



Health and Social Security Scrutiny Panel

Quarterly Meeting with the Minister for Social Security

THURSDAY, 26th FEBRUARY 2015

Panel:

Deputy R.J. Renouf of St. Ouen (Chairman):

Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier (Vice-Chairman):

Deputy T.A. McDonald of St. Saviour

Witnesses:

The Minister for Social Security

Assistant Minister for Social Security

Policy and Strategy Director

Head of Back to Work

Interim Chief Officer

[13:00]

Deputy R.J. Renouf of St. Ouen (Chairman):

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. This is a public hearing of the Health and Social Security Scrutiny Panel and we have convened today to hear the Minister for Social Security with specific regard to the changes the Minister has announced relating to persons in receipt of Long-Term Incapacity Allowance. We have before us the Minister and members of her team. I am Deputy Richard Renouf, chairman of the panel.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Thank you all for coming. Thank you, Minister. We recognise that we have got just 40 minutes so we will try and ask you as much as we can to understand why you have made these changes. But the change was announced in a press release the very afternoon after we had concluded our first quarterly hearing with you and you might be able to understand a frustration we felt because we wanted to ask you about plans your department had and perhaps understandably you were not able to share too much with us because you were still working on so much of your new initiatives and new policy. So you can understand we felt rather frustrated at not being able to get to grips with too much. But yet that afternoon this new announcement was made of changes and I wanted to ask you why you felt that you were not able to tell us of that at the meeting and why it had to come out through the press?

The Minister for Social Security:

Yes, of course. The major part of the discussion in the Scrutiny hearing last week was the changes we may be making with regards to the Medium-Term Financial Plan and the savings that are required. The change that you are referring to now in the Long-Term Incapacity Allowance is merely an operational change. It is nothing of any consequence because, I think, as you will understand, we have already been encouraging people back to work with Long-Term Incapacity Allowance benefit between 5 per cent and 30 per cent. So this was merely an extension of that period. It was not requiring a Ministerial Decision or anything. It was purely an operational change. It was just one of those things. I signed off the press release in the afternoon and that was that. So it was not of such significance that we could have brought it to you or made it public before we signed off the press release.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Could I perhaps just say that it is possible to ask for a quarterly meeting to go into private session and we could have received that news because you were talking to us about the Back to Work scheme and the priority of your department to reduce the numbers of people seeking work. You spoke to us about constantly seeking new initiatives to do so and this was clearly an initiative. We may have been able to learn about it and begin to address these questions rather than learn about it in a press release. But we are interested because you described it as fairly routine but clearly

there are people who may be affected. I understand you would have written to persons receiving the long-term care allowances and presumably asking them to come and meet your Back to Work team.

The Minister for Social Security:

Yes, a third of the people receiving it had come forward voluntarily anyway to ask to have the assistance that Back to Work give them. So a letter was sent out, I think it was Wednesday, the day before the Scrutiny hearing, to the remaining 64, I think, people just to say that this is what we are going to do. So it was only just the day before so we had not had replies from them by the Scrutiny hearing. As you say, had it been a private one it might have been different but as it was purely an operational move we did not feel it was necessary.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Can we ask about the reason you made the change because if you previously limited that requirement to seek work to those on 30 per cent incapacity allowance what reason did you want to move to 35 per cent?

The Minister for Social Security:

Largely because it has been so successful from the 5 per cent to 30 per cent. The Back to Work team are extremely professional and experienced in encouraging people back into work and there has been such a huge take up, and I think you have seen the figures, of getting people back into work that it was deemed that we could encourage more people, so just upping the percentage. But if you want some more details perhaps ...

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Well, if we could just ask ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Upping the percentage is not just operational because you are affecting 100 people or thereabouts who are on 35 per cent-plus. Can you give us an idea of what sort of impairment or disability we are talking about at 35 per cent?

