

21.06.08

[THE STATES noted that, in accordance with Standing Order 63(9), a written response would be provided for the following oral questions that had not been asked during the time allowed at the meeting –]

**18 Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier to the Minister for Social Security regarding the Jersey Dental Fitness Scheme. (OQ.129/2021):**

**Question**

Will the Minister provide her assessment of recent take-up by children and young people of the Jersey Dental Fitness Scheme and state whether she has any plans either to re-invigorate the Scheme or to replace it; and, if so, when will steps be taken to improve or replace the current Scheme?

**Answer**

There were around 750 children enrolled on the scheme in 2019, down to 623 in 2020, which was probably affected by Covid. These numbers have been decreasing over recent years.

The Assembly might recall when the scheme was reviewed in 2015 there were problems with it. It doesn't reach many children, or the most disadvantaged children and the way it is designed is heavy in administration. We think there are better ways of doing things.

A new Dental Strategy is being developed as we speak, and the future role of the Dental Fitness Scheme will form part of that review

As the Deputy will know, having met with officers yesterday, there is a lot of work going on right now to create a Dental Strategy and to take some immediate action to improve access to dental services for children, especially those who might have missed out during 2020 when most dental services were suspended.

We have more work to do before any announcements can be made.