



Health and Social Security Scrutiny Panel

Quarterly Hearing

Witness: The Minister for Social Security

Thursday, 24th June 2021

Panel:

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat of St. Helier (Chair)

Deputy K.G. Pamplin of St. Saviour (Vice-Chair)

Deputy C.S. Alves of St. Helier

Witnesses:

Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier, The Minister for Social Security

Deputy S.M. Wickenden of St. Helier, Assistant Minister for Social Security

Mr. I. Burns, Director General, Customer and Local Services

Ms. S. Duhamel, Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Performance and Planning

Mr. P. McGinnety, Director of Local Services

Ms. K. Baker, Private Secretary to the Minister for Social Security

[14:30]

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat of St. Helier (Chair):

Good afternoon. This is the quarterly hearing of the Health and Social Security Scrutiny Panel with the Minister for Social Security. We are using Teams this afternoon because some members are unable to attend, so we are doing a bit of a hybrid, so some of us are in the States Assembly and others remotely. First, I would just like to remind individuals that the same rules apply as if we were in the States Assembly. I will first ask the panel to introduce themselves and the ministerial team to introduce themselves and also the officers that are in attendance and that are going to speak, so that anyone that is listening will be able to hear us all and understand who is speaking. Once we start, what we will do is that we will ask that those that are speaking put their cameras on and those that are not speaking turn their cameras off in order that the system works just a lot better if we just

stick to only showing those that are speaking at the time. I will kick off. I am Deputy Mary Le Hegarat, Districts 3 and 4, St. Helier, and I am the chair of this panel.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin of St. Saviour (Vice-Chair):

Deputy Kevin Pamplin, and I am the vice-chair of the panel.

Deputy C.S. Alves of St. Helier:

I am Deputy Carina Alves of St. Helier District 2 and I am a member of the panel.

The Minister for Social Security:

I am Deputy Judy Martin, St. Helier No. 1 District, and I am the Minister for Social Security.

Assistant Minister for Social Security:

Good afternoon, everyone. I am Deputy Scott Wickenden, and I am the Assistant Minister for Social Security.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Good afternoon. I am Ian Burns. I am the director general for Customer and Local Services.

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Performance and Planning:

Hello. I am Sue Duhamel, head of policy at Strategic Policy, Performance and Planning.

Director of Local Services:

Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Paul McGinnety and I am director of Local Services.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Perfect. The questioning is going to start today with Deputy Alves.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Thank you. Minister, in a recent *Jersey Evening Post* article dated 24th May, you were reported as stating a long-COVID response plan was being developed “to identify how best to support people” with symptoms of long-COVID. Please could you provide an update as to whether this response plan will include any funding provision for subsidised G.P. (general practitioner) visits?

The Minister for Social Security:

The work is still ongoing. It is being led by Public Health, so we need to find out exactly what long-COVID is, and at the moment there has been no discussion about the next phase and G.P.s, no.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Thank you. On 8th March, you signed a Ministerial Decision to permit weekly payments of £99.61 per student for up to 53 students forced to return to Jersey early from their off-Island accommodation due to COVID-19 and that this would be reviewed in June. Will this support measure be extended once England is reclassified as red from 29th June?

The Minister for Social Security:

You say in March this year. It was started in March last year because we had students either stuck here or coming home for the Easter. At the moment we are just paying in the holidays when they come home. We have not discussed whether or not to pay it. I do not know if really England would make that much difference. A lot of them still come home for the summer, so if they have got to come home for that reason. It may depend if a lot of them coming home ... I heard one student saying that he wants to come and did not want to isolate because he has got a job to go to in 10 days. It may now be different because all the isolation is changing, but yes, that is still there.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Thank you. The panel has received anecdotal reports that constituents are being asked to provide further information about income support claims made during the first lockdown in 2020. Is this the case and, if so, how many people does this affect?

The Minister for Social Security:

I will start and Ian can finish because, yes, I do not know if you remember - you will remember - the dark days of late March and early April last year, we found an extra 1,000 people pretty quickly and we were doing the C.R.E.S.S. (COVID-19 Related Emergency Support Scheme) as well, which were people not on income support. We made the form a lot easier. At the time, to make sure people were getting money, we were not asking for as much as what we would normally do in evidence, et cetera. Over to Ian, I think, now. The department has calmed down and they are being asked for the evidence, yes.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes, the Minister is right. So last year we did have over 1,000 households and unemployment went up by 1,400 nearly, and we - with the Minister's support - shortened the application process. Previously we would have expected claimants to provide their bank statements, for example, which just was not practical as it would have been before in the middle of a pandemic and lockdown. So we shortened that process and made sure that people got money. I am very proud of the work of the department, because we did get claims opened very quickly and thankfully there were no questions from States Members, for example, about delays in that process. As things have calmed down and we have switched of course now to helping people get work, and I am pleased with the

progress that Back to Work are making there, we have got capacity to go back and seek evidence that we would have asked for normally to make sure people's claims are accurate, as indeed people would expect us to do. Indeed, when they signed their claim, it would have been expected that they provide information at the request of the department to validate their claim. Obviously we are going back and doing that and, in some cases, we are finding perhaps that customers did not declare all their income, perhaps had earnings that they did not mention previously, maybe the accommodation they had or rather the people in the accommodation was not declared correctly, and likewise perhaps property assets overseas. In those cases of course that does mean that potentially people have received too much money and that will therefore calculate an overpayment, which they will be expected to repay. That is exactly what we are going through right now.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Can I just double-check that the documentation at the start, those individuals signed to say that they knew that that was going to happen and that if they had claimed incorrectly that they would have to repay?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes, absolutely. That is standard wording. Even though it was done online, the standard wording was exactly the same and the income support claimants can be asked to provide evidence at any point to help validate their claim. That is how we have operated since the claims were started up in 2008. The change last year was obviously because of the pandemic. We would not want people delayed getting money and falling into financial hardship, so the Minister was supportive to say: "Let us get those claims opened" and I am sure that the panel would agree that was the right approach, and then let us make sure then that people get money and any financial hardship is alleviated. As the Minister mentioned, we also had C.R.E.S.S. as well in the same aspect. We will then be able to go back and seek evidence, as we do on a regular basis with claimants.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Roughly how many people does this affect then and how long do you see this taking?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I think there were 1,000 extra claims opened from March and some of them obviously opened and then closed very quickly because people found that their jobs were kept open through the co-funded payroll scheme and in other cases people got back into work very quickly. So we are working through those. I guess the maximum amount would be roughly that number and that we are working through them. I think we are getting towards the end of that process. Certainly in the next few months we will be at the end of that process.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Okay, thank you. On 26th March, the panel notes a Ministerial Decision to bring forward the Social Security (Contributions) (COVID-19) (Amendment No. 3) (Jersey) Order 2021 to allow the Minister to potentially defer employer and class 2 individual social security contributions by 2 years, if necessary, which will be delaying approximately £12 million of social security contributions. How will the shortfall in funding be replaced if an Order is made in the 2-year period?

The Minister for Social Security:

Those were deferred. They were not never to pay. What is it, £26 million for the 4 per cent?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

£26 million for the 4 per cent.

