

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY L.M.C. DOUBLET OF ST. SAVIOUR
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 14th OCTOBER 2024
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 21st OCTOBER 2024**

Question

“In relation to the [Connect Me](#) grant scheme, will the Minister state –

- (a) how many Islanders have benefited from projects funded by the scheme;
- (b) what plans, if any, exist to continue this scheme;
- (c) how, if at all, the scheme links with social prescribing;
- (d) what social, emotional, physical and mental health benefits, if any, it is considered could be furthered by this scheme; and
- (e) what plans she has to ensure that as many Islanders as possible benefit from the projects funded by the Connect Me grants?”

Answer

- (a) Since 2022, an estimated 25,000 Islanders have benefited from the 150 projects funded by the Connect Me scheme.
- (b) The scheme has continuous funding until 2028, as per the Government Plan 2024-2027, and will build on the foundations that have been made, including the grant scheme, the link workers, the connector network and the social prescribing platform.
- (c) The scheme is intrinsic to the development of social prescribing on the Island, by using both an internationally recognised social prescribing platform as well as the community connector and link worker network and providing small grants to community organisations to empower social mobility and increased participation in physical activity, arts, heritage, and culture.

The platform will allow Islanders to self-refer into activities, or be referred by professionals, including GPs, to access activities with support from link workers.

- (d) Social prescribing is a means of enabling GPs, nurses and other health and care professionals to refer people to a range of local non-clinical services.

Recognising that people’s health is determined primarily by a range of social, economic and environmental factors, social prescribing seeks to address their needs in a holistic way. It also aims to support individuals to take greater control of their own health.

Social prescribing can involve a range of activities which are typically provided by voluntary and community sector organisations. Examples include volunteering, arts activities, group learning, gardening, befriending, cookery, healthy eating advice and a range of sports.

Community-centred ways of working can be more effective than more traditional services in improving the health and wellbeing of marginalised groups and vulnerable individuals. For this reason, they are an essential way of reducing health inequalities within a local area or community.

- (e) It is my intention to build on the wide range of projects that have been supported so far across our community, which will intrinsically link with the development of wider health and social care services for Islanders.

I am committed to empowering individuals and the community to make positive changes, and the strength of the Jersey community provides the bedrock to build upon. Allowing all parts of our community to access grants reflects the rich tapestry of island life, from pétanque to celebrations of our Island diversity, we have seen the Connect Me grants have a significant impact across all demographics.