

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER  
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 2nd JUNE 2015**

**Question**

Has the Chief Minister read the International Labour Organisation report “World Employment and Social Outlook” which points out that the global shift to insecure jobs (as indicated by temporary, short-term or zero-hours contracts and mock self-employment) since the financial crisis has fuelled growing inequality especially in the UK where salaried work is declining as a proportion of total employment?

What lessons does the Chief Minister believe that the report findings have, if any, for the growth of inequality in the Jersey economy?

In the face of evidence that half of new jobs created in Jersey in recent months are insecure zero- hours employment, does the Chief Minister concur with the report conclusions that insecure employment leads to a “vicious circle of weak demand and slow job creation” and, if so, what measures do he and other Ministers plan to take to prevent this?

**Answer**

I have not read the International Labour Organisation report “World Employment and Social Outlook”. For Jersey, however, the Income Distribution Survey is run every five years, as the primary source of information of income equality, and will next report at the end of 2015. Only then will we have an objective measure to track what has happened over the last few years.

We do have, however, an increasingly positive set of economic indicators on earnings, inflation, employment, unemployment, retail sales, and business outlook. These are encouraging figures, which show more people in work, and earnings outstripping inflation.

In particular, employment rose by nearly 2,000 in 2014 to a record high. This included a substantial proportion of zero hour contract staff, and while this is something to be monitored, zero hour contracts are a valid part of a flexible labour market, and have a role to play for both employers and employees.

There is a risk that job insecurity can impact on demand and employment creation but it is not clear that is the situation in Jersey, particularly when employment is rising and unemployment falling. It is pleasing that the ILO refer to the need to stimulate investment opportunities to boost job creation and productivity, as this endorses the approach set out in the Strategic Plan and underpinning the next MTFP.