

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING  
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 19th JANUARY 2010**

**Question**

Will the Minister advise members what actual average waiting times are currently being achieved for new applicants to access housing and, if these are higher than the targets specified within the 2010 Housing Department Business Plan (1 bed less than 12 months; 2 bed less than 6 to 7 months; 3 bed less than 8 months) what specific measures will be put in place to achieve the targets?

**Answer**

Average waiting times for all active waiting list applicants, as of 12th January 2010, are as follows:-

<b>Bed Size Need</b>	<b>Current average waiting time</b>	<b>2010 Target</b>
One bedroom accommodation	14.5 months	<12 months
Two bedroom accommodation	8.9 months	< 6 – 7 months
Three bedroom accommodation	10.3 months	< 8 months

The Housing Minister alone cannot reduce the waiting times for new applicants as the only true solution is ensuring the provision of additional housing stock of the right type to meet existing and future needs. The department is working closely and collaboratively with the Planning Department in that regard. Initiatives such as Planning for Homes to be published early this year and the Island Plan Review presently out for consultation are key to meeting the challenge of providing that new stock.

In respect of the existing social housing stock, the Department is pro-active in ensuring that it is being used appropriately by working closely with tenants as their needs change. If for instance a tenant is occupying a home which is now too large for their housing needs and which may be causing financial hardship to run, the department will try to identify opportunities for downsizing, in doing so releasing the larger homes for occupation by those families in need on the waiting list. This process has proved successful in addressing some of the demand for three and four bedroom properties but will do nothing to address the demand for smaller homes.

Our population is ageing and quite rightly older people want to stay in their homes much longer, this has resulted in a slowing down of turnover of 1 and 2 bedroom homes. Consequently waiting lists for these categories of home are increasing and the lack of new social rented homes, particularly homes which are suitable for older persons must be of real concern to us all. This is particularly worrying as a number of sites were zoned in July 2008 for this purpose and on the majority of them no progress has been made whatsoever. In the soon to be published update on Planning for Homes, the Minister for Housing highlights this problem and makes some suggestions about how we can ensure that the delivery of homes on land rezoned for Category A purposes can be accelerated.