

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER CENTRAL
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 10th OCTOBER 2022
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 17th OCTOBER 2022**

Question

Given that 30% of parents recently surveyed gave “expense” as a reason that prevented them from taking their children to the dentist, with 20% claiming it was “too difficult to get an appointment”, will the Minister explain to members what measures are in place to deliver oral health to the community, especially to children and children young people?

Answer

There are a number of schemes which deliver oral health to the community:

- The Dental Department at the Hospital provides free dental treatment for children of primary school age or younger.
- The ‘Jersey Dental Fitness Scheme’ provides subsidised dental treatment to secondary school children and young people in full time education. The scheme is means tested, based on household income, and requires payment of a monthly fee, the amount of which varies depending on an initial assessment of the child’s teeth. The dental treatment is provided by a community dentist.
- The ‘Covid-19 Dental Catch-up Scheme’ was launched in December 2021 by the Minister for Social Security to support secondary school children in families who receive income support to access the dental care they may have missed in during lock down when dental services were disrupted. The scheme closed at the end of September 2022.
- The Pension Plus scheme makes a contribution to the cost of dental, optical and chiropody care of low-income pensioners.

The Health and Community Services Department and Public Health are currently working together to help ensure more timely and equitable access to dental services, and better oral health for Islanders.

Activity includes:

- reviewing the schemes described above to ensure they are effective
- developing the information and intelligence needed to produce a comprehensive oral health needs assessment which will inform a longer-term oral health strategy aimed at reducing inequalities
- pending development of the that oral health strategy working to reduce waiting times for appointments in the General Hospital Dental Department, including:
 - a. securing additional administrative support to call patients prior to their appointments to reduce wasted clinical time through non-attendance

- b. scheduling evening clinics to increase service capacity
- c. engagement of an additional dentist on a sessional basis to increase service capacity
- d. commissioning of clinical activity from independent dental practices to enable children to access free dental care more quickly in a community setting
- e. seeking to recruit additional dentist to work in the Department, and
- f. provision of daily emergency slots for any child who has toothache (triaged by the dentists).