The Minister for Social Security:

Yes, I am not adding up the 2 M.D.s (Ministerial Decisions), so the M.D.4 was for companies to not pay. You know how they paid the quarters, I think the 3 quarters, the first 2, then they paid, then it was the last quarter and some even again in the first quarter of this year. Some people have gone back to work and all depended ... remember we locked down again, but all employees to 4 per cent, that finishes this month. We have got no plans to put it up, only back to what it was and we hoped they will spend it in the local economy to keep the economy going, so money in people's pockets.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Picking up what you have just said there, what work or promotion has been done or will be done to remind people that their contribution rates will be going back to pre-COVID levels from the end of this month?

The Minister for Social Security:

Comms are on it. We need to keep telling people it starts again on 1st July. Lots of people get paid monthly, it will not hit them until the end of July, but we spoke about this in our meeting last Friday. We have just got to let people know because they will notice it if they do not know that is coming.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes, we have written to all employers well in advance to remind them they need to change their payroll systems to bring it back to 6 per cent. We also are writing this week to self-employed individuals who pay class 2 contributions and we will be doing some more general awareness next week to make the wider population aware that it will affect their payment. Most employers will be telling their staff as part of that process.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Okay, great. I am going to hand over to our chair, Deputy Le Hegarat. Thank you.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

I am going to ask some questions in relation to the Health Insurance Fund and the Jersey Care Model. On 17th May it was reported in an article by the *J.E.P. (Jersey Evening Post)* that the level of subsidy provided from the H.I.F. (Health Insurance Fund) to support the cost of G.P. appointments for Islanders had remained unchanged over the past 10 years at £20. Please could you advise whether you anticipate an increase in the subsidy from the H.I.F. for G.P. visits?

The Minister for Social Security:

I was surprised when I was contacted because it is not a year it had been frozen, it had been frozen for 9 years because loads of things have been different. Women can go to their doctor - it does not have to be Le Bas - anytime to suit them and have a free cervical smear. There are other free ... or the doctors do childhood injections, et cetera, so we have been paying money across. There is something for diabetes. I was quite shocked because I thought when we are going to the new care model there would be lots more paid for from the H.I.F., that lots more people will be getting it free.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Can I ask, Minister, if I looked on the website, would I be able to find what services I can get for free in relation to what you have just explained?

The Minister for Social Security:

Yes, I am sure they are on the website.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

What I am thinking is, or the reason I ask that question is, because if I go to the G.P. I will anticipate that I have to pay for certain things but I may not know what I get for free. What I am saying is that if we get things for free that we should not be charged for is that published anywhere?

The Minister for Social Security:

Is it on our website?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes, so each doctor will have a price list and I think under J.Q.I.F. (Jersey Quality Improvement Framework) they are encouraged to promote various services to their patient groups.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

I am only pursuing it as we speak here, but if I am making a decision about whether to have something or not I may not go to the G.P. It is a suggestion maybe, just from my thought process here, is that do we think there would be value so that Islanders were aware of what services they could get for free, therefore it may encourage people to go and have those services as opposed to being concerned about having to pay for them? Do you understand what I am trying to say? From a comms perspective, I just wonder.

The Minister for Social Security:

Yes. With most of the things it is for the doctors to contact their patients because that also ... and do they get a little bit of a bonus if they put the percentage up? We know they have all gone up.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Absolutely.

The Minister for Social Security:

Yes, Sue can explain that more, but yes, they have all gone up since the doctors have been doing it for free.

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Performance and Planning:

I can explain. The things in that that have been provided free are very much things which we want the public to be doing and therefore you are right, we have drawn people in.

[14:45]

So in terms of cervical smears, those are done already to a schedule, so the G.P. will write to you. Sorry, the G.P. or Health will write, somebody will write to you; I do not know exactly where this comes from. But in the letter it says this is a free service you can get with your G.P. or you can see Le Bas, so you are told when to go and you are told it is free in the letter, so it is a letter inviting you in. Flu vaccines is the same kind of thing, you will get letters - this will be from your G.P. - saying: "You are in one of the entitled groups, please come in and get your flu jab now considering it is a reduced price." Childhood vaccinations, again it is very clear, scheduled for when the child comes in for the vaccinations. The other one that is free is our diabetic supplies, where the diabetic will need test strips and various things from time to time and so they have got some relationships with the pharmacist rather than the G.P. Again, they will know that with the pharmacist, that is set up and they will know it is a free service. They are all very clearly things that the Government are keen for you to do at the right time and therefore it tells you to come when that right time is.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Thank you.

Assistant Minister for Social Security:

Targeted healthcare rather than just the ...

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Yes, because from our perspective, we want people to know what they can get for free, so that was just something really because obviously there is considerable concern among the public in relation to the Jersey Care Model and what they perceive that they are still going to get for what they pay. So I think it is just really about ensuring that the public have a full understanding.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I think there is no harm in doing what you have ... basically your question, Chair, so we can certainly make an amendment to the government website and make it clearer.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Yes, because I think there is a benefit because I think it just means that everybody is fully aware of what they are entitled to. That is great, thank you.

The Minister for Social Security:

Yes, because we advertise the Health Access Scheme well, do we not, and we write to people? We know those 10,000 people, they are not free unless you are under 17, but it is really subsidised at £12. That is all your blood tests and everything, which is £12 in itself if you need a couple of blood tests. Yes, we will make sure that is up to date.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Following on from the subsidy thing in relation to G.P.s, if the subsidy is not increased - and it seems like it is unlikely to be - and this leads to further increases in the costs of G.P. visits, will any provision be made to widen the criteria for coverage under the new Health Access Scheme?

The Minister for Social Security:

Before COVID, we were looking at income support, then there was capitation, then there was a next list and that was all health-led and then it was getting nearer and nearer the end of the year and we had to step in. We know the income support people, pension class, et cetera, and the first tranche was always going to be the financially vulnerable, so yes, in the next year, whether it will be in my ministry and Richard's to work together. The next tranche will be looking ... and they were listed, which will be a medical element, long-term medical. A lot of people on long-term medical do fall into the 10,000 there, but you are right, there will be people above and that is the next tranche that has

got to be worked out. Again, when we keep working this out, we need to know. We could cost it tomorrow. It is funding it. We need to know where this funding is coming from.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

We will get to that.

The Minister for Social Security:

It is moving it from somewhere to another.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

In addition to increases in the £20 subsidy payment from the H.I.F., are there any other means of reducing the cost of G.P. visits, such as helping G.P. surgeries reduce overhead costs?

The Minister for Social Security:

I do not know what the G.P. ... you see, G.P.s do not want to be like ... and it would not be N.H.S. (National Health Service) style, but that everything is provided for. I think they did do that when we paid them £5 million, was it not? Everything was covered in the 4 months, yes.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

In COVID, there was 3 months where G.P.s were employed by Government, yes.

The Minister for Social Security:

Yes, their staff, everything in that. I do not think they would want to go that far themselves. I do not know.

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Performance and Planning:

So until 2014, G.P.s main source of income from this Government was through the benefit, but since then there has been a significant large contract. We have talked about the contract for the smear tests and the flu, which are specific things around service. There is something called J.Q.I.F. That provides regular income to G.P.s based on the size of their list, so larger G.P.s get more money and smaller gets less money. That is helping them, as you say, those overhead costs, but also encouraging them to bring patients in to do regular check-ups and things. So they are getting the money for that directly, so that is money that goes on a monthly basis to surgeries and then some at the end of the year. So that is providing nearly £2 million worth of extra income into G.P. surgeries now, which was not there a few years ago. That is one of the reasons why the medical benefit has not gone up, because these other income streams have been increased instead, and these income streams allow us to be more targeted, but also encouraging health promotion tasks and activities. So when you do not want people to come in and pay, it costs them money for a visit, but they will

come in and have a quick blood test or get your blood pressure done or something like that. The G.P.s are getting some cash for keeping those records up to date, so it is encouraging the G.P.s to be more proactive in looking after the health of patients.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

You said that was £2 million?

