

STATES OF JERSEY



PROPOSED GOVERNMENT PLAN 2024- 2027 (P.72/2023): EIGHTEENTH AMENDMENT

FREE GP VISITS FOR ALL FULL TIME STUDENTS

Lodged au Greffe on 27th November 2023
by Deputy C.S. Alves of St. Helier Central

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSED GOVERNMENT PLAN 2024-2027 (P.72/2023): EIGHTEENTH AMENDMENT

1 PAGE 2, PARAGRAPH (e) –

After the words “Appendix 2 – Summary Table 3 in line with Article 9(2)(b) of the Law” insert the words –

“, except that a new line should be inserted in Summary Table 3 to include a transfer of £75,000 from the Health Insurance Fund to the Consolidated Fund to allocate funds to extend the Free GP visits for Children and Young People Scheme to all full-time students, including students in full-time education undertaking Higher Education at Highlands College, Colleges, and Universities in the UK or abroad”

2 PAGE 2, PARAGRAPH (h) –

After the words “Appendix 2 – Summary Tables 5(i) and (ii) of the Report” insert the words –

“, except that, in Summary Table 5(i) the Head of Expenditure for Health and Community Services should be increased by £75,000 to allocate funds to extend the Free GP visits for Children and Young People Scheme to all full-time students, including students in full-time education undertaking Higher Education at Highlands College, Colleges, and Universities in the UK or abroad”

DEPUTY C.S. ALVES OF ST. HELIER CENTRAL

Note: After this amendment, the proposition would read as follows –

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

to receive the Government Plan 2024 – 2027 specified in Article 9(1) of the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019 (“the Law”) and specifically –

- (a) to approve the estimate of total States income to be paid into the Consolidated Fund in 2024 as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 1 to the Report, which is inclusive of the proposed taxation and impôts duties changes outlined in the Government Plan, in line with Article 9(2)(a) of the Law;
- (b) to refer to their Act dated 30th September 2016 and to approve the application of existing resources for work on the development of ‘user pays’ charges in relation to all aspects of waste, including commercial and domestic liquid and solid waste;
- (c) to approve the proposed Changes to Approval for financing/borrowing for 2024, as shown in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 2 to the Report, which

may be obtained by the Minister for Treasury and Resources, as and when required, in line with Article 9 (2)(c) of the Law, of up to those revised approvals;

- (d) to approve the extension of the use of the existing Revolving Credit Facility to include the provision of funds that would otherwise be implemented through bank overdraft or bank overdraft facilities under Article 26 (1)(a) of the Law, should they be needed, subject to the limits outlined in that article;
- (e) to approve the transfers from one States fund to another for 2024 of up to and including the amounts set in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 3 in line with Article 9(2)(b) of the Law, except that a new line should be inserted in Summary Table 3 to include a transfer of £75,000 from the Health Insurance Fund to the Consolidated Fund to allocate funds to extend the Free GP visits for Children and Young People Scheme to all full-time students, including students in full-time education undertaking Higher Education at Highlands College, Colleges, and Universities in the UK or abroad;
- (f) to approve a transfer from the Consolidated Fund to the Stabilisation Fund in 2024 of up to £25 million, subject to a decision of the Minister for Treasury and Resources based on the availability of funds in the Consolidated Fund as at 31 December 2023 in excess of the estimates provided in this plan, or from budgeted underspends identified before 31 December 2024;
- (g) to approve each major project that is to be started or continued in 2024 and the total cost of each such project and any amendments to the proposed total cost of a major project under a previously approved Government Plan, in line with Article 9(2)(d), (e) and (f) of the Law and as set out in Appendix 2 - Summary Table 4 to the Report;
- (h) to approve the proposed amount to be appropriated from the Consolidated Fund for 2024, for each Head of Expenditure, being gross expenditure less estimated income (if any), in line with Articles 9(2)(g), 10(1) and 10(2) of the Law, and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Tables 5(i) and (ii) of the Report, except that, in Summary Table 5(i) the Head of Expenditure for Health and Community Services should be increased by £75,000 to allocate funds to extend the Free GP visits for Children and Young People Scheme to all full-time students, including students in full-time education undertaking Higher Education at Highlands College, Colleges, and Universities in the UK or abroad”
- (i) to approve the estimated income, being estimated gross income less expenditure, that each States trading operation will pay into its trading fund in 2024 in line with Article 9(2)(h) of the Law and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 6 to the Report;
- (j) to approve the proposed amount to be appropriated from each States trading operation’s trading fund for 2024 for each head of expenditure in line with

Article 9(2)(i) of the Law and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 7 to the Report;

- (k) to approve the estimated income and expenditure proposals for the Climate Emergency Fund for 2024 as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 8 to the Report; and
- (l) to approve, in accordance with Article 9(1) of the Law, the Government Plan 2024-2027, as set out at Appendix 3 to the Report.

