

SCRUTINY

PRESS RELEASE

States of Jersey
States Assembly



États de Jersey
Assemblée des États

Embargo until 13th January 2010

Scrutiny Review of Benefit Levels

Who can afford to live in Jersey?

The Income Support Sub-Panel, chaired by Deputy Geoff Southern, today announced a major review into how effective the new Income Support system is in alleviating poverty. "Our aim is to work co-operatively with the Social Security Department to help develop an information base on which future Social Policy can be securely founded", says Deputy Southern.

In addition to a major statistical review to be undertaken by Dr. Martin Evans, Oxford University, Advisor to the Sub-Panel, we shall be examining how individuals and families are coping in today's difficult economic climate.

This wide-ranging investigation will assess how the level of Income Support benefits and their design interact with other areas of fiscal and social policy, with particular regard to:

- Income tax thresholds
- Social Insurance contributions
- Minimum wage levels
- Pensions
- Social rent-setting policy and housing finance

'We shall examine minimum standards of living and the impact of inflation on households below average income' says Deputy Southern. 'Of particular concern will be the treatment of particularly vulnerable target groups including:

- Children;
- Pensioners;
- Single parent families;
- Young people; and,
- Those with a disability

'I believe this constitutes a breakthrough in enabling Scrutiny to contribute positively to the social policy objectives of government. We shall take Scrutiny out to the people; in addition to taking evidence from a wide range of organisations and concerned groups, we are conducting a survey of deprivation indicators on-line via the Scrutiny website and through our new facebook page @ scrutinyjersey. The survey results will combine with further information gathered from the 2010 Social

Survey and the Income Distribution Survey to provide a much-needed insight into poverty and hardship in Jersey.

The Sub-Panel is encouraging contributions from seldom-heard groups and individuals in the community. A scrutiny officer will be available at scheduled times during the review at The Bridge to assist with completion of the survey. The Sub-Panel will also be making itself available to visit groups such as Age Concern, YES, Good Companions and the Jersey Childcare Trust etc.

The review will be launched on the 13th January 2010; the closing date for evidence will be the 31st May 2010 and the Sub-Panel will report to the States before the summer recess.

Health, Social Security and Housing Scrutiny Sub-Panel Membership:

Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier: Chairman
Deputy D.J. De Sousa of St. Helier: Vice-Chairman
Connétable D Mezbourian
Connétable S.A. Yates of St. Martin
Deputy T.A. Vallois of St. Saviour
Mr Ed Le Quesne

Advisor

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