

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 18th JUNE 2019**

Question

Further to the answer to Written Question 244/2019 on 4th June 2019, will the Minister give the breakdown of the figure of 88% of households on Income Support with their own income to show those with pension income, Long-Term Incapacity Allowance (L.T.I.A.), maintenance and earned income?

Given that the cost of living in Jersey, as measured by RPI, has increased by 32% over the period December 2007 to December 2018, is it the Minister's assessment that the increases in most Income Support components, which have not matched that increase in RPI, have left those households with no other income aside from Income Support worse off over this period and, if not, will she explain why not?

Further, will she explain whether the increases proposed this year in P.56/2019, namely to share the increase between components and disregards, will leave those without other income further behind RPI increases; and how such a measure is consistent with the priorities of the Common Strategic Policy to reduce income inequality?

Answer

Written Question 244/2019 confirmed that in round figures, 5,000 out of 5,700 income support claimants had at least one income source of their own at the end of 2018.

The breakdown of these income streams as at 31/12/2018 is as follows:

Household Type	Households with Earned income	Households with Pension income	Households with Maintenance income	Households with INV/LTIA income	Households with Other income
65+	85	1730	9	64	67
Adult/s without children	725	117	61	860	139
Adults with Child/ren	743	10	122	144	72
Single adult with child/ren	648	14	535	125	75

Note that some households have more than one source of income.

As set out in the response to question 244, the income support system is based on a balance between components, the income of claimants and the disregard applied to that income. There have been significant changes in all three of these areas over the last 11 years.

The number of claimants wholly reliant on income support with no income of their own, has decreased substantially from 32% to 12%. In the system today there are far fewer households who are fully reliant on income support components.

Housing components have risen well above the increase in the RPI index over this time to reflect the extra investment in housing from 2014 onwards. In 2014 25% of tenants in States housing lived in properties

that did not meet the Decent Homes Standard. Today, 97% of homes meet the Decent Homes Standard and by 2020 there will be no Andium tenant living in housing that falls below this level.

Over the 11 year period, the government has been constrained in the amount of public spending available as the island has been affected by and recovered from a global recession. Decisions have been taken each year to allocate taxpayers money to priority areas. I acknowledge that on a component by component basis, not every individual component has been increased by RPI every year, but I am confident that the overall allocation of public money to the income support scheme over this period has been undertaken as fairly as possible and in such a way to encourage people to move towards financial independence.

The package of income support changes is wholly in line with the priorities of the Common Strategic Policy, in particular:

- We will put children first. We will do this by protecting and supporting children, by improving their educational outcomes and by involving and engaging children in decisions that affect their everyday lives.
- We will reduce income inequality and improve the standard of living. We will do this by improving the quality and affordability of housing, improving social inclusion, and by removing barriers to and at work.

My proposals for 2019 are designed to help all households receiving Income Support, but will give extra help to households with children. We are also working to improve the standard of living and reduce barriers to work by improving the financial incentives for households to increase their own income. Our continued investment in housing is driving up quality standards.