

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 25th FEBRUARY 2020**

Question

Will the Minister inform members what actions, if any, she has under consideration to attract more family members to become carers by reducing the income barriers that apply, and what discussions, if any, there have been in this respect regarding the carer's allowance and components?

Answer

Home Carer's Allowance is a benefit available to people who give up work or substantially reduce their working hours to care full-time for somebody. Home Carer's Allowance was designed so that people can continue to earn a modest amount alongside their caring responsibilities. Not every carer wants to work, or is able to work, whilst caring but for some carers it is important to maintain a link with the world of work. The income rules for HCA are currently under review.

The Government has identified one of its Common Strategic Priorities as:

*CSP2: We will improve Islanders' wellbeing and mental and physical health -
We will do this by supporting Islanders to live healthier, active, longer lives, improving the quality of and access to mental health services, and by putting patients, families and carers at the heart of Jersey's health and care system.*

Jersey benefits tremendously from the care delivered by family members. We already support family carers through the benefit system but are also taking positive steps to give greater recognition to families who care for a member in the home. I hope this will make it easier for families who want to provide care to a member who needs it.

We are also committed to the following Government Plan action under Common Strategic Priority 4

In 2020, we will develop additional support for disabled people who continue to live in their own home, and their carers. This may include the provision of a personal budget, or financial help with the additional costs faced by households looking after a family member at home.

A budget allocation of £150,000 has been made to support this project in 2020 with further funds available in future years. We are addressing this commitment through a joint project between the Health and Community Services, Customer and Local Services, and Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Departments. Officers have been tasked with gathering evidence on additional household costs from families who provide care. They have studied the information we already have from families and have looked at the types of costs that families face in the UK, as well as evidence from the voluntary and charitable sector. The project will run through 2020 and it is likely that benefit regulations will be brought to the States Assembly for debate later in the year.