

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 2nd DECEMBER 2013**

Question

Further to the response given by the Minister to the question of the Deputy of St. Ouen on 19th November 2013, when he referred to changes to the medical protocols engaged in the assessment of the degree of impairment related to percentage awards of Long Term Incapacity Allowance, will the Minister advise whether the tests for impairment have been reinforced and, if so, has this resulted in an overall reduction of percentage awards?

If this is so, will he point to any evidence that previous assessments, either locally or elsewhere, were too generous and state whether any change is linked with ATOS assessments related to 'capacity for work' of those with disability in the UK, and, if so, whether there is any intention to introduce such tests here?

Answer

As reported in R.134/2013 "Social Security Department: Minister's Report and Financial Statements – 2012", the average percentage rate of assessment for Long Term Incapacity Allowance (LTIA) claims in payment in 2012 is 37% and this percentage has remained more or less constant over the last five years (page 28). The total number of claims for LTIA and Invalidity Benefit (one of the benefits replaced by LTIA which can still be claimed by ongoing claimants) has increased from 4,367 in 2008 to 4,529 in 2012 (R.134/2013 page 29).

Ongoing training is provided to medical board doctors to ensure they maintain and apply best practice consistently, particularly in the context of functional assessment. The Department also continues to review and enhance its operational process resulting in a number of improvements over the last five years including a development of determining officer's guidelines, greater differentiation in reassessment periods and moving to combined assessments of single claimants with multiple LTIA claims.

These changes have improved the quality and consistency of the process.

There is no intention to introduce ATOS tests and the legislation governing incapacity benefits in Jersey is not linked to the UK legislation in this area.