

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY R.J. WARD OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 30th JUNE 2020**

Question

Will the Minister advise –

- (a) how errors in the level of payments made to claimants by Customer and Local Services are monitored, including how such errors are recorded and how they are reported to the Minister for any decisions required about the enforcement or cancellation of repayments; and
- (b) who takes the final decision regarding the enforcement of a repayment following an over-payment made to a claimant?

Answer

Customer and Local Services administers a wide variety of services for a number of Ministers covering a range of legislation.

For all services and payments, the potential risks are assessed, and an appropriate level of control and checking is put in place to reduce potential errors (both customer and departmental) and fraud. Monitoring of performance (and therefore errors) takes place through a range of approaches, including colleague appraisals, team meetings, performance meetings, relevant exception reports, write off logs and quarterly risk meetings. All payment transactions, customer interactions and therefore any payment errors are recorded on the appropriate departmental business system. The department proactively seeks feedback from customers on the service it provides. In addition, the OneGov customer feedback policy also sets out the process for handling customer complaints.

If a benefit claimant wishes to challenge a decision about their benefits, they can first request that their decision is reviewed by a different officer. Following a second decision, there is the right of appeal to an independent tribunal. For benefit payments, Determining Officers can refer cases that have exceptional circumstances and fall outside of guidelines to the Minister for Social Security for a Ministerial Decision. This can include decisions about the enforcement or cancellation of repayments.

Final decisions about enforcement of overpayments to a claimant are made by the relevant Determining Officer according to departmental guidelines and within the financial limits of the departmental scheme of delegation.