

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to make a submission with reference to the enquiry into the **Child Support Legislation Amendment (Reform of the Child Support Scheme – New Formula and Other Measures) Bill 2006**

Firstly I wish to state that I support the principles of this legislation, however, it appears to me that the current provision for prescribed non-agency payments to credit the costs of items such as school fees and medical expenses against a child support liability will no longer be accessible to parents whose children are in a shared care arrangement under this legislation.

If this is the case, I believe that this should be reviewed as it is inconsistent with the principle that cost of the children should be shared between the parents according to their capacity to pay, and their level of care. To remedy this inconsistency I believe that the costs for these prescribed items should also be split in accordance with the parent's child support payment percentage as calculated under the new formula. It is already recognised that these prescribed items can be significant costs and therefore need to be treated separately to the day to day costs of the children.

In my own case, the children's care is shared 50/50 and I am the paying parent. On top of a significant amount of child support, I also pay private school fees, uniforms medical expenses, and many other activities and expenses which are not prescribed items. However, because the payee parent refuses to contribute anything to these additional costs, I am only able to obtain some contribution to this significant additional expenditure through prescribed non agency payments for some items.

If prescribed non agency payments are not to be available at all to the parents of children in shared care then this will mean that, unless an agreement can be reached, one parent will still be left to pay all of these significant additional expenses, in addition to, or out of, their child support payment. In the case of shared care it would be unfair for either parent to be left solely responsible for the expenses. These types of expenses can be significant and are additional to day to day expenses, they should therefore also be split in accordance with the split of the costs of the children under the new formula. The existing prescribed non-agency payment mechanism could be used to achieve this by modifying it to allow for percentage splits of costs.

Thankyou,

Jane Barrow