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Performance and Planning:

It is about £2 million. It is a bit under, it is about £1.8 million.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Would you be able to provide the panel with the detail of other funding which is given to the G.P.s so that it gives us and the Island as a whole an opportunity to see what funding does go into it, so it gives us maybe a better picture than just saying £20 or £25 or whatever? That would be very helpful.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Can I just chip in there? Historically before, I know that G.P.s used to get a certain rebate as well for each referral letter that they did or an X-ray request that they put or an M.R.I. (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) scan request or anything like that. All of that has now been taken away and has obviously been transferred to the patient, so has any consideration been given to give that back? Because I do know that there are some ... okay, say a consultation is £40, some surgeries are charging £20 for a referral letter or an X-ray referral, which they used to maybe do free of charge because they had that rebate element, because that is part of preventative medicine as well.

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Performance and Planning:

You are right, so letters of referral used to be included within the medical record system and that stopped when this new big contract came to bear. The new contract is worth much more money than the amount of income the doctors were getting through letters of referral. Letters of referral were sometimes ... it was difficult to understand sometimes what the value was in just ticking a box on a form. So whereas some letters of referral were very complicated and take time, others were very simple. Also we are trying to encourage much more direct communications with the hospital, so there has been a lot of work on being able to get tests automatically through the hospital, so instead of the doctor having to do something extra, which takes up time - you appreciate that - it is much faster than the overall consultation, it is done there and then the computers can talk to each other. So the letters of referral money has gone, but it was not a particularly well-targeted use of the money. The J.Q.I.F. money, I will give you all the data, but it is significantly more than the money that was lost from the letters of referral going, so the net effect is a significant increase the doctors are seeing. They got a significant increase in income there and the J.Q.I.F. money goes up

appropriately each year, so it is a balance all the time, but we are trying to target the money towards things which are working towards health promotion, that are targeted towards particular health activities which are encouraging people to be taking care of their own health as opposed to just looking after them when they come in.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Just your point there, Deputy, about the costs of additional services, one of the reasons which the Health Access Scheme was ... we were pleased with the outcome that you pay £12 for the appointment, but all the ancillary services are included to avoid that cost of: "Well, it only cost £12 but I have got to pay £20 for that." If I can come back to the Chair's original question, which was have we considered about supporting G.P.s with their costs; G.P.s of course are private businesses. They can innovate and change their cost structures themselves, they can work collaboratively with other health providers and all of that is in their gift to be able to look at their cost base as well as working with Government, of course. So they have got many more options as a private business than they would have if they were part of government services.

Assistant Minister for Social Security:

On that basis of they are private practices, even if we put it up to £40, there would be no contract or anything that would mean that the price would go down for the patients, so without having any contractual basis we could put the supplement up to £40, but that will not mean that 100 per cent will go down for the patient.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

That is fine, thank you.

The Minister for Social Security:

But there is a new doctor on the Primary Care Body and, as I say, this has been going on for 9 years and we need to understand why all of a sudden ... he is not a new doctor, he is just new on the care body, so we need to understand what are their costs, what is it they want. We thought we were going on this trajectory and this would help the healthcare model and this just adds for other people. But if we get the Health Access Scheme right, the next tranche, it will be more money again for them and less for the people, if you see what I mean, so we just need to know where the money is coming from and then it can be done.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Talking about the money and where it is coming from, the panel understands that you have the responsibility for bringing forward proposals for how the Jersey Care Model will be funded. What progress have you made in this regard?

The Minister for Social Security:

It is definitely not as advanced as I would probably like it to be. We gave some money to the healthcare model last year from the H.I.F. for 3 big items. I thought it was doctors' I.T. (information technology) but it was ...

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Can I just stop you? It was more about the future and the funding, because am I right in thinking it is not about what you have already given for the Jersey Care Model? The question I want to ask about is we were under the impression that Social Security would bring forward proposals for how the Jersey Care Model will be funded in the future.

The Minister for Social Security:

No. We will not. Health needs to cost it properly and we need to find out what it costs, what they want to provide in that cost and then we need to find sustainable funding. That could come through, but there would never be enough in the H.I.F. as it is, unless some ...

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

No. Right, because there is a little bit of a glitch here, I feel, because some of us were under the impression that Social Security was going to bring funding proposals for the Jersey Care Model by the end of 2020, so then we accepted that some of us must have got that wrong, but more importantly, we were under the impression that Social Security were the ones that were looking at the ... or had the responsibility for funding of how the Jersey Care Model was going to be funded in the future. So at the moment we have got the H.I.F. The H.I.F. is not going to fund the Jersey Care Model, so we were given the impression that Social Security, by the end of 2021 ... and bearing in mind we are now 6 months and next week is the end of June, so there is 6 months left where we would have anticipated you, Social Security, coming back to us with a funding model. But clearly, by what you have just said to me, that is not the case, so therefore we need to go back to Health maybe or ask the question of somebody next week probably, who is the victim of our challenge, but we need to look at it and decide who is going to work out how this is all going to be funded.

The Minister for Social Security:

Yes, we do need to know what the cost is going to be but if you go back to the healthcare model at the beginning, a lot of people were concerned that if they did not get their treatment in the hospital, you have got a millions and millions of pounds budget in the hospital, is that the right place to go? They might put it out into primary care, it might be a clinic, it might even only be a pharmacy, depending on what you need, but at the moment it is all being done in that big room over there, that

big building. My understanding was some money that would be saved from the Health budget would go into primary care. So we are all on a different thing here.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Right. Can I just confirm, I have asked this question ... yes, before Sue starts I will just explain.

The Minister for Social Security:

Yes, I do know we need to work this out.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

I have, on more than one occasion, asked the same question and I have been categorically told the director in relation to ... which is Caroline Langdon, and they have, on more than one occasion, told me that if you go to the hospital today for your treatment and your treatment comes out of the hospital and goes to primary care, that money goes with you, so you will not be paying primary care.

The Minister for Social Security:

Yes, I have understood that.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

That is exactly what we have been told, so that is fine.

The Minister for Social Security:

Coming from the hospital, not from Social Security, I have to say.

[15:00]

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Correct, but let us get this clear: I think all of us will agree that to provide care in the community is probably going to be more expensive than providing it within the hospital setting potentially - or it could be, I do not know - but the point is we are going to have to fund it. Now, the H.I.F., they have taken money out of the H.I.F., which has had a lot of public comment, as we all know, and there were some real reservations among the Assembly as well about taking money out of the H.I.F. to sort of initiate the project of the Jersey Care Model. But there is an anticipation that - well, we thought Social Security, but clearly that is not the case - somebody is going to come before the end of 2021 with a funding proposal because otherwise what are we going to do, Sue? I do not expect you to answer that, Sue, by the way.

