



Businesses are invited to a lunchtime event on possible changes to the rules for Jersey's incapacity (sickness) benefits. The Minister for Social Security is reviewing the existing incapacity benefit system to better meet the needs of Jersey workers and their employers.

Timetable

Drinks and sandwiches will be provided from 12pm. The Minister will open the event at **12.30** with a short presentation by Dr Mark Simpson, the expert medical advisor. Dr Simpson will set out how other countries have made changes to their benefit rules, and some of the possible options for a trial system in Jersey.

This will be followed by a panel discussion, where Dr Simpson will be joined by:

- Helen Ruelle (Chair of the Jersey Employment Trust and Director of Local Legal Services at Ogier);
- Patricia Rowan (Director of Jersey Advisory and Conciliation Service); and
- Nour Belal (English Solicitor at BCR Law and neurodiversity advocate)

Introducing flexibility to Jersey's sickness benefit rules

The event will explore how Jersey could benefit from giving workers the option of doing some work whilst in receipt of Short-Term Incapacity Allowance. Unlike most other economies, Jersey's Short Term Incapacity Allowance prevents any work or work-related activity during a period of illness, including voluntary work.

The Minister is considering trialling a system where people who have been signed off work can ask to return to work whilst still being supported with STIA benefit. Often described as "adjusted duties" or a "partial" or "phased" return to work, this can help people manage illness and disability during working life. Jersey should do more to prevent people from feeling like they can't work at all because of health problems.

A change could be particularly helpful to people who experience chronic conditions such as mental health or musculoskeletal pain, where health professionals will often encourage a

gradual return to activity to help manage the condition. It could help Jersey be more inclusive of people who experience health problems or disabilities.

However, even where the option is available, evidence from the UK and Guernsey suggests that businesses often need to be supported in understanding how to help a worker who asks for adjusted duties or a phased return to the workplace. This is particularly relevant to small or medium-sized firms.

The Minister wants to include employers in the design of the trial scheme to ensure that any changes are appropriate to Jersey, its employers and the needs of its workforce.

Please join us, and learn more about the kinds of changes that might be trialled in Jersey.

For any questions about the event, please contact Will Lakeman (the officer leading the review) on W.Lakeman@gov.je.