

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 23RD MAY 2017**

Question

Following her response on 2nd May 2017 to oral question 1(275), in which she stated that 85 of 598 jobs on the Back to Work (BTW) scheme were zero-hour contracts, will the Minister explain the over-representation of zero-hour contracts in BTW jobs (14 per cent) compared to the wider private sector (11 per cent) as recorded in the most recent Jersey Labour Market report?

Will the Minister commit to keep a record of the jobs advertised by employers on her Department's system shown by full time, part time, and zero-hours, and by employment sector?

Furthermore, given her commitment to examine the use / misuse of zero-hours contracts in 2018, will she work with the Statistics Unit to analyse the prevalence of zero-hour contracts in the employment sectors entitled 'Miscellaneous Business Activities' and 'Education, Health and other services', given they are the sectors with the largest prevalence of such contracts in the private sector?

Answer

Back to Work is committed to supporting jobseekers move into sustainable employment. Taking up the offer of a zero hours or temporary job is often a very positive first step into employment for many, particularly for those who may have barriers such as long term unemployment. It allows the employee to build up their skills and experience, gain confidence, and therefore improve their overall employability to then move into a full-time permanent post. For people out of work and relying on Income Support I firmly believe that any job is better than no job and therefore, it is not surprising that for a small group (14%) of our jobseekers, a zero hours contract offers an opportunity to gain some paid work as a 'foot in the door' and is a positive step forward to full time work.

Jobs in Jersey is a part of the gov.je website that provides an easy way for employers to advertise roles to the public free of charge – in many cases the employer does not specify details about the role they are advertising such as salary or contract type. In some cases this may be because the employer has not yet made decisions about the specifics of a role, in other cases it may be that they do not want to share this on a public website. If Social Security were to require employers to give all information about every role in order to use the website for advertising, it could have a negative impact with fewer jobs being advertised through this useful mechanism. For this reason Social Security will not change the current way the system is used and recorded.

I can confirm that my officers will be working with the Statistics Unit to undertake further analysis of the zero hours contract figures reported in the Labour Market Survey.