

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 17th JULY 2012**

Question

Will the Minister outline for members how adult children, living in an Income Support (IS) unit, whether in work or unemployed, are treated differently under the IS system depending on their age?

In particular, will he give a worked example to illustrate whether the system provides incentives for the adult child to leave the family home when he or she reaches the age of 25, thereby occupying two accommodation units instead of one?

Given the shortage of housing on the Island, is the Minister content that the IS system contains such incentives, and if not, will he review this policy?

Answer

Whilst an adult child remains in the family home then, depending on the age of the adult child and whether they are in full-time education, full-time employment or actively seeking work, they will either be included in the income support claim of their parents, or considered as a separate income support claim.

However, regardless of the age of the adult child, if both the parent household and the adult child household receive income support, there is no difference in the value of the income support components available to the family as a whole. The accommodation component for all the people sharing the accommodation is included in the income support claim of the tenant of the property, to allow the tenant to pay the rent.

The income support accommodation component is not generally available to young people aged under 25, living on their own. From age 25 onwards, a single person living on their own is entitled to an accommodation component in respect of lodgings or a bedsit up to a maximum value of £109 per week.

Example: Parents and two children occupying a three-bedroom rented house. Family receives income support.

Note that these examples indicate the maximum value of income support available with the family receiving **no other income**. In most cases, the actual amount of income support will be less than these values, as the household will have earnings and / or other income.

1. Adult child is 18 and actively seeking work. Adult child is included with parents' claim

Maximum IS components available:

Family as a single unit

Component Type	rate	value
Adults	3 x 92.12	276.36
Child	1 x 63.98	63.98
Household	49.56	49.56
Accommodation – 3 bed house	258.02	258.02
Total		£647.92

2. Adult child is 25 and actively seeking work. Adult child has separate claim but remains living at home

Maximum IS components available:

Family:

Component Type	rate	value
Adults	2 x 92.12	184.24
Child	1 x 63.98	63.98
Household	49.56	49.56
Accommodation – 3 bed house	258.02	258.02
Total		£555.80

Adult child:

Component Type	rate	value
Adults	1 x 92.12	92.12
Child		
Household		
Accommodation		
Total		£92.12

3. Adult child is 25 and actively seeking work. Adult child has separate claim and moves into own accommodation

Maximum IS components available:

Family

Component Type	rate	value
Adults	2 x 92.12	184.24
Child	1 x 63.98	63.98
Household	49.56	49.56
Accommodation – 2 bed house	231.28	231.28
Total		£529.06

Adult child:

Component Type	rate	value
Adults	1 x 92.12	92.12
Child		
Household	49.56	49.56
Accommodation – bedsit	109.41	109.41
Total		£251.09

In scenario 3, the adult child is now receiving a higher rate of income support, but has to meet the cost of rent, utility bills and all the other expenses of maintaining a separate household. I do not believe that this situation could be described as providing an “incentive” for the individual to leave the family home. There must be a minimum age at which an adult is no longer considered linked to their parents and is entitled to occupy their own accommodation. The income support regulations set this age limit in respect of the accommodation component and this has been approved by the States.

If the family is housed by the Housing Department and an adult child moves out, then if the remainder of the family is under-occupying their property, the remaining family members can be moved to smaller accommodation. In other cases, the accommodation component will be reduced to reflect the smaller household size and the family will need to make up any shortfall in the rent themselves.

I do not consider that the income support system contains incentives for individuals aged 25 to move out of the family home. Nor do I accept the premise within the question that there is an overall shortage of housing on the island. On both counts, I have no plans to review this policy area.