

2020.02.04

7 Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the tax assessments of families needing to access higher education funding: (OQ.30/2020)

Will the Minister take steps to ensure that priority is given to the tax assessments of families which need their assessments in order to access higher education funding and if not, why not?

Deputy S.J. Pinel of St. Clement (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):

I have asked the Comptroller of Revenue to do everything possible to assist his colleagues in the Education Department in streamlining the process for confirming family income for the purposes of making higher education grants. Online filing is now available to many Islanders and is receiving excellent feedback. The Comptroller expects to start processing tax returns submitted online later in February. If people can file their 2019 tax return online, they should expect to receive a tax assessment in weeks, rather than months, in most cases. The more people who can file online and do so, the more tax officers will be available to process paper tax returns.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

I thank the Minister for her response, it was raised with me as a concern by parents and I think that is a very practical way forward and I thank the Minister for her response.

[10:15]

4.7.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I ask the Minister whether she believes that the new system at La Motte Street, a one stop shop so to speak, has assisted the speed of this process, when you have got such a specific need in terms of higher education, or whether it may have become a slight obstacle to the speed of this, in terms of processing these applications?

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

The one stop shop has been very successful at La Motte Street, but the Deputy asks, in quickening the process I think the online filing arriving at the same time as the move to La Motte Street and the introduction of the revenue management system has been quite complicated for tax officers. The Education team, if they need a quicker assessment, can accept self-certification by the applicant of an income and view a tax assessment at a later date.

4.7.2 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is the Minister certain that the link between the assessment team for higher education and tax is there, so that they can be highlighted, because I know that can be an issue?

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

Yes, I did say in my opening remarks to Deputy Maçon that the Comptroller is working with the Education team to try and process any of these tax assessments very quickly.

4.7.3 Deputy K.F. Morel of St. Lawrence:

Will the Minister be assuming responsibility for ensuring the Comptroller meets these timeframes, or will she be merely remaining accountable?

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

Yes, as the Minister for Treasury and Resources, of course I assume responsibility.

4.7.4 Deputy J.M. Maçon:

If a parent has a concern about delaying their tax return and they need this information, or the student does, will the Minister confirm that the best person to contact is the Comptroller?

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

Yes, there is a Comptroller and Deputy Comptroller and a large team of tax officials dealing with all of this.