

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY M.R. HIGGINS OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 24th FEBRUARY 2015**

Question

Will the Minister provide an annual breakdown of the number of people who were actively seeking work during the period 2008 to 2014 -

- (a) who opted for self-employment, together with the nature of self-employment they decided to pursue;
- (b) whose income had to be supplemented by income support whilst self-employed; and,
- (c) who returned to the unemployment register as actively seeking work after a period as self-employed, indicating the length of time they were classed as self-employed?

Answer

Income support provides financial assistance to individuals who are actively seeking work, who are in employment or who have self-employment. Earnings from employment and self-employment are included on the Income Support claim with a disregard applied of 23% of the gross earnings. This ensures that as an individual moves into employment or self-employment, they can continue to receive Income Support whilst their income remains within the Income Support levels.

In December 2014 there were 185 individuals who were self-employed but also receiving Income Support. Precise information on the nature of their self-employment is only held on a case-by-case basis and is not easily collated. However, advisors working with these individuals report that the spread of businesses is broad, touching on many sectors from domestic to manual labour, to IT, marketing and catering. Likewise, the previous employment history of these individuals can only be ascertained by a case-by-case examination of their records.

Historic data to the level of detail requested in the question spanning the seven years from 2008 to 2014 would need to be collated manually from a variety of sources on a case-by-case basis. This would be extremely time consuming but an initial analysis completed in the time available indicated an average of just under 200 self-employed individuals receiving Income Support between 2011 and 2014.

The Back to Work teams support individuals who are Actively Seeking Work and wanting to set up their own business, and a specialist Advisor is available to support this group to increase their income or find more hours of paid work.