

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 6th DECEMBER 2010**

Question

Will the Minister inform members who have been appointed as external advisors on the review of Income Support along with details of their qualifications/experience in this field? Will he confirm whether he would be prepared to re-visit the terms of reference to consider the inclusion of the following –

- a) Potential interaction of Income Support, earnings and income tax thresholds;
- b) Treatment of over/under payments of benefit;
- c) Overall coverage of potential claimants/take-up rates?

Answer

As previously set out, the review of Income Support will cover all significant aspects of this benefit.

The Department is making use of external advice as appropriate. The employment review is already under way and a small team from the well respected International Centre for Public and Social Policy (based at the University of Nottingham) is assisting with this task. The communications review has also started and is being supported by the States Communications Unit working with specialist advisers from the UK Department of Work and Pensions. The Housing Department is currently finalising the tender process to appoint external advisers for the Housing Transformation Programme, which includes a review of the interface between social housing provision and Income Support. Further advisers will be recruited during 2011 as other aspects of the review are developed.

The potential interaction of Income Support, earnings and Income Tax thresholds will be considered as part of the overall review of benefit levels. As this topic is also included in the current HSSH panel review of Income Support, the findings of the Panel will be incorporated into the departmental review. The treatment of over and under payment of benefit is an administrative issue which will be addressed as part of the review of Income Support administration. The overall coverage of potential claimants and take-up rates will be considered as part of the analysis of the household income distribution survey recently completed by the Statistics Unit.