

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY R.J. WARD OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 25th SEPTEMBER 2018**

Question

Further to the presentation of 'Foodbanks in Jersey 2017 – Usage Report' (R.139/2017), will the Minister advise –

- (a) whether food bank use in Jersey is currently monitored and, if not, why not;
- (b) if such use is monitored, what the current level of food bank use is in Jersey; and
- (c) what measures, if any, will be taken in both the short and long terms to reduce and remove the need for food banks in the Island?

Answer

- a) Foodbank use in Jersey is currently monitored by the individual providers of emergency food provision. The three main providers on-island are The Grace Trust, St Helier Methodist Centre and St Vincent de Paul.

The exact data collected varies by organisation, and may include the following:

Total number of food bags/parcels issued; number of individuals visiting the foodbank; the referring organisation and detail on gender, age and ethnicity of those visiting the foodbank.

Given the variations in data collection by the different providers, previous reports have faced the statistical challenge of deriving meaningful comparisons. Therefore it is felt that continuing to produce a composite data set would not have sufficient merit.

- b) The latest data published by the government is the 'Foodbanks in Jersey 2017 usage report'. This report was published on 20th December 2017, and collates data collected by the three main food bank providers in the first quarter of 2017. A total of 364 visits were recorded during this time period. Some of these visits will be repeat visits and it is not possible to state the number of individual people making use of foodbanks over this period. Individual providers publish their own statistics from time to time.
- c) Since the publication of the first government report in 2016 there has been much effort put into joint working between food banks and government agencies and this collaborative approach continues. This includes encouraging food bank clients to contact government departments to confirm that they are receiving all the benefits and services that they are entitled to.

Common reasons cited by individuals seeking food assistance in the 2017 report were having a long-term health condition, general low income and debt or an unexpected problem that had meant unforeseen costs they could not manage.

The government is committed to supporting vulnerable groups and this includes projects to tackle long-term social issues, including the Disability Strategy, Skills Strategy and Housing Strategy.