

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 15th MAY 2012**

Question

As the response of the Chief Minister to question 6833 of 1st May 2012 revealed that the vast majority (1,127 of 1,157) of zero-hours contracts issued by States departments were in the Education and Health departments, will he seek a breakdown of the use of these contracts from the Ministers responsible to confirm that zero-hours are only used to meet genuine needs for flexibility and are not a used in cases where a fixed-term contract with defined hours and other terms and conditions would be far more appropriate, and, if so, will he undertake to report his findings to members?

Answer

States current systems do not allow for the easy analysis of individual zero hour contracts. However, zero hour contracts are used to provide flexible resources to cover various operational needs such as the absence of permanent employees due to sickness, special leave, or training.

An employee may have been deployed within numerous roles during any one month and may have provided ad-hoc cover for permanent staff absent due to sickness or special leave or training courses, or to cover a specific short term need or vacant post.

The Education, Sports and Culture Department employs individuals on zero hours contracts in four main groups: Highlands College Lecturers, Adult Education Tutors, Teaching and Non-Teaching supply. The flexibility afforded by these types of contracts is essential as it enables the Department to maintain a bank of appropriately qualified and skilled staff to meet the demands of fluctuating pupil and student numbers.

Within Health and Social Services it is essential to have flexible capacity in the workforce to provide essential services with unpredictable peaks and demands. The use of a blend of full time, part time, fixed term and zero hours contracts in Health and Social Services is considered to be appropriate and minimises the risk to patients.

The table below shows the deployment of zero hour contract staff within Education Sport and Culture and Health and Social Services during March 2012.

| Department | Division | Total |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| Education, Sport & Culture | Education General | 352 |
| | Highlands College | 218 |
| | Education Sports Division | 12 |
| Health & Social Services | Health and Social Services | 545 |
| Total | | 1,127 |

Employees who work for the States of Jersey on a zero hour contract provide a valuable source of flexible labour. The States of Jersey is confident that each department regularly reviews the use of zero hour contracts to ensure that they are utilised appropriately.