

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING
BY DEPUTY L.M.C. DOUBLET OF ST. SAVIOUR
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 12th OCTOBER 2026
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 19th OCTOBER 2026**

Question

“Further to the adoption of the [Budget \(Government Plan\) 2026-2029 nineteenth amendment, as amended](#), within which it was agreed that the Minister would explore the feasibility of extending the provision of free school meals, will the Minister advise –

- (a) what actions have been taken to progress this work;
- (b) what findings have been made to date;
- (c) whether any proposals have been specifically ruled out, and why; and
- (d) when will the full report be presented to the Assembly?”

Answer

- (a) Officers have commenced work to assess the feasibility of extending free school meal provision in accordance with the amendment adopted by the Assembly. This has included identifying the data required to assess the groups referenced within the amendment and engaging with relevant Government departments to establish whether such data is available.

Discussions have taken place with colleagues in Employment, Social Security and Housing to understand what information is currently held and whether it can be used to support modelling of potential eligibility cohorts and the implications of any extension to the existing scheme.

- (b) The initial assessment has identified significant limitations in the data currently held by Government in relation to some of the groups referenced within the amendment.

Government does not routinely hold data that would identify households that would otherwise qualify for Income Support were they not owner-occupiers of a mortgaged residence. As a result, it is not currently possible to quantify this cohort or accurately assess the impact of extending eligibility to these households without further investigative work.

Officers are continuing to explore whether any alternative data sources or methodologies could support the analysis required.

- (c) No options have been formally ruled out at this stage. However, the feasibility assessment will need to take account of the availability and reliability of data, alongside the financial and operational implications of any proposed extension to free school meal provision.

Where eligibility groups cannot be robustly identified using existing Government data, this may present challenges in assessing or implementing specific options.

- (d) The Minister intends to report to the Assembly before the end of 2026, in accordance with the requirement set out in the adopted amendment.