

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY G.C.L. BAUDAINS OF ST. CLEMENT
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 30th APRIL 2013**

Question

Would the Chief Minister state whether the Council of Ministers are concerned about the increasing prevalence of 'zero hour' contracts and their association with 'casual labour' issues of decades ago?

Notwithstanding that such terms can be appropriate in certain circumstances, is the Minister concerned that some employers are using these contracts as an excuse for bad work management and would he also state whether he believes it appropriate and morally acceptable for States bodies to use such contracts?

Answer

There are no statistics on the use of zero hour contracts across the Island. As a consequence, it would not be possible to verify the premise of the question that there is an increasing prevalence of such contracts or whether their use was associated with working practices in previous decades.

As the Deputy states zero hours contracts are entirely appropriate for people who agree to be available for work as and when required but where no particular hours or times of work are specified. Examples of the appropriate use of such contracts include the use of Bank Nurses in Health and Social Services and Supply Teachers in the Education, Sport and Culture Departments respectively.

It is incumbent upon employers in the Island to use zero hours contracts appropriately and not to use them to cover work that is regular in nature. To do otherwise can result in Employment Tribunal claims in respect of the appropriate annual leave, recognition of bank holidays, unfair dismissal and redundancy.

In today's environment it is appropriate that State bodies utilise a number of different contractual and working arrangements which can include the use of zero hours contracts to the mutual benefit of the service and the affected individual.