The Minister for Social Security:

It is not 35 per cent-plus. It is 35 per cent and below. Possibly I can defer to the Chief Officer who can explain the way that these assessments are made as to what determines the percentage.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

The assessments are made by a medical board, we understand that, and are often regularly checked yearly or 3-yearly. Some people will get signed up at 35 per cent effectively, but they are not expecting that, or is that only applied to more serious levels of impairment? Nonetheless, what sort of impairments are we talking about? What sort of capacity? Mental capacity or physical capacity?

Interim Chief Officer:

It may be mild to moderate back pain, mild to moderate depression or perhaps, for example, loss of sight in one eye. That is the sort of ... I mean the L.T.I.A. (Long-Term Incapacity Allowance) cuts across a broad range of elements of course and the percentages do not necessarily mean much by themselves but the underlying conditions, that is a flavour of the sort of assessments that the medical board may make.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Can I just ask you: you used the word “encouraging” people back to work? Can I go straight into saying, why then do you feel the need for a sanction?

The Minister for Social Security:

The sanction is the standard; I think the phrase is carrot and stick. So you encourage people to go back to work, which any research will tell you helps a person’s wellbeing, their self-esteem, apart from just increases their financial potential, which has a knock-on effect on their families. So it is a good all-round encouragement. The sanctions are there, as they are with income support. That if a client or customer fails to comply with the appointments that may be set up for them to attend a possible interview or a training day or a work placement, all of which may have been set up, and if somebody consistently fails to do that, which is arranged for them then there has got to be a sanction otherwise it will just carry on and on and on, that people will disobey the rules by which we have to govern the benefit system.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

So if someone is saying: “No, I do not feel capable of returning to that work for that length of time” it may well receive a sanction?

The Minister for Social Security:

No. They would only be encouraged to go for a job or position if the Back to Work team, who I have said before are incredibly professional and experienced at this, if they thought that that particular position was right for them and every account of, if they were not feeling well, for

instance, on a particular day there would be no sanction applied at all. It is just consistently refusing to attend any of the meetings or the interviews that have been arranged for them.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Where is the Back to Work team professional?

Interim Chief Officer:

So if your question is specifically around do we have professional qualifications in relation to employment advice, that answer I think would be no. If it is professional the way we go about trying to support people into work then the answer is yes. We have over the last 3 years had a great deal of success helping move people into employment. Over 5,000 people have been able to ... we supported people to get 5,000 jobs in that period. We have large amounts of customer comments and feedbacks grateful for the support they have received. We have feedback from employers saying that we have really helped their business and we constantly try and think of new ways of trying to work with employers and those who are unemployed.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I am sure that is right and it is a successful scheme. But in moving from 30 per cent to 35 per cent you are getting closer to people who have severer disabilities. How do the Back to Work team assess an ability to work for somebody who has a disability or an impairment or something affecting their life?

Interim Chief Officer:

Whether individuals are on L.T.I.A. or not people are affected by all sorts of issues and the advisers of course are working with people to try and understand what their current issues are, how to overcome those barriers. There may be criminal records, there may be individual personal situations that are developing, a recent bereavement and so on, some people will be signed off sick, some will not be, so it is a constant dialogue with the adviser. Advisers can, if they feel it is appropriate, allow someone not to look for work for a period it is right for them, as an individual.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Can I ask specifically what the training is? How long does it last? What does it consist of? How are these officers making these judgments trained?

Head of Back to Work:

We have a quite extensive staff training programme. It starts with an induction which takes place over 2 weeks of day long ... half-day or day long courses with a professional ... someone who has got real experience in it. That covers all of the basics around how to be an employment adviser,

and that is training which I believe compared to U.K. (United Kingdom) companies such as Ingeus, people in the welfare to work industry, that is ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

What was that name?

Head of Back to Work:

Ingeus is an example of a company in the U.K. We have benchmarked our training to make sure we have covered all these sorts of things. We then have sort of buddy systems where people ... we have experienced advisers who people sit with and train about how to be an adviser over that period of time. We have also got legal training and important training that is data protection, things like safeguarding training. Everyone goes through an official safeguarding training that is accredited by the Safeguarding Partnership Board.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

What does that entail? I am not aware of that.

Head of Back to Work:

That is a day long course, I think, is it?