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Performance and Planning:

I am not going to answer the question, but P.114/2020 was the Jersey Care Model that went to the States last year and part of that proposition included creating sustainable funding by 2025. I think in reality that is more realistic. It is true that in the 2021 Government Plan it does make a commitment to come forward by the end of this year. In reality, I think for a whole variety of reasons, with COVID and ... so the COVID is the reason why people have realised the importance of public health. It was perhaps a bit of a gap before in thinking, so the need to reassess the full value of health costs is an important thing to do and it is important to get it right. But getting the public health bit right will be really important, and then all the things that you talked about with stuff in the community and what that costs compared to having it in the hospital. So I think the answer lies somewhere between now and 2025 and the answer also lies between the hospital and H.I.F. It will be a mixture of both. I think it would be sensible for a small Government to have one place where the health funding came from in future, but at the minute the H.I.F. does work and it is working really well. It has provided the funding for the Health Access Scheme, which has been a great support for the population and the H.I.F. is fine for the time being. It does not go for ever but it will keep going until 2025 and by that time I think we will have the whole picture. So I think perhaps people were enthusiastic and perhaps a bit ambitious in terms of timeframe, but I think we will get there. So it is obviously the objective to sort out the health funding, but it is a very strong Government ...

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Just stepping back, the Council of Ministers are right now in the middle of developing the next Government Plan and therefore there will be discussions that will be taking place around the financial position, which will cover the next 4 years, so exactly the timeframe that Sue has described. At the heart of that will be an understanding that our demographic position is such that healthcare costs will go up. Certainly they will go up if we do nothing and they will go up probably ... if you still move to the Jersey Care Model, it will be in the long term probably the same. So there is that realisation anyway that there will be a need for additional health costs in the next few years. I think that is the bigger picture, but yes, the Jersey Care Model, which the Minister is obviously - through the transfer of H.I.F. - funding that work and supporting them to deliver that work, but that very much remains the responsibility of our colleagues in Health, but it will eventually be agreed by the Council of Ministers.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

I sincerely hope that they bring something before the Government Plan because, if they do not, I think they might struggle for people to agree the Government Plan because there was enough unrest in relation to using the H.I.F. for funding the Jersey Care Model's initial projects. So I think that it will be something maybe we will bring up next week.

Assistant Minister for Social Security:

Chair, I think it is something to bring up with them because we cannot come forward - or anyone could come forward - with a sustainable model for it when we do not know how much it is going to cost, because the sustainable model will either be too much or too little. Who is paying for that? The public are. So we need to make sure that we know the cost.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Very interesting answer, thank you. Moving on, it was also reported in the same article that the move then of £44 million was due to be transferred out of the H.I.F. to cover the cost of hospital I.T. systems and the Jersey Care Model and that there was a lack of good governance in relation to the H.I.F. Please could you provide details of the governance and accountability measures in place in relation to transfers of funds made from the H.I.F. for other health-related projects?

The Minister for Social Security:

We only did one, did we not? Was it £11 million this year?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes, you have only agreed one set and the Minister would be expecting to get another report on how that money was spent, as indeed previous Ministers have done in the past when there have been transfers from the H.I.F. to Health for primary care purposes. That has been an approach that has taken place and we would expect the same this time around.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Thank you. If the funding requirements for the J.C.M. (Jersey Care Model) substantially increase as the delivery of the J.C.M. progresses, will further transfers be made from the H.I.F. to compensate for any potential shortfall?

The Minister for Social Security:

I think it goes back to our original question. We need to know what it is going to cost and then we need to know that it is sustainable funding. Even P.125 said it must have a sustainable fund, so that money is coming out of there. We can do it for a year or 2, but no, we need to have it properly costed. Health need to properly cost the healthcare model and then we need to know where the money is going to come from.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

You cannot spend it twice.

The Minister for Social Security:

You cannot spend the money twice. As we say, we have given some this year. There should be money going across, but we need to check what happened last year, what was that spent on.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

It is good to hear, Minister, that you want to know what has happened to what you have already given.

The Minister for Social Security:

I am absolutely wanting to know.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Okay. In a *J.E.P.* article dated 1st June 2021, following its rejected proposal for an interim funded model in August 2020, the Primary Care Board submitted its case for an increase in the rebated G.P. consultations and financial provisions for consultations with the practice nurses, which were not accepted by the Government. The Primary Care Board reported that its case for increasing the rebate was evidence-based. I think you have already answered that. You might like to say why it was rejected, their proposals. Can you advise why the proposals were rejected?

The Minister for Social Security:

I do not remember them as proposals. We spoke about giving a rebate for nurses and that is sort of still ongoing.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

I know we have covered a few bits here.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes, we have. We have covered it. The dialogue continues with the Primary Care Board. Having a practice with more nurses is exactly in line with the J.C.M. approach, but how you fund and support the development of that service, there are perhaps differences of opinion what the best way would be, but that is certainly something that is still taking place and regular meetings take place with the Primary Care Body all the time.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Okay, thank you. No, I think that is covered. I will return back to Deputy Alves.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Thank you. Minister, in the report accompanying the Draft Income Support (Amendment No. 21) (Jersey) Regulations 202- you advised that most of the increases to the income support components

will take place in 2022 due to a higher Retail Price Index of 2.6 per cent. Is this increase in 2002 in response to a predicted rise in overall inflation?

The Minister for Social Security:

No, it is exactly that. It is pegged against the retail price increase, so that is that, but we would not normally do 2 years. We have done it this year to go up in October and then we sat down around January. We were talking about proroguing and everything falling and so a new Council of Ministers officer said: "Oh, you will never get anything to go in October next year" and I said: "Well, can we do it?" So we have put it out, that they did not really like next year, although next year it is across the board. This year we are doing £5 for the first child. We are increasing the child component costs for nurseries and the rest goes up by 1.1. So it is not very fiddly. That was the money we got in the Government Plan and it was pegged against that and then next year every component just goes up by 2.6 on 1st October, which will sort of be clean. Now, it does not stop a new Minister coming in and adding to that if she can find some money or he can find some money, but it gives certainty to all the people that are on income support, so yes.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

And the R.P.I. (Retail Price Index) forecasts come from the Fiscal Policy Panel.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

So what impact, if any, did the increases to the income support components have on the provision of funding to the Health Access Scheme? Will that have any impact on that?

The Minister for Social Security:

No, the people will still pay that money. That is how it is at the moment, yes.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Okay, so regardless of those components going up, they would be asked ...

The Minister for Social Security:

No, if you remember, they did not go up last year and then people on income support got an extra £100, so in the household component there is for doctors, so they did get an increase, but it was sort of hidden. This is to make sure they get 2 increases and, as I say, whoever ... it does not stop anybody else changing it, but it gives total certainly it will go up in October. I think it will be very tight next year. We can get the C.O.M. in in July then and then you have got ... oh, it could, but it is very tight. That will be in the debate on Tuesday.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Okay. My final question is based on some issues that I have encountered with constituents recently with finding accommodation and the accommodation component of the income support scheme. It was just a question really on when was that uprated and what was the uprate based on.

The Minister for Social Security:

Was it the last 2 ... I do not think I have got the ...

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Performance and Planning:

If you are in social rented accommodation, then the income support system supports your full rent regardless of whether you are in appropriate-sized accommodation. If you are in private sector accommodation, there are caps on the amount of rent that will be included within your calculation, so those caps typically go up with the other components. As the Minister just explained, there was an increase last year, but last year we did have the £100 grant per person and obviously the Health Access Scheme, as she just pointed out, is on top of your income support, so that is an extra value to the support to a family. But this year, the rent components will go up this year in line across the board.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

So is there a view to kind of review them at all? Because obviously what I am finding, what I am experiencing, is that a lot of people are struggling to find accommodation and we all know that housing is in short supply anyway, but when they do find somewhere, it is significantly over the accommodation component that is offered to them, but a similarly priced apartment, house or whatever in social housing would be covered for them fully. Obviously we all recognise that there are massive waiting lists for social housing with social housing providers. Has any consideration been given to kind of revisiting this, because having tried to look for accommodation for constituents myself as well, it is very, very difficult, especially when they cannot get into social housing for whatever reason or the lists are very large, that the components are just not in line with what is really out there in the market, but although the same levels, if you are in social housing, would be recognised by you and would be covered in full?

