

‘Residential qualifications are outdated and unfair,’ says Housing Minister



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THE distinction between “qualified” and “unqualified” rental properties does nothing positive for Islanders, the Housing Minister has said.

Answering questions without notice yesterday for the first time since being elected on 30 January, Deputy Sam Mézec (pictured above) indicated that he would be in favour of scrapping the categorisations, which limit what recent arrivals to the Island can rent, putting the vast majority of properties off limits.

An Islander has to be considered an essential worker or have lived in Jersey for ten years to gain access to much of the rental market.

Although he said that the decision was ultimately one for the Chief Minister, Deputy Mézec added: “I don’t believe having this distinction does anything positive for people living and working in Jersey.

“It is an outdated control that is not meeting its purpose – there should be fair and equal access to rental accommodation.”

During his period of questions, Deputy Mézec also:

- Confirmed that he was seeking to reframe the proposed Rental Tenancies Law, which he described as “not very digestible” and “over-complicated” in the form it had been initially put forward by his predecessor, Deputy David Warr.
- Gave his view that the “communities” element of his full title of Housing and Communities Minister was “superfluous” – all ministers should be committed to making a positive impact to the community, he said.
- Stated that he would not be seeking to reintroduce a proposal for a rent freeze over the remainder of the current political term. Having seen a proposition defeated by 35 votes to nine in September 2022, the minister said he accepted the view of the Assembly.

Asked by Deputy Lucy Stephenson whether he recognised that some landlords might be “unsettled” by his return to the position he also held between 2018 and 2020, Deputy Mézec said he had already met the Jersey Landlords Association for “a fantastic chat” and would spend as much time as he could engaging with landlords.