

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 10th JULY 2018**

Question

Further to his response to Written Question 91/2018, in which it was stated that that the additional source for funding of a new Income Distribution Survey had not yet been identified, will the Chief Minister –

- (a) advise whether that is still the case and, if it is, inform members when he plans to reach a decision on this issue;
- (b) state whether it his assessment that the powers of Statistics Jersey to access data held by public authorities will enable detailed and useful examinations by Statistics Jersey of markers of inequality (such as health) and analyses by household or individual income or by electoral district / Parish; and
- (c) commit to examine the publication list of Statistics Jersey for the coming 18 months, and to discuss it with the Chief Statistician, to ensure that the impact of income data on such markers is included wherever the Chief Statistician considers it to be relevant?

Answer

- (a) The response to Written Question 91/2018 remains correct, a source of funding has not yet been identified. It would be highly desirable if this could be remedied by the end of the summer recess, enabling work to proceed this year.
- (b) The powers of Statistics Jersey to access data held by public authorities should enable detailed and useful examinations by Statistics Jersey of markers of inequality (such as health) and analyses by household or individual income or by electoral district / Parish.

The Statistics and Census (Jersey) Law 2018 came into force on 23rd February 2018. This new law puts an onus on Statistics Jersey to re-use data already collected by the States of Jersey wherever possible, reducing the burden placed on businesses and people. The law provides a legal gateway for data held by public authorities to be accessed by Statistics Jersey for statistical purposes.

From the perspective of individual and household income, under the auspices of this Law, Statistics Jersey has submitted requests for information held by the Income Tax and Social Security departments. Once access to the data has been facilitated, and its quality and coverage assessed, Statistics Jersey will conduct analyses of the resulting income distributions, in particular to produce and monitor indicators of income inequality.

In time it is envisaged that a coherent approach based on such administrative data sources coupled with periodic surveys of households (such as the Jersey Opinions and Lifestyles Survey) will, in principle, enable:

- provision of more frequent and timely measures of income inequality
 - breakdown by geographical area
 - examination of interrelationships between multi-factor determinants of inequality more generally.
- (c) Yes.

The Statistics and Census (Jersey) Law 2018 requires the Statistics Users Group to publish a publication schedule each year for Statistics Jersey. The supplementary Code of Practice for Official Statistics in Jersey specifies that a timetable of statistical releases for the forthcoming twelve months should be published in December of each year. The publication schedule for 2018 was presented by the Chief Statistician to the Group at its meeting of 13th November 2017 and approved by the Group at that meeting.

In drawing up each year's publication schedule Statistics Jersey engages with stakeholders, particularly from the perspective that official statistics should meet the requirements of informed evidence-based decision-making by government and the States Assembly as a primary user of official statistics. It is anticipated that the configuring of a more centralised policy function within the restructured States Departments will facilitate such engagement.

A proposed publication schedule for 2019 will be presented to the Group by the Chief Statistician in December 2018. As for previous release schedules that for 2019 will prioritise the requirements of stakeholders within the resources assigned to Statistics Jersey.

As part of this, officers will consider and discuss the publication schedule with the Chief Statistician, in consultation with Ministers.

Finally, the Law requires the Statistics Users Group to publish a five-yearly program for Statistics Jersey. The inclusion of a household income and spending survey, run at approximately five-yearly intervals prior to 2014/15, sits naturally within such a program.