

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
BY DEPUTY K.F. MOREL OF ST. LAWRENCE  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 12th MAY 2020**

**Question**

“Prior to making the Covid-19 (Restricted Movement) (Jersey) Order 2020, was the Minister advised about the impact of the Order on the physical and mental health of adults, children and vulnerable people, as well as the social development of children and teenagers; and, if so, will he provide the Assembly with a copy of that advice in the response to this question?”

**Answer**

The COVID-19 pandemic represents an unparalleled global public health emergency which has compelled Governments around the world to take unprecedented and rapid action to protect the health of their citizens and the capacity of national healthcare systems.

The primary policy objective of the ‘Stay at Home’ Covid-19 (Restricted Movement) (Jersey) Order 2020 was to delay the spread of the virus and shield the most vulnerable in our population. The decision to make the Order was taken following written advice from the Medical Officer of Health ahead of the commencement and subsequent extensions to the Order.

The potential implications of the ‘Stay at Home’ instruction had been recognised and considered by Ministers prior to making the Order on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020. The minutes of the Emergency Council, Competent Authorities Meeting and Council of Ministers are the formal fora in which advice was given and such matters were discussed. The existing engagement code between Government and the Assembly Scrutiny Panels enables a request for these records to be made available to them.

During the month of March work was undertaken to establish a Community Task Force to provide input into, and oversight of, support for vulnerable islanders, working with the Parishes, voluntary and community sector, businesses and government. Whilst prioritising those Islanders most in need of support, the Community Taskforce is working to support all islanders in this very difficult situation. To this end, the following workstreams have been established:

- Advice to the Voluntary and Community sector
- Co-ordination of support activity to islanders who might need support as a result of COVID-19
- Routes for those needing support or wishing to volunteer
- Proactive targeting to ensure Islanders are getting support.

Approval was given for a steering group to provide collective political leadership for the Community Task Force and updates on the work of the task force were provided to ministers at meetings held before 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and continue to be provided.

Outside of formal fora, ministers were in regular discussion amongst themselves and with officers and the vulnerabilities of islanders during a period of restricted movement were a paramount consideration. Pressures on time and resource prior to 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020 inevitably meant that engagement was often primarily focussed on issues immediately pertinent to the emergency rather than the drafting of formal written advice to the Minister on those vulnerabilities, insofar as any formal advice might have been desirable. It was clearly understood from the outset that measures to protect vulnerable groups would be implemented or enhanced as soon as possible.

Many programmes and initiatives are now in place to support vulnerable people and families during the present emergency. These include but are not limited to:

- The launch of the Coronavirus helpline on 19 February
- Establishing a Children and Families Hub to coordinate support for vulnerable children and families
- The continued provision of school and nursery education for the children of critical workers and those with additional needs or in need of extra support
- Increased frequency of multi-agency safeguarding meetings to raise and respond quickly to concerns for individuals and families who may be struggling
- The launch, on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020, of Connect Me on the gov.je website to match up the needs of the community with the help available from the Government, Parishes, voluntary and community sector organisations and volunteers to ensure the right help reaches people when they need it, in a safe and sustainable way
- Increased tenancy protections, including the adjournment of all eviction cases before the Petty Debts Court as part of a package of measures in response to the pandemic
- The Hometime initiative hosted on the Government of Jersey's Facebook pages, with contributions from Mind Jersey and the Listening Lounge to support Islanders' mental health
- Creation of a survey to allow children and young people to share their thoughts and feelings on a range of topics, from the impact coronavirus has had on their friendships to their experiences of home learning.
- A new Learning at Home website [learningathome.gov.je](http://learningathome.gov.je) covering a range of wellbeing resources for children, young people and parents on how to study well at home and look after their wellbeing
- A vulnerable families list has been developed enabling services to be more proactive in how they support the most vulnerable and identifying a Lead Professional who will keep in regular contact with them during this difficult period
- The Youth Enquiry Service (YES) has increased its helpline and counselling service for 14 – 25-year olds to 7 days per week, noon to 8pm. In addition, it also runs a targeted walk and talk service (mindful of physical distancing) to support young people that need face to face support.