

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 20th OCTOBER 2015**

Question

Will the Minister produce for the States any documents containing the results of the consultation that took place with the Citizens Advice Bureau, the Jersey Child Care Trust and Age Concern prior to the publication of the benefit cuts proposals? If she cannot, will she explain why?

Answer

As explained both before and during the MTFP debate, briefings were arranged with a number of charities and voluntary groups to explain the proposals that formed our savings package.

It is an important part of the day-to-day business of running a large government department for my officers to hold regular meetings with the stakeholder organisations with whom we work. These valued partners support the same clients within the Island, and so they often have a direct interest in any changes made to the benefits we administer. This informal contact is particularly valuable when the Department has developed plans that involve changes to the existing benefit rules, and so it is typical that officers will meet with stakeholder organisations to provide advance notice of any changes. This also gives stakeholders the chance to ask questions of my officers.

The Department undertakes formal consultation when appropriate, for example in developing the details of the new discrimination law, but it is not appropriate to use this process as part of a budget setting exercise.