

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 9th MARCH 2020**

**Question**

Further to his response to Oral Question 61/2020, in which the Minister stated that he “would accept that £25 a week, if you have specialist medical needs and expensive items, may not be an adequate sum in some cases” to be used to cover the cost of wound dressings, will the Minister conduct an investigation into when this level of £25 was last reviewed and whether any hardship has been caused by this level being set at it stands currently; and will he undertake to uprate it accordingly?

**Answer**

Oral question 61/2020 covered two separate areas. The original question referred to the financial support available to low-income residents who are living in residential care and receiving a long-term care benefit. As stated in the answer: *“Residents of care homes in receipt of long-term care do retain a proportion of their income, usually pension income for their personal needs. If that was to prove insufficient, they can request help through the income support scheme for health-related items, such as dressings. Payments are made as one-off special payments and do not need to be repaid. Either the resident or the care home can initiate a request for payment.”* Later in the oral question, reference was made by the questioner to these individuals receiving “£25 a week pocket money”. The LTC benefit provides for a personal allowance to a claimant living in a care home. The figure of £25 is not correct. The current rate is £37.80 per week and the figure was last increased on 1 January 2020. A low-income resident in a care home is not expected to use their personal allowance to meet specialist medical costs. As explained in the oral answer, in this situation the resident can apply for additional support through the Income Support scheme.

The answer to the oral question also covered the pilot scheme to support the cost of dressings in the community. The oral answer noted: “There is a pilot scheme, which is about to become operational to run until December of this year. Under this scheme, my department is working with Family Nursing and Home Care to supply medical hosiery to patients with leg ulcers. These are very specialist stockings, so they are not suitable for all wounds, but those diagnosed with a particular condition will be provided with those hosiery items free of charge, whereas previously there was a charge. We have budgeted a maximum of £40,000 a year during this pilot scheme. This is a group of patients with a well-defined need, assessed by a nurse and it is believed this initiative will make a real difference to their condition.”

In some cases, people living in the community with a medical need for specialist dressings will need to meet these costs themselves. The pilot scheme is investigating this area to determine where and how additional help should be provided. Low-income patients in the community already have access to Income Support payments to help with these costs.