

24.02.06.

9.3 Deputy H.L Jeune of the Minister for Social Security regarding the outcomes from the free period product scheme. (OQ.22/2024)

Will the Minister advise what demonstrable outcomes have been identified from the free period product scheme and will she confirm what future plans, if any, she has for expanding the scheme?

Deputy L.V. Feltham (The Minister for Social Security):

I thank the Deputy for her question. As she will know, I personally have been critical of and raised concerns about whether the scheme was meeting its intended outcomes, which are to address period poverty, meet individual needs, make it easy for people to access products, respect dignity and support inclusion. At this point, I have not received sufficient evidence to demonstrate that these outcomes have been met or are being delivered and I will be meeting with relevant officers next week to discuss how the scheme can be improved. As for scheme expansion, I am keen to see improvements in relation to the location and process of obtaining products and also a wider range of products being made available.

9.3.1 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I thank the Minister for her answer. Therefore, can the Minister advise how she will, for example, integrate sustainable period products into any future scheme that she is looking at and how she will be able to work with the Jersey Sustainable Period Products campaign, for example, to provide those superior products as part of the scheme but also the education around such a scheme and the introduction of sustainable period products? If not, why not?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I will be quite happy to look at ways in which we can incorporate sustainable period products into the scheme. There has been a review undertaken of the pilot scheme and the consultation in relation to that review did look at sustainable period products. I am quite happy to meet with interested stakeholders about how we can make those more available.

9.3.2 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I want to follow up on the sustainable products. Would the Minister be specifically looking under that umbrella of sustainable products at reusable and washable products, which of course are the most ideal products in terms of the environment and cost savings? If she would agree to include those in her scheme, how does she think they can be distributed to women who need them?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Yes, I would agree personally to be including those particular products in the scheme. I know that different products are suitable to different people and for me it is important to include a full range of products to ensure that we are fully inclusive. I am yet to have the briefing with relevant officers and, before making any further commitments, I do really need to understand the most sustainable methods and affordable methods for providing those products.

9.3.3 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Would the Minister perhaps look into making such products available on prescription, which is a pre-existing mechanism that could be used?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Yes, that is one of the mechanisms I myself have been thinking about but as yet I have not had the opportunity to get the briefing from officers around whether indeed that would be viable and achievable. If it is viable and achievable, then absolutely I would be inclined to look at that.

9.3.4 Deputy M.R. Scott:

Will the Minister be reviewing the performance measures that were used in rolling out the scheme and any gap analysis that was entitled in it?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Yes, I would be happy to do that. I was pleased that the original question referred to demonstrable outcomes. Outcomes is something that I am very keen to demonstrate and to measure and with that in mind I would be keen to take the review that the questioner referenced.

9.3.5 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Seeing that the Minister has expressed that she will be looking into the assessment of this scheme and looking at how to maybe amend it as such, will she commit to working with myself and other Assembly Members who are particularly interested in making sure this scheme is as successful as possible and working also with organisations already doing this type of work in the area to develop a better offering both in the sense of place but also in what kind of products and the education around the use and benefits of sustainable products, for example?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Yes, I am committed to working collaboratively with all Members of this Assembly and with the relevant stakeholders as required.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Before we come to the next question, I am going to announce the result of the elections for members of the States Employment Board. The number of votes cast for each candidate was as follows: the Connétable of St. Clement 31 votes, Deputy Ahier 23, Deputy Bailhache 18, Deputy Kovacs 16. The Connétable of St. Clement and Deputy Ahier have been elected. **[Approbation]**