway that the Minister for Health and Social Services is working on. I am not sure of the timing for those but clearly it is something that we all want to prioritise as soon as we can.

**9.10.2 Deputy A. Howell of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:**

Can I bring to the attention, please, of the Minister for Social Security that the Dental Fitness Scheme has not received any increase for 28 years? Can I also ask the Minister that she engages with the dental profession on all these matters, and the Minister for Health and Social Services, because they need to be included?

**Deputy E. Millar:**

I think, as I have just indicated, we are working with the Minister for Health and Social Services to ensure that funding is available and that there are revised schemes for dental health for children. I cannot speak for what has happened in the past in terms of the level of government subsidy, but that is certainly something that will be considered going further and I am sure that the dental profession will be closely involved in all developments. We would not create a scheme without seeking the views of our main stakeholder.

**The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):**

Do you have a supplementary, Deputy Howell?

**Deputy A. Howell:**

No, I would just like to thank her very much and say the dental profession really wants to work with you. I think over the last few years they have been largely ignored on these matters.

**9.10.3 Deputy L.V. Feltham:**

We heard from the Chief Minister earlier that the Government Plan is in its final stages of preparation. Can the Minister confirm that you have sought to increase funding for the Jersey

Dental Fitness Scheme in your discussions among the Council of Ministers in relation to the Government Plan for next year?

**Deputy E. Millar:**

I do not have a specific funding request for the Dental Health Scheme. As I said, again, it is difficult to allocate funding until you have devised a scheme that will have to work over the course of this year with the Minister for Health and Social Services. Once we have a scheme approved that also works for the dental profession, we will also review the funding. I would also just mention that the previous Minister for Social Security lodged a scheme in 2021 which aimed to fully fund children from low-income households for check-ups and necessary treatment.

[10:45]

That was a one-off scheme designed to help children access care that they may have missed during the COVID lockdown. That scheme will close this year and the outcomes of that scheme, we will look at how it performed and any lessons learned, and that will also feed into the work that is done going forward on new Dental Fitness Schemes or amended and improved, hopefully, dental schemes for children.