

23.09.12

**14 Deputy R.J. Ward of the Minister for Housing and Communities regarding recent changes in eligibility criteria for the Affordable Housing Gateway (OQ.174/2023)**

Will the Minister clarify the basis and evidence used in deciding the recent changes to the Affordable Housing Gateway eligibility criteria?

**Deputy D. Warr (The Minister for Housing and Communities):**

I thank the Deputy for his question. I would point out that the reasons behind my decision to change the Gateway criteria are explained in my roadmap. I am hoping the Deputy can see that on the screen, the roadmap for improving access to social housing in Jersey which I published at the end of July this year. I just particularly point the Deputy in the direction of page 5, paragraph 3.5, which should probably help to inform the answer to his question. I want social housing to be accessible to all Islanders who may need help with housing costs, which is especially important as Jersey continues to experience housing and cost-of-living pressures. I am concerned that the Gateway does not provide an accurate picture of need. I want to surface the true demand for social housing. In light of additional housing supply that is becoming available, we can start to widen access to social housing with the confidence that demand is going to be met.

**5.14.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Thank you for the reference to the document, it was really for something to be said in public but I am sure the public can look that up. Can I ask the Minister, and this is a genuine question with regards widening the Gateway, there is a demographic on the Island, the early 20s, mid-20s, young people who are paying extortionate rents in the private sectors sometimes and they are really struggling to make ends meet, and that is a demographic that may be leaving the Island? Can I ask the Minister whether he will be looking to extend to younger people so that they have a settled home with a longer-term contract with our social housing provider and more security of tenure to help them build their careers on Island?

**Deputy D. Warr:**

Thank you, Deputy, for your question. Once again I am afraid I have to point you in the direction of the roadmap for improving access to social housing because we have a very definite timeline in which we are going to be dropping the age demographic too for access to social housing. Very quickly and, again, as the Deputy points out, this is a public document, so probably not best that I repeat what is said in this document. But it is our intention to drop the age access down to 25 in approximately 12 months' time.