

Social Affairs Scrutiny Panel Income Support Sub-Panel

Meeting 4
Date: 2nd May 2006
Location: Le Capelain Room, States Building

Present	Deputy J.A. Martin, Chairman Senator B.E. Shenton Deputy G.P. Southern [for items 3, 4 and 5] Deputy S. Pitman, Vice Chairman	
Apologies		
Absent		
In attendance	Mr. C. Ahier, Scrutiny Officer Mr. W. Millow, Scrutiny Officer	
Ref Back	Agenda matter	Action
	<p>1. Minutes of Previous Meetings</p> <p>The Sub-Panel noted that the minutes had not yet been completed and deferred consideration until the next meeting.</p>	
[21/03/06 Item 5] & [24/04/06 Item 4]	<p>2. Action Updates</p> <p>The Sub-Panel noted the action updates and agreed the following additional actions:</p> <p>i) The Sub-Panel were informed that the Minister for social Security had invited them to attend a meeting with him and his Assistant Minister. The Sub-Panel agreed to meet with them at 9:30am on 19th May 2006 at the Social Security Department.</p> <p>ii) Ask the Comité des Connétables if the outstanding information relating to the Citizens Fund will be available to the Sub-Panel prior to the meeting with the Minister and Assistant Minister for Social Security on 19th May 2006.</p> <p>iii) The Sub-Panel agreed to seek information relating to the 'Social Insurance' system in Guernsey.</p> <p>iv) The Sub-Panel agreed to ask the Comité des Connétables how much Welfare was paid to people in respect of their housing costs in 2005.</p> <p>v) The Sub-Panel agreed to ask the Social Security Department when the full cross-departmental review of residential care in Jersey was due to be completed and the preferred method of funding.</p>	<p>CA/WM</p> <p>CA/WM</p> <p>CA/WM</p> <p>CA/WM</p> <p>CA/WM</p>

3. Jersey Association of Carers

The Panel was attended upon by Mrs. F. Hagg of the Jersey Association of Carers to discuss the Income Support proposals.

The Chairman welcomed Mrs. Hagg and explained the purpose of the meeting.

Mrs. Hagg explained that her association was affiliated to Carers UK which was set up in 1994. They currently have 5 employees who are each contracted and paid for 7 hours per week though, in reality, work much longer hours. Funding is from charitable sources and the States provide office space in the foyer of the General Hospital where they have a drop-in centre. In total her association takes care of approximately 10,400 carers in Jersey.

Mrs Hagg explained that she has been involved with the formulation of the proposals from the beginning. She explained that she had expressed the view to Social Security that more users should have been involved from the early stages.

Mrs. Hagg stated that she felt carers were currently being financially penalised as the Carers Allowance stops at pensionable age. However she went on to inform the Sub-Panel that at the last meeting with the Social Security Department she had been informed that the new proposals might include a £40.00 allowance for pensioner carers. She went on to state that under the current arrangements it is usual to involve Family Nursing and Home Care once people reach pensionable age. Despite the subsidised nature of the services they provide there is still an approximate £200.00 per week charge which is not discounted according to ability to pay.

Mrs. Hagg expressed concern about how the new Income Support proposals would work as she had had difficulty in accessing information from the Social Security Department. Mrs. Hagg went on to say that the current system has a flat rate payment but that the department had appeared to take on board her concerns and that under the new proposals it may be tiered.

Mrs. Hagg highlighted the difficulties for people who are not full time carers. They are often not able to access help because it can be difficult to prove they work 35 hours caring a week. She went on to mention the problem of some parents not wanting Family Nursing and Home Care to take over from their children in caring for them.

Mrs. Hagg stated her concern about mis-information emanating from the Social Security Department. She contended that she had had first hand experience of incorrect advice being given out and in fact corrected Social Security employees. She went on to say that the benefit system is very hard to understand and the mis-information does not help.

	<p>The Panel discussed young people as carers. Mrs. Hagg confirmed that young people cannot be in receipt in of care allowance if they are in full time education.</p> <p>Mrs. Hagg stated that attendance allowance, £479.00 per month, is currently paid in full if someone is deemed eligible as there are no staged payments.</p> <p>The Panel asked Mrs. Hagg for her opinion as to how help for people in Jersey compares to help for people in the UK. She stated that Jersey was better off in some areas but worse off in others. She felt that those with severe disabilities were worse off in Jersey and also financially penalised whilst respite care was very inefficient.</p> <p>Mrs Hagg stated that she was concerned about people falling through any safety net although she has been informed that there will be a much bigger safety net under the new proposals. She had concerns about any administration of the new system being carried out by the Parish Halls as there was a social stigma attached to going there for help.</p> <p>Mrs. Hagg confirmed that she had asked the Social Security Department to look at the current practice of retired Doctors assessing people for help. She felt it was a ‘Dickensian’ system and agreed that it was very difficult to challenge any decision. She expressed the hope that the appeal board under the new system would not also consist of retired doctors as it is now. Mrs. Hagg went on to state that Social Security had asked her who would carry out the assessments if not retired doctors but after discussions had appeared to accept that trained assessors should undertake this role.</p> <p>Mrs. Hagg was asked when the last discussions took place between her and Social Security. She confirmed that it had been in February this year.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Mrs. Hagg for attending and informed her that the Sub-Panel will probably invite her back once more detailed proposals were available.</p>	
	<p>4. Adviser</p> <p>The Sub-Panel discussed the issue of engaging an adviser and agreed to consider the issue in more detail at the next meeting.</p>	<p>CA/WM</p>
	<p>5. Future Meetings</p> <p>The Sub-Panel noted that the next meeting would take place at 2:00pm on Monday 15th May in the Le Capelain Room, States</p>	

	Building.	
--	-----------	--