

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION
BY DEPUTY L.M.C. DOUBLET OF ST. SAVIOUR
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 22nd MARCH 2016**

Question

Can the Minister advise what work is undertaken in schools to prevent mental health issues? Can the Minister further state what his plans are to develop and improve this work, including any targets, and advise how this ties in with the commitments made in the new Mental Health Strategy? Can the Minister also advise how he works with the Minister for Health and Social Services in this area?

Answer

Positive mental health and well-being is recognised as an important issue for children and young people and it is addressed in a range of ways in school. The focus is on education, prevention and early identification of potential difficulties. A range of support services is in place to help young people if necessary and these range from school-based pastoral teams to central services coordinated by the Educational Support Team at the Education Department.

Education, and in particular the Principal Educational Psychologist (PEP) has been and is a key participant in developing the new Jersey Mental Health Strategy, which was launched last November. This will ensure closer working and collaboration across States departments and other agencies. The PEP is responsible for co-ordinating the delivery of the strategy for 5 to 19 year olds so the actions taken by the Education Department are aligned with, and part of, the strategy.

Current provision

1. **Learning:** The issue is addressed through the Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum, which is compulsory in all Jersey schools (unlike the UK). It is designed to help students acquire the skills, language and strategies they need in order to live healthy, safe fulfilling, responsible and balanced lives. This curriculum specifically states that pupils should be taught 'how to maintain physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing'. Each school has a member of staff who leads in this subject and they meet through a central PSHE working group to discuss issues and share best practice.
2. **Staff training:** This is coordinated by the Education Support Team (EST), which provides general training for staff to raise awareness and more specific training for those who are directly involved in pastoral care and likely to deal with children who are experiencing difficulties. This is already established and becoming more integrated with Health and Social Services and the third sector.
3. **Wellbeing Team:** Peripatetic staff work with all primary schools specifically to promote the positive well-being that underpins successful learning. They focus on positive emotional health, emotional literacy and resilience and work with schools to identify and support pupils with social and emotional needs. This would typically include pupils who have low self-esteem or confidence, anxiety or emotional needs. They deliver sessions to small groups or one-to-one for individual pupils and help them learn coping strategies that will help in all areas of their life.
4. **School-based Counselling:** All secondary schools have a school counsellor, either full-time or part time. The Youth Service also provide the Youth Enquiry Service (YES) for young people who prefer not to go to a counsellor at their school.

5. **Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs):** 56 teaching assistants from our primary and secondary schools have been trained over the past year to assist in this area. ELSAs are a key component of how a school responds to children and young people who have well-being needs.
6. **Third sector initiatives:** The Education Department and individual schools work with local charities, including MindJersey to promote awareness of mental health issues. Training for ‘Mental Health First Aid’ is being offered to teachers for the first time next term to improve understanding of mental issues and teach practical skills to help staff identify signs of mental health in young people. A two-day conference focussing on mental health in young people is planned for later in the summer term, the first event of its kind.
7. **Educational Psychology:** The EP team provide all schools and school communities with consultation, casework support and training. Responding to pupils with emerging mental health and well-being needs is a central role of the service provided by this team. They also oversee the governance and clinical supervision of the school-based counselling service.
8. **Multi Agency Support Teams (MAST):** These include representatives from the Education, CAMHS Social Services, Police, Parenting Support and the Jersey Youth Service. Representatives work together in secondary schools to help young people and their families who are dealing with difficult circumstances, including mental health issues.
9. **Early Help:** This approach has been successfully launched over the past six months and is now a key mechanism to ensure that departments and agencies work together and formulate a central plan to support families in a cohesive and co-ordinated way if more than one organisation is involved.
10. **MASH:** Education staff are an integral part of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, which provides a co-ordinated approach to situations where there are concerns about the welfare of any young person, either as a result of mental health problems or other factors.

New initiatives

1. **Primary Mental Health Workers:** The creation of a new team within 12 month whose role will be to link schools, the EST and CAMHS to ensure appropriate support is available at all levels for young people.
2. **Anti-bullying research:** Because of the link between bullying and mental ill health, the EST will be leading a two-year project into the extent, causes and remedies for bullying in Jersey.
3. **FRIENDS approach:** Staff training will begin in this new kind of training (not dissimilar to a curriculum), which is being introduced to enhance early intervention and gives staff a structured programme to follow as they support young people.
4. **Information:** Work is under way to improve the information available so that parents and staff are fully informed of services available and how to access them.
5. **Also:** Additional posts are being developed in conjunction with H&SS in this area specifically to support children and young people.

The Education Minister principally works with the health and Social Services Minister through the Child and Vulnerable Adults (CAVA) group in relation to this issue. Targets in all areas relate to improvements for individuals and families.