

Social Security Advisory Council Annual Report

Brief Introduction

The Social Security Advisory Council is representative of the stakeholders and community at large in particular employees, employers and beneficiaries.

The Social Security Advisory Council is to act as a sounding board for future innovations and as a mechanism for independent representation of the scheme's members such as employees, employers and beneficiaries.

Social Security Advisory Council Annual Report

Members of the Social Security Advisory Council

Social Security Advisory Council
c/o PO Box 55
Philip Le Feuvre House
La Motte Street
St Helier
JERSEY JE4 8PE

Chair	Jurat Geoffrey Allo
Vice chair	Ms Jacqueline Collins
Council members	Mr Peter Harrison Mrs Fran Houghton Mr John Rosser
Council secretary	Miss Isabel De Ornelas

Social Security Advisory Council

Annual Report

Annual review

The Employment and Social Security Committee placed before the Council the range of matters falling under their remit. From this and in view of the impending major changes to Income Support, the Council elected to concentrate their efforts on the matter of 'disability and its implications within the Income Support reforms.'

Initially it was recommended that the Council should meet on a quarterly basis, it was quickly recognized that, in view of the complexity of the subject our task would be impossible by only meeting on this basis and as such the Council agreed to monthly meetings. Indeed this was increased even further when public meetings were held at which time the Council met on a weekly basis.

As will be seen in the following Report and Memorandum (appendix a) the Council submitted a report together with their recommendations to the Employment and Social Security Committee who in turn would advise the States of Jersey of the final recommendations.

Subsequent to this the matter was fully debated in the States of Jersey and agreement approved in principle with documentation now in its final stages of preparation for presentation to the 'law draftsman.'

Our role is not yet finished as we will continue to monitor and recommend any adjustments if necessary before the law is enacted. As this project is in the final stages the Council are at this time giving careful consideration to which direction their next review of the Social Security systems should take.

The annual budget of £25,000 is contained within the Employment and Social Security department's budget and to date expenditure involved has been nominal. Since inception costs have not exceed £2,000.

In conclusion to this report I would like to place on record my sincere thanks to the Council members and indeed our secretary for all their unstinting efforts over this last year.

I would like to thank Ann Esterson, Controller of Employment and Social Security and all her staff, in particular Mr Tom Gales, Strategy and Policy Director, who has acted throughout as our technical advisor.

Jurat Geoffrey Allo

Chairman

Social Security Advisory Council

Annual Report

Appendix A

Report and Memorandum

INTRODUCTION

The Council has a two-pronged role in that it is tasked with acting as an advisory and review body to the Employment and Social Security Committee on matters relating to Social Security and to undertake a review on any matter at the request of that Committee. The Committee has requested a review of Disability in the context of the new reforms being proposed to create an Income Support System. The Council is required to report to the States of Jersey on any changes to the Social Security Law and to provide, for the sake of transparency, an annual report of its activities and will do so at the appropriate time. This report deals solely with a review of work carried out to date on the matter of Disability as a component to the Income Support System and is therefore addressed to the Employment and Social Security Committee. This follows an Interim Report submitted to the Committee on 14th September 2004

Following presentations made by the Employment and Social Security Department on the Income Support System and current disability benefits, the Council undertook a series of forums with a wide range of groups from within the community including representatives from charities and support groups, employment and union bodies, and carers. During this period, on 2nd November 2004, the Committee released to the public their reports on reform under references RC48 and RC49.

The forums conducted by the Council were generally in support of reform and the design of the scheme being proposed. It seems there is an acceptance that those most in need should receive the most assistance but it cannot be denied that the financial losers will be a very unhappy group of citizens. There was some reserve from various participants as they await more information as 'the devil may be in the detail'. The idea that the reform is a means for the States of Jersey to reduce the Island's welfare budget was in the minds of some.

The discussions have been varied and wide ranging and while they focused on mental and physical disability, as conventionally recognised, there was concern that those needing Income Support may have a 'disability' that has nothing to do with a medical condition.

The Council were interested in establishing concerns and problem areas to be avoided in the new reform as well as ideas to improve upon systems already in place which will be carried over. The Council believe there were two distinct areas for research: disability being the prime reason an individual is eligible for Income Support in the first place, and secondly, the additional cost of being disabled. The latter has already been recognised in the design of the Income Support System with the bolting on of a disability component to assist with those additional costs. The Council is, however, sceptical that the proposed three tier system will afford sufficient flexibility to respond sensibly to the varying needs of the disabled. A distillation of all the discussions presented itself in a series of challenges.

Social Security Advisory Council Annual Report

- Communicate to the community the principles behind the reform It must be clearly understood by the recipient community how Income Support and the disability component are funded; how Income Support and, in particular, the disability component are calculated; what is included in the calculations and the practical impact of the changes.
- Raise awareness of the support available.
- Ensure that in the total equation, carers are not forgotten.

THE NEXT STEP

The Council have reached the conclusion that there is no more they can do at this time other than highlight the areas it feels essential to be included in the new Income Support System as it relates to Disability. Once the details in the Report and Proposition are available, the Council can review the detailed questions and concerns posed by the public and submit further comment to the Committee.

SOCIAL SECURITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

2006

Social Security Advisory Council Annual Report 2006

Brief Introduction

The Social Security Advisory Council is representative of the stakeholders of the Social Security Insurance scheme and community at large in particular employees, employers and beneficiaries.

