

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY R.J. WARD OF ST. HELIER
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 4th APRIL 2022
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 11th APRIL 2022**

Question

Will the Minister advise how many Income Support claimants are currently repaying an overpayment at a rate of more than £20 per month?

Answer

The recent announcement of additional payments of £20 per person per month to income support households will reflect the number of people living in the household. A pensioner couple will receive an additional £40 a month and a couple with 2 children will receive an additional £80 a month.

These payments are not affected by any repayment amounts for the household. Every Income Support household will receive an additional £20 per person per month as a separate payment under the temporary scheme.

There are currently 1,196 Income Support claims with a repayment recorded against the claim at a rate of £4.62 or more a week (equivalent to £20 a month) per person in the Income Support household. The Income Support system is designed to make payments in advance to protect vulnerable households from periods when they see a drop in income. As a consequence, when household income increases or benefit needs reduce, the household may receive more than its legal entitlement for a short period. This additional amount is then recouped in small regular amounts from ongoing benefit payments. Most repayment periods are short.

The alternative would be to provide Income Support payments in arrears. A household experiencing a drop in income or an increase in benefit needs would not be legally entitled to extra support immediately. If the benefit system included emergency loans to bridge that gap, then the loans would need to be repaid from ongoing benefit payments.