

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 28th APRIL 2015**

Question

Can the Minister account for the prevalence of zero-hours jobs in Jersey, which now accounts for 10% of employment, compared to around 2% in the UK, and, if not, why not?

Answer

The Council of Minister's overarching aim is to achieve a labour market that is flexible, effective and fair. The Social Security department will publish a report in May 2015, which will provide data on the use of zero hours contracts in Jersey.

Jersey's labour market report from December 2014 showed that 5,990 jobs in the private and public sector were filled on zero-hours contracts. The Jersey Annual Social Survey 2014 showed that 76% of workers on zero-hours contracts reported being 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with the type of contract, identifying flexibility as one of the main benefits. Evidence from the UK shows that individuals on zero-hours contracts work across the economy, that zero-hours contracts are used by businesses of all sizes, and that individuals may hold a number of them.

Zero-hours contracts allow businesses emerging from difficult economic conditions to employ staff to stimulate growth and, as such, zero-hours contracts can play a vital role in the economy. Benefits for employers include flexibility, supporting expansion plans, retention of skills, and knowledge of the company and its culture. Individuals cite greater choice, opportunities to enter the labour market and a pathway to other forms of employment, as well as flexibility for retirement plans as the benefits of zero-hours contracts.

Zero-hours contracts are not a new phenomenon and they have been used responsibly for many years. They can support business flexibility, making it easier to engage new staff and opening up opportunities for young people. These contracts and other flexible arrangements give individuals more choice and the ability to combine their work with other arrangements. However, the States Assembly (P.100/2013) has already committed to take any action that may be required to restrict any proven misuse of zero-hours contracts.