Interim Chief Officer:

Yes.

Head of Back to Work:

A one-day course and it covers safeguarding issues but also about we have got a safeguarding panel and how to refer any safeguarding concerns. It also covers what is the role of an adviser and when to refer on, almost so that people know what the routes are if they do have safeguarding concerns about a client or about something that a client has mentioned in relation to someone else. So there are key bits of training as well as that. The training actually carries on through an adviser journey. So we have training such as in techniques, such as motivational interviewing. We are currently running coaching training for our advisers which is about how to ... the coaching model, using the grow model, about how to work with our customers ... to best work with our customers so that we can support them in their journey to work. There is also training in how to write a good C.V. (curriculum vitae), interview skills, so that we make sure our advisers are trained and how to pass on this information to our customers so that they can get ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

How long overall would the training take? When would the trainee be sitting at a desk advising people and supporting people doing the job?

Head of Back to Work:

Our official induction process, the key training at the beginning, is a 2-week process and after that they would be paired up and so they would start to get their own caseload. After that 2-week training they would start to get their own caseload but they have team leaders who will go on appointments with them. They have also got buddies who will go in on appointments with them. The best way to learn is through starting to pick up your own caseload, work with customers, but there is a big support mechanism there so that over time then once they have passed their competency; we have an 8-week official review, 26-week review passing probation, this sort of thing.

[13:15]

So there are key weekly reviews on how well that adviser is doing. There are observations by team leaders so it is not a sort of you do the training and then ... the training continues.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

From all you have said it is very detailed training but is there any training in understanding medical conditions and the effect they can have on people's ability to work?

Head of Back to Work:

I mean the group we have got of advisers within our Work Right provision work closely with our colleagues who are health advisers in the health service. We focus that these clients will ... rather than going to a whole range of different advisers what we have decided to have is specialists who will be the most experienced to deal with questions about how will their allowances be affected, if they get a job how does their income support and their L.T.I.A. still work. So we have one team of advisers who are specifically working in that with an experienced team leader who ran some pilot work in this area last year.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

But if somebody is before you and saying: "My condition means that if I try and do a day's work I am absolutely washed out for the rest of the week" how is that assessed?

Head of Back to Work:

That is exactly where the role of an adviser stops. Our advisers are not medical professionals and we affirm with them that they ... so what we would do is we would encourage ... the adviser knows that ... I mean they would encourage them to go to their G.P. (general practitioner). If someone is signed off obviously ... we will ... that is the G.P.'s professional clinical assessment. The L.T.I.A. is a clinical assessment so that is not something that the adviser's make clinical decisions on that.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

But the difference between somebody who has a memory lapse, for example, and fails to turn up, and fails to ring to say: "Sorry, I cannot come in today to do your appointment" and then perhaps does it again 3 weeks later when you have rearranged the appointments, effectively that is 2 breaches. At what stage do you start saying: "Hang on, the capacity of this person to work or to turn up." We are talking about ... I met somebody the other day who is subject to epileptic fits and suffers memory loss. The appointment is there, they know it and in 5 minutes it has gone. But how long ... what skills have you got in terms of ... there are all sorts of things. It is very easy to see a physical disability or whatever that is and a lot of the stuff is based around that, but mental capacity and feelings and psychology of it, so this encouraging and encouraging but somewhere in there you have got a system that says: "And it is carrot and stick" to quote your Minister, and we can encourage all we like but we also need a stick. At what stage are you in a position to spend ... make up your mind and say it is time for the stick? Because this person is not doing the business. Where is the difference between I think this person should be out at work and this person does not think he should be out at work. How do you make that? How do you train that? Because that is what you are asking, I think. Minister.

The Minister for Social Security:

I think if you ... that would depend on the clinical assessment, as Sophie said, the advisers do not do that. That is down to the G.P. or the hospital consultant, whatever it is.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

But it is your board. Your board does L.T.I.A., you are at 35 per cent.

