

19.4 Deputy V. Li of St. Helier North of the Minister for Children and Families regarding the number of referrals received by the Children and Families Hub. (OQ55/2026)

In relation to the number of referrals received by the Children and Families Hub each year, will the Minister advise what assessment has been carried out on the impact of the school holidays on the identification of children at risk and if no assessment has been carried out, will he agree to undertake such an assessment?

Connétable R.P. Vibert of St. Peter (The Minister for Children and Families):

I thank the Deputy for this question. I spoke with the Deputy at the end of this morning's session and in fact there were things that I was not going to mention which I probably will now, as she has encouraged me to do so. In fact, assessment of numbers that come through the Hub did not take place prior to me becoming Minister, so the first data that we have of actual numbers only start in July 2023. I have to say I am pleased this is an area that I was keen to concentrate on. Over the last 2 years really this service has come on an enormous amount and there are new structures in place. I will not go through the individual monthly numbers, but I have agreed to meet with Deputy Li and share that information directly with her.

[15:30]

The Children and Families Hub demand is monitored through regular performance reporting. The volume and themes of contacts, together with their outcomes, are reviewed monthly at an operational performance meeting to support the service delivery and identify emerging issues. Of course, that is critical, as I spoke about on another question recently. Emerging issues, obviously the situation can change dramatically. A more detailed strategic review is undertaken quarterly. These reviews consider volume but are also focused on qualitative insights. Additional analyses are undertaken on performance information across the service, including that relating to missing children and child exploitation, as well as the potential locations of concern. This information informs a strategic multi-agency risk management panel, which ensures a strategic overview of areas of concern to ensure an effective multi-agency response. Around 30 per cent of our referrals to the Children and Families Hub are submitted by schools. Typically referral numbers ...

The Bailiff:

Minister, your answer has reached 2 minutes now. It has been a long answer; there is an informal target of 90 seconds.

The Connétable of St. Peter:

I am happy to share more with the Deputy. It is a wide area so it is difficult.

19.4.1 Deputy V. Li:

I thank the Minister for answering, I am looking forward to receiving such data and findings to our panel. Given the school holidays is around the corner right now, will the assessment cover this summer, not just the future ones?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Yes, the summer is something that we have recognised is a crucial period. In June and July we undertake work with headteachers and teachers and we encourage them to bring forward those children who might not necessarily have reached the bar normally for referral, so that we are aware of those children during the holiday period. We have outreach workers during the holiday period. We also cover events such as music festivals and we also cover those areas that I referred to before where we know children congregate. Through that I am satisfied that we fill that gap during the holidays, and I look forward to talking to the Deputy further about that.