

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER CENTRAL
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 3rd APRIL 2023
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON WEDNESDAY 12th APRIL 2023**

Question

“Further to the response to [Oral Question 45/2023](#), in which the Minister stated that “our legal system lacks simple and effective provisions for the payment of child maintenance” but ruled out “income support legislation as an appropriate place to introduce such powers”, will the Minister inform members where, in her assessment, is the appropriate place to position such powers in order to best protect single parents and their children?”

Answer

The question asks for an assessment of the Jersey legal system to identify an appropriate place to position powers for the payment of child maintenance. It is not possible to provide such an assessment within the timescale provided to respond to a written question, nor does that question sit with Social Security.

In my response to oral question 45/2023, I made the statement that “*to the extent that our legal system lacks simple and effective provisions for the payment of child maintenance, I do not believe that the income support legislation is an appropriate place to introduce such powers.*” Income support legislation provides weekly benefits to low-income households who satisfy a number of eligibility conditions. My understanding of the nature of statutory provision or customary law basis for the payment or enforcement of child maintenance is that it would not be limited to low-income families and that the other eligibility conditions applied to Income Support households may not be relevant to child maintenance payments.

At present I am not aware that this subject is covered under any current ministerial plan. A proposal to include such activity in a future ministerial plan could be put forward for consideration subject to agreement as to the appropriate ministerial/judicial lead.