The Minister for Social Security:

But they will then make the assessment of the percentage based on what they see and if somebody is constantly having, I think you said epilepsy or epileptic fits, or whatever, or memory lapses, then they will be on a different percentage. You would not be, as you said, in breach twice because the advisers understand that situation. So would follow up with a phone call or a visit or whatever. It would not be an automatic breach at all.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I think you told us that the assessment by the medical board for L.T.I.A. is not an assessment of somebody's ability to work. It is purely an assessment of incapacity. But now you are moving on to assess their ability to work. How do you resolve the disagreement if they say to you: "Look, I am sorry, I just cannot hold down a full-time job, which you are asking me to" or: "I cannot hold down any job because of stress, fatigue" which are recognised ...

Head of Back to Work:

Okay, that is a medical and so we would want evidence from a medical professional.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Do you require them to get evidence from their doctor?

Head of Back to Work:

Yes.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

So they have to justify to you that they cannot work even though they might have 35 per cent incapacity, and that is recognised, you are saying: "We still think you can work. It is up to you, the recipient, to submit it."

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Is that what you are saying?

Policy and Strategy Director:

It is very important to understand that L.T.I.A. is specifically not an assessment of work. The doctors are not allowed to consider that in their assessment of the condition. The Income Support Law, which is what we are talking about, does something different. The Income Support Law recognises that people who have medical conditions may not be able to work full-time, may not be able to work at all. The Income Support Law is not prescriptive as to how that judgment should be made. It requires the officer to make a judgment as to what is the sensible thing to do. If that judgment is seen to be bad then the claimant will go to appeal and will win the appeal. So there is that legal route out of that situation. But obviously we have very few appeals in that area because it does not ever get that serious because you manage the situation bit by bit. The question about memory loss is an interesting one because obviously somebody who suffers memory loss is going to be quite limited in the kind of work they can do. So you could not give them work, which would be ... so you are not ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

He has just been sanctioned.

Policy and Strategy Director:

But they would not be ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

He has got 13 weeks for not responding, for leaving his job ... losing his job.

Policy and Strategy Director:

Okay, I do not know ... obviously we cannot talk about individual cases and I am not aware of it.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

With people who, and he is not on L.T.I.A. ...

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Let us try and keep off individual cases.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

For example, that is, I would not say typical, but that happens. Now this is somebody who is not officially on L.T.I.A., he should be perhaps, but nonetheless for all sorts of reasons at some stage you are saying: "We will sanction you if necessary" and it comes down to a judgment call between what the department or the officers say this person is capable of and what the person says: "I do not feel like I can cope with that" does it not? Putting a sanction in there fundamentally changes the nature of the relationship between an officer helping, supporting, trying to get rid of obstacles, and an officer saying: "I think you are fit for work and you are swinging the lead" and that is what it comes down to. Now the training is vital in that. In particular, for those with a disability, because while it might be more straightforward to spot somebody, I will use the phrase "swinging the lead", who has not apparently other psychological conditions, it is very different to then be trained up to cater for those with a variable condition with something that is to do with mental capacity or something to do with simply life skills but it is not there, is it not?

Interim Chief Officer:

So last year we ran a number of pilots around this group and in fact we wrote to ... over a couple of pilots we wrote to basically everybody who was 35 per cent L.T.I.A. and also on income support and asked them to voluntarily engage with us to help them find work. We had a good initial response from people when we did that, and indeed, I think as the Minister has already mentioned, roughly about 30 or so have continued to work with us.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

And are now employed?

Interim Chief Officer:

A small number are but this has happened at the second half of the year. The interesting thing about this, it is not interesting it is sad in a way, is that many of these individuals have not worked for a very long time, which is why we have a dedicated team lined up to support them because they are effectively another 100 long-term unemployed people who we will be trying to help into employment. So they will need guidance, coaching, support, all the things we just talked about, to move them closer and closer to employment, and also we need to work with employers to help give them a chance. The initial job goal may not be a full-time job Monday to Friday in a particular industry. It may be getting the confidence to apply for jobs and then maybe working some voluntary work and so on, so they can move gradually towards returning to employment. But we did these pilots last year, so we had a good response initially, when we asked them to come in, but when the 60 or so who are not currently engaging with us realised that they perhaps did not need to, that is the point when they disengaged. But we have therefore seen the majority of the 100 or so people of 35 per cent L.T.I.A., and our understanding from that group is that we believe they are all able to work with the right support and encouragement and they can return to the workplace and ...

