

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
BY DEPUTY L.M.C. DOUBLET OF ST. SAVIOUR  
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 22nd FEBRUARY 2021  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 1st MARCH 2021**

**Question**

Will the Minister state what assessments, if any, were made of the risk of exempting younger children from public health guidance in the home in comparison with public spaces, controlled events and gatherings such as playgroups?

**Answer**

As it currently stands, there is no limit to the number of children, of any age, who may participate in a gathering associated with a registered day care environment. However, only 10 people may participate in a controlled gathering associated with non-registered children's activity groups, such as a parent and toddler group. This limit includes people of all ages (for example, parents / carers and children), but does not include the activity organiser.

Where a gathering takes place in a private home or garden, the gathering limit of 10 excludes any child under 3 years of age. This is because, despite the risks associated with household mingling in an uncontrolled environment, it was recognised that including under 3s in the limit of 10 in homes and gardens may have a disproportionate effect on some families, depending on the makeup of that family.

It is recognised, however, that participation in controlled children's activity groups is essential to the development of young children and makes a significant contribution to their wellbeing as well as their parents' / carers' wellbeing. I have, therefore, asked the Medical Officer for Health to consider, as a matter of priority, whether it is proportionate to continue to include young children in the limit of 10. Based on the advice received, I will consider whether to bring forward amendments to the Gathering Orders potentially excluding young children from the limit of 10 in relation to children's activity groups. In doing so, consideration will also be given as to whether that should apply to children under 3 years of age or whether the age limit should increase to accommodate children below school age.