

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY J.A. HILTON OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 28TH MARCH 2017**

Question

As asbestos-related diseases are considered to be industrial diseases in the U.K. and elsewhere, will the Minister explain why they are not designated as such in Jersey and why all notifications of asbestos-related diseases are not routinely given to the Health and Safety Inspectorate?

Answer

The answer provided presumes that Deputy Hilton's reference to asbestos-related diseases being considered 'industrial diseases' relates to the classification of certain occupationally acquired, asbestos-related diseases as 'prescribed diseases' under the UK 'Industrial Injuries Scheme'.

In the UK the 'Industrial Injuries Scheme' provides non-contributory, no-fault benefits for disablement because of an accident at work or because of one of over 70 prescribed diseases known to be a risk from certain jobs. The list of prescribed diseases for which benefits are paid include work-related asbestos-related diseases, namely asbestosis and mesothelioma, as well as lung cancer and pleural thickening where there is a history of substantial work-related asbestos exposures.

The basis of the Law for these benefits in the UK is contained in the Social Security Act, 1998, the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act, 1992 and the Social Security Administration Act, 1992. The States of Jersey has not adopted an equivalent benefit scheme, so no equivalent list of designated or prescribed 'industrial' diseases exists.

There would be little, if any, tangible benefit of the Health and Safety Inspectorate being notified of asbestos-related diseases at the time of diagnosis. Asbestos-related diseases have a very long latency period between first exposure to asbestos and the onset of disease, which can vary between 15 and 60 years. By the time of diagnosis, it would not be possible to identify exactly where or when the workplace exposure that led to the disease occurred so there is very little that can be done from a Health and Safety Inspectorate perspective. The emphasis must therefore be placed on preventing exposures to asbestos now, as this is the only way to eliminate asbestos-related diseases in the future. I can confirm that this remains a high priority issue for the Health and Safety Inspectorate.