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

How do you reach that belief that they are able to work?

Interim Chief Officer:

Because we obviously talk to many different sorts of customers on a daily basis and we have talked to those ... the difference between 30 per cent and 35 per cent, there is not a lot of difference in terms of the ailments and the assessments, so we are already talking to people who have L.T.I.A., who have illnesses and indeed there are people who are registered for actively seeking work voluntarily who have higher percentage awards, so we are already dealing with individuals who have, on the scale of L.T.I.A., a different level of award. So we have that understanding. What we have not been able to do with the other 60 or so is to get down into those issues and exactly what their realistic job goals may well be. Indeed how long that may take. That is what we hope now to be able to do.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

This is 64 or thereabouts who did not engage with you? When they realised they did not have to they said: "Okay, I am not going to do it, it is not for me"?

Interim Chief Officer:

Yes.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Is it not the case that what you are going to present them with under this new system is that we also have got a stick, we have got a sanction and if you do not co-operate with us, as we see it, then we will ...

Interim Chief Officer:

Thankfully the level of sanctions compared to the amount of successes we have and the amount of appointments we have is very small. That is a very positive thing. Yes, so it is a reason for someone to engage with us but having someone to engage with us just because they are going to get hit with a sanction if they do not come in, that is it, that is not a conducive way of helping someone find work. However ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

No, you have already seen the volunteers and you have helped them. The difference between volunteering and being coerced into is a vast difference.

Interim Chief Officer:

However, we believe with the support and the dialogue and the investment and showing interest in individuals that over a period of time they can realise that actually forget about the sanctions, we are now engaged, we now want to improve. We have had some great comments from that group of customers who voluntarily engage with us. "I wish it had happened years ago" and these sorts of comments and that is fabulous. We hope that we can continue that work and ultimately these individuals will be better off, yes, they will be better off financially but more importantly they will be better off for their long-term wellbeing in getting into employment. That is understood that work is good for you in that sense. Also they will retain their financial independence.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I hope that is the case but I think what concerns the panel is that among those 60 there may be some, and I do not know what the number might be, who because of their condition would be unable to work in the way you would like them to work perhaps. That requires a medical input to this whole process and I do not yet see where the medical input is to confirm to you whether or not that core of people are prevented from working because of their condition. How do we get that because the risk is that you will be working with all of the 60 people, asking them to do certain things, but because of their medical condition they cannot do what you might wish them to. But you cannot be sure of that because you have not had the medical evidence.

Interim Chief Officer:

I can understand where the panel is coming from. The issues are that we are already working with people ... forget about the L.T.I.A. We are working with people, human beings, who go for different pangs and troughs, already its successes and indeed being unemployed is potentially a trough for people who we hope to bring people out of. So we are, while not being medically trained, we do understand that people have good and bad times, things affect them in their personal life, that people potentially do need to be referred for either safeguarding support or medical support. So if you have someone in front of you who is desperately trying to find work but medically should be getting some support then we would refer them to get medical support. We are not doctors but that is based upon our relationship with that individual and, as I said earlier on, we would be able to exempt somebody from seeking work for a period if that was the right thing for them at that particular time. There are other individuals who maybe need to recover from drug or alcohol addiction, and again we would work with them and colleagues in Health and Social Services to ensure they got the right level of support. Making them look for work would not necessarily be the right thing for them.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Has it happened in your previous work with people receiving up to 30 per cent incapacity allowance, have you exempted some from being required to seek work because of medical reasons?

Interim Chief Officer:

Yes, for people on L.T.I.A. or without L.T.I.A. we have exempted some individuals, yes, for particular reasons, bereavements and so on; a painful but relatively easy example to explain.

