

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 2nd DECEMBER 2013**

Question

What safeguards, if any, are in place to ensure that employers participating in Advance to Work and Jobs Fest schemes are genuinely seeking to employ candidates in permanent or long-term contract work and not just exploiting the incentives on offer to obtain up to £243.41 a week to offset employee wages?

What efforts, if any, are made to ensure that placements are made on 'usual' terms and conditions and that unpaid overtime or unusual hours are not imposed?

What steps, if any, are made to ensure that interviews mid-way through the placement are conducted in such a way as to assure employees of anonymity and security in assessing the placement?

What measures, if any, are in place to ensure that employers do not use the scheme to obtain cheap labour by extending the length of the placement or engaging a series of qualified workers over time?

What evidence, if any, does the Minister have to suggest that such placements do not get in the way of candidates engaging in applying for real jobs?

Answer

JobsFest was designed and timed specifically to help people who have been out of work all year and at the time of year when trends suggest that unemployment would rise. The initiative has had a positive impact in reducing registered unemployment in October when it was expected to increase. It has provided a platform for meaningful work for locally qualified people who were unemployed. Under the scheme 109 jobseekers secured roles.

All jobseekers securing roles under the JobsFest Employer Incentive will have benefited from being provided with recent working experience which will boost their employability, motivation and confidence. Around 50% of positions have been continued into December.

A further incentive is available to employers who keep on JobsFest candidates for 6 months on a permanent or long term contract. The Employment Grant may also be available. There was no requirement for employers to keep candidates beyond the end of November.

Employers could pay candidates at higher than the minimum wage and for more than 35 hours per week. Employers are required to provide evidence of employment (e.g. contracts & payslips) before any incentive can be claimed.

For jobseekers recruited under the JobsFest Incentive, Back to Work has facilitated open feedback between the employer & employee to help address any issues in order to maximise the potential for jobseekers to be retained.

The JobsFest incentive was available only during the 8 weeks between 7th October & 30th November 2013.

Throughout the incentive period support has been provided to candidates to help them use the work experience to help find a new position or sustain the incentive employment opportunity.

Advance to Work supports those aged 16-19 into paid employment. The scheme provides:

- Mentor support
- Core and industry specific and personal development training
- Unpaid work experience placements for up to 3 months
- In work support for up to 1 year after employment

The Advance to Work team considers carefully the suitability of trainees and employers when arranging placements. Mentors remain in contact with trainees throughout the placement and help address any issues arising. Jobseeking activity continues throughout any placement.

Of Advance to Work trainees securing employment, approximately 60% do so with an employer with whom they have completed a placement.