

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY  
BY THE CONNÉTABLE OF ST. JOHN  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 14th MAY 2013**

**Question**

Can the Minister advise Members the amount paid to claimants as the housing component of Income Support for 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012?

Has the Minister considered the impact on the Income Support budget for the years ahead as a result of what may well be a considerable increase in publicly-owned rental properties and, if so, how much extra is projected to be required in 2014, 2015 and 2016.?

Does the Minister intend to request an increase in budget to meet this extra burden?

Is the Minister content for his department to transfer millions of its budget to support a body that may not be as politically accountable as the Housing Department is to the Housing Minister and Assembly today?.

**Answer**

Information previously published indicates that the calculated allocation to housing components within the total income support expenditure has been:

Year	Allocation	Reference
2009	£22.7 M	Question 6536; 12/9/2011
2010	£24.1 M	Question 6536; 12/9/2011
2011	£24.4 M	R.126/2012, Question 7520; 19/3/2013

The allocation for 2012 will be published as part of the 2012 annual report.

The anticipated increase in publicly owned rental properties will allow additional tenants in receipt of income support benefit to transfer from the private sector to the public sector. These transfers will not, in themselves, result in any additional costs to the income support budget.

The total impact on the income support budget following the implementation of the Housing Transformation Programme has been considered in detail and as stated in the response to question 7602 (30 April 2013) *“The Minister for Treasury and Resources has confirmed that the additional cost of higher Income Support rates following the change in social rental policy will be fully reflected in additional funding for Income Support on an annual basis.”*

As Minister for Social Security, I hold the political responsibility for the income support scheme which supports low income families with their basic living costs. A large proportion of income support households live in the social rented sector and many of the proposals contained within the Housing Transformation Programme are aimed at improving both the condition of the social housing stock and the legal rights of social housing tenants. As such, I am fully supportive of the current proposals of the Housing Minister.

For clarification, there is no intention to transfer budgets between the Social Security Department and the new Housing Company. Income support is a benefit claimed by individual tenants. However, to reduce administration costs, bulk payments in respect of income support assistance towards the rental costs of tenants are made on a weekly basis, currently to the Housing Department and it is anticipated that a similar processing method will be set up with the proposed Housing Company.

The Housing Company will continue to be politically accountable as its policies will be set by the Strategic Housing Unit which will be governed by the Housing Minister, and the social housing regulator will ensure compliance with those policies. Additionally, the Housing Company will be 100% owned by the States of Jersey and governed by a Transfer Agreement between the States and the Housing Company which includes the requirement to provide regular updates to the States.