

21.06.08

**14 Deputy R.J. Ward of the Minister for Children and Education regarding the allocation of Covid-19 ‘catch-up’ funding. (OQ.121/2021):**

Will the Minister state the total amount of COVID-19 catch-up funding that has been allocated per child for 2021):?

**Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré (Acting Minister for Children and Education):**

Yes, what appears to be a very simple question is quite a complicated answer. As the Deputy knows, we have invested quite significantly in education reform but we have also obviously recognised the impact of COVID and so catch-up funding has been allocated. Very swiftly, over 2020 and 2021): a total of about £1.7 million has been allocated. The split on that for 2021): is £904,000, that is in the Government Plan. There is an extra £380,000 which was announced in April, which is to do with I.T. (information technology) devices and a previous £445,000, these are all approximate figures, for 2020. Broadly speaking, the targets are in total just over 2,500 children between 2020 and 2021): should be impacted by the funding and the extra tuition that we put in place. Broadly speaking, the split is just under 900 for 2020 and just under 1,700 for 2021);; I will let the Deputy do the requisite maths. But I would make it very much the point, it was not done really on a per head basis, it was more about identifying on a need basis, for example, take into account things like schools in receipt of pupil premiums, et cetera.

**3.14.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

I must admit I could not pick some of that but can I confirm with the Minister that the catch-up funding is not distributed among all students then but is being targeted, therefore, per pupil does not refer to per pupil for the around 13,000 students that we have? If that is the case, does the Minister believe that there is any need for catch-up funding for those students as well, as all students will have been affected in different ways by what they have missed during the COVID situation?

[12:00]

**Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:**

I think the crucial thing here was the point was that we rapidly identified the pupils who would be most affected and that is well-targeted. But the funding has been aimed at all teachers, I believe, and they have benefited from, effectively, what we are calling the Jersey tutoring programme. That has benefited all teachers, which, ultimately, will then start mitigating the wider impacts that the Deputy has referred to. But I would emphasise that this is an ongoing position of see if we need to address further matters we will do so.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Can I just ask for clarification there? The Minister said teachers --

**The Bailiff:**

You will have the final supplementary question, Deputy.

**3.14.2 Senator K.L. Moore:**

Given the delay in providing and delivering the assistance to pupils who identified as having needs with regards to information technology and access to it during lockdown, how will the Acting Minister for Children and Education ensure that delivery in this area is swift?

**Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:**

I am slightly puzzled there because what we have said is that the additional that was done for the I.T. devices ...

**The Bailiff:**

I am afraid you have frozen, Chief Minister, we cannot hear you and your picture is no longer moving.

**Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:**

Sir, I have frozen, I am just trying to sort out some tech stuff.

**The Bailiff:**

Yes.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Does the Minister need some catch-up funding just ... sorry.

**The Bailiff:**

We need him to catch-up, not the funding. I can allow a short period for this and I will add some injury time at the end of the question period.

**Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:**

Sir, can you hear me?

**The Bailiff:**

Yes, we can hear you, Chief Minister.

**Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:**

If you have heard that for some reason my laptop decided to go completely haywire. Right, I believe I was trying to answer Senator Moore's question and, essentially, my understanding is that the devices that we certainly announced in April are being distributed or have been distributed to the schools and, therefore, there should not be any delays on that matter.

**3.14.3 Senator K.L. Moore:**

The delivery of those devices was a year after the need had been identified in March and April the previous year, therefore, I ask the same question, how will the Minister ensure swift delivery of catch-up at a time for all pupils who have experienced detriment during the past 18 months of their education?

**Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:**

Perhaps the 2 points, the devices I refer to are additional and ... sorry, was I ...

**The Bailiff:**

We can still hear you, Chief Minister. It is not particularly a good line but we can still hear you.

**Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:**

Apologies, Sir, I thought I was in danger of speaking over you. Okay, so in terms of the delivery of the catch-up funding, as I have said, the programme started last year. It has started swiftly and it

continues. It is being delivered, it is not proposed to be delivered, it is happening. Therefore, on that basis it is being delivered swiftly and to those children who are in need of it and most need it.

**3.14.4 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

From a calculation per child in 2021): it is £69 per student for catch-up; that is just a rough calculation. Does the Chief Minister believe that given that putting children first is a common strategic priority that this is enough and it is not enough? Why is it not more?

**Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:**

I am going to disagree. It is the trouble with an oral question of this nature. It is just over £500 for affected people and on that basis I believe that is sufficient and obviously, as we have said, we will continue. I think it is being reviewed mid-year, I think in June or later this month, and therefore we will continue to assess. Obviously, as we come out of the COVID pandemic there is almost certainly and there will be provisions for what I will call the social welfare impact and well-being impact of COVID going forward.