

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER  
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER CENTRAL  
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 26th JUNE 2023  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 3rd JULY 2023**

**Question**

“In light of the Government’s continuing commitment to “putting children first”, will the Chief Minister –

- (a) state what data is collected to determine and measure childhood social conditions in Jersey, and whether this includes the average height of children, [as is reported to be the case in the UK](#), and provide her assessment from the data of how such conditions have changed over the last decade, highlighting in particular whether it is her assessment that the conditions have deteriorated;
- (b) with reference to the UNICEF report entitled ‘[Worlds of Influence](#)’, state how many, and what proportion of, children in Jersey live in households with less than 60% of median income and how the Island compares with other jurisdictions in this area;
- (c) state what data, if any, is available to measure child poverty in the Island and how the level of such poverty changed over the last decade;
- (d) explain what measures are in place to reduce the level of child poverty; and
- (e) explain what data is available in respect of public spending on child education and care for children and state what the current level of expenditure per child is?”

**Answer**

As our Common Strategic Policy and Ministerial Plans made clear, we have set an ambition for all children and young people to have the best start in life, recognising that the early years have a lasting impact, and that being loved, being listened to, and receiving a good, rounded education are essential to future life chances.

The best way to ensure that all families have a good quality of life is to safeguard a strong economy and maximise job opportunities, so that parents can provide for their children. Within my first 100 days, we introduced a mini-Budget that prioritised lower income taxes for hard working families and increased benefits for the most vulnerable. It is in this context that I have set out the range of activities that this Council of Ministers has prioritised in order to support families and reduce poverty.

- a) The Jersey Children and Young Persons Survey is carried out by Statistics Jersey every two years – the last results were for 2021 [R Jersey Children and Young People's Survey 20220309 SJ.pdf \(gov.je\)](#). This survey included a range of questions on childhood social conditions in Jersey, including: lack of material possessions, financial status; wellbeing; health; exercise; dental hygiene; exercise; self-harm; belonging; smoking, alcohol and drug use; etc.

The reference to UK data includes the NHS National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) which covers children in Reception (aged 4-5 years) and Year 6 (aged 10-11 years) in mainstream state-maintained schools in England. [National Child Measurement Programme, England, 2021/22 school year - NDRS \(digital.nhs.uk\)](#) The Jersey Child Measurement Programme (JCMP) likewise

measures annually the height and weight of children in Reception (Year R: 4 to 5-year-olds) and Year 6 (10 to 11-year-olds) [Child Measurement 2021-2022.pdf \(gov.je\)](#) .

The Jersey Child Measurement Programme is primarily used to monitor childhood obesity amongst Jersey's children, and the data to date has not been used to look at standardised average height. The methodology used by the study referenced in the article by Michael Marmot can be assessed, to determine if it could be included in future reports.

The 2021 Children and Young Persons Survey includes a number of time-series. These show, for instance, that the proportion of young people eating at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day has improved in the last decade, as has the proportion of young people meeting the recommended level of physical activity. However, the proportion of young people who have visited the dentist in the last 6 months has declined in the last decade to 2021 (which is likely partly a Covid impact).

More detail can be found in the [Obesity, Diet and Physical Activity Report](#)

- b) Statistics Jersey publish statistics on children in households below 60% median income in their household Income Distribution Statistics reports. The Statistics Jersey reports use the same income equivalisation process and the same 60% of the median threshold for relative low income that are used by Eurostat and UNICEF.

In 2021/2022 15% of children were in households in relative low income before housing costs i.e. below 60% median net income before housing costs, and 24% were in households in relative low income after housing costs.

For international comparisons, the UNICEF report [Worlds of Influence \(unicef.ca\)](#) was based on 2018 statistics for children aged under 18 living in relative low net income before housing costs. Note that Statistics Jersey's Income Distribution Statistics reports on children aged under 16, so they are not directly comparable with this UNICEF report. More recent international statistics for children aged under 16 living in households in relative low net income before housing costs for 2013 to 2022 are available from Eurostat here [Statistics | Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](#), and these are directly comparable with statistics from Jersey' income distribution report. This shows that the EU average proportion of proportion of children living in relative low net income before housing costs was 19.0% in 2022 compared to the Jersey equivalent of 15% for the March 2022 reference period.

