

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY THE DEPUTY OF GROUVILLE
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 29th MAY 2012**

Question

Can the Minister confirm whether the Income Support system can be accessed by not only a head of a household, but also by his or her unqualified family and extended family who may never have contributed to the system and, if this is the case, what immediate action, if any, has he taken since 24th April 2012, when I brought this to his attention, to address this situation and what further action is proposed?

Answer

An Income Support claim can only be made in respect of a household comprising, at the most, an adult couple and dependent children. **No other relatives sharing accommodation with the couple are entitled to be included within the Income Support claim.**

I can confirm that information has previously been provided to the Deputy by e-mail dated 25 April 2012. Income Support benefit is paid to an Income Support household. This can be made up of a single person or a married/cohabiting couple, and any dependent children. Dependent children are included in an Income Support claim up to compulsory school leaving age (16+). Older children can continue to be included in the claim up to the age of 19 if they are registered as actively seeking work, or up to the age of 25 if they remain in full-time education.

Income Support is a non-contributory benefit funded by general taxation, and so the requirements for access to this benefit differ from those benefits administered by the Department, which are based on Social Security contributions.

Qualification for Income Support benefit includes a requirement that the claimant has either five years' continuous residency in Jersey immediately preceding the date of the claim or ten years' continuous residency at any point in the past. The Income Support Law requires that one adult (the claimant) in the household meets this residency test for the family unit to receive benefit.

If a number of separate households share accommodation, for example as members of an extended family, each single adult or adult couple that satisfied the test for five years' continuous recent residency, or ten years' residency at some point in the past, would be treated as a separate family unit and could make their own independent claim to Income Support benefit.

If an Income Support claim is made by a family unit sharing accommodation with other relatives, any support provided for accommodation costs is reduced to reflect the proportion of the dwelling being occupied by the Income Support household.

As above, there is no legal requirement for a second adult in an Income Support household to also satisfy the residency test. The great majority of these adults do also satisfy the residency test in their own right but since the end of 2011 my Department has been investigating the extent to which some valid Income Support claims include a second adult who would not satisfy the residency test themselves. This work has been discussed at two meetings of the Council of

Ministers and I am planning to lodge a proposition on this matter within the next few days. The proposition will make an amendment to the Income Support regulations such that in order to receive the adult component in respect of a second adult included in an Income Support claim, the second adult will be required to meet the residency condition in their own right. This will reduce the total value of Income Support benefit available to Income Support households in which the second adult has lived in Jersey for less than five years, and has not previously completed ten years residency in the past.