

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY DEPUTY I. GARDINER OF ST. HELIER NORTH
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 3rd JUNE 2024
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 10th JUNE 2024**

Question

“In respect of cases of whooping cough in Jersey, will the Minister advise –

- (a) how many cases have been diagnosed during the period 1st January to 31st May this year;
- (b) how many individuals in total have been tested;
- (c) what was the average time taken to obtain the results; and
- (d) are there sufficient testing kits in the Island?”

Answer

Recent data by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) shows increasing cases of whooping cough. As a reflection of the situation in the UK, Jersey has also seen an increase in reporting of suspected and laboratory confirmed cases.

Registered Medical Practitioners have a statutory requirement to notify Public Health of all patients where they have a clinical suspicion of a notifiable disease. In accordance with [Loi \(1934\) sur la Santé Publique](#), whooping cough is a notifiable disease. Immediate notification is important as there is often a critical window of time in which effective public health control measures can be implemented.

- (a) Based on laboratory data from 1st January to 31st May 2024 there were 14 positive results following request for *Bordetella pertussis* PCR (diagnostic test for the bacterium responsible for whooping cough used in Jersey)
- (b) There have been 59 requests for *Bordetella pertussis* PCR
- (c) PCR samples are sent off island, with a usual turnaround time about 5-6 days.
- (d) PCR tests are in plentiful supply. However, doctors can prescribe antibiotics to treat whooping cough following a clinical assessment of the patient, if there is a suspicion of the illness.

As infants are susceptible to disease is of fundamental importance that babies are vaccinated on time. Vaccinations are recommended at 8, 12 and 16 weeks of age and that those who miss vaccination are caught up at the earliest opportunity. Coverage in Jersey for infant pertussis vaccination is greater than 95%.

For younger babies, vaccination of mothers in pregnancy offers passive protection before they can be directly protected by the infant vaccine programme. Studies have found maternal vaccination offers around 90% vaccine effectiveness against confirmed disease and 97% protection against death from pertussis in infants under 3 months of age.