

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND HOUSING
BY DEPUTY L.M.C. DOUBLET OF ST. SAVIOUR
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 2nd NOVEMBER 2020**

Question

Will the Minister advise what plans he has, if any, to respond to the issues outlined in the Best Start Partnership's briefing paper on the impact of Covid-19 lockdown measures on parents-to-be, babies, young children and their families?

Answer

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Best Start Partnership board for producing this briefing paper which provides much needed feedback from parents, professionals and other groups and organisations regarding the impact of Covid-19.

The wide circulation of the briefing paper has been significant in raising awareness of the potential impact of Covid-19 on Jersey's youngest residents and the need to consider the legacy of the pandemic in all future planning as this generation of children develop and grow up.

I recognise that whilst services have been flexible families have undoubtedly missed the face-to-face contact and an increased demand is already evident.

The Partnership launched a comprehensive survey to more fully understand the experiences of young children and their families during the pandemic which has recently closed. The analysis of the findings will be fed back to contributors and partners to inform future planning.

The Government will be considering the wider impact of the pandemic through further work with the childcare sector to understand the changing needs parents have for childcare, the impact on the family and how this affects both parents and children.

A focus on well-being within the early years will be maintained to ensure that the needs of children and families will be at the centre of the provision, through contact, engagement and activities, whilst adhering to the COVID guidance.

The Early Years Policy Development Board will soon be presenting their findings and policy proposals which will give due consideration to all current reports that pertain to improving outcomes for children, including the Big Education Conversation and the Education Reform Programme, both of which recognise the importance and value of investing in the early years.