[13:30]

We would do that. As well as some individuals who were sick would go to the doctor to get medical treatment and potentially be signed off work or signed off for looking for work.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Would you expect that component, that percentage to grow as you sort of move through the percentages? So you are moving towards people who have got greater incapacity. You might wish in the future to move up to 40 per cent and bring those people into it, so you are recognising that the severer you get into incapacity there will be people who medically could not cope with a day's work perhaps because of their condition.

Policy and Strategy Director:

Can we explain that ... so we are talking about the Income Support Law, so that the L.T.I.A. Law does not take any notice of whether you can work or not. The Income Support Law though does have a different way of dealing with it. It is a little bit complicated but there are medical components within income support, and people who attain a certain level of support within income support are always automatically exempt from work requirements.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

So if someone with a medical condition with an assessed score of less than 24 on the impairment or the medical care that is quite a significant ... that is halfway, let us say of the level of 2.

Policy and Strategy Director:

One and a half.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Second level of impairment and that requires you to fail on quite a number of tests in order to achieve that score. It is quite significantly ... quite an impairment.

Policy and Strategy Director:

But that is what you are asking about. You asked about what is the guarantee that you are not going to go over to people who are patently incapable of working, so that is your guarantee.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

What is the equivalent between that 24 points and the 35 per cent on L.T.I.A.? Where does that sit because it could be there or they could be there?

Policy and Strategy Director:

They are not testing the same thing. It is an apples and pears situation. So you will get people who have got a high score on one and low score on the other and vice versa.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

So you do not know.

Policy and Strategy Director:

You cannot tell because the income support one is a slightly more modern test, which looks at how you can do things, whereas L.T.I.A. is solely concerned with the ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

The income support is a more modern test, did you say?

Policy and Strategy Director:

Yes.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Okay.

Policy and Strategy Director:

Yes, because the ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

But basically you do not know what the comparator is between the L.T.I.A. score and the impairment score?

Policy and Strategy Director:

Typically someone with a very high ... or look to have a high L.T.I.A. one but there will be lots within this kind of range of 30 per cent, it will be very different. You will not be able to make a direct comparison.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Can I ask the Minister if it is your intention to go beyond 35 per cent towards a greater score, 40, 45, 50 per cent? As you get the staff available, as jobs become available, do you want to encourage it? Are we seeing the first stage of a step towards 45 per cent?

The Minister for Social Security:

It is not a first stage. It is a continuation of what we have done already from the 5 per cent to 30 per cent, so the extra 5 per cent is a continuation of that, so we will have to ... it is obviously very new this increase in percentage, so we will have to see how ... what the success, if you like, of that is as to whether we go further forward. But, yes, of course it would be wonderful to get more people back into work, if they can.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Is the difference now that you have got the sanction and you are prepared to use it?

The Minister for Social Security:

I know you keep referring to the sanctions, Deputy, but this is just like, as I think the Chief Officer alluded to, it is only the same as being in work. I mean if you are in a job you have only so many opportunities to be off sick or to not turn up on the day or to not put in the hours per week, and this is pretty much the same sort of thing. So you have warnings and then if you continued not to comply with the rules of the employer or the contract that you signed the same as this. It is an Income Support Law and if you refuse to comply ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

So we are taking people who have a medical incapacity and we are saying: "If you fail to turn up for your job, if you fail in what is required of you in your job and your employer lets you go, you will be facing a sanction"? "You might be facing a sanction" let us put it on the permissive.

The Minister for Social Security:

I think you have warnings in any employment, and this is just part of the law.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

So, yes, you are prepared to sanction people who have not been able to fill the needs of an employer even with support.

Policy and Strategy Director:

If you lose your job through being unable to do it because of a medical ... physical condition and you are not able to do the job, it is not suitable for you anymore, perhaps you become ill during the job and you cannot do it anymore, that would never be sanctioned. That is not the way sanctions work at all.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Much of the reason as to why we have asked you to come before us is because I think this is an issue which generates public concern. Part of the reason is because of the bad experience that the U.K. seems to have had over this. I know our schemes are different but there has been a lot of publicity in the U.K. concerning the assessments made, trying to get people back to work, the apparent poor assessments and how they were criticised on appeals. So I think it is in every one's interest to make sure our Jersey Back to Work scheme works well. Are you confident that we can recognise vulnerable people who have good reason for not being able to hold down a job and protect them by not unreasonably requiring them to go to work?

