

2020.06.16

**12 Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier of the Assistant Chief Minister regarding the provision of I.T. to Islanders as part of the response to Covid-19 (OQ.157/2020):**

May I ask the Assistant Chief Minister, will the Minister advise what work, if any, is being undertaken with regards to increasing the provision of and access to I.T. for Islanders as part of the response to COVID-19, with particular reference to school and college students?

**Deputy S.M. Wickenden of St. Helier (Assistant Chief Minister):**

With reference to schools and college students, the Minister for Education is best placed to provide details. The Government have worked with local telecommunication companies to provide free broadband for schoolchildren, adult learners and those leaving care who do not currently have broadband connections. The Government have also loaned over 300 devices out to families. Further devices have been purchased and provided where necessary, where families are still without a device.

**3.12.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

That is an answer I have heard before from the Minister for Education, so let me ask something to try to prompt a new answer. Given the significant budgets put aside for this impact of I.T. and the fact that Teams is not available across schools and staff are working on ancient equipment, should there not be a priority given to the current situation with the backing of the budget from I.T., which is obviously not adequate in Education, because the Education budget is not adequate full stop?

**Deputy S.M. Wickenden:**

I have had no request. Obviously Education have their own I.T. department and their own I.T. budget, as the Deputy will know, as the chairman of the Scrutiny Panel that scrutinises Education. As far as any request we have had for support from Education has been looked into and dealt with, but we have no requests for any more additional support. I believe that Teams will be completed across the schools by the end of the week for the final email accounts, so that has happened.

**3.12.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Yes, could I just expand the question to talk about liaison between the Health Department and the I.T. Department in terms of getting rid of what still exists, I believe paper records in the hospital, and what co-operation is taking place between these 2 august departments?

**The Bailiff:**

I am afraid that is outside the ambit of the question, Deputy Southern, which relates to I.T. for Islanders in the response to COVID-19 with reference to school and colleges in particular, so I am afraid that might be a question that will have to be posed later on in the morning.

**3.12.3 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Can I ask the Assistant Minister just to remind the Assembly and the public listening of the level of spend that is available in the Government Plan for improving I.T. and ask what is being done proactively to find areas that would benefit from support such as education, and I would add things such as health, which I think is relevant, given it is all Islanders that are affected?

**Deputy S.M. Wickenden:**

I would say that that would be a question for the Minister for Health and Social Services and the Minister for Education, as it is within their remits.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

The amount of money available for the I.T. development? That is, I think, directly relevant to the Assistant Minister.

**Deputy S.M. Wickenden:**

For development, there are a number of different areas within the Government Plan for I.T. For replacement of equipment, there is a £5 million budget per annum in there, but there are particular projects that go on like the cybersecurity. Over the span of the Government Plan has got £109 million in it.