

21.04.20

**10 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Minister for Social Security regarding government expenditure on benefits (OQ.96/2021):**

Following the response to Written Question 134/2021, will the Minister undertake to provide tables and charts generated from the Open Data site to allow for comparisons to be made for 2018 and (when available) 2019 with 2017 expenditure on benefits, as shown in Tables 22 to 45 of the 2017 annual report, with the tables and charts to include a summarised view of all benefit cost data?

**Deputy J.A. Martin (The Minister for Social Security):**

I am always willing to support Members to ensure that they have access to full information in respect to the areas that sit under my remit. The Open Data website is part of gov.je and it includes detailed information on benefit and contribution statistics from 2012 up to 2019 and these can be compared back to 2012. This information is available to everybody, members of the public as well as States Members and provides a detailed record of social security income and expenditure. The Deputy has previously been offered help to use the public available data to address his particular areas of interest and I am happy to repeat that offer. If there is any area where the data is not publicly available, I will provide the Deputy with the information he requires.

**3.10.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

As earlier, I may be an old dog and difficult to train to learn new tricks, I cannot handle the Open Data pages, which look just to me like a whole string of numbers. I would appreciate certainly some training, whatever it takes, in the department to cover that. But if I cannot understand what those tables are about, what about Joe Soap, average member of the public? Can they handle them or is this a format which reduces access and accountability, rather than expands access and accountability?

**Deputy J.A. Martin:**

I would hope not. This was the agreed way forward for the consolidated Government of Jersey finance and operating data to be provided in the annual report and accounts so that everybody could see it. Just the difficulty with the Deputy, and I am really not trying to be unhelpful, is exactly where he wants it. It might just be this is what you do to compare. I have made the offer before and the offer is still there.