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Deputy Catherine Curtis
Chair – Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Sent by email only

24 March 2025

Dear Chair,

Early Years Plan – Request for clarification on KPIs and Timescales

Thank you for your letter of 13th March asking a range of questions on the above topic.

Please see the below answers to your questions and do not hesitate to contact me again if you require further information.

1. Could you provide specific KPIs and targets covering both quantitative metrics (e.g., number of childcare places created) and qualitative outcomes (e.g., improvements in child development) that will measure the Early Years Plan’s impact?

We have adopted an outcomes-based accountability (OBA) model to measure the impact of the pilot programmes on the attending children's development. This approach ensures we assess how much we have done, how well we have done it and assesses if anyone is better off because of it:

How much we did	How well we did it
Number of children who have accessed the provision(s)	Children's levels of progress in the areas of Communication, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development.
How many parents have we engaged/how many sessions have they attended	Changes in children’s Wellbeing and Involvement levels using the Leuven Scales
Is anyone better off	

All settings will use the *Cherry Garden* assessment tool to track and report on children's developmental progress and outcomes outlined above. Baseline data was collated at the start of the pilot activity and progress assessment will be undertaken termly. The next set of reporting is due at the end of Spring term.

Effective reporting and monitoring of the pilot activity will help to shape the future direction of any potential universal offering. In addition to the child development reporting we:

- Provide monthly progress reports to the project board on site identification, staffing, and pilot development and delivery.

- Undertake regular reviews of the pilot's progress, identifying successes and areas for improvement.
- Gather input from parents, staff, and partner organisations.

2. How will data collected from pilot programmes, including on child development and family satisfaction, be aggregated, evaluated, and published? Will independent evaluators or sector stakeholders (such as JEYA or Jersey Child Care Trust) be involved, and what is the frequency of reporting?

- Child attendance, development tracking, and parental feedback will be collected as outlined above from each pilot. Each pilot will be using Cherry Garden to track children's development.
- Data will then be centrally collated to allow for comparative analysis across the pilot activity
- Parental and staff surveys will provide qualitative insights.
- All stakeholders will be involved in contributing feedback into the pilot programmes.

Evaluation

- Monthly reports are shared with the project board (internal), summarising pilot progress, key learnings, risks, issues, pilot development and delivery.
- A representative from JCCT is on the project board and regularly provides independent views and insight into the development and evolution of all the pilots as well as the wider activity being undertaken in relation to the Early Years CSP commitments.

3. Could you outline the planned durations and review points of the pilots at d'Auvergne, Trinity, and Plat Douet, specifying how soon after their completion decisions on extension, adjustment, or scaling up will be made?

The phase one pilots were all approved and funded to run for a year. A mid-point evaluation is being conducted to assess emerging trends and identify key learnings to ensure continued alignment with the core aspirations of the CSP.

A final impact report will be published at the end of phase one pilots, outlining recommendations for next steps.

Decisions will be made in sufficient time to enable a seamless continuation of provisions if that is the recommendation.

4. Regarding the proposed accelerated rollout of a universal offer for 2- to 3-year-olds, can you detail key milestones, projected timelines, interim steps, and factors (e.g., workforce readiness, capacity) that will trigger further implementation?

There are several inputs, as set out in response to question 5, that need to be assessed to determine the timescales for implementation of a universal offer. In addition to these, further work is required to establish any new governance arrangements (both requirements and enforcement), application processes for parents and providers, and funding availability.

These inputs are not sequential, rather all will be collected and assessed as part of a 'readiness assessment'. It is expected that a sufficiently clear view of each of these inputs will be achievable in Q2 2025 enabling implementation planning.

There will be further provider engagement as the support mechanism and implementation plans are developed.

5. When will the Department conclude and publish its analysis (including workforce surveys, birth rate projections, and migration data) to inform capacity planning and staffing requirements?

There are several inputs to capacity planning which will be shared. These include:

- Provider survey commissioned by Best Start Partnership and due for publication in March 2025.
- Parent survey commissioned in March 2025 and due for publication later in 2025 (a provider has been selected; timescales are to be confirmed as part of early planning).
- Demand modelling that considers birth rate and migration assumptions in Q2 2025.
- An assessment of the level of additional need in this cohort of young children will be conducted in H1 2025.

These inputs will be considered in assessing whether there is sufficient capacity amongst all providers for the Minister to introduce universal support for 2-to-3-year-olds.

6. How will staff to child ratios in school based two-year-old provision be set, ensuring consistency with best practice and addressing private sector concerns about competitive pay, recruitment, retention, and professional development? What immediate initiatives are planned to support workforce retention and upskilling?