- c) Income Distribution Statistics are based on responses to the Living Costs and Household Income Survey, which is carried out periodically. Net income after housings costs is the headline income measure in Statistics Jersey's household Income Distribution Statistics reports, the latest being [Household Income Distribution 2021/2022](#), as it measures disposable income available to households.

However, net income after housings costs is more difficult to measure than other types of income, so is less widely available from other jurisdictions. Statistics Jersey can make international comparisons with a wider range of countries by comparing net income before housing costs, but it should be noted that differences in housing costs between countries means this may not be indicative of how Jersey would compare using net income after housing costs.

The proportions of children living in households in relative low income after housing costs in Jersey are:

- 24% in 2021/2022
- 25% in 2019/2020
- 29% in 2014/2015
- 22% in 2009/2010

The UNICEF report uses net income before housing costs (“post-tax, post-transfer income”). The proportion of children living in households in relative low income before housing costs in Jersey are:

- 15% in 2021/2022
- 11% in 2019/2020
- 13% in 2014/2015
- 12% 2009/2010

Note that the [UNICEF report](#) referred to gives statistics for children aged under 18 who are living in relative low income, while Statistics Jersey’s Income Distribution Statistics reports on children aged under 16, so they are not directly comparable. [EU data Statistics | Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](#) measures the distribution of household net income before housing costs for under 16s from 2013 to 2022, and is therefore comparable to the Jersey data.

The proportion of children in relative low net income before housing costs in Jersey has remained below the EU average in each survey over the last decade, however the size of the gap has narrowed in each survey (from 8 percentage points in 2014/2015, to 7 percentage points in 2019/2020, to 4 percentage points in 2021/2022).

In addition to the proportion of children in relative low income, Statistics Jersey publishes in the Jersey Children’s and Young Persons Survey reports information on children lacking material belongings. Out of ten items that children and young people think are necessary for a ‘normal kind of life’ (e.g. a smartphone; money you can save each month), 1% of Jersey children lacked 5 or more items, and 19% lacked 2-4 items. The 2021 survey results do not provide a time series, but Statistics Jersey could provide this data for the previous two surveys on request.

d) explain what measures are in place to reduce the level of child poverty;

The most significant measure for supporting families and children is to enable a strong and growing economy. This allows most families to be financially independent and keep more of their income. For example, the 100 Day Plan included a mini-Budget that put over £56 million back into the pockets of Islanders. The accompanying Children’s Rights Impact Assessment set out that single taxpayers saw a reduction in their tax liability of £520, while married couples and civil partnerships saw a reduction of £832.

The mini-Budget’s increases to the maximum available childcare tax relief caps also provided further support, up to a maximum of £202 for each school aged child, and more than £500 for pre-school age children. The Ministerial Cost of Living Strategy Group actively considers the topic of childcare provision and further measures may be announced in the future.

As one of my three areas of relentless focus, housing is also critical to preventing and alleviating child poverty. The Life on the Rock report identified that stable, quality housing was one of the top five issues that would make a difference to a quarter of children’s lives. This is a top priority for this Council of Ministers. Work is currently underway to improve Jersey’s provision of housing, including the quality of accommodation, which will alleviate some aspects of child poverty.

The Government also has a role in safeguarding rights for parents and children which can prevent poverty. For example, in 2021 contributory benefits were extended to create a new parental allowance, to allow both parents to claim a total of up to 32 weeks parental allowance between them. Similar rights were extended to adoptive parents. [\(P.124/2020\)](#). The final stage of family friendly employment legislation was introduced in 2020 with both parents entitled to six weeks of paid leave, up to a year of leave in total, and improved rights in respect of breastfeeding and time off to attend antenatal appointments. Again, similar rights were extended to adoptive parents. [\(P.100/2019\)](#). Finally, rights under the discrimination law were updated in 2021 to extend discrimination rights to parents with children seeking to rent or buy property [\(P.58/2021\)](#).

A strong and growing economy also provides tax revenue for the Government to target benefits and support to low income families with over five years' residence. Financial support for parents is provided through a range of statutory and non statutory provision.

The main statutory provision is the income support system which supports low income households with weekly benefit payments. Current component rates include:

	weekly component	hourly rate
child under school leaving age - first child	£91.70	
child under school leaving age - additional child	£77.28	
child over school leaving age	£111.30	
childcare – 0 - 3 years		£8.84 per hour
childcare 3 to 11 years		£7.40 per hour

Child components and childcare components have both been subject to significant increases over the last five years.

