

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS
BY DEPUTY P.V.F. LE CLAIRE OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 18th JULY 2011**

Question

Given the current levels of unemployment in the Island, especially in the long term unemployed, can the Minister please provide members with a breakdown of people in Jersey who are here as a result of his department issuing work permits, and in particular -

1. The total number of people on work permits at present and how that compares with last year?
2. The total number of dependents accompanying them and how that compares to last year?
3. The jobs occupied by those on work permits by skill and by sector?
4. The jobs occupied by dependents of those who have been issued work permits by skill and by sector?
5. The length of the permits issued to conduct this work in Jersey?
6. The total number of work permits issued in 2010 and the total issued so far in 2011 by skill and sector?
7. The charges levied in relation to issuing permits;
8. what the Minister's plans are, if any, to review the work permit policy of his department with regard to protecting jobs for Jersey residents, given the recent geographic expansion of the EU and the high levels of unemployment in Jersey?

Answer

Number of Work Permit Holders

The IT system in place in the Customs and Immigration Service does not report the actual number of work permit holders and dependants in the Island at any one time. This information has not been required because all work permits are of a finite duration and have been measured by showing the number of permits issued by sector in a particular time frame. A snapshot at any one time is just that – tomorrow there may be considerably more or less work permit holders than today and thus the issuance of the permits has been seen as a more valid measure.

Comparative statistics for work permits issued by sector for the periods 1 January 2010 to 30 June 2010 and 2011 are shown below:

Sectors	Number Of Work Permits Issued 1 January to 30 June 2010	Number Of Work Permits Issued 1 January to 30 June 2011
Agriculture	1	0
Entertainers	11	4
Finance	66	49
Hospitality	62	55
Information Technology	3	26
Health	15	16
Legal	8	5
Other (Education, Sport, Telecommunications]	14	19
Total	180	174

Figures showing the actual number of work permit holders and their dependants were however compiled at the end of **December 2010** for a previous question on this subject from the Deputy:

Sectors	Total No. Work Permit Holders	Total No. Work Permit Dependants
Finance	171	114
Hospitality	73	9
Information Technology	38	16
Health	35	31
Legal	23	14
Other (Education, Sport, Telecommunications, Engineering)	17	21
Total	357	205

Dependants

The total number of dependants of work permit holders (*this includes spouses, unmarried partners and children under the age of 18 and where the work permit exceeds 12 months duration*) who either accompanied or joined them in Jersey are as follows:

Dates	Number of work permit dependants
1 January to 30 June 2010	21
1 January to 30 June 2011	29

These figures only take into account applications for "Work Permit Dependant" entry clearances (visas) which have been referred to the Customs and Immigration Service from British Diplomatic Posts.

Under the Directions of the Lieutenant-Governor (Immigration Rules) there are no restrictions as to where work permit dependants can take employment. Therefore, there is no information available on the jobs they may have filled locally.

Length of validity of work permits

Work permits are issued for periods of between 1 day and 5 years. Short term permits are issued for beach lifeguards, entertainers, hospital locum appointments, seasonal hospitality workers, persons with technical expertise and established overseas employees with company-specific knowledge being seconded to fill a temporary skills gap, undertake a special project or for career development purposes.

Fees

The current scale of fees for processing work permit applications is:

Permit for less than 12 months validity

Initial application	£40
Extension up to total of 12 months	£40
Extension beyond total of 12 months	£160

Permit for 12 months or more

Initial application	£200
Extension	£200

The fee is non-refundable even if the application is refused.

Review of Work Permit Policy

A review of the work permit policy has taken place and I am satisfied that the operation of the scheme safeguards the employment of resident labour, maintains the immigration control and meets the Island's economic and social needs. However, it is intended to make the following amendments to the policy:

1. Change in the minimum earnings threshold for jobs in finance and law to ensure that only applications, for appropriately qualified persons, are considered.
2. Ensure that employers reach all persons who are free of permit in the Island the standard of advertising by including, where appropriate, an advert at the Social Security Department. (Although it should be stressed that there is no evidence to suggest that local persons are actually being displaced or disadvantaged.)
3. Introduce an English language requirement, as part of the qualifying criteria, for the issue of a work permit to ensure that migrants coming to work in Jersey have a basic command of the English language which will allow them to cope with everyday life.
4. Increase the work permit application fees to reflect better the cost of providing the service.

I am also reviewing the availability and duration of work permits in relation to the Hospitality Industry.