- The adult-child ratios within Jersey's Early Years Statutory Requirements have and will be, consistently applied to both school based 2–3-year-old provision and to registered nursery settings.
- Workforce retention and recruitment has been a focus for the workforce working group in 2024/25 with members including CYPES officers, JEYA representatives, JCCT, Highlands College and Skills Jersey leading this to provide industry insight and perspective. A workforce plan is in place and recent recruitment initiatives have proved positive.
- There has been a series of recruitment roadshows held across the island at various times of the day and evening with online opportunities also, in the hope that this approach reaches as many people as possible. There has also been a social media campaign and website pages created that promote the importance and variety of roles within childcare and early years.
- A plan to support professional development across the children's workforce has been developed in partnership with Best Start Jersey and will be funded by Government to prioritise upskilling early years practitioners across a range of domains. This will include the priority areas identified collectively with settings and schools of supporting communication and language development; SEND and health and well-being.

7. What formal mechanisms are in place to integrate private sector feedback into the design of funding models (e.g., the NEF extension) and operational decisions early in the policy development process?

There are multiple mechanisms in place including:

- The Best Start Partnership continues to provide a whole sector forum. The most recent activity includes commissioning the Early Childhood Education and Care provider survey and establishing a whole sector approach to Continuous Professional Development.
- Whole sector engagement carried out via a series of roundtable events to develop the policy imperatives for early years.
- A workforce development plan, overseen by Skills Jersey, ensures sector representation.
- JEYA have been very actively involved with the GoJ Economy team providing the principal source of cost data to inform any universal rate for 2-to-3-year-olds.
- The second provider survey was conducted in Q4 2024 and will be published in Q1 2025.
- A parent survey will elicit the voice of families

8. Given sector concerns about potential negative impacts of expanding government nursery provision on private providers, what contingency plans or support measures are you considering to maintain sector sustainability if private enrolment declines?

The main objective is the provision of, and access to, quality early education and childcare. The specific focus is increased support for 2-to-3-year-olds.

The provider survey includes questions on ongoing viability of providers with all but one respondent expressing an expectation that they will continue to operate into the near future (next 12 months).

The survey has also highlighted pressures as they relate to workforce costs and rental costs, amongst other areas. It is consequently important to ensure that any new Government support to parents reflects the best estimate of actual cost of provision. To this end JEYA have been actively involved with the GoJ Economy team to provide cost data as a key input to the design of any Government support.

It is expected that any offer of increased Government support will, as a minimum, stabilise demand for childcare and more likely increase demand by reducing cost to families.

As previously described, pilots have been big enough to test different ways of working but small enough not to impact existing settings. The original intention to publish an 'expression of interest' to establish a further pilot has been paused whilst capacity is assessed.

It is important to note that, because of declining birth rates, it is very likely the sector will need to respond to changes in demand outside of any changes instigated by Government.

9. How will the Department measure and publicly report improvements in children's social, emotional, cognitive outcomes (including those with additional needs), and will structured feedback from parents and providers be routinely incorporated into policy decisions?

To respond in two parts, measurement first and then structured stakeholder input.

Measurement:

The Education Department collects children's achievement and attainment data within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

A baseline measurement is completed for all nursery and reception children on entry to their school or setting and then a summative assessment at the end of the year which shows how all groups, including those with SEND have made progress.

We report annually on children's attainment at the end of Reception against all the 17 Early Learning Goals and unlike other jurisdictions, we also gather data on children's well-being and Involvement levels and their Characteristics of Effective learning. This holistic approach to assessment gives us a rich picture of the whole child, what they have learnt, how they like to learn and how well they do this.

Stakeholder input:

The rationale behind the roundtable series between November 2023 and January 2024 was to bring together a group of representatives from the early education and childcare sector, public health, third sector, family and parent support organisations, employers, Government officials and parents to discuss the future direction of policy. The findings from the published report continue to inform early years policy work. Regular policy updates to the sector from Government are provided via the Best Start Partnership and further information can be found on the Government website: [Early Years Policy work](#).

In preparation for the roundtable series, and to inform policy development, the first Early Childhood Education and Care provider survey was administered in Jersey in 2023. This report formed an important 'baseline' of information and has been repeated in 2024. These surveys provide helpful insights into the key challenges facing the sector including workforce and capacity.

One of the gaps identified during the roundtable events was a need to engage with parents to understand their current and future needs better. This is currently being actioned through the development of a parent survey which is due to take place this year.

Ongoing sector engagement through the Best Start Partnership provides a further opportunity to elicit input and feedback.

Yours sincerely,



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