

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 21st JUNE 2021
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 28th JUNE 2021**

Question

Further to the response to Written Question 78/2021, will the Minister advise what the “small daily adjustment” for overpayment recovery was in the years 2019 and 2020 and, given that Income Support awards are based on a measure of the sums required to meet the needs of low-income households, how assessors judge the impact on potential hardship caused through such adjustments?

Answer

The response to Written Question 78/2021 described the context in which overpayments of Income Support can occur. It outlined how small overpayments are a feature of Income Support, due to the decision to pay the benefit in advance, to ensure that vulnerable households are not left without funds to support their basic needs immediately following a decrease to their household income.

It explained that most overpayments are small, and repaid quickly, but larger overpayments will often be caused by a household failing to notify Income Support of an increase in their income. When any overpayment recovery is made against an Income Support claim, it is because a household has had more money than they are entitled to and the money needs to be paid back.

Instead of requiring all money to be paid back at once, in most cases a small daily adjustment is taken from ongoing benefit entitlement

An analysis of active overpayment data as at the end of 2019 and 2020 shows that the most common repayment amount is £3 a day. As noted below each case is considered individually and there is a wide range of daily repayment amounts across all claims.

Each case is considered individually by an officer, who will set a repayment level that recognises the household’s ability to repay. The officer will take into account a household’s current income and what is known about any additional costs they face. The officer will also consider any current overpayment or loan repayment on their claim, and will consider all requests to reduce repayments where appropriate. They will consider the reasons for asking, the household’s weekly income and outgoings against a reasonable length of repayment.