

STATES OF JERSEY



STATES STRATEGIC PLAN 2009 – 2014 (P.52/2009): FOURTH AMENDMENT

Lodged au Greffe on 19th May 2009
by Deputy D.J. de Sousa of St. Helier

STATES GREFFE

1 PAGE 2 –

After the words “attached as Appendix 1” insert the words –

“, except that in Priority 8 on pages 20–21, in the section entitled “What we will do”, in the first bullet point, after the words “help themselves” insert the words “by providing real incentives to improve their situation and standard of living”.

2 PAGE 2 –

After the words “attached as Appendix 1” insert the words –

“, except that in Priority 8 on pages 20–21, in the section entitled “What we will do”, in the second bullet point, after the words “people in need” insert the words “by making the system easier to access and flexible to ensure against unusual circumstances”.

3 PAGE 2 –

After the words “attached as Appendix 1” insert the words –

“, except that in Priority 8 on pages 20–21, in the section entitled “What we will do”, in the fourth bullet point, after the words “greater independence” insert the words “by providing training for appropriate jobs that will be available”.

4 PAGE 2 –

After the words “attached as Appendix 1” insert the words –

“, except that in Priority 8 on pages 20–21, in the section entitled “What we will do”, after the last bullet point insert an additional bullet point as follows –

- Review and strengthen the community role of the parish.”

5 PAGE 2 –

After the words “attached as Appendix 1” insert the words –

“, except that in Priority 8 on page 21, in the section entitled “Key Indicators”, after the last bullet point insert the following additional bullet points –

- Level of incentives to gain employment and stay in work.
- Amount of real training available for jobs.
- Number of claimants supported in full-time or part-time work and training.”

DEPUTY D.J. DE SOUSA OF ST. HELIER

REPORT

Amendment 1

The Scrutiny Sub-Panel Chairman's foreword in S.R.17/2007 presented to the States of Jersey on 2nd October 2007 before the new system was initiated stated that one of the key concerns throughout the Sub-Panel reviews was: "The essence of the reforms had been to squeeze out any resources that promoted and reinforced work to those on low to moderate incomes." It is now over one year since the introduction of income support, and still there are no real incentives initiated to encourage the long-term unemployed back into meaningful employment. Also, in the Sub-Panel's report of 2008, at 6.8: "Incentives to work" stated that under the current system claimants are insufficiently rewarded for seeking paid employment or increasing the number of hours worked and may in fact end up worse-off. These issues still need to be addressed.

Amendment 2

In the previous Income Support Review presented to the States of Jersey in 2008 and previously the review before its introduction in 2007, all reported that the forms were too long and too complicated for most applicants. In several of the previous reports it has been found that the system is fundamentally flawed because it is bureaucratic and impersonal. On the one hand it is wasting taxpayers' money by lacking controls, and on the other is allowing the elderly and vulnerable to "slip through the net".

Amendment 3

In the 2008 Sub-Panel Report, one of the key findings was that "the Minister has seriously underestimated the work required to enable Income Support applicants to enter and maintain full-time work, and that the incremental approach adopted to cater for this problem is inadequate." In working on the current review this issue still remains unsolved.

Amendment 4

One of the fundamental issues arising out of the current Income Support Review is that the lack of parish involvement in the system. Payment cheques are not being cashed. The vulnerable and elderly do not have the Community Visitors that knew them well and could alert the appropriate agency if they had concerns about an individual. Parishes need to reach out to all sections of the community.

Amendment 5

This amendment adds 3 further Key Indicators that are self-explanatory. I hope that if these amendments are adopted and the income support system is improved in other ways, it will also lead to a system where there are no penalties for claiming maintenance, an easier and more accessible system of claiming, greater flexibility for unusual circumstances, together with clear definitions of what makes up a unit, and encouragement for single and married parents to both work when they need to, by providing real help with child care.

Financial and manpower implications

There may be some financial or resource implications with these amendments, but as the Council of Ministers notes in the Plan these will all be considered in future Annual Business Plans.