

Minister for Social Security



19-21 Broad Street | St Helier
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Deputy Louise Doublet
Chair, Health and Social Security Scrutiny Panel

Sent by email

4th July 2024

Dear Deputy Doublet

Review of Income Support Overpayments

Thank you for your letter dated 8th March 2024, regarding the previous Scrutiny Panel's review of Income Support Overpayments ([S.R.1/2023](#)) and the previous Minister's response to this review ([s.r.1-2023 res.pdf \(gov.je\)](#)).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the previous Panel for the work they undertook in this area, which highlighted the impact that Income Support overpayments can have on vulnerable Islanders. I have thoroughly reviewed the previous Ministerial response to this review, and considered the actions that I would like to take in this area. As the Panel will be aware, the impact of Income Support overpayments is something that greatly concerns me. I am therefore pleased to be able to confirm that I have asked the team to progress changes relating to the processing of overpayments, which are anticipated to reduce the volume of overpayments by up to 50%. These changes should be in place by September 2024 at the latest.

I am also pleased to be able to confirm that I will be making further changes regarding interdependent relationships. During the Public Hearing with the previous Minister, the previous Panel raised concerns regarding the use of the word "conjugal" to assess the interdependency of a relationship for Income Support purposes. I share the previous Panel's concerns on this, and I can confirm that legislative drafting will therefore be progressed which will remove the reference to "conjugal" in the existing legislation and replace the term "interdependent relationship" with the term "partnership". These changes will be made by Ministerial Order and will be made alongside changes to the Income Support section on gov.je, which will provide clear guidance on the definition of a partner.

Thank you again to the previous Panel for their useful input on this area, I am confident these changes will improve processes for people claiming Income Support.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "L. Feltham".

Deputy Lyndsay Feltham
Minister for Social Security