The Social Security Advisory Council is to act as a sounding board for future innovations in Social issues and as a mechanism for independent representation of the Social Security Insurance scheme's members such as employees, employers and beneficiaries.

Social Security Advisory Council
Annual Report 2006

Members of the Social Security Advisory Council

Social Security Advisory Council
c/o PO Box 55
Philip Le Feuvre House
La Motte Street
St Helier
JERSEY
JE4 8PE

Chair	Jurat Geoffrey Allo
Vice chair	Ms Jacqueline Collins FCA
Council members	Mrs Annette Cullen Chartered FCIPD Mr Peter Harrison Mrs Fran Houghton Mr John Rosser ACII Mrs Silvie Seymour
Council secretary	Miss Isabel De Ornelas

Social Security Advisory Council Annual Report 2006

This is the second Annual Report of the Social Security Advisory Council. In January we were fortunate enough to recruit two additional members, Mrs Annette Cullen and Mrs Sylvie Seymour. This action was taken to ensure continuity bearing in mind each members' term of office is for three years. Mr Harrison will be retiring from the Council in April of 2007 and I would wish to place on record our appreciation for all the support he has given during his term of office.

Throughout the year we have carefully monitored the progress of the Income Support System and indeed consulted with both the Minister and Deputy Minister on this important subject.

The Council has throughout its operation met on a monthly basis and this has been beneficial bearing in mind the developments that have taken place over the year. The Council is greatly assisted by the presence at all meetings in an advisory capacity of the Policy and Strategy Director of Social Security Mr Tom Gales who is very much involved with Income Support. The Council are able to obtain current and accurate information on progress, in addition his presence enables questions to be raised and information to be forthcoming without any unnecessary delay taking place.

The Council also met with Mr Richard Bell the new Controller and I am able to report he is anxious that our work continue, at this meeting we were able to inform of the subjects we intended to cover in the following months.

Two Sub Committees were established as I was anxious to see that our new members were fully involved as soon as possible, and this proved a great success. One Sub Committee headed by Mr John Rosser accompanied by Mrs Sylvie Seymour are dealing with the important issues of pensions, and the performance of the investments funds in general. The other Sub Committee headed by Miss Jackie Collins assisted by Mrs Annette Cullen are dealing with all aspects of communications.

Council members have attended public consultations covering the Income Support System and reported their findings back to the Council, this information has indeed proved most interesting and has aided our overview of this important subject. Our findings, and the discussions of the Council, show the following areas to have been of particular concern when assessing a claimant's entitlement to Income Support:-

Social Security Advisory Council Annual Report 2006

- *The qualifying period of residency.*
- *Risk of ineligibility due to short term absences from the island.*
- *The question of capital assets being taken into consideration and, in relation to those in full time residential care, whilst being a very emotive subject is one that should be dealt with in a practical manner.*
- *All channels of distribution of benefit should be encouraged to facilitate access to those elderly and infirm and to ensure an optimum level of service is provided by the maximum number of distribution points e.g. Parish Halls.*
- *There needs to be a strategy to re-educate the public fully on the Income Support System.*
- *Action needs to be taken to establish a credit union for beneficiaries who currently are denied access to bank accounts.*
- *It is imperative that for Special Payments clearly defined procedures are set down in order that the individual will be clear at the outset of any financial implication.*
- *The assessment of persons with physical or mental disabilities must be sensitive enough to address individual circumstances.*
- *Every attempt should be made to encourage through inducements to beneficiaries and by employers' programmes, gainful employment despite illness and or disability.*

We have noted that many of the points raised by the stakeholders in the course of public consultations are being addressed by the Social Security Department.

The Council receives communications on a regular basis in the form of Briefing Notes issued by the Social Security Department informing us of developments to the Income Support System.

Mr Paul Bradbury the Corporate Services Director addressed the Council on the financial structure and management of the Social Security Fund. This meeting was very educational for the Council who are now more familiar with the process.

In the initial brief set down in 2003 it was suggested that the Council when formed should meet on a quarterly basis. I make no apology for repeating in this Report my original statement that this arrangement would have been totally impractical, and as such the members have continued to sit monthly and I am grateful to them for giving so freely of their time. It should also be borne in mind that members serving on the Sub Committees have attended in addition public meetings mainly concerning Income Support .

Social Security Advisory Council Annual Report 2006

In 2007 the Council is presently evaluating whether it can effectively address the subject of pensions. It is also considering the subject of the Social Security Contributions and Payments systems. The Council will continued to monitor the Income Support system as it is refined.

At the time of formation an invitation was extended by the Social Security Advisory Council in the United Kingdom for members to attend one of their regular meetings. Now that the Jersey Council has worked together for three years it is considered appropriate to arrange a visit for a limited number of members during the current year. This will allow the Council to gather additional material which will assist it in its role.

The annual budget of £25,000 is contained within the Social Security Department's budget and expenditure and in 2006 expenditure has amounted to £2148.

Finally I would like to thank the Minister and his staff, and in particular Mrs Gloria Henry (Personal Assistant to the Controller) for the use of the facilities at Philip Le Feuvre House and the way we are accommodated. I extend this appreciation to our Council Secretary Isabel de Ornelas who ensures that members are in receipt of all relevant documentation.

Jurat Geoffrey Allo
Chairman