

3.4 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Minister for Social Security regarding action following the decision of the Assembly to adopt Deputy Martin's amendment to the Draft Income Support (Special Payments) (Child Personal Care) (Jersey) Regulations 201- (P.90/2014):

What action, if any, has the Minister taken, or does he have under consideration, following the decision of the Assembly to adopt Deputy Martin's amendment to the Draft Income Support (Special Payments) (Child Personal Care) (Jersey) Regulations 201- (P.90/2014) and to support special payments for child personal care?

[15:00]

Senator F. du H. Le Gresley (The Minister for Social Security):

Since the recent States debate, I have met with Deputy Martin on 2 separate occasions together with other Ministers and Assistant Ministers to discuss the situation and to agree practical steps that can be taken to implement the States decision. Officers are currently in discussion with the Treasury and Resources Department and this may then need the backing of the Council of Ministers as to funding to meet the additional cost of providing benefits during 2015. I would also submit a growth bid to the M.T.F.P. (Medium-Term Financial Plan) 2 to secure funding for 2016 and onwards. Subject to identifying an appropriate budget and, with Deputy Martin's agreement, I will then lodge amendments to the Regulations that have been left incomplete to allow the debate to be brought to conclusion on 9th September. The amendments will separate the 3 categories of disability as follows: the P.C.(Personal Care) 3 highest level benefit will be available from September in line with my original proposals; the new benefit for P.C.2 will be introduced from the start of next year with successful claimants receiving backdated payments from the beginning of 2015 and the final category of P.C.1 will remain within income support for the time being with additional research being undertaken to identify the most appropriate support for these families. This work will be co-ordinated with the initial stages of a disability strategy for the Island.

The Bailiff:

Deputy Southern, do you wish a supplementary?

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Yes. I am somewhat sceptical about the need to research Level 1 disability since it was specifically a point of pride that we had distinguished between levels of impairment and had this lowest level to get to people. Other than that, for once I thank the Minister for his prompt and apparently accurate well-targeted action.

3.4.1 Deputy J.H. Young:

Could I ask the Minister just to clarify? He said he was putting in a bid to the next Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2016 but clearly also said he was going to implement some of the new structures earlier. Can he just confirm that means he is going to meet those benefits from existing balances and resources?

Senator F. du H. Le Gresley:

No. Well, the Deputy is partly correct, we would have one year to fund of the current Medium-Term Financial Plan. I do not have the money unless I make savings within tax-funded benefits, that is why I am having discussions with the Treasury to see if we can release money, perhaps from contingencies or some other method, to allow me to make P.C.2 payments in 2015.