STATES OF JERSEY

DRAFT INCOME SUPPORT (PARENTS, CHILDREN AND HOUSING) (JERSEY) AMENDMENT REGULATIONS 202- (P.59/2025): COMMENTS

Presented to the States on 4th September 2025
by the Health and Social Security Scrutiny Panel

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Background

On 21st July 2025, [P.59/2025 - Draft Income Support (Parents, Children and Housing) (Jersey) Amendment Regulations 202-] was lodged 'au Greffe' by the Minister for Social Security. The purpose of the proposed Regulations are to:

1. ensure they are fully aligned with the current and future administration of income support claims;
2. enable more efficient benefit administration; and
3. enable improved data collection.

The intention is for the amendments to protect existing claimants, maintain current payment levels, and have no negative financial impact on households.

Summary of Amendments:

- **Definition of "Family Unit"** – Regulation 3(4D) formally defines the term to improve data collection and claim processing.
- **Housing Component for Non-Named Household Members** – Regulation 3(4H) updates the law so housing costs can be awarded for eligible family members not named on a lease/licence, aligning with current practice in social housing.
- **Students in Full-Time Education Who Work** – Regulations 4(2), (5), (7), (8), (9) and 6 ensure young people's earnings are fully disregarded if they are better off being excluded from a parent's claim, preventing any loss of benefit for them or their parents.
- **Other Young People Who Work** – Regulation 5 formalises the practice of keeping or removing working young people from a parent's claim to maximise household benefit.
- **Housing Component for Shared Dwellings** – Regulations 3(4G), 4(3) and 4(4) adjust the calculation where rent is below the private housing cap or above the social housing cap (under-occupation), ensuring alignment with current administration.
- **Single Parent Component** – Regulations 2 and 4(6) fix an anomaly so single parents can still receive this component even if a dependent young person has a separate Income Support claim due to high care needs.

Commentary

The Panel understands that these amendments are required to align the Law to the processing and administration that has developed in the Employment, Social Security and Housing (ESSH) department since the introduction of the Income Support Law in 2008, reflecting current practice and supporting future needs, without reducing any household's entitlement. The Panel also appreciates that these amendments will support the deployment of the Transform Programme, an ESSH initiative, scheduled for delivery in 2028, to modernise services and replace the existing NESSIE system with an improved, customer focused benefits management platform. The amendments aim to ensure that any newly integrated software performs more effectively, allowing enhanced data collection to inform and strengthen policy development and improve services by correcting operational anomalies, allowing a consistent approach to the processing and administration of claims.

Key changes include a clearer definition of ‘family unit’, rules allowing young people under 25 to remain on, or leave a parent’s claim depending on which maximises household income, and updated treatment of students’ and young people’s earnings to ensure work is always financially beneficial. Housing provisions are also aligned with operational practice to fairly allocate rent support in shared or multi-household dwellings.

Conclusion

The Panel is supportive of the Proposition. The proposed changes would allow young people under the age of 25 to remain on a parent’s Income Support claim only where this results in the highest overall household income. The Panel considers this to be a pragmatic and balanced approach, ensuring that household resources are maximised while also recognising the changing circumstances and responsibilities of young adults.

The Panel notes that the amendments are designed to safeguard claimants by maintaining existing claims without reducing their value. Importantly, the Panel understands that these changes will not create additional financial or staffing pressures within ESSH.

Furthermore, the Panel welcomes the intention of the amendments to avoid discouraging young people from entering employment while they are part of a household in receipt of Income Support. By ensuring that participation in the workforce remains beneficial, the amendments support both income security and opportunities for skills development.

These amendments improve efficiency, support fair outcomes, and enable better data collection, with no additional cost or resource impact on Government.

Statement under Standing Order 37A [Presentation of comment relating to a proposition]

Due to an administrative oversight, these comments have been presented beyond the required deadline.