

Health, Social Security & Housing Scrutiny Panel

Income Support

PUBLIC SESSION

Record of Meeting

Date: **29th February 2008**

Meeting Number: **30**

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
	<p>1. Notes of previous meetings</p> <p>The Sub-Panel approved the notes of their meeting of the 28th January 2008.</p>	
	<p>2. Public responses to the ‘Call for Evidence’</p> <p>The Sub-Panel received and noted collated copies of the written public submissions to date. The Sub-Panel also received and noted a written record of progress to date with individual’s issues. It was agreed to update both records with full contact details where appropriate and for Sub-Panel members to update on progress through the Scrutiny Office. The Sub-Panel further agreed to ask anyone making a submission in the future if they would object to their details being passed on to their Parish Deputy or Connétable to pursue their case.</p> <p>The Chairman forwarded a submission from a member of the public to the Scrutiny Department for registering and subsequent distribution to the Sub-Panel.</p> <p>The Sub-Panel discussed the submissions received to date and noted the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent rebate/rent abatement – the Sub-Panel agreed to write to the Minister for Treasury & Resources requesting an explanation of the accounting procedures involved. • Lifetime rental accommodation for the over 50s e.g. Convent Court – the Sub-Panel agreed to write to the Minister for Social Security requesting clarification as to how they are regarded under Income Support. • Maintenance payments – it was noted that maintenance 	<p>CA</p> <p>CA</p> <p>CA</p> <p>CA</p>

	<p>payments were included in the assessment whether the intended recipient received the payments or not.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifetime award of Disability Transport Allowance – the Sub-Panel agreed to write to the Minister for Social Security seeking an explanation as to why recipients who had previously been advised of lifetime awards had been reassessed under Income Support. • Family Nursing & Home Care (FN&HC) – the Sub-Panel noted membership and payment issues and agreed to circulate hard copies of the transcript of the recent meeting between FN&HC and Sub-Panel members and the subsequent e-mail correspondence. • Homeopathic Doctors – the Sub-Panel noted that funded access to Homeopathic Doctors had been excluded under Income Support. <p>The Connétable of St. Martin informed the Sub-Panel that he had conducted a survey of St. Martin Parishioners who had previously been in receipt of Welfare payments. The Sub-Panel noted the responses received and agreed that they should be registered and collated by the Scrutiny Office. The Sub-Panel further agreed to write to the Comité des Connétables requesting an update on the types of queries they had received from their Parishioners.</p>	<p>CA</p> <p>CA</p> <p>CA</p> <p>CA</p>
	<p>The Sub-Panel received a representation from a member of the public who was accompanied by the Connétable of Grouville:</p> <p>The Sub-Panel discussed the implications of means testing Attendance Allowance under Income Support. The Sub-Panel were advised that this individual had a profoundly disabled 4 year old child who was unable to communicate, reach or grab and would require a lifetime of intensive care. They were further advised that the child in question was currently attending Mont à L'Abbé school.</p> <p>The Sub-Panel were advised that Jersey was one of the few jurisdictions that means tested Attendance Allowance. It was noted that the circumstances of some parents prevented them from being able to give up work to act as carers and that the withdrawal of Attendance Allowance could profoundly disadvantage them and their child(ren). The Sub-Panel were advised that the father of the child in question had effectively down graded his career in order to ensure greater flexibility for dealing with his child's condition when required.</p> <p>The Sub-Panel noted that the parents of the child in question had received 'muddled' advice from the Social Security Department. They had received differing advice from different employees which may have resulted in the parents not claiming other benefits they were in fact entitled to. In contrast it was noted that the Health & Social Services Department had provided an excellent service. The Sub-Panel were further advised that when challenged about the changes to Attendance Allowance under Income Support the Minister for Social Security had stated that the aim was to re-distribute the money available to those people most in need. The Sub-Panel agreed to establish how many had received Attendance Allowance in 2006 and the total cost of those payments.</p>	<p>CA</p>

	<p>The Sub-Panel agreed that many States members may have been unaware of the impact upon Attendance Allowance when they approved the Income Support proposals.</p> <p>The Sub-Panel were advised that other parents of children at Mont à L'Abbé school had informally expressed their concern about the changes to Attendance Allowance. The Sub-Panel agreed to write to the Head Teacher of Mont à L'Abbé school to arrange a meeting with parents to further discuss this issue.</p> <p>The Sub-Panel were advised that copies of the correspondence between the parents of the child in question and the Health & Social Services Department and the Social Security Department would be forwarded for their information.</p>	<p>CA</p>
	<p>3. Legal Advice</p> <p>i. The Sub-Panel noted that only two responses to the request for legal advice had been received to date. They further noted that one firm had declined the request and one firm had quoted a cost of £4,000-£5,000. The Sub-Panel agreed to contact the law firms that had not yet replied to their letter.</p> <p>ii. The Sub-Panel noted representation from members of the public regarding the treatment of same sex couples under the Income Support Law and the Income Tax Law. The Sub-Panel were advised that the Attorney General had offered to provide them with legal advice concerning this issue. The Sub-Panel agreed, in the first instance, to write to the comptroller of Income Tax for clarification on how the following 'family units' are assessed under Income Tax laws in comparison to an equivalent married couple:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different sex couple • Different sex couple with children • Same sex couple • Same sex couple with adopted children 	<p>CA</p> <p>CA</p>
	<p>4. Media Advertisement</p> <p>The Sub-Panel discussed the public response to their recent media advertisements and agreed that they would reach a different demographic advertising on the radio. The Sub-Panel agreed to initiate radio advertising and the Chairman was delegated this responsibility.</p>	<p>JM/CA</p>
	<p>5. Budget</p> <p>The Sub-Panel noted that their existing budget of £2,000 would not be sufficient to cover the cost of legal advice or more extensive media advertisements. The Chairman agreed to discuss the budget with the Health, Social Security and Housing Panel at their meeting of the 4th March 2008.</p>	<p>JM/CA</p>
	<p>6. Date of next meeting</p>	

	The Sub-Panel agreed to meet at 9:30am on Friday 7 th March.	
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Date.....