The Minister for Social Security:

Yes, I have every confidence that that would not be required. As I say, it is not a new scheme. This is merely extending the current scheme at which there have been no questions asked and, in fact, many compliments from clients ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Because nobody knew about it. Where was that widely disseminated? Where was the press release on ...

The Minister for Social Security:

It has been part of the ... 2013.

Policy and Strategy Director:

It is encompassed in the ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

I look forward to seeing in your ... some report somewhere where you have mentioned it because I have not seen it and I, as you know, get fairly heavily involved with social security issues. I look forward to receiving it.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I am encouraged to receive that assurance, Minister. Thank you and you can expect that we will perhaps during quarterly meetings question you and ask how this change is panning out.

The Minister for Social Security:

Yes, of course.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

And if you remain confident with it.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

I am aware we have only got 2 minutes left, can I get a quick one in? Can you tell me why you have not waited to expand this scheme or this initiative until you have a Discrimination Law on disability in place when you could work on both ends of the scale, the employee and the employer, trying to make sure that discrimination against disability does not occur? Why did you not do that? It is only 2 years down the line tops. Could it not have waited?

The Minister for Social Security:

It is all part of the whole government strategy of getting people back into work and waiting another 2 years when we do not have to seems fairly pointless. I mean it is part of the next Strategic Plan to remove barriers for people to get back into work and it was the previous Government's, I think, initial ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

We have not seen the next Strategic Plan yet but I am glad you think it is going to be in there.

The Minister for Social Security:

It is very much part of it and it is also, I think, probably on the first line of our business plan as well for this year, is the priority of getting people back into work. The Disability Discrimination Law will hopefully come into effect in 2017 but why would one wait for another 2 years when people would then be perhaps 3 years without a job when we can work on it now, and we have the expertise within the Back to Work team to do it. I have got many people back into work which allows them a bit more time, as the employment figures have dropped dramatically over the last 2 years, to encourage people from other schemes back into work.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

A final question if I may: in the operation of this scheme so far, for those under 30 per cent disabled and tend to be over-35s or up to 35 per cent, what sort of placements have you made in what sort of areas? Which employers out there are crying to take people on still?

The Minister for Social Security:

Certainly hospitality now.

Interim Chief Officer:

We have been successful all over different industries in the Island so there is no specific ... we have not had specific barriers identified to say that the existing group of 5 to 30 per cent, subject to the individual ... maybe individual injury or ailment, cannot find work on the Island. So we have had successes. I have not got the details of the breakdown ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Do you have those sort of figures to hand, do you?

Interim Chief Officer:

I am not sure how easy they would be to pull out but, yes ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

You could?

Interim Chief Officer:

We would be able to ... we will understand ... what I can be confident about, there is not a particular ... for each individual ... clearly if an individual has a bad back, for example, and they used to work in construction and they cannot work in construction anymore then we would not help them get a job in construction because they cannot work in construction. So it is an individual issue.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Finally, if I may, it is the last one. There is 30 seconds to go. Is it a fact that for every person on L.T.I.A. or otherwise that you place in work you save between £100 to £200 on the bill for income support, which is the taxpayer funded element, is that the case?

Interim Chief Officer:

Yes, they would be better ... the individual would be better off.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

No, the department saves as well.

Interim Chief Officer:

Yes, the individual would be better off and the department income support payment for that individual would go down. How much it goes down depends on how many hours they work and what they get paid.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Which is why I said between £100 and £200.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

So, thank you.

Interim Chief Officer:

But they would be better off.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

We will conclude there, Minister. Thank you very much for coming. I hope that is ... I feel that in part that has assisted my understanding but we will meet again in quarterly meetings and one or 2 others. Thank you for coming with your team.

The Minister for Social Security:

Thank you for your time.

[13:40]