

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE
MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM, SPORT AND CULTURE
BY DEPUTY M.R. HIGGINS OF ST. HELIER
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 20th SEPTEMBER 2021
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 28th SEPTEMBER 2021**

Question

Will the Minister provide members with an explanation of the various labour shortages certain industries are experiencing in the Island, and set out any research that has been carried out into this matter by the Government identifying the scale, causes and possible solutions to these shortages?

Answer

Government has a range of ongoing policy development projects and tools that monitor, evaluate and / or respond to changes in the labour market. Statistics Jersey publishes the Census and regular Labour Market Reports. The Draft Bridging Island Plan, the recent Population policy consultation paper, the Economic Framework and the Skills Jersey strategic plan are some examples of cross-Governmental policies and initiatives that have been or are being developed with reference to the status of the Island's labour market.

To the extent that the Island faces degrees of labour shortage in some sectors, these are tending to be a function of several factors. A number of employees left the Island during the COVID-19 pandemic and have not returned. The Island's economy has performed comparatively well, notwithstanding the impact of COVID. Post-Brexit, the ending of free movement of persons will also have had an impact. In addition, it is also important to remember that COVID remains a public health concern.

The visitor and hospitality sector has been faced with relatively acute labour shortages this year, reflecting the position across the British Isles. Recent research by Jersey Business and the Jersey Hospitality Association indicates that the Island's visitor and hospitality sector has been up to 1,500 workers short this summer. This shortage has caused some businesses to scale back their service provision. Given that the supply of labour in that sector is predicted to remain tight for the foreseeable future in Jersey and across the British Isles as a whole, Government is actively exploring the possibility of securing peak season sources of labour from certain other Commonwealth jurisdictions for the 2022 season, pending the development of longer-term solutions in partnership with industry.

Active monitoring of job advertisements by Skills Jersey across various platforms indicates that while the visitor and hospitality sector has suffered the most significant gap between staff demand and supply this year, there is also a degree of unmet demand across a range of other sectors, including retail, social care and construction. A broad range of Government actions are therefore being deployed in response. Amongst other things, Skills Jersey is currently reviewing the supply and demand for heavy goods vehicle drivers in the Island and researching delivery options for a Cyber Security apprenticeship pathway. The Fiscal Stimulus Fund is supporting a project that will encourage domiciliary care providers to recruit and train new staff members to provide home care services.

Looking to the future, Government is developing a Skills Strategy in recognition of the fact that the pace of evolution across many economic sectors will change both the overall requirement for staff and the particular skills that employers in those sectors require.