

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER  
BY DEPUTY S.Y. MÉZEC OF ST. HELIER  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 28TH MARCH 2017**

**Question**

What statistical evidence, if any, does the Chief Minister have to back up the statement made in the answer to Written Question 1(160) from Deputy M.R. Higgins of St. Helier that "*relative low income is reducing*"?

**Answer**

Income inequality reduced between the Jersey Income Distribution Surveys of 2002 – 2009/10 as our economy performed well, and deteriorated between the surveys of 2009/10 – 2014/15 as the impact of the financial crisis affected people's incomes.

In particular, the deterioration between 2009/10 and 2014/15 was driven by a reduction in the employment income of those aged between 30 – 39 and unqualified people, and as low interest rates and rents stretched out the distribution after housing costs.

Since then, the range of economic statistics are much more positive, with unemployment at a six year low; participation at a high of 86%; and earnings rising above inflation for four consecutive years (2013 – 2016) after 3 years of below inflation increases (2010 – 2012). So more people in work and earning more. The 2014 Jersey Annual Social Survey provided some advance indication of this more positive outlook, reporting that while there had been no material change in numbers reporting they were finding it difficult to cope financially, the proportion who said their situation had worsened in the last 12 months had reduced considerably, and those who said their situation had improved in the last 12 months had increased.

We have more to do to ensure that the positive economic changes that are taking place benefit more people across our Island. As the review of personal taxes has shown, we have a more progressive tax system; and our approach to spending, for example, investment in health and education, helps those who need it most. With more information and statistics than ever before, we can and will do more to help those on lower incomes.