

**QUESTION TO BE ASKED OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SECURITY
COMMITTEE ON TUESDAY 21st OCTOBER 2003,
BY DEPUTY R.G. LE HERISSIER OF ST. SAVIOUR**

Question

- (a) Would the President state how many young people at or below the age of 25 are registered as unemployed at present, and is the Committee satisfied that this number is an accurate reflection of the real situation in regard to youth unemployment?
- (b) What measures, if any, are in place to deal with youth unemployment and how effective are these measures proving?

Answer

- (a) As at the 30th September 2003, there were 97 at or below the age of 25 registered as unemployed for contribution purposes out of a total of 342 of working age. There is no legal requirement to register as unemployed in Jersey so it may not fully reflect the real situation. However, young people who have recently left school are also encouraged to keep in touch with the Careers Service in the Department of Education, Sport and Culture. That Department has recently reported that 29 school leavers are still on their register.
- (b) There are a number of measures in place to support people, irrespective of age, to improve their skills, qualifications and access to the labour market.

Specifically, for young people, career guidance is provided in all educational establishments and every encouragement is given to pupils to attain qualifications which will help them achieve their career aspirations. I am advised that more young people than ever this year have chosen to continue their education after the age of 16 at Hautlieu and Highlands, the latter reporting that their enrolment has increased by 15 per cent to 710 full time students. Although, student choices may have been influenced by the tight labour market situation, it is a positive outcome for the Island because it will eventually contribute to a much higher skills base.

Highlands has been monitoring the destinations of its pupils and reports that well qualified students are continuing to gain employment with particularly good placement rates in childcare, construction, media, business and the motor vehicle trade.

In addition to the educational provision, apprenticeship schemes, funded through the Training and Employment Partnership, (TEP), are available in various trades including brick and block, carpentry, plumbing, painting, welding, motor vehicle and chefs. I am advised that there are currently 130 apprentices supported by these schemes. The TEP also sponsors a Skills Credit programme which provides help to young people between the ages of 16 and 19 with the costs of training.

Finally, the Work Services at the Employment and Social Security Department provide many different forms of support from help with career guidance, job matching and information, job applications and interview techniques to skill development and job coach support for those with special employment needs. The Workwise team now have a job coach whose sole responsibility is to support young people and who liaises closely with the schools. Young people with disabilities can also get support through the Jersey Employment Trust which operates a number of sheltered work and training schemes.

These approaches have been developed over a number of years and have been effective in keeping youth, and other unemployment, at very low levels. However, as I had said, there is no doubt that the employment situation has tightened this year and the Committee has been monitoring the position closely with other interested Committees. Basically, people can no longer walk into jobs with little or no

qualifications or skills. It is for this reason that we have put so much emphasis on training and skill development. As with any programmes, they have to adapt with the changing times, and we are currently working with TEP and the Careers Service at the Department of Education, Sport and Culture and others to develop a new programme which can provide further help to improve the employability of all individuals who are finding it difficult to secure a job.