

2019.09.24

2 Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier of the Minister for Social Security regarding overpayments of Income Support: (OQ.219/2019)

Will the Minister state how the figure for overpayments on income support claims last year compares with the figure for 2011 given in response to Written Question 6972 on 26th June 2012 of 2,688 overpayments at an estimated median value of £138, repaid at a rate of £21 weekly?

Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier (The Minister for Social Security):

I am afraid the Deputy is not going to be too happy with the answer, because we cannot make a direct comparison, because as of 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, possibly even 2015, there have been all things changing, computers are different, data collected in different ways. What I have asked the Department to do, for the Deputy and for other States Members, is the final year - was it 2016, or 2017 - when the figures stopped changing and produced a set of figures, so the Deputy can refer back to those and we are going to make direct comparisons. I am sorry, that is exactly where we are. The Deputy probably does know the answer to that, because he was my Assistant for nearly a year.

3.2.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

The Minister is right when she says I am not going to like the answer, because the answer for 2011 was achievable. We found out what that was and we knew what the level of overpayments and underpayments was on income support claims and yet we are saying, some years later, we do not know that number anymore. What are the measures by which the Minister is ensuring that her Department is working efficiently as regards income support claims?

Deputy J.A. Martin:

I did not say that. I said the information is collected differently. There is a lot more ... there is one debt - let us call it one debt - where somebody might have had an overpayment, or income support and sick, income support long-term care, completely ... the information is collected differently. I think the Deputy will like the figures. The figures are what they are and I am trying to find out the year they stopped changing. I think it could be 2016, or 2017. I have a set of figures for him, so he can see. The information will be there, but it is not comparing what was in 2011. That is all I am saying.

The Bailiff:

Final supplementary?

Deputy G.P. Southern:

If I were not left completely speechless, Sir, I would have one.