The Minister for Social Security:

We did put them up once, but as I say, even putting it up by 1 per cent, the one-bedroom goes up from £142 to £144, but even if I directed all the money to that ... could you split it? Could it just not go to Andium and just go to private rent? We could look at that next time.

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Performance and Planning:

It would be Andium. The relationship whereby Andium get the full amount of the rent is an intrinsic part of the whole way it is set up and social housing is funded, so that is quite important, so we could

not really cut back on that. That is always fully funded year to year. We do know that about half of private sector tenants on income support see the full costs of their rent included within the cap and a number above.

[15:15]

That proportion has not changed that much over the years, so we have always seen quite a big range of rents in the private sector. But you are right, that is an area to look at. The problem is the Minister has a certain amount of budget set aside each year and if you put it on to rent then you cannot put it on to anything else.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

I understand that, I think it is just really kind of ... a lot of people's frustrations of those people who are potentially sofa-surfing or currently living in hotels is that they are wanting to find somewhere because they cannot afford anything above that cap, and it is just proving really difficult. Whereas if they were on the social housing list and there was accommodation that was above the cap it would all be covered, and that is where the frustration has come from so it is just really to raise that.

The Minister for Social Security:

Fair comment. I do know that happens and it is sort of like Russell, he included more inclusive and who can go on there, et cetera, but it is no good putting people on the housing list if you cannot house people. The supply has got to go up.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Okay, I am going to hand over to Deputy Pamplin.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

Apologies, I am full of infection but I will soldier on best I can. I am as far away from you as possible; nothing personal. Minister, I want to start with the review of the minimum wage that recently happened. Your consultation in the way it was set concluded on 31st May so can you give us an insight of how it was received, what sort of engagement did you have compared to other reviews. What can you say?

The Minister for Social Security:

Obviously we kept readvertising it. I sent it around to States Members about 3 times, if you had any input. It did not actually finish on the 31st because quite a big organisation had a new head person and they wanted to have a good input. So it has probably finished about 2 weeks ago now and it is all being collated. It is not just about what the minimum wage figure is. It is about what would we

do in the future? Is the Employment Forum going out every year a really good use of their time? If we get it right one year would you not then peg it against something? So unless something goes really wrong, you can see that it is going to go up, people know where they are, employers know where they are, employees know where they are. So I do not know. Did you, as a panel, make any ... as I say, the figure is the figure, the other parts of that survey could change the minimum wage because we have been doing it this way since 2005 when it came in; 15, 16 years. So going forward as well whatever ... as I say, when we get to what it is, if it is the right figure then it says in the consultation: "Do you think it should be benchmarked, and if so against what?" So, yes, I have got no idea. It is all being collated now and I did say as soon as we have got something to present to you in confidence to see where it is going and everything we can bring that to you.

Assistant Minister for Social Security:

We wanted to make it as inclusive as possible, which is why we sent out releases and we sent out to States Members and asked them to get people involved. But because somebody that was a really large employer-faced group wanted to come to us late we decided to continue it, which is why it is slightly later than it was, because the more information we have the better we can get this.

The Minister for Social Security:

It would not have been finished in 3 weeks. Probably another few weeks before we have got anything really collated and where we were going.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

Could you just flesh out a bit more about the responses then, because just picking up what you are saying about extending for this large company - which does make sense - and going out to States Members? Was there much of a reaction or because you extended it you thought: "Well, we really need to extend it, this is a large company" but is the other thinking: "We did not really get a big turn up of responses back"; is that fair to say?

The Minister for Social Security:

I do not know. As I say, they are being collated and I will see them when they are collated. I know why they went out to the last person who asked because it was the last week. They may have contacted early but the head of the organisation changed - put it like that - so they wanted to speak to the person who was doing the consultation. We had lots of people speak; it went to Chamber a few times. I really have no idea what the outcome will be and I am really wanting to know.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

Have you got any timescales yet, given the delay and given the fact you will obviously want to review it and then present it to us confidentially, do you have a timescale in mind?

The Minister for Social Security:

I do not think it would be ... well, it could be lodged before summer. During the recess I would imagine it would be lodged, for debate straight after, yes.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

Do you have any idea at this stage when obviously we are not seeing the consultation side of things, how you would measure the impact of any changes to the process? As you said, it has been this way for over 15 years. Do you have any ideas at this stage how you will measure the impact?

The Minister for Social Security:

They might well come back and say keep it as it is. Some people think it is the best thing since sliced bread because the forum go out and they literally go and talk to the farmers, they go and talk to this industry and that. But it is a good 6 months and then they have to collate everything, so they do this every year. I asked the forum to do the rest breaks and holidays and because they did not do the minimum wage they could pick that one up. I think they do a brilliant job. We were just sort of thinking we were going to look at the minimum wage, it has been done this way for so long, is there a better way to do it.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

Yes, of course. Have you identified a specific minimum wage setting process that may replace if that does come through, in preparation?

The Minister for Social Security:

It is early days, I have not seen any of the responses and they are being collated, and so I am literally talking as if I have got a crystal ball. I have got no evidence of what it could be at the moment, it is just that little bit too soon.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

What I am saying is - let us play devil's advocate - the process comes back and they say: "Ditch it, we want to do something different" you will then have to go: "Okay, well I have got an overwhelming response saying to make change, I am now going to go away and see what that process is." So what I am getting at: have you started looking at stuff in preparation that is an outcome? It may not be, I am just saying ... because that may delay the process because you say: "Well, now I need a period of time to go away and look into something."

Assistant Minister for Social Security:

That is exactly what we are expecting to come back from this report. We do not know what people have said to them yet and we will not see that, but when it comes back it could say: "Do it differently, this is a different way of doing it" and we will not be able to judge the impact of that until we know what it recommends. So when we get those recommendations we will definitely come and talk to you as a panel to talk about that, but until we have got to the end of that consultation and that review coming to us we cannot answer any of those questions.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

Sure, it is just trying to get an understanding of the process in anticipation of any delays. Moving on to zero-hour contracts. Minister, following the adoption of P.32/2021, the regulations of zero-hour contracts back on 11th May, the panel noted your amendment to the proposition including other measures to be identified as part of the review. Have you identified additional measures that could be implemented as part of the regulation of zero-hour contracts?

The Minister for Social Security:

We have not started the big review yet. It is not due until next year. The little part of exclusivity, it still has not started but it is a small piece of work and that will be ready by the time we said, which is early next year for a March debate.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

Under (d) in the amended proposition it was noted that funding will be allocated to provide a publicity campaign, if I have got that right, to advise employees basically and employers of workers' rights under zero-hour contracts. Again, at this stage, any vision of what that will be in terms of workshops or live Facebook streams, which seem to be very popular at the moment, or those sorts of things?

The Minister for Social Security:

It just has not started so I cannot ask the officers. The same officer is working on tidying up or looking through the minimum wage, and he has just done the landlord and have gone out to law drafting for the rest breaks and that, so it is sort of one officer and he is doing a lot at the moment. But it will get started on time and we could talk to you about ...

