

**4.13 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Minister for Social Security regarding the extent to which the proposals in the ‘Draft Income Support (Amendment No. 16) (Jersey) Regulations’ (P.45/2017) addressed the recommendation in paragraph 20 of the Scrutiny report ‘Living on Low Income’ (S.R.4/2016) relating to the ‘benefit trap’:
[1(336)]**

To what extent, if any, have the proposals in the Draft Income Support (Amendment No. 16) (Jersey) Regulations (P.45/2017) addressed the recommendation in paragraph 20 of the Scrutiny Report *Living on Low Income* (S.R.4/2016) relating to the “benefit trap”?

Deputy S.J. Pinel (The Minister for Social Security):

Paragraph 20 of the Scrutiny Report *Living on Low Income* recommends that work incentives should be improved within Income Support. I confirm that I do intend to improve the work incentives as part of the 2017 update. This is clearly set out in the written report accompanying the Income Support Regulations lodged last week. The work incentives are planned to increase from 23 per cent to 25 per cent from 1st October this year. Work incentives are set through a Ministerial Order. The debate on P.45 which relates to increases in component rates set out in the Regulations is scheduled for debate on 18th July. This order will be made straight after that. Combined with increases in component rates, every income support household will benefit from these proposals. Thank you.

4.13.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

In particular, the recommendation was that the Minister should examine whether additional payments such as those for childcare or care-related needs could be removed from the income support calculation. Has she considered, or will she consider, examining that proposal which I believe works elsewhere and focuses/targets income support at the vulnerable, like children?

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

We must remember in all of this that income support is a safety net designed to help low-income households meet their basic needs and we do help people with childcare costs. In October, we will be helping up to £6.79 an hour for a child under 3 and £5.30 an hour for a child aged 3 to 11.

4.13.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

In particular, will she reconsider her decision to eliminate the single-parent component over recent times which has proven to increase the number of children living in low-income families on income support, i.e., the income support safety net is too low?

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

No, I will not reconsider that. The Assembly agreed with the proposals to reduce over time the lone-parent supplement and it will not be returned.