

STATES OF JERSEY



HEALTH INSURANCE EXEMPTION CARDS: FREE BUS TRAVEL AND ACTIVE CARDS (P.145/2007) – COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 16th November 2007
by the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture recognises the immense benefit that is derived from people being able to participate in physical activity. This is especially for those people who have a chronic medical condition. The Jersey Exercise Referral Scheme provides a targeted approach to enable people who either have existing health problems or are at significant risk of disease to receive support in becoming more active. Over 900 people a year are referred to the local scheme as part of their treatment of a chronic disease such as back pain, Type 2 diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease.

When the new Income Support scheme is introduced, the Minister has agreed that those on low income, as defined by Income Support, when appropriately referred by a health practitioner, will be able to access the Jersey Exercise Referral Scheme without charge.

In addition, following successful completion of the 18 week scheme, all clients will be advised of the options available to them. If they choose an activity which requires the use of ESC sport facilities, they will be offered a free Active Card at their formal assessment on production of a current letter from Income Support to confirm that they are still eligible.

Allocation of free Active Card Membership will be reviewed periodically with the Social Security Department to confirm ongoing suitability. Clients will be required to make a declaration so that Exercise Referral can contact Social Security to confirm the individual's income support status.

In conclusion, therefore, the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture supports Part (a)(ii) of the proposition and will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to enable persons who are currently holders of HIE cards, and who are subsequently classified as being on low income as defined by the Income Support Scheme, to have free access to the Exercise Referral Scheme and to have free Active Cards, subject to referral by their G.P.s on health grounds.