

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY SENATOR S.C. FERGUSON
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 17th APRIL 2012**

Question

Will the Minister explain in detail the rationale and method for deriving the alcohol consumption figures quoted on 29th March 2012 by the Medical Officer of Health at a public meeting to mark the 60th anniversary of Alcoholics Anonymous in Jersey?

Will the Minister confirm whether the statistical approach and method has been reviewed by the Statistics Department?

Answer

The alcohol consumption figures quoted by the Medical Officer of Health were produced by the independent States of Jersey Statistic Unit; the Unit has calculated per capita alcohol consumption figures for Jersey on an annual basis since 2002.

The methodology on which the Statistics Unit bases its calculations has been developed from a standard approach followed by the Imperial College Medical School in the 2001 report: "Responding to drug and alcohol use in Jersey, April 2001."

The rationale for calculating per capita consumption for the resident *population aged 15 years and over* is to enable comparison with World Health Organisation data for other jurisdictions.

The consumption figure for Jersey is derived from impôt data compiled by the Island's Customs and Immigration Service, aggregated on a calendar year basis, for total volumes of wine, spirits, beer/lager and cider.

The resident population aged 15 years and over is derived from population estimates produced by the Statistics Unit. An adjustment is made to allow for tourists, business travellers and language students (using data compiled by the Tourism Department) and seasonal workers (data from the six-monthly Manpower Survey). The tourism data provides detailed information on the number of people who visit the Island each year and their average length of stay.

The consumption figure quoted for Jersey residents is likely to be a conservative estimate of the true level of consumption as no account is made for the following factors:

- upward: informal production; off-Island consumption by residents; imports by residents
- downward: stockpiling; waste and spillage.

Using this methodology, it is estimated that as an Island population Jersey consumes significantly more alcohol than near neighbours. The most recent figure shows that as a population Jersey consumes 13.9 litres per capita compared to 11.2 litres in the UK. The demand on health services from this avoidable burden shows no sign of relenting.