REPORT

The free GP visits for children and young people scheme was established following the adoption of the [Government Plan 2023-2026 \(P.97/2022\) Eighteenth Amendment](#) last year.

The government made the [announcement](#) that this scheme was coming into force on 24 July 2023, and would include access to a range of additional services free of charge including; blood and urine tests, referral letters, ECGs, swabs, spirometry, ear syringing, and pregnancy tests.

This amendment seeks to extend the existing provision to all full-time students, this would include students in full-time education undertaking Higher Education at Highlands College, and Colleges and Universities in the UK or abroad.

The current offering for free GP visits for young people and children currently covers those aged 0 to 17 so those aged 18, who may be in college or sixth form on the island, are not covered. In addition, those who have birthdays earlier on in the academic year, in September for example, are at a disadvantage to their counterparts who may have birthday later on or even after the academic year has finished (July/August).

There is also the added disadvantage that those studying in the UK benefit from the reciprocal agreement with the UK which provides them with free access to GPs, dentists, and any other additional services whereas those studying on island do not benefit from this.

Full time students are the next most vulnerable group after children and young people and face the same challenges as those who are 0 to 17 years old.

Academic Performance

Research shows that education and health are closely linked. According to a report published by Public Health England, entitled "[The link between pupil health and wellbeing and attainment](#)", better academic grades and progression are associated with more positive individual and cumulative health behaviours and wellbeing.

Students facing health challenges may struggle to attend classes regularly, concentrate on their studies, and perform well academically.

Economic Contributions and Productivity

Keeping individuals in good health leads to more productive members of our society. Providing free healthcare to full-time students, sets them up with good habits for the future and is therefore an investment in a healthier future workforce.

Students who receive adequate healthcare are more likely to complete and continue with their education, pursuing higher levels employment as well as specialising in certain areas leading to a more skilled workforce making a positive contribution to society and the economy.

According to an independent analysis conducted last year commissioned by the NHS Confederation, entitled [*Investment in health boosts labour productivity and economic activity*](#), “Every pound invested in the NHS results in around £4 back to the economy, new analysis shows investment in health boosts economic activity”

Public Health and Disease Prevention

As the recent pandemic has shown us, living near others and socialising with a wide range of people increases the risk of disease transmission. Students often live with, and encounter, more individuals on a day-to-day basis. Therefore, providing access to free healthcare and ensuring students can access preventive measures and timely treatment, reduces the spread of illnesses, minimises the risk of outbreaks and protects the broader population. A healthy student population contributes to overall community well-being.

Inclusion and Equality

Reducing barriers to Education is vital and ensuring individuals from diverse socio-economic backgrounds have equal opportunities to access education without being hindered by health-related challenges is a way to reduce these barriers.

By alleviating the financial strain on students and their families ensures healthcare costs do not hinder educational pursuits, fostering an environment where everyone has the chance to succeed.

Long Term Savings

It is evident that investing in preventive healthcare can lead to long-term cost savings. Early intervention and preventive measures can reduce the need for expensive treatments and hospitalisations at a later stage.

A healthier population places less strain on public healthcare systems, leading to more efficient and sustainable healthcare infrastructure.

In conclusion, providing full-time students with free healthcare at an integral time in their life is an investment with long-term and far-reaching benefits. Not only is the immediate well-being of students improved but it also contributes to a healthier, more equitable and productive society in the long run.

Financial and staffing implications

The financial implications of this amendment have been estimated using the number of student from [P.97/2022 \(Amd. 17\)](#)

“There are 1473 students receiving Student Finance Funding who would be eligible for the Avanchi18 card if this was extended to students over the age of 19 in full time education at University in Jersey, the UK and abroad. There are a further 99 students studying at Highlands College who do not receive Student Finance funding. There are 37 students studying full time at Highlands over the age of 19 years on Level 2 and Level 3 courses. There are 148 students who are trainees and apprentices training at Highlands College”

Using these numbers, the following calculations have been completed –

- (a) To gain the approximate total number of students on the island, all the numbers from [P.97/2022 \(Amd. 17\)](#) were added together to give 1757, as an approximate number of students;
- (b) A recent newsletter published by the [Consumer Council](#) provides a breakdown of costs for GP visits across different age groups in Jersey. From this newsletter the average price of a student GP visit is approximately £33;
- (c) The approximate total number of students was then multiplied by the average cost of a student GP visit to give the total 57,981, then rounded up to 58,000. Using the average 1.2 GP visits per year from [P.97/2022 \(Amd.18\)](#) and multiplying that by the 58,000 gives a total of £69,600; and
- (d) To cover unexpected additional costs this proposition has also included a further £5,400.