

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY M.R. HIGGINS OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 20TH JUNE 2017**

Question

Further to his answer to written question 1(317) on 6th June 2017, will the Chief Minister undertake to improve data collection in relation to licence applications under Control of Housing and Work legislation to ensure the type of data sought (i.e. the nature of the jobs for which licences are sought) in question 1(317) is collected as a matter of course; and, if not, why not?

Answer

It is possible to categorise permissions applied for and granted by occupation, albeit at some additional burden on businesses when applying, and staff when recording applications. However, this would not provide information on changes in the composition of the workforce by occupation driven by net migration, which is what written question 1(317) on 6th June 2017 appeared to be asking.

This is because analysing applications by occupation does not tell you other information that would be needed to understand changes in the composition of our workforce, including through migration, for example, when new migrants arrive who are married or in civil partnerships with entitled people and do not need permission to work; or when businesses use existing permissions that have been freed up as existing workers obtain their five years residence; or where newer migrants undertake training within a business to take on a new role and occupation within the business.

As such, the only way to understand changes in the composition of the workforce by occupation, including through migration, outside of the census, is to require all our 7,000 island businesses to report all their nearly 60,000 employees by occupation, or a new business survey for businesses to complete.

In considering either approach, the “Code of Practise for Official Statistics in Jersey” (R.63/2015) is instructive, with one of the eight principles for the production of statistics being “proportionate burden”, which seems a reasonable matter to consider when assessing whether additional information should be collected by government.

Indeed, this issue could be looked at from a different and arguably more practical perspective, which is that it more important to know where the skills gaps are, and what future demand for skills is likely to be, and where we should support migration as a consequence. This work is being done as part of the skills strategy, and in determining whether to grant applications to businesses for newer migrants.