

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 26th APRIL 2016**

Question

Can the Minister advise what measures are in place to reduce housing poverty in the Island, and, in the light of those measures, could the Minister advise –

- (a) how housing poverty is measured and how that measure compares with those used in other jurisdictions;
- (b) what figures are available which detail the prevalence of housing poverty amongst the tenants of Andium Homes, housing trusts and in the private rental sector and, if none, why;
- (c) what estimate has been made of the impact on tenants of the decision to raise rents in the social rental sector and, if none, why?

Answer

The Housing Strategy focusses on the need for more affordable and better quality homes.

The Jersey Housing Affordability Report 2013 provides a breakdown of the proportion of low income households living in housing stress (spending more than 30% of their gross income on housing costs):

Owner-occupiers with mortgage	Social rental	Private rental	Non-qualified
35%	31%	56%	52%

Proportion of low income households in rental stress

The results of the Jersey Housing Affordability Report confirm the need to bring forward effective policies to address housing affordability. The Housing Strategy prioritises measures to:

- Increase affordable housing supply to relieve upward pressures on the costs of both renting and purchasing a home – with the objective of providing 1,000 new affordable units of accommodation up to 2020.
- Raise the standard of social rented accommodation – a programme of major investment to bring all former States-owned homes up to meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2024.
- Introduce minimum standards in the rented sector – improving housing conditions, especially for low income households who are at greatest risk of poor quality housing.

The Income Support system is also an essential component of the support available to assist low income with the reasonable costs of housing. Income Support limits were increased in 2014, which provided additional support of £1 million per year to private sector tenants as part of the Housing Transformation Programme. Support for private sector rents has also been fully protected within the Medium Term Financial Plan, and rental components for private sector tenants are due to rise in each of the next 4 years.

A review has not yet been undertaken into the impact on tenants of the decision to raise rents in the social rental sector. The 90% rents policy came into effect in 2014 and only applies to new tenancies. The policy therefore requires more time to embed itself before reviewing the impact on tenants.

The 90% rents policy ensures that tenants pay a fair level of rent that reflects the value for their home, and underpins the substantial programme of investment in refurbishment which is underway. In respect of low income households, the Income Support system includes the full cost of the reasonable rent for social housing tenants.

These measures, together with the Council of Ministers' focus on supporting a strong economy to benefit all income groups, will support low income households with their housing costs in a fair and sustainable manner.