

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 10th SEPTEMBER 2019**

Question

Will the Minister advise –

- (a) what consideration, if any, she has given, in her assessment of priorities to reduce income inequality and improve the standard of living for pensioners (amongst others), to the risk that some employers may use zero-hour contracts to avoid paying into workplace pension schemes for their employees; and
- (b) whether it is her assessment that, given that such zero-hour contract employees are amongst the least well paid in the workforce and have low job-security, greater protection for such workers will need to be incorporated within employment legislation as a priority in order for her proposed pension reforms to succeed?

Answer

The Government Plan proposes that the Social Security Minister will develop proposals to improve financial independence in old age next year. The details of these proposals will be identified during 2020. This will include investigating a workplace pension scheme, which could offer every worker access to a second pension on top of their Social Security pension.

Currently, workplace pensions are non-statutory and so employers can choose whether to offer their employees a workplace pension scheme.

Any proposals that the Minister identifies in 2020 will include consideration of how different groups of people are likely to be affected by them. This will include, for example, people with low earnings and people who change jobs regularly.

The Social Security Minister would like any proposals to be as inclusive as possible.

People who are employed on zero-hours contracts are considered ‘employees’ for the purpose of the employment law and are protected in the same way as employees on other types of contracts. Subject to the detailed work to be undertaken next year, the Minister does not consider it will be necessary to make changes to employment legislation in order to ensure the effective implementation of proposals to support financial independence in old age.