

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND HOUSING
BY DEPUTY C.S. ALVES OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 15th JANUARY 2019**

Question

Does the Minister have any plan, or intention, to re-establish a rent tribunal to allow tenants (in all sectors) to challenge rent increases and, if so, will he provide details of any such plan or intentions?

Answer

I am giving active consideration to the re-establishment of a Rent Control Tribunal.

The Council of Ministers' Statement of Common Strategic Policy 2018–2022 includes a priority to “*reduce income inequality and improve the standard of living*”. In order to support the delivery of this priority, the Council of Ministers will introduce measures to improve the quality and affordability of housing, including measures to strengthen the rights of tenants.

The re-establishment of a Rent Control Tribunal is one such way by which we can strengthen the rights and protections afforded to tenants. A tribunal would enable tenants to challenge rent increases where they felt that any rent increase was unreasonable and inconsistent with equivalent rents in the market.

Before I bring forward proposals for the re-establishment of a Rent Control Tribunal, I have asked officers to review the Dwelling Houses (Rent Control) (Jersey) Law 1946, which would give legislative effect to a tribunal. This is not a modern piece of legislation and it may, as a result, require amendment to make sure that it is fit for purpose and reflects modern practice in the rented sector.

Moreover, the Law prescribes a standard form of written contract (a standard lease), which I believe should also be revised in order to provide a more consumer-orientated framework for the legal relationship between landlords and tenants.

I am also considering making revisions to the tenancy deposit protection arrangements under the Residential Tenancy (Jersey) Law 2011 such as potential improvements to the way that tenants may seek redress against landlords who do not protect deposit money, and an extension of the legislation to other rental arrangements such as non-self-contained rented accommodation.

I will report to the Assembly by mid-March 2019 with findings and proposed next steps.