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

Will you be insisting as part of that publicity campaign that it is multi-reaching in terms of languages and the needs of Islanders? Because again, I know we are a very English dominated Island and we see a lot of stuff that comes out from all of us predominantly in English, and then sometimes Portuguese, Polish, and whatever as an afterthought, or using just a Google translator; but specifically for zero-hour contracts will there be some thought process of making sure what is needed to be reached out is in all accessible languages.

The Minister for Social Security:

I note your comments and, yes, absolutely.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

Moving on to the disability strategy. The last quarterly hearing we had on 8th March, in a response to a question about what steps you have taken to improve communication with partners involved in the strategy you advised that the Disability Strategy Group were very keen to improve communications with partners. How is that Disability Strategy Group managing the communication with partners? Can you bring us any updates?

The Minister for Social Security:

Yes, well there have been lots of updates, I am so impressed, and Paul is on the line to tell you all about them. I mean, I could not keep them all in my head when he was telling me the other day, so if I can hand over to Paul for you.

Director of Local Services:

Good afternoon, Deputy. Yes, in terms of communication, specifically all of the subgroups are now up and running, they are chaired by civil society groups. We have the Parent Carer Forum, we have the Royal Association of Deaf People coming to the Island in early July to look at Islanders' needs, to look at communication, and they will respond after that. So, yes, it is central. We have a big comms campaign that is going out. Would it be helpful if I gave a sort of general overview of where we are since 8th March? So, as I said, we met with the Parent Carer Forum on Monday; very positive and we will be working with them around key issues such as transition, which we know is a current gap and an issue that Islanders feel very strongly about. As I have said, all of the subgroups are now meeting. We have secretarial support coming from volunteer.je. A learning disability charter was signed and agreed in terms of professional practice, so this is both Government of Jersey and civil society, so the likes of Les Amis were involved, Beresford Street Kitchen, Mencap, so again really positive that we have got a common factor in terms of delivering services for Islanders. You would have seen the campaign that we did around awareness at Christmastime where we reached out to over 14,000 Islanders who were able to access that through ITV. We are going to again have a campaign to widen the network in terms of people who can participate in the groups. Picking up your point to your previous question about being inclusive to all Islanders, that comms will go out next week. We are then going to have an awareness campaign over a number of months to raise awareness, understand what the issues are for all Islanders in terms of accessibility, and that will culminate in an event in October where Islanders will be able to meet politicians to discuss issues that they have around disability. I am delighted to say that we have secured Lord David Blunkett as the keynote speaker, so again his experience is vital. We are also

doing some work to ensure that disability is included in the employer's net worth, diversity and inclusion kit. Again that is something which is very strongly coming through. We are also working with customer experience and our insight teams to capture and understand disabled people's experience in accessing government services. Also at the planning stage, we are promoting opportunities for disabled Islanders to be active citizens by increasing representation on boards, and we are working with I Will and the Board Apprentice, as well as Lloyds and HSBC, so again that is really positive in terms of enrichment activities. The planning for the transport co-ordinator, that has commenced and we are looking to recruit to get that person in post as soon as possible. I touched upon the Royal Association of Deaf People, they were due to come last year but obviously the pandemic, et cetera, delayed that. Again that is an area where we have listened to the community; it is an area where we really need to listen to those individuals and support them. We are also working with J.D.C. (Jersey Development Company) on the proposed waterfront development to make sure it is accessible for all Islanders, and we have also linked in with the hospital team and our sort of experts' experience that have fed into that process, so we are thinking about inclusion at the start, not at the end. It is very difficult to retrofit inclusion if you have not done it from the off. You might have seen we partnered with Jersey Sport and Disney Marvel Superhero Series where over 500 Islanders took part in activities, including our team, so again really good to look at those activities. That is the first time I understand it has actually left the mainland to come to Jersey, and I have just had confirmation that they would like us to partner with them again; so again really good in terms of raising the profile. You would have seen the Fiscal Stimulus Fund, which will provide over £400,000 for Healing Waves which is absolutely fantastic both for Islanders and people who will look to come to visit.

[15:30]

We are also supporting disabled Islanders who would like to get involved with politics, although I am going to make sure we keep hold of Ant Lewis, I do not want him going anywhere. I am far happier that he sits in our team. We are also doing some work with Andium because we are quite clear, we talked about the housing shortage before but for people with disabilities we need to be planning ahead. So we are working with Andium to look at age groups of what would be required in future years so that we have got homes for life so people can remain independent in their own communities. Then finally we are doing some work with ArtHouse around classes for children and young people with complex needs. So all in all it has been quite a busy time; the momentum is getting there but in terms of communication it is going to be different forms for different people. We know that one size does not fit all; it needs to be across different formats. We need to make sure that we are thinking of those people with sight impairments, those people with hearing loss, but also, as you have alluded to, those people who speak different languages. So that is certainly front and centre of the information group that we have.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

Excellent, and as always it is great to hear the update of the work going on, it is really positive. A couple of things to pick up there. The first one in my mind, politics, with the election next year and - just putting another hat on my head - the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Jersey Branch, there is a bit of work going on between small branches regions who are talking to each other's legislatures about how accessible and improvements are made to democracy, so that would be our States Assembly and government buildings and stuff. I know Liberate have done a piece of work going into making sure accessible buildings that are public servicing are audited and stuff, but is there anything on the pipeline for ... I am thinking about Parish Halls, nomination evenings, I am thinking about the Assembly itself and the courts. Is there a piece of work going in there?

Director of Local Services:

So we have linked in with the office, the Minister and also Senator Farnham met with myself and Ant Lewis because we know that has additional challenges, you know, if you just think about the canvassing and the support there. So what we have got to do is we are meeting early in July and we want to provide practical steps, because you can have the most accessible building in the world but unless your staff are customer-focussed are actually trained to support people then you are only getting halfway there. So that is part of our challenge and that is why we are reaching out. Ant is the logical person because he has stood for Parliament before, and so he will be able to use his real-time experience to provide advice. We are really hoping that people come forward, and obviously we cannot get involved with any sort of politics but, in terms of practicalities and support, then that is something that the team are there for. We are really excited; we would love to see more representation in the States. That would be absolutely fantastic for us. Hence why Lord Blunkett is coming over, because we have made that point, he is an inspirational character. The offices that he has held and the issues that he has had to overcome I think would be an inspiration to any Islander who thinks that they want to stand, so that is certainly our focus. I know the focus groups also want to talk to politicians and candidates about where they see disability moving forward and how it can enhance lives, whether that be employment, education opportunities, housing. So I think a lot of the civil society groups see this as a key issue at next year's election.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

Very good. I guess going to the Minister on this point; in the United Kingdom there is funding available by Parliament for people who wish to take part in democracy, i.e. elections, to bring them up to equal standings to ensure that they can be heard at hustings, so there is a fund available for people who want to stand to ensure they have quality. Would that be something, Minister, in the time permitting before the next election that could be made available?

The Minister for Social Security:

The next step, nearer getting to the election, as you say, it is always that ... when do you step away from an election, but Paul is talking to the Greffe and what they want, there is your road in because they are helpful to anybody, and if they saw a disability or saw what somebody needed they would get around that. So where the money would come from or whatever. But, getting nearer and nearer it is like Lisa, vote.je, and all that, talk to us. And when she says “talk to us” she means talk to her. So Paul could get the people who are interested and then it goes sort of to ... I call it utterly independent, you know.

