

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY C.S. ALVES OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 12th MAY 2020**

Question

“Will the Minister outline what financial support, if any, is currently available to people who could otherwise be working, as their place of work is operational, but are unable to do so either due to having an underlying medical condition that puts them at risk in the current Coronavirus crisis, or because they live in a household with others who are considered at high risk?”

Answer

The primary mechanism for supporting people who are unable to go to work (irrespective of health factors) is the Co-Funded Payroll Scheme. This Scheme helps employers to retain their staff by supporting them with their wage bills. The Scheme has entered phase 2 under which employers can apply for sums amounting to 80% of their employees’ wages up to a maximum payment of £1,600 per month per person. Eligible employers can apply for support for all their staff, including severely vulnerable people. Through the Scheme, the person’s wages are maintained and may exceed the standard rate of benefit paid under social security schemes. The Scheme offers other advantages over benefit payments, as the severely vulnerable person remains in employment and is able to return to work at a later date. Unlike the UK wage support scheme, the Jersey Scheme allows workers to undertake work and this includes home working that can be undertaken by a person in the severely vulnerable category.

Any household with a low income can apply for Income Support. This includes workers who have lost their job as well as those who are still working and the employer is using the Co-funded Payroll Scheme. Additionally, I have also approved the creation of Covid Related Emergency Support Scheme (CRESS), which provides limited financial help to workers who have lost employment and have not lived in Jersey long enough to be eligible for income support.

Public Health advice does not require that people who live with a severely vulnerable person ‘shield’ alongside them. Rather it suggests that measures are taken within the home to reduce the risk of virus transmission. However, if an individual does give up work because they live with a person who is shielding, they may apply for income support or CRESS and in this circumstance would not incur a ‘giving up work’ sanction.

These measures may change with public health advice and as the Government response to the coronavirus emergency adapts.