

Health, Social Security & Housing Scrutiny Panel

Income Support

PUBLIC SESSION

Record of Meeting

Date: **28th January 2008**

Meeting Number: **29**

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| Present | Deputy J. A. Martin – Chairman, Deputy G. Southern, Vice-Chairman, Deputy C. J. Scott Warren and Connétable S. A. Yates |
| Apologies | |
| Absent | |
| In attendance | Charlie Ahier, Scrutiny Officer |

| Ref Back | Agenda matter | Action |
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| | <p>1. Appointment of Vice-Chairman</p> <p>On behalf of the Sub-Panel the Chairman welcomed new members Deputy Scott Warren and Connétable Yates.</p> <p>The Sub-Panel discussed the role of Vice-Chairman and agreed that Deputy Southern should be appointed to the position.</p> | |
| | <p>2. Work Programme</p> <p>The Sub-Panel discussed their role in reviewing the implementation of Income Support. The Chairman informed the Sub-Panel that she saw them maintaining a watching brief, identifying where the new system works well and where it needs to be improved.</p> <p>The Sub-Panel noted that Connétable Yates had received a copy of the Income Support Special Payment application form. The Sub-Panel agreed to request, from the Social Security Department, the latest versions of all Income Support application forms.</p> <p>The Sub-Panel considered the outstanding issue of 'fettered discretion' whereby a determining officer is authorised to decide whether or not payment should be made direct to a third party solely dependent on an individual's circumstances. It was agreed to request additional funding from the HSSH Panel in order to fund the provision of independent legal advice on the issue.</p> <p>The Sub-Panel noted that they had yet to be notified of any action taken by the relevant Departments in respect of replacing the previous systems of free bus travel and Active Cards for former HIE recipients. It was agreed to seek clarification on progress from the</p> | <p>CA</p> <p>JM/CA</p> <p>JM/CA</p> |

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| | <p>relevant Ministers.</p> <p>The Sub-Panel discussed issues concerning the Household Medical Accounts (HMA) and agreed to clarify with the Social Security Department arrangements at the end of a calendar year to dispose of money residing in an HMA.</p> <p>The Sub-Panel noted that people had received incorrectly calculated Housing assessments and that a further letter correcting the error was to be sent shortly.</p> | <p>CA</p> |
| | <p>3. Data Protection</p> <p>The Sub-Panel considered data protection issues raised in correspondence from the Data Protection Commissioner (DPC). It was noted that the DPC had recently been receiving an increase in Income Support related enquiries but was unable to pursue a number of them because they were not directly linked to data protection issues. The DPC had indicated that she would welcome the opportunity to direct individuals with non-data protection Income Support queries to the Sub-Panel. It was further noted that the Data Protection Commissioner had asked to be included in any press release the Sub-Panel distributed detailing contact arrangements for Income Support related queries or complaints.</p> | |
| | <p>4. Media Advertisement and Press Statement</p> <p>The Sub-Panel considered the draft 'Call for Evidence' and press release. Consideration was given to the timing of publication. The Sub-Panel discussed whether a period of time should be allowed for the new system to 'bed-in' before the Sub-Panel initiated its 'Call for Evidence'. It was noted that a number of individuals had contacted Sub-Panel members seeking assistance or clarification. With due reference to the discussion the Sub-Panel agreed to publish the 'Call for Evidence' immediately.</p> <p>The Sub-Panel agreed to ascertain the cost of advertising in both the Jersey Evening Post and on Channel 103. It was further agreed that Deputy Southern should be delegated the responsibility of amending the drafts before submission for Sub-Panel approval.</p> | <p>CA CA/GS</p> |
| | <p>5. Date of next meeting</p> <p>The Sub-Panel deferred consideration of their next meeting date.</p> | |

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Date.....