

**From:** Allinson, Alex (MHK) <Alex.Allinson2@gov.im>  
**Sent:** 20 May 2021 15:27  
**To:** [Details supplied]  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** RE: May Tynwald

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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Dear Mr President,

I apologise again for not being able to attend Tynwald this week but was in self-isolation following returning to the island.

I would like to thank Mrs Ann Corlett MHK for answering Members' questions on my behalf.

I listened to the sitting on Manx Radio and there were a number of supplementary questions which I would like to respond to;

- Mr Hooper asked whether the number of children claiming free school meals had increased in response to the economic problems caused by the pandemic.

I have obtained the figures of children who were claiming FSM in January 2020 and January 2021 to show if there has been any increase;

31/01/20 = 2102

31/01/21 = 2205

This equates to an increase of 103 in 2021. It may be that with the rise in unemployment over that period there are more families eligible for this benefit but not claiming it. The department will continue to monitor the situation and if members have any constituent issues regarding eligibility please direct them to the information page on the DESC website which contains an application form. These are also available by contacting the team at Hamilton House; <https://www.gov.im/about-the-government/departments/education-sport-and-culture/policies-and-procedures-a-to-z/f/free-school-meals/>

- Ms Edge asked about the percentage of FSM equivalent grocery vouchers redeemed over last summer and over the lockdown periods this year.

Summer holidays 2020 – 93% redeemed

January/ February 2021 Lockdown 2 – 96% redeemed

March/ April 2021 – Lockdown 3 – 88% redeemed

I will be discussing the comments raised by Honourable Members at the Council of Ministers Social Policy and Children's Sub-Committee tomorrow.

Yours sincerely,

**Dr Alex Allinson**

**MHK for Ramsey**

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