

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY M.R. HIGGINS OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 14TH MARCH 2017**

Question

Will the Minister explain what measures of economic inequality the Council of Ministers uses and what those measures reveal about the current state of inequality in the Island; and will he further state what measures, if any, are being taken to reduce any such inequality?

Answer

After a period when income inequality was effected by the global economic crisis, as shown in the “Jersey Household Income Distribution 2014/15 report”, our economic performance is now improving - earnings are rising, unemployment is at a six year low, and relative low income is reducing.

The Council of Ministers continue to monitor this, using the full range of published statistics, including established indicators of inequality, such as income ratios and the Gini coefficient. This supports firm action to improve the lives of islanders, including doing more to improve the position of people across our society, especially the most disadvantaged, including:

- Prioritising education and focusing on providing children with the best start in life to improve outcomes, for example, the pupil premium will support children with the highest needs.
- Investing in health and social services to improve people’s health and well-being, including their mental and physical health.
- Continuing to invest in infrastructure, including improving the people’s standard of housing, for example - incorporating higher insulation standards to reduce tenant’s heating costs; forthcoming legislation to improve private rental standards; and necessary investment in refurbishing our social housing to meet decent homes standards.

The Long Term Plan will also highlight these issues, using indicators which cover issues such as coping financially, average incomes, relative low income, rental stress, and housing affordability. This supports increasingly co-ordinated and targeted action supported by key metrics and measures.