

Response to the radio advertising 19th February 2009 -

The gentleman explained that he is on Income Support and Long Term Disability; he works, is married with 3 young children and feels that income support does not incentivise individuals to work. For some time the gentleman's wife did work but following child care costs and other costs they were £50 a month better off for all the effort. As their income had increased marginally their rent went up.

The gentleman has a 75% disability, he has multiple sclerosis and finds working difficult, his condition is not consistent and causes him significant problems. He does not have a HMA and feels that he cannot go to the doctor as he believes he would not be able to cover the costs involved. He outlined that he had been ill for some time and should have been in receipt of benefit since 2004 but due to a number of issues had not received it; this was the subject of an ongoing case with legal aid assistance.

The gentleman would also like to know more about how he could re-skill and whether he can access courses to improve his situation, he has heard about skills training but nothing has ever been offered.

One of the difficulties faced by the gentleman and his family is not know what the various components of the Income Support are and how they are allocated. He is concerned over emergency payments and avoids things like the dentist due to cost; he would not be able to pay.

Initially when on income support and 2/3rds of the family rent was being paid directly from Social Security to housing, he frequently received arrears notices even though the payments were inter departmental, this now appears to have been resolved.

The gentleman has over the years had a number of States members assist him but he still feels frustrated with aspects of the system which does not support anyone improving their situation.