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Mr Simon Hamilton MLA
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Our ref: SUB/1392/2010

15 November 2010

Savings Accounts and Health in Pregnancy Grant Bill – notification of the UK Government's intention to legislate on a provision extending to Northern Ireland

The Savings Accounts and Health in Pregnancy Grant Bill was introduced in the House of Commons on 15 September. The Bill contains provision for the removal of two way exchange of information between the United Kingdom jurisdictions on child maintenance. As this issue falls within the transferred field the agreement of the Executive Committee, the Social Development Committee and the Assembly to the inclusion of Northern Ireland in the Bill will be required.

I enclose a copy of the Bill for your information. The relevant provisions extending to Northern Ireland are clause 2(3) and (4).

Due to the late inclusion of this measure in the Bill by the Department for Work and Pensions the consent of the Northern Ireland Assembly was not obtained before the Bill was introduced on 15 September. The absence of the Assembly's consent is not a bar to it proceeding to this stage. However, the agreement of the Assembly must be obtained before the Bill goes forward for Royal Assent in December 2010.

The Bill contains provisions that are consequential on the proposed repeal of the Saving Gateway Accounts Act 2009. This means that the Bill will amend the law dealing with the supply of information by the Department for Social Development to Revenue and Customs. **The effect of this will be that the requirement on the Department for Social Development to provide Revenue and Customs with information relating to social security for the purposes of identifying those individuals who would have been eligible to open a Saving Gateway account will be removed. The provision is obsolete, therefore this is a technical amendment.**

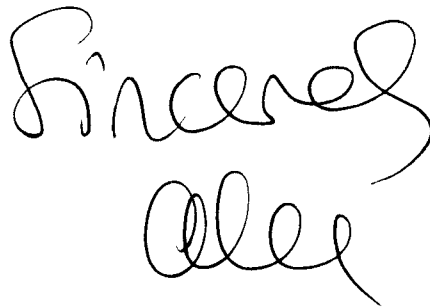


ISSUES FOR PEOPLE

I trust that the Committee will be able to support the inclusion of the provision in the Great Britain Savings Accounts and Health in Pregnancy Grant Bill.

It is my intention to seek approval from the Executive at its meeting on 2 December and I would be grateful if the Committee could consider the issue and let me know by 30 November if it is content for me to seek the agreement of the Assembly which must be obtained before the end of December 2010.

If it would be helpful I can arrange for one of my officials to brief the Committee about this matter. However, as it is relatively straightforward, the Committee may not consider that it is necessary to seek clarification from officials.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sincerely Alex". The word "Sincerely" is written in a cursive style, and "Alex" is written in a more stylized, cursive script below it.

ALEX ATTWOOD MLA
Minister for Social Development

cc: Peter McCallion
Margaret Sisk
Billy Crawford