

**STATEMENT TO BE MADE BY THE
MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM, SPORT AND CULTURE
ON THURSDAY 2nd APRIL 2020**

Application of Control of Housing and Work Legislation during the Coronavirus Crisis

I thank Deputy Gardiner for highlighting how the Control of Housing and Work Law provisions might be impacted by the current Covid-19 epidemic and especially how these might be utilised to assist those registered workers who have been in Jersey for less than 5 years, and employers who find themselves with gaps within their existing work force due to the current situation.

I offer my apologies for not coming back to the Deputy sooner on this matter. I am sure she will appreciate that this is a fast-moving situation and while the health of Islanders is our overriding concern, one of our key priorities has been to deliver a package for financial support for business and individuals.

I am pleased with what we have delivered within the time constraints we face, and it is crucial that we did that.

The Government has announced a series of additional business support measures to help preserve as many Islanders' jobs as possible, and maintain our key economic infrastructure, during the Covid-19 epidemic: the Coronavirus Payroll co-funding scheme, the Jersey Business Disruption Loan Guarantee Scheme, the Jersey Covid-19 Special Situations Fund, and options to defer GST payments and social security contributions.

The Deputy will be aware that we have also announced the Covid-Related Emergency Support Scheme (CRESS) to provide specific financial support for those with under five years' residency in Jersey, recognising the restrictions on travel.

In relation to the Control of Housing and Work Law, exemptions already exist within the Control of Housing and Work (Exemptions) (Jersey) Order 2013 to allow for all employers who hold a business licence to disregard the maximum number of registered or licensed employees that they employ where a registered or licensed person is being utilised to replace a person that is on leave.

In the case of maternity or sick leave this can be for a period of up to 9 months. In all other cases of leave this can be for a maximum of 3 months.

These exemptions allow for employers to utilise registered workers to fill any gaps in their existing work force where employees are currently absent on leave, whatever those circumstances might be, and without an application for extra registered or licensed employees to be made.

I must stress that they do not allow for extra registered or licensed employees to be taken on to expand a business. And any such requests for additions to a business licence would need to be applied for in the normal way.

I intend to introduce by Order a further exemption which will allow for all businesses to temporarily utilise registered / licenced employees to fill gaps in their existing workforce where those staff have left the Island due to the current Covid-19 epidemic. I will propose that this will be in line with the current 3-month exemption.

This would ensure that during the Covid-19 epidemic exemptions would apply to all employers who have a gap within their existing workforce, whatever that reason might be.

I can confirm that Customer and Local Services will also provide a job matching service through the CRESS scheme for registered workers as well as all other job seekers.

This service has previously only been available to those who have been in the Island for 5 years or more. They will also be offering reassurance to businesses regarding the exemptions discussed during the job matching process.

I want to stress that, whatever the employment status and whatever the role, all work must be carried out safely and in line with medical guidelines for the protection of staff and customers.

I believe that this creates a level playing field for registered workers to be able to temporarily access any vacancies within the existing workforce so that people can remain in employment and prevent businesses from closing permanently wherever possible.