



19th September 2019

Chairman
Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel
Scrutiny Office
Morier House
St Helier
JE1 1DD

Dear Deputy Ward

I am writing on behalf of the Jersey Early Years Association (JEYA) in the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair who are out of the Island.

It would appear from the information you forwarded to us that the EYPDB are still in the VERY early stages of their considerations. We had hoped we would be further on by now.

There are three main points that we would wish to bring to your attention.

1. The Action plan of the CYPES team and others is to bring forward 'A reformed nursery education offer'.

We cannot comment on the cost or benefit implications of this recommendation at present as we have no detail. There is no suggestion of what this actually means and who it is aimed at. Whether it's to benefit children, families or providers.

2. An increase of hours from 20 to 30 per week for all 3-4 year olds during term time.

To meet the Government Plan to put children first, we should ask, how does this meet the plan? Is it right that children should be in a school environment for 30 hours per week?

From past research, the optimum period of time a 3-4 year old child should be in an 'educational' environment is 20 hours per week.

It would be interesting to know the basis of research for the suggested increase of hours.

An additional 10 hours in nursery will mean more focus on care rather than education.

An increase from 20 to 30 hours for the schools would mean an increase in staffing costs. Although it may mean filling empty nursery spaces and on paper seem a worthwhile cost effective exercise, as many teachers are employed for more than 20 hours per week.

The fixed cost model of States provision is VERY expensive and suggests unfilled places get filled with 'non-vulnerable' children at MASSIVE public cost.

3. The delivery of nursery places for vulnerable 2 year olds

We would support the extension of a scheme currently in place that offers 10 hours per week run by the Jersey Child Care Trust and supported through charitable donations. Parents choose which nursery best suits the needs of their child and their family.

However there needs to be clarification on the definition of vulnerable and who is putting the definition together.

We would not support a move to place vulnerable children in a school nursery

Teacher training at any level does not equip teachers to provide for 2 year olds care and educational needs. School facilities do not provide for nappy changing, toilet training, smaller scale equipment, security arrangement, so potentially new facilities would need to be built.

School culture, training and experience does NOT equip staff to work with families, which can often be the cause of problems with vulnerable children.

Vulnerable children need to connect to adults far more than children in the first instance. Schools should not fill up with more and more children, creating greater child to child dependency (schools on a 1:10 ratio) rather than building up a trusting relationship with positive adult influence in a non States setting, preparing children for school.

What we would hope to see in future recommendations, is direct dialogue with the non States sector who educate and care for up to 50% of 3-4 year olds and evidence of parental input into these recommendations.

We would also like to see recommendations regarding the financing of future nursery education funding schemes with a review of the cost of educating and caring for a child. Current levels of funding do not reflect the true cost. Additional funding would be better spent on giving a fair rate for NEF to enable the non-States sector to employ more graduate workers to ensure the best start possible for the children in our Island.

Yours sincerely

Tanya Brint
Treasurer JEYA

