

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY THE DEPUTY OF ST. JOHN
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 17th NOVEMBER 2015**

Question

Could the Minister detail the policy on which the Back to Work programme is based and, in particular, whether the mental health strategy which has recently published will have an effect on the way in which this policy is delivered?

Answer

The Department takes a proactive approach to supporting clients with mental health conditions and will continue to look for ways to build on the employment services we provide in line with the recently published mental health strategy.

Back to Work was set up in late 2011 to address rising levels of unemployment and to help individuals move into, and stay in, employment, acknowledging that work pays, both financially and in terms of emotional well-being. Back to Work's services are specifically mentioned in the recently published mental health strategy which states that

"The department recognises that worklessness is detrimental to health and wellbeing and its policies reflect the additional barriers faced by people with a mental illness." (p34, A Mental Health Strategy for Jersey 2016-2020)

Of the 1,500 clients currently supported by Back to Work a number suffer from poor mental health, with conditions ranging from those which have been diagnosed and are well managed to the more severe and debilitating. Back to Work works closely with mental health services to provide support across this spectrum. A qualified mental health professional, employed by Back to Work, is able to make direct referrals to support services, ensuring that appropriate support and therapies are accessed at the earliest opportunity.

Back to Work clients who are initially unable to engage meaningfully with employment services due to serious or complex personal circumstances related to mental health or addiction, receive support from the Occupational Support Unit (OSU), a bespoke support service within Back to Work, established in January 2015. The OSU creates links between employment support services and more specialised and targeted mental health services.

Back to Work also works closely with a number of partner agencies including Mind Jersey, Jersey Employment Trust and Autism Jersey, to ensure that individuals are referred to the appropriate specialist support services. Back to Work provides:

- Training for all BTW staff to help them recognise clients who may require specialist support
- Direct referrals to Jersey Talking Therapies and the Pain Clinic via the OSU Mental Health Advisor
- Partnership working with the Safeguarding Partnership Board.