Director of Local Services:

I think the issue here is obviously everybody has different needs, and I think what we need to do is see what those needs are and then support all the right professionals and make sure that it is a level playing field. Hence why we are reaching out quite early in the process to get an understanding of what that might be, because the planning can be quite significant, it could be that we need to work with our colleagues in speech and language, it could be that we need to work with occupational health. So we need to do it properly and to do that we need to act early, be able to do that assessment and then provide that level of support.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

Yes, absolutely. Good stuff. The other thing I picked up out of that was carers. You talk about how this links up with the carer strategy, I know the Carers Group on Jersey are very vocal about ongoing strategies and how this all links up. Has any of that come up in the work?

Director of Local Services:

Carers play a vital role across our community, and there has been some work and there have been some very dedicated people and we need to take it to the next step. We rely on carers across our whole system, whether that be healthcare or education. So is it where we would like it to be? No, we need to do more right across the board, to be honest with you.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

Yes, that is the point that has been echoing that we are starting to hear more and more. I think it could become a big election issue, but we will see. Lastly from me, there are a lot of strategies being developed at the moment around the climate emergency, we are looking at all sorts of big topics at the moment, assisted dying could be one. Is there feedback coming through to you about how ... like you said about getting people involved at the beginning of these big things rather than try and shoehorn them into an ongoing strategy at the very beginning. How could climate change affect those who are unpaid carers or who are living with access needs on the Island? So is that

starting to come through, how this disability strategy working group can link in at an earlier stage with big pieces of strategy that will impact all of us?

Director of Local Services:

The truth is that we try to link in wherever we can because we know that we have got over 14,000 disabled people on the Island, so if we are getting it right for that particular group then we are pretty much getting it right for everybody. So that is why we have jumped into the discussions about the waterfront, that is why we are jumping into the hospital, because we need to be front and centre of that. Really we are just trying to make sure there is a culture that before you do anything or consider anything you actually consider those needs of Islanders with additional needs and what the impact could be. I think, like anything, climate change will affect everybody whether you have a disability or not, so we are championing that. So that is something I can give you assurance that we are trying to get involved in as much as possible.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

I am thinking about the sustainable transport policy as well, that can have a big impact because for people who are carers they need their cars, and I am thinking about disabled parking spaces or bus access; I know we have a system in place. So it is just good to know that those things are being discussed and thought through that could come through.

Director of Local Services:

We work very closely with Liberty about that. I know there is some work going on around a carer's pass, which I understand might be in the offing in the next couple of months. Transport is a big issue. I mean, I know that we are only 9 by 5 but it is an issue that has raised its head multiple times so you are quite right, it is a big issue for everybody on their own but potentially more so for those with a disability.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

What would be your desired outcome of this piece of work of the group strategy in a year's time? Where would you like it to be? Anyone can answer that, Minister, or yourself, Paul.

Director of Local Services:

I think we have made some good progress but we want more, as Ant Lewis always says, more. I think it is progress, it is about creating that noise and it becoming part of our DNA so whatever we do we are considering disability, we are thinking about that, that we are planning a bit more. The Minister and I met with the Parent Carer Forum on Monday and we know that the young people who are coming through, they do not just magically turn 18 overnight, we know who they are. So I think it is about planning so that we have got smooth transitions, and that as a community we build on the

fantastic strengths that we have got. If you look at the fact that there are 400 charities across the Island, the Parish system, we are all set up to be a really inclusive and caring community and sometimes just supporting people to do that. That is, I suppose, part of our job is giving people that sort of confidence. One of the things that the team has been working on is that in terms of employment how do we make people feel confident to employ somebody with a disability, and that is why developing these toolkits, supporting people. What we do not want to do is sort of go in with a big stick and browbeat people. This has to be built on strengths and it has to become the norm.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

Also there are new laws in place for employers and all of us to make sure they pair up. Just one more point, you made the point about Ant there and he has been a brilliant asset and a fantastic eye there is no doubt, but he may choose to stand in the next election and one of the biggest problems in Jersey is succession planning. How can you ensure that with Ant, say he does decide to step in, that there will be somebody to take his place, that part of this is reaching out and putting plans in place? We have seen many strategies on this panel in the last 3 years that start off really, really strong and then whittle away when people start to move away. How can you reassure that those things will definitely be in play if things change or somebody leaves?

Director of Local Services:

In terms of that, thanks to the funding that we have which we have not had in previous years, we have a project manager who has returned to Jersey after sort of 25 years away, international experience, knows the Island. He is leading it. As well as Ant we also have Steph De La Cour, who is an expert by experience and her and Ant job share. So again I think what we have demonstrated is to be inclusive you have to have a degree of flexibility, that sort of days of 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. have kind of gone. So the way that we succession plan is that we reduce the risk because we obviously have more people involved, but also we are flexible because we have to understand that for some people working 37 hours a week is not going to happen with their additional needs. So I am quite confident that we have got that team in place and Ant has assured me he is not going to stand for election.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

People change their mind.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

Politics is an interesting place. Anything can happen in the next year. On that note I will hand back to Deputy Alves now.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Thanks, Kevin. Thanks, Paul.

Director of Local Services:

It is a pleasure.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

In the 2021 Customer and Local Services business plan you required that Beresford Street Kitchen would be supported to develop a sustainable funding model, and that £300,000 would be provided if this could not be achieved by the end of quarter 2. Does Beresford Street Kitchen have a sustainable funding model in place?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

We have been having some good conversations with B.S.K. (Beresford Street Kitchen) and are working through their plans, and at the moment we are supporting them with £300,000 and we would imagine that we would be supporting them for the whole 12 months, so for the full £300,000. We continue to meet with them; we are meeting with them next week, for example, and we will continue to do so. So, yes, we are supporting them in developing that thinking and that strategy.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Okay, so that £300,000 would be in place for that?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

We had that sum of money for the sole purpose of paying for them and we are paying them £75,000 a quarter, and so we will continue to do that. If they turned around and said they did not need it for some reason towards the end of the year we would not pay it because they would not need it, as you would expect. But at this moment in time I would imagine they will need those funds.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Okay, great. I am going to hand over to the chair now, thank you.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

We are coming to the final couple of questions; hopefully we will be finishing on time. Minister, can you please provide an update on the statistics relating to parental leave, given that the new system will have been in place for a year on 5th July? What has been the take up of the new system?

The Minister for Social Security:

I do not know what the take up is. It came in, in the middle of COVID, which is the 32 weeks, but the actual extended pay came in on 1st January this year, so one would affect the other. We are going to do a full review starting next year.

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

In terms of parental leave, that is a right that an employee has with their employer and the Government does not know those figures, our job is to communicate that. That is mainly done through J.A.C.S. (Jersey Advisory and Conciliation Service), so J.A.C.S. runs training courses and also provides advice and answers lots of queries every year from both employees and employers about parental leave. So on parental leave the Government would not hold statistics.

