

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY R.G. LE HÉRISSEIER OF ST. SAVIOUR
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 16th APRIL 2013**

Question

What are the actual sums and the sums as a proportion of Income Support expenditure devoted to income 'top up' in the last 3 calendar years and is the Minister satisfied that these sums are sustainable?

Answer

The published report on Income Support for 2011 (R.126/2012) identified that 80% of Income Support households use Income Support to top up other household income. The remaining 20% are wholly reliant on Income Support payments for their weekly income.

The report includes the following:

“ Income Support tops up household income. Many Income Support households receive income through earnings, pensions, social security benefits, maintenance and other income. 80% of Income Support households have some other form of income, with the remaining 1,296 (20%) of Income Support households being totally reliant on Income Support for their weekly income.

As household income from other sources increases, Income Support benefit decreases until the family is fully self-sufficient. Depending on the source of income, a variety of incentives and allowances are provided to encourage Income Support families to support themselves as far as possible”.

The 2011 report (pages 10-13) provides further details on the number of Income Support households who have income under the following categories: earned income, pensions, maintenance payments, long-term incapacity allowance (including invalidity benefit) and miscellaneous income.

At the end of December 2011, 74% of weekly benefit by value was being paid to households with some other form of income, and 26% was being paid to households with no other form of income. Allocating these proportions to the total weekly expenditure in 2011 of £66.9 million, this represents £49.8 million to households with other income and £17.1 million to those without other income.

This detailed analysis was not undertaken in respect of the 2010 results and the 2012 report is currently in preparation.

The level of Income Support expenditure is closely linked to the overall health of the local economy. I am satisfied that the funding allocated within the Medium Term Financial Plan is sufficient to cover the costs of Income Support over the next three years, barring a completely unforeseen change in circumstances.

Members will be aware that the Medium Term Financial Plan includes a reduction of £3 million in the Income Support budget from 2014 onwards and officers are currently working on a number of policy proposals to achieve these savings which I will be considering over the next few months.