

21.06.29

**14 Deputy C.S. Alves of the Minister for Children and Education regarding antisocial or criminal behaviour (OQ.151/2021):**

Further to Written Question 292/2021, will the Minister advise what statistics or other data are collected on young people who are found to be engaging in antisocial or criminal behaviour; and is it the Minister's assessment that the current support in place is making a positive demonstrable difference to the number of youth arrests?

**Deputy S.M. Wickenden (The Minister for Children and Education):**

The recent multiagency work that was put in place to support a group of young people who are involved in antisocial and criminal behaviour has made a positive difference to the group of young people. The divert initiative ran for 6 months and brought together resources from the States of Jersey Police, Children's Social Care, Education, Probation, Health, C.A.M.H.S., Jersey Youth Service and Skills Jersey to support this small number of children. Through the 6-month period we analysed the data relating to their involvement in incidents, offences, both as a victim and suspect, arrests, stop searches and missing episodes. The data shows that there has been a significant reduction in both the number and severity of incidents involving these young people over the 6-month period. School attendance for the group improved significantly during the course of divert from an average of 35 unauthorised absences to 17 at the end of the initiative.

**5.14.1 Deputy C.S. Alves:**

What plans and resources will be in place to support these young people during the summer holidays, for example, where they will not have access to things like school?

**Deputy S.M. Wickenden:**

I thank the Deputy for her question. Just because there has been an improvement does not mean these children will fall off the radar of the support we are putting in place. The partnership approach we have put in place is able to identify the professionals best placed to mentor each of these young people based on the strength of their relationship with the child rather than their professional role and that will continue to happen.

**5.14.2 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Is focus kept on any particular focus of these children around particular schools and if so, are those schools given extra funding and resources to help impact on those children's behaviour and keeping them in school? It is that school funding that may be the first port of call.

**Deputy S.M. Wickenden:**

I would not have access to that information due to the sensitivity of the children's knowledge. I know that all the departments get together. It is about schooling. It is about outside schooling. It is about education. As far as whether there is extra funding, I am not aware of that myself within the ability to answer that.

**5.14.3 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Would the Minister agree that given the very selective nature of our schooling, it may be that many of the challenging behaviours are focused within particular schools and therefore identifying that and increasing and targeting funding is the best way forward to challenge this issue? Would the Minister agree that would be the right thing to do, and if so, what is he going to do to do that?

**Deputy S.M. Wickenden:**

The work we are doing on the education reform, on the school funding review, and we are looking at the inclusion review, will also identify areas where there is not the right level of funding for certain schools. We cannot just talk about the children in this instance about that. It has to be looked at holistically and there will then be a plan for more funding that comes to the Government Plan. The school funding review will also put in more funding from July to schools where it sees the funding is underutilised in that manner, so the work is already happening to investigate this at a much more holistic way.

**5.14.4 Deputy M.R. Higgins:**

Can the Minister, following on from my questions to the Minister for Home Affairs, tell Members whether your success rate involves any students who have been subjected to the stop and search and who are representing 20 per cent of crime?

**Deputy S.M. Wickenden:**

I cannot answer that question. It is not within my gift to have that information. That is to do with the multiagency work, the police, C.A.M.H.S. and the like but not information I have.

**5.14.5 Deputy M.R. Higgins:**

Can the Minister answer some general questions of those who have that information? He does not need to know the individuals concerned but we need to get a grip on what help or remedial measures are being used to deal with these particular 20 per cent.

**Deputy S.M. Wickenden:**

I would be surprised if this multiagency work was not involved in the 20 per cent or the level that was there. It would make absolute sense to make sure this work was happening in the area where the children have the most challenges. I will ask the question but I would be surprised if the answer was not yes, it is that level of children on the Island.

**5.14.6 Senator S.W. Pallett:**

What is the Minister's department doing to ensure those engaging in antisocial behaviour are not suffering from any mental health issues and if identified, what support is available for them?

**Deputy S.M. Wickenden:**

I thank the Senator for his question. Where the initiative is running, C.A.M.H.S., the Youth Service, Health, Probation and Education are all involved in working together about these children. If they identify mental health issues that need to be looked at, I am sure the C.A.M.H.S. service will pick that up within the work they are doing in the multiagency work.

**5.14.7 Senator S.W. Pallett:**

Could the Minister reassure us that C.A.M.H.S. and the police work closely together to ensure those that are offending are treated in the best possible way to ensure they do not reoffend?

**Deputy S.M. Wickenden:**

I know that is a priority for C.A.M.H.S. and the police that we get the right outcomes and we help these children to get into a better place in their lives so they are not reoffending and get the support they require. Nobody in my department or the police wants to see a continuation of degradation in these children's lives.

**5.14.8 Deputy C.S. Alves:**

The Minister may or may not be aware that in the past, social workers were based in local secondary schools and a number of schools have voiced their concerns to me that they feel this is the missing link to ensure there is joined-up thinking with the approach. Can the Minister give us his opinion on this and whether he agrees or would look into reinstating this link back into secondary schools?

**Deputy S.M. Wickenden:**

I would need to look into that. I am happy to speak to any heads who feel they need better services or other support services and how that would work, and I would work with all the departments within Children and Education to make sure their voices are heard and we can see a right outcome if that is the right thing to do.