

21.07.19

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour will ask the following question of the Minister for Health and Social Services –

“At what point was the decision taken to allow a “trickle of infection through children”, as indicated to members at a recent briefing, in order to build natural immunity to Covid-19 in that part of the population, and what medical or scientific evidence was considered in the course of making this decision?” WQ.165/2021

**The following response was provided in writing in accordance with Standing Order 63(9) as the oral question was not asked before the end of the time allowed for Oral Questions:**

Individuals who have not had the opportunity to be vaccinated are at greater risk of contracting COVID infection. This currently includes children as the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has not recommended routine immunisation of children at present. Mitigation needs to be balanced with the burden of COVID disease. The easing of restrictions in the face of the milder infections consequent upon vaccination invariably saw an increase in transmission, but this was in balance with the less significant restrictions.

The Deputy Medical Officer for Health explained to Ministers that if such mild infections were going to be seen it would be better for these to occur during the summer months in the absence of co-circulating respiratory viruses such as flu and RSV. It is anticipated that there will be a significant increase in winter viruses this coming season as normal winter viral activity was not seen last season. The medical advice received by Ministers from the Deputy Medical Officer for Health was that a ‘trickle of infection’ through the population during the summer months would have an overall winter benefit.