[15:45]

On parental benefits, which came in at the end of last year, we have seen an increase in the level of births this year so I would expect those levels to go up. It is a little bit early to say exactly the total impact because obviously the leave runs over more than half a year and we are not yet more than half a year into it. As the Minister says, following Deputy Doublet's proposition in 2019 I think there is going to be a full review 2 years after implementation; to do a full review of parental leave, so that will be in the start of July 2022. That will go to the business plan for next year, so we will be doing that and then we will look at that across the board and see ... we have to do a survey to find out, so we will ask people what they thought about it, did it work the way they expected it to, what are the impacts for the employers. There was some concern that it would be an added burden to employers, but has that really panned out like that or is that actually fine. Were the employees taking their full rights, so all that will be happening next year.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Can you please provide an update on the online registration process for social security? How has this been received and is it operating as planned?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes, so I think the panel are asking about how you get your registration cards and your JY numbers, et cetera. That is available online and, for example, if you are a new arrival in the Island you would request your registration card and pay your fee and get your card in the post pretty much the next day. So it is very easy to use and we get good feedback on that particular process. Obviously existing residents can also use it to get their registration card if they are moving out or starting a new job, they can do that exactly the same way but they would not have to pay a fee. So if you are referring to that, that works very well. That is set up. Obviously if people cannot use online then they can request a card over the phone and that is absolutely fine, whether they are a new resident

or otherwise they can request a card on the phone, and if they want to see someone face to face they can of course - as we discussed before - request an appointment and have that conversation face to face with somebody. So there are options, but we have high numbers of people using the online registration form.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Can I just come in there with a question? I think I actually emailed you, Minister, yesterday about the Freephone numbers. So obviously I know there has been one set up for COVID and when I have looked online there is one set up to pay class 2 contributions. So my question is, is there one set up centrally for the C.L.S. (Customer and Local Services) service, because I think the point that I made in that email was that a lot of individuals are on a pay-as-you-go mobile and that can cost up to 35 pence per minute to ring a landline. I know that once I got elected I was on pay to go and realised quite quickly that my credit was running out so I was able to transfer on to a contract. Obviously not everybody has the means to do that, it just worked out a lot more financially viable. I thought there had been one?

The Minister for Social Security:

No.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

So there was never one?

The Minister for Social Security:

There was never one, and there was a question from Deputy Ward and we met with J.T. (Jersey Telecom) and they have given us for the duration, and it has been in for quite a while, for the helpline, they have given it there. We costed it and, do not forget, everything there is ... we have made income support as one so you do not have to listen to the rest, and there is a call back after 2 minutes, and you could email and officers will phone back straight away. It is around £40,000 to £50,000, if it is needed. But I certainly would not be paying for it, because it has got 5 extensions, the co-funded payroll is on there, pension ...

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Tax as well.

The Minister for Social Security:

Tax, yes, so it is not all me but it is ... somebody said in town, they walked down I suppose, there are also free phone boxes. But, yes, I was quite surprised it was that amount of money. Again it would have to be paid for. So I thought it was a minute, but I phone ... they think I am mad and

everyone says, “Well you are red-flagged” so I phone from different numbers. I had an irate person on the phone saying he could not get through to the co-funded, he must have just not heard. So I went, and I said: “I have got someone who needs to talk to you” and he was so angry, I mean, really frustrated. I think he had not heard. But maybe on a bad day, but it is quite settled down there with timings now, I mean ...

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

We had quite a lot of activity at the end of the tax year with people coming into La Motte Street and handing their forms in, and right now we are getting quite a bit of people about settled status as well. But, as the Minister said, we have a customer facilities number which is 444 444, which is answered typically within 20 seconds, and people can ask straight away to be phoned back if that is what is needed. J.T. have got all their phone boxes free for local calls, but you can also come in and speak to somebody and ask for an appointment or ask for someone to call back, so there are lots of routes. We would be paying potentially a lot of money on a Freephone number which would be unnecessary because most people who call the number have it on their contract, so you would end up paying for minutes that you would not need to pay. So in terms of its popularity and its value for money, it does not really ... with all the other options that are available it does not make sense to spend that much money on that service.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

I think that ring-back facility has probably dealt with that quite well.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Only 2 more left to go. Can you please confirm what connection there is between the registration process for social security and the issuance of work permits?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

The phrase “work permits” tend to refer to people who are not in Europe but coming to work in Jersey, and they are issued by Customs and Immigration. If that is what you mean ... because work permits and registered permissions can be different.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Okay, so now it is work permits as well for those that live in Europe because of Brexit, so this year that has become part of that process so it is not just those outside of Europe, and that is what we were referring to with that question.

The Minister for Social Security:

Again, one is Home Affairs and the other one is Chief Minister.

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

I can confirm that C.L.S. is working very closely with the J.H.A. (Justice and Home Affairs) to make sure that the relationship between people coming in to register normally and the immigration process has been transferred as smoothly as possible. But you are absolutely right, with Brexit the number of people who are new to our process has expanded exponentially, and COVID has probably depressed that situation a bit. So, therefore, it is time to get this right and this was a shortage of people coming, so there is probably not too much pressure this year, but getting that process right so that it works between C.L.S. and J.H.A. really smoothly is important.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Settled status, obviously that is different again.

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

That is different, yes.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

I have had recent experience of people who have come to the Island, a couple who one does have a work permit, the other does not. Having looked on the jobs in Jersey section, which is obviously managed by you guys, there are some jobs on there that are advertised, for example healthcare assistants, who are currently advertised under 5 years so they obviously have the licences to allow people to work under the 5 years. However, those employers when I have contacted them have not been aware that if they were to take somebody on who had just arrived on the Island that they would need a work permit to take that person on. It just so happens that that one particular case that I have dealt with, they are a qualified healthcare assistant where they have come from, but obviously they have only just joined the Island. So it was just really kind of is that information shared with those employers who are asking for their jobs to be advertised and who are advertising without the under 5 years, because at the moment that is okay but in 5 years' time the licences are always going to be redundant unless you are British obviously because the work permit is going to be the priority. It is just really asking about what communication there is from the department about that.

The Minister for Social Security:

I thought they had to get the work permit prior to coming for work and the person who is coming over ... I think it is a 6-month holiday with that, is it not?

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

No, you cannot work unless ...

Deputy C.S. Alves:

You cannot work, but what I am saying is ...

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

If somebody has come with a worker.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Yes, come with a worker, yes.

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

The Government has issued information in the last couple of months, not C.L.S. but the Government as a whole has issued information to employers trying to give them clear advice as to what the work permits are and what the visas are, and how that relates to the Jersey Housing and Work Law. So C.L.S. is obviously seeing people come in and does the registration process for social security, but it is a broader issue, but it is a very good point and we will make sure that there is even more going out there.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Final question coming up. The panel understands that an amendment that would ban landlords from not offering properties to people with children is due to be debated on 20th July. For the benefit of the public could you briefly outline the details of the amendment?

The Minister for Social Security:

So it comes under the discrimination law, so they cannot advertise and they cannot not, in theory, have children in there ... if they are buying, if they are selling or they are renting. But it is under discrimination law so the person who felt that they were discriminated against would have to take them to a discrimination tribunal. But there are safeguards, let us say, so under health and safety, and obviously whatever it was, if the flat is 6 floors up and did not have any lifts or ... there will be some that will not be, but it is not going to be ... there is no get out of it, if you have got a decent 3-bedroom house, you have got someone with a family who wants to bring one or 2 children, that they have the right then to take you to the discrimination tribunal, if they refuse.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Okay. That is pretty much us done. That is not bad, 5 minutes to go. Just checking with Deputy Pamplin or Deputy Alves if they have got anything further that they wish to ask prior to us closing?

Deputy C.S. Alves:

No.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

No, all good.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

That is great. Thank you all very much for your contributions and thank you to the public, if anyone is listening, and we will see you in 3 months. Thank you.

[15:57]