In addition, the value of the extra support provided to a single parent has increased from £10.15 per week in 2018 to £43.47 per week today.

In 2020, the Health Access Scheme was established, providing free GP surgery visits to all children in income support households aged under 17. A separate scheme to provide free GP surgery visits to all children, regardless of income, has been agreed by the States Assembly and will be launched in the near future.

Healthy Start vouchers provide extra help with the cost of fresh fruit and vegetables to low income families with children up to the age of four and Income Support families with a child under three years receive extra help with winter heating costs.

In addition to ongoing benefit support, a number of temporary schemes over the last three years have included support for children. These included:

- Spend Local - £100 per child to spend in local businesses – summer 2020
- CRESS - £50 per child per week to support families of registered workers unable to find employment during COVID restrictions - April to August 2020
- COLTS - monthly payments between April and December 2022 - £20 per child April to June; £40 per child July to December
- Dental catch up scheme - free dental check ups and treatment for income support children during 2022
- Parental Support Payment - one off payment of £250 for a single child or £500 for a family with two or more children, provided in early 2023 to families that include a registered worker with low household income

- e) explain what data is available in respect of public spending on child education and care for children and state what the current level of expenditure per child is?"

Spending on child education and care is published in the Annual Report and Accounts for the Government of Jersey and planned expenditure is published in the Government Plan. Latest published figures in the Government Plan 2023 to 2026 Annex are:

**CYPES - Service Level Analysis**

2023 Estimate £'000	Near Cash		Net Revenue	Non-Cash	Net Revenue	FTE
	Income	Expenditure	Expenditure	Depreciation	Expenditure	Employees
Children's Social Care & Safeguarding	6	31,490	31,484	-	31,484	344.0
Education	19,666	139,687	120,021	80	120,101	1,966.0
Integrated Services & Commissioning	120	10,906	10,786	-	10,786	129.0
Office of the Director General	43	4,726	4,683	37	4,720	25.0
Young People	800	4,004	3,204	8	3,212	54.0
Skills and Student Finance	585	20,095	19,510	-	19,510	41.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,220</b>	<b>210,908</b>	<b>189,688</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>189,813</b>	<b>2,559.0</b>

The Education Directorate provides the regulatory framework for pre-school registered carers, private nurseries and for all education providers. It provides fully government-funded school places for the majority of Island children, and partial funding for some fee-charging schools; it supplies specialist skills into schools, and funds individual educational support packages for the children with the most complex needs.

Education budgets are no longer driven solely by pupil numbers. The funding formula has been reworked in line with the recommendations of the Independent Schools Funding Review. School budgets now reflect a greater proportion of fixed and semi-fixed costs and a smaller proportion of pupil-driven costs.

Education costs per individual child are not therefore readily available and the average is not meaningful at system level. Actual costs per child range widely. Some children have minimal or partial support from the taxpayer and, at the other end of the scale, there are children in fully government-funded schools, who may access centrally provided specialist support and for whom schools receive individual additional funding in respect of their complex needs and/or compensation for disadvantage.

For example, there is an additional allowance to schools for 3043 children who qualify for Jersey Premium. The budget for Jersey Premium is £4,253,000.

The Children's Social Care and Safeguarding directorate provides care for children in the care of the Minister, early interventions to support families on the edge of care, and support for Care Leavers. It also supports all other agencies involved with these children and their families. Again, the average cost per child is not meaningful and the individual cost is not readily available.

Cohort	Count
Nursery*	466
Private nurseries	316
Primary Education*	5991
Secondary Education*	5183
Highlands (spring census) Years 12-15.	615
Total Goj students in non-fee charging schools	12571
All students 3 to 19	15160
Jersey Premium**	3043
CSCS total cases (incl. care leavers) (Jan 2023)	590
Early Help total cases (end of Q4 2022)	241

\*Numbers relate to government schools only – fee-charging, non-fee paying and special. Numbers accurate at time of January census. Highlands, Private Nursery, EHE and non-provided schools not included.

\*\* Nursery to Year 13 – all government fee-paying and non- fee charging, as well as special schools