

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 11th DECEMBER 2012**

Question

What specific measures, if any, does the Minister have under consideration to reduce the need for members of the public to seek help from the Citizens' Advice Bureau regarding problems with Income Support claims, which was recorded in their 2011 annual report as the top single issue brought to them by clients on 553 occasions, relegating indebtedness to second place at 262?

Answer

I am very pleased to note that the number of queries dealt with by the Citizens Advice Bureau in respect of Income Support fell from 629 in 2010 to 553 in 2011. The table below shows that both the number and the proportion of Income Support queries dealt with by the Citizens Advice Bureau has fallen over this period.

Year	2010	2011
Income Support enquiries	629	553
Total number of advice issues	10,468	9,769
Income Support queries as % of total issues	6.0%	5.7%

When considered in the context of the overall economic climate over the last two years, and the increased numbers of unemployed workers and Income Support claims, I believe these figures are very encouraging. They demonstrate the success of our investment in staff training and communications, as well as a strong working relationship between the Department and the Citizens' Advice Bureau.

In 2012, further improvements have been made including:

- Launch of a redesigned Income Support application form
- A new, detailed Income Support award letter
- A redesigned Income Support calculator, designed to provide information in the same format as the new award letter

All of the above projects included consultation with and feedback from community groups including the Citizens Advice Bureau.