

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY I.J. GORST**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY, 13th FEBRUARY 2007

Question

Does the Minister have any plans to introduce a scheme for disabled people similar to the United Kingdom 'Workstep' scheme and, if not, would he explain why?

Answer

The UK "Workstep" Supported employment programme is centred around the personal development of individuals to take up employment in the labour market. Workstep participants receive one-to-one support from specialist advisers who will guide them through the process by providing assistance in finding a suitable work placement, supporting the person and their employer in the placement and providing on-going training and advice.

The Social Security Department is the major funding body for the Jersey Employment Trust (JET), which provides employment based training and employment support similar to that present in the UK's Workstep programme.

The services provided by the Jersey Employment Trust are, in the main, focussed on clients with moderate to severe impairments who require long-term training and rehabilitation programmes. The Jersey Employment Trust strives to find open sustained employment opportunities for its clients and supports them in the workplace.

In addition the Department provides services directly for those requiring less intensive support through its Workwise Team. The Department established the Workwise Team in March 1998 to provide a supported employment service for people with special employment needs. Each client of Workwise has a nominated Job Coach to assist them in drawing up an individual development plan and to find a suitable employment placement. Once the suitable work placement has been found the Job Coach will work with the client at the place of work in order that a person's skills can be developed. The Job Coach will work closely with the employer ensuring that any issues or concerns raised may be addressed in a timely and effective manner. The amount of support given to any client or employer is decided upon on a case by case basis. Support in the workplace is withdrawn in a managed and agreed manner and the over arching aim of the service is to provide assistance whereby clients access open sustained employment.

Having considered the basic frameworks of Workstep and the services provided through the Workwise Section and the Jersey Employment Trust, I believe we have a comparable supported employment service as they do in the UK.