

2.11 Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier of the Minister for Social Security regarding the current level of contributors to the Social Security Scheme:

Following his answer to a written question on 10th October 2006, in which he stated that the computer holds about 400,000 individual records, of which about a quarter are active, is the Minister able to advise Members from this figure how many of these people are currently working and paying Social Security contributions?

Deputy P.N. Troy of St. Brelade (Assistant Minister for Social Security - rapporteur):

In the absence of the Minister, I will respond. The most recent information available records the individuals who paid or were credited with contributions in a certain month. This is not necessarily people in work, but it is people paying contributions. In the last quarter processed, which covered the months of April, May and June 2006, the number of individuals paying contributions or credited with contributions was 55,828 in April; 56,450 in May and 56,977 in June. The corresponding figures for the same quarter in 2005 were 55,291 in April; 55,758 in May and 56,169 in June 2005.

2.11.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Could the Assistant Minister inform us what procedures are in place so that people no longer sign-up using, for example, famous Disney characters?

Deputy P.N. Troy:

When people come to the department to sign-up, obviously we do attempt to secure their identity, and if someone signed up as Mickey Mouse I am sure we would recognise that was incorrect.

2.11.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Would the rapporteur inform Members what contribution his department has made to the formulation of policy going towards a population register so that we can accurately know how many people find work and where, and in particular, what steps he has taken to ensure that this database is secure?

Deputy P.N. Troy:

Social Security has a computer system which is very adequate and is capable of keeping adequate records of all of those who register with the department. We do have to comply with all data protection issues, and the Data Protection Registrar is fully aware of how the department operates. There is already a Population Officer appointed, who will be co-ordinating all of the work on the future structure of the new Population Office. That is not an area of our responsibility.

2.11.3 Deputy J.A. Martin:

I am still slightly confused. We had 400,000 registered; a quarter active, which I make 100,000, and the average figure today, Sir, is around 56,000. Are these people working in Jersey? Can the Ministry not tell us exactly how many people are working in Jersey from their records, because I think this is getting even more confusing and I think it is a straightforward question, and I would like a straightforward answer.

Deputy P.N. Troy:

Our data is collected for contribution purposes; it is not collected for employment purposes. We do request those who are unemployed to register with the department,

but we do not force people to register with the department and we know, of course, that there are currently about 400 people who are unemployed. In addition to the 55,000 who are paying contributions, we have approximately 23,000 pensioners at home and abroad, and another group who do not work or pay contributions, such as married women and children, and that accounts for the other records that are active. But of the 300,000 that are not active and classified as dormant, those are old records which include people who have lived and worked in Jersey, but have left the Island.

2.11.4 Deputy J.A. Hilton of St. Helier:

In answer to an earlier question by Deputy Le Hérissier, the Assistant Minister said that the department did try and have some firm evidence of a person's identity when they signed-up at Social Security. Can he just tell Members what forms of identification the department asks for, and in the event that somebody arrives with absolutely no identification at all, what do they do about that?

Deputy P.N. Troy:

I would have to respond separately to the Deputy on that. I would have to go back to the department to find out which documents and so on they request.

2.11.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:

If I may, I believe the Assistant Minister did not answer my question. May I please?

The Bailiff:

You may put it again then.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

The question was what involvement or contribution has the department made to the formation of the new population register?

Deputy P.N. Troy:

We are not charged with creating the population register. We have information. Whether it will be shared, and how it is shared, with the Population Office will have to be established, so that it complies fully with data protection issues. So, I cannot fully answer that at the present time.