

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 3rd NOVEMBER 2015**

Question

Given that the Minister's response to written question 9012, tabled on 20th October 2015, fails to point out that, although the most common award of Long Term Incapacity Allowance (L.T.I.A.) is 20% (approximately £40 per week), this represents only 8% of claims, can the Minister provide the average loss of income for those receiving L.T.I.A.?

Can the Minister also advise whether, given that the average L.T.I.A. award of those who also need Income Support is some £5,900 annually or £110 weekly, this results in an average loss from the removal of Income Support disregard not of £2.40 but of close to £7.00 weekly?

Is the Minister's statement that 'the Department has not in any way decreased the income support to those with disabilities' correct given the above figures?

Answer

I have been very clear regarding the changes that have already been debated and agreed by members as part of the Social Security MTFP proposals. The Long Term Incapacity Allowance (LTIA) is a contributory benefit that compensates a working age person in respect of a loss of faculty, judged on a percentage scale. The value of LTIA has not been reduced it has increased annually. The value of this contributory benefit went up from £196.42 to £199.99 (by £3.57 per week) on 1 October 2015; and this will continue to increase over the next four years.

The most common award of LTIA is at 20% of the standard rate of benefit, or approximately £40 per week. At the end of 2014, about 511 people (13% of all claims) claimed LTIA at this level - out of the 3,958 people in total who claimed LTIA. The median average percentage rate of assessment for LTIA claims by those who also claim Income Support was 40% of the standard rate of benefit, or about £80 per week in 2014. In other words, half of those claiming LTIA and Income Support at the same time were assessed at 40% or below and the other half at 40% and above. Looking specifically at a 40% LTIA claim, if the person claims Income Support, removing the overlap will mean they receive £4.80 a week less in Income Support.

As I confirmed in my previous answer to written question 9012, and included in my propositions that were agreed by the States, the approval of my spending plans has allowed the Department to maintain the level of benefits paid to people with disabilities. The impairment component of Income Support contains three separate elements that provide additional financial support to assist with the cost of personal care, mobility, and the cost of extra visits to the GP (General Practitioner). The impairment component is available to Income Support claimants of all ages, including pensioners and children. The elements that comprise it have not been reduced. The package of changes approved by Members concerned the treatment of the overlap between Income Support and LTIA benefit income, and resulted in the removal of an additional 6% disregard against LTIA income within the Income Support calculation. This extra allowance was not aimed at any specific need or additional cost. This has now been brought in line with the treatment of other contributory benefits, such as Short Term Incapacity Allowance, which have never received an additional income disregard. The removal of this extra disregard simplifies the calculation of Income Support and ensures that all benefits claimants are treated fairly.