

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY G. P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 18th MARCH 2014**

Question

In the light of the most recent figures for the number of minimum hours contracts in the UK, which show a doubling of previous estimates, what consideration, if any, will the Minister give to taking measures to protect employees in Jersey by ending the use of 'exclusivity clauses' and stopping the use of these contracts when employees are, in practice, working regular hours?

Answer

I am not aware of any recent figures regarding minimum hours contracts in the UK, but given the recently published revised estimates of the number of zero hour contracts in the UK, based on the Office for National Statistics' Labour Force Survey, it is likely that Deputy Southern's question concerns **zero hour** contracts. Unlike zero hour contracts, minimum hour contracts provide a guaranteed minimum number of working hours per week and are sometimes used where work is regular but weekly hours are variable.

The Minister is aware that a consultation on zero hour contracts was launched by the UK Department for Business Innovation and Skills in December 2013 which is seeking evidence and views on a range of potential actions that could be taken to maximise the opportunities of zero hours contracts while minimising abuse. One aspect of this relates to the use of exclusivity clauses - where employees are required to work under zero hour contracts that provide no guarantee of work, but prevent the individual from working for other companies. The outcomes of that consultation, which closed on 13 March 2014, will merit the Minister's consideration.

Further to the Deputy's Proposition on this subject (P.100/2013 which was adopted by the States, as amended, in September last year), work is underway via the States of Jersey Statistics Unit to investigate issues relating to zero hour contracts through various business and household surveys. As the Minister reminded the Deputy in response to his written question on a similar subject, tabled on 2 December 2013, this investigation will take until the end of 2014 and the Minister will be in a position to consider and react, as necessary, to the use of zero hour contracts when the findings are available.