

2025.02.04

Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Chief Minister regarding registered or licensed workers (OO.34/2025):

Will the Minister state the total number of individuals working in the Island broken down by registered or licensed status for each of the years 2022, 2023 and 2024 and detail the total amount of revenue generated by the issuance of licences and whether the revenue has been ring-fenced for Skills Jersey?

Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter (The Chief Minister):

As at December 2022 there were 5,240 registered roles. As at December 2023 there were 5,890 registered roles. The December 2024 figures have not yet been published, but as at June 2024 the total registered roles was 6,170. In 2022 the registered fees income was £329,600. In 2023 registered licences fees total was £342,658, and in 2024 the total was £356,527.50. Skills Jersey receives a guaranteed amount each year of £300,000 from the income received from registered fees. The publicly available labour market report published by Stats Jersey report on this data in June and December each year.

4.13.1 Deputy D.J. Warr:

My question to the Minister is an attempt really to demonstrate the level of what is effectively a stealth tax being levied on local businesses by government departments. Of course, add charges which are applied by J.F.S.C. (Jersey Financial Services Commission), J.O.I.C. (Jersey Office of the Information Commissioner), places of refreshment alcohol licence, et cetera. The consistent theme in all of these are charges made by Government. If the Chief Minister had a magic wand - I am sure he wishes he had one on occasions - which charges does he believe could be removed tomorrow and give some solace to local businesses?

The Bailiff:

That does somewhat stretch outside the ambit of the question. You may have intended a result, Deputy, but you have asked about the particular number of individuals and money raised under a particular regime and system and I am not sure, I am afraid, that that falls to be answered, if I can say so. If you wish to rephrase it in some manner, but I do not think you can stretch into all other areas.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

How would the Chief Minister look to ... apologies, I will just get my brain working here.

The Bailiff:

That is quite all right. Take as long as you need. [Laughter]

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Thank you. Lunchtime? What strategy could the Chief Minister employ to reduce the cost of business that is driven by government charges?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Well, we want to keep government charges to business as low as possible. In relation to the charge for registered staff, that was introduced in 2018, approved by the States Assembly, to deliver us an income to put towards Skills Jersey, as is happening now. It was considered during the discussions in relation to providing support on the journey to a new minimum wage that this fee be reduced, but it was decided to keep that going and continue to support the provision of skills. That is perhaps one area for consideration: do we think it is worth charging employers for registered fees, because if we did not we would not be able to use that money into skills. So there is a method and a reason for why we do it, but of course that can be open for debate at any time. I think it is up to Government ... a lot of these fees are based upon a cost recovery calculation. Where we are not using the money to put into something like skills, we look to recover costs, so I suppose the best strategy is for Government to be as lean and productive as possible so the fees we charge to businesses can remain as low as possible. We have also capped increases on Government fees and charges at 2.5 per cent to help in the battle against inflation in our own small way.

The Bailiff:

I might say, Deputy Warr, of course, the Chief Minister will be asked questions and if you wish to move in that direction it would be open to you to do so.