



Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Quarterly Meeting with the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

MONDAY, 21st OCTOBER 2013

Panel:

Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour (Chairman)
Connétable M.P.S. Le Troquer of St. Martin
Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade
Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier

Witnesses:

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture
Director, Education, Sport and Culture
Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills
Manager, Trackers -The Apprentice Programme

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Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour (Chairman)

Good morning and welcome. Firstly can we begin by congratulating the department on what was a very good presentation at the Hotel de France on the I.T. (Information Technology) Skills Strategy? For those us who attended, we thought that was a very good presentation and we look

forward to the outcomes in due course. Also we would like to thank you for the documents that you have provided with us in preparation for this hearing today. I wonder if we can begin then now looking at the apprentice scheme, and just for the record if you can advise us to date how many apprenticeships are currently engaged in the new scheme.

TRACKERS APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

One hundred and thirteen, but to give you more detail ... I think that is right, Penny, is it not? I have asked Penny to join us this morning because any kind of operational detail that you might like about the scheme, Penny is very familiar with. She runs the scheme very well, it is a very successful scheme. She is here in fact to give you a brief run through of what is going on with the apprentice scheme, if you would like to take it that way, Chairman.

Deputy J.M. Maçon: Please.

Manager, Trackers - The Apprentice Programme:

Okay, what I did is ... obviously you have the paper which is an overview and really today I just wanted to bring it to life a little bit. I looked at the transcript from the last quarterly hearing and saw there are a few key areas that you were really interested in. So one of the areas obviously is the **role of the mentor**. As you know from the past programmes we have run Advance to Work, Advance Plus, the mentor role works really well. I think for us in Trackers we thought it would be really successful for apprentices because it helps them along their journey, the mentor works very closely with the apprentice looking at their successes and achievements and how we can set goals for the future. One of the areas we were not sure how it would go down is with the employers but it has been highly successful. Employers have really engaged with the mentors and one of the key areas is every quarter throughout the apprentice's journey the mentor meets with the apprentice and the employer or a supervisor, foreman or whoever, and they look at ... it is like a mini appraisal. So it would be looking at what sort of skills they are learning, what development needs there are and also what future aims for that apprentice. One of the key things that we have noticed recently, they are identifying additional training. So they have got their key apprenticeship but we want these people to be the best in their field so what else to add value to that apprentice and the business. So, for example, I just did just bring a quote with us. You know, we have added a mobile tower training for several construction firms for their apprentice and an email just back from this particular highly recognised employer: "No, he has not done the course, although various other staff have and are certified. That would be brilliant and is a very pleasant employer surprise if this is the calibre of education, added value and support that this scheme is providing." So it was a very real email that came back from a recognised employer, which was great. It is just one of

several, you know, comments that we are having quite regularly now. One of the other aspects we have noticed is that, you know, lots of our employers are small businesses and so that mentor provides sometimes some HR advice and pointing them in the right direction and things like that. Especially when we have been discussing zero hour contracts recently because we have one on one with employers quite regularly so they are asking us what is the best way forward. Obviously we do direct them to J.A.C.S. (Jersey Advisory Conciliation Service) quite regularly for extra advice and support. We have also had 10 of our employers who have taken up the opportunity to have another apprentice this year from the last cohort and some have got several joining us. So that is sort of the role of the mentor and lots of recognition of success, it is a key aim for us.

Another area I noticed that you were interested in is the **entry criteria** and sort of how that process happened. I think we did direct you to the website and there are some key areas there. But obviously the main part is quality. We are looking for quality employers but also apprentices that passionately want to do whatever the industry is, they want to do that as their career. So we do have a set criteria, it is ... we have developed like profiles for the individuals to look at to see if they are meeting those. That is where we are looking for motivated and committed young people, majority, but we do have a number that are over 20 years-old, about 15 across the other industries and then all of our care, our new care sector, they are all mature candidates. So as much as we want the 14 to 16 and the develop there, and that is our key group, sort of post 16 to 19, we do also look at any apprentice at this point in time that is coming forward for the future. Most of them have come with employers, which has been fantastic in this economic climate, they have coming with employers. When we took them on this summer, we are taking quite a few from Highlands College where they have done a one year course already so they are in that transition period of time. Seven of them were looking for paid work and 3 of them moved into paid work within the 8 weeks of being with us from that first group this summer. Four of them are in internships, so everybody is in a work placement, and 2 of those are very likely to go into paid work very shortly as well.

One of the other things just to go through really was the **success factors** that I put on the report for you just to fill you in where we are up to. Obviously the numbers, we are already exceeding our numbers and we do have several inquiries coming through on a fairly regular basis now, so that is great. Already quite a few word of mouth. So we have had employers coming to us especially the small businesses that have heard from another small business about us. So they are coming forward. We are looking at new areas to develop all the time. Obviously Trackers is not just about the traditional trades, although it is very important, the traditional apprenticeship areas. We have obviously launched the healthcare apprenticeship in January and we are on our second group for that now. So we have now 31 enrolled for care. But we are in talks with Jersey Finance, the Dental Association, hospitality areas so there are many more developments going to

happen in the next couple of years. Obviously the 14 to 16 is one of the key success areas. We wanted to be really embedded in education as a very real option. Trackers becomes a very real option for young people when they are looking at their choices. So some will come straight from 14 to 16, some will have done a one year at Highlands first and then join us and we are looking at, wherever possible, that their progression can on to higher education. I think 2 of ours have completed their apprenticeship and one of those has already gone on to the H.M.C.(?) so they are moving forward. Four students just from this initial cohort that we have just taken on came directly from the 14 to 16 vocation group, so that was good. General public perception and partnerships, like I just said, the reputation by word of mouth is coming through. We have now 73 employers working with us in one year or less than one year, which is great. We obviously work closely with the Construction Council, Institute of Carpenters and many others. Really nicely, in this economic climate, you know, for employers to give up some time to spend with the mentor doing these quarterly reviews is quite precious time and we have been amazed at how committed our employers are out there to see success for their apprentices going forward and basically the value for the future of business. So that has been really great. Just things like celebration, you know, our success outcomes, we are going to be looking to do a celebration night in January, early next year, January/February to recognise ... because we have some that have already gone through the process and obviously welcome all these new ones that are starting. There is lots more about looking at the quality of apprenticeships and added value.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Thank you. I do not know if you have been before a scrutiny hearing but I just wanted to thank you for that to begin with it and just to remind you in our role we do have to play Devil's Advocate sometimes, so do not take things personally if we do ask some difficulty questions. That is what we are here to do.

Deputy M. Tadier:

You talked about the economic downturn and the affect that you might have expected that to have on the uptake from employers, you seem to suggest that there has not been that downturn. We were discussing previously, what is the incentive from employer's perspective to take on apprenticeships? Especially now that they are under, perhaps, extra economic pressure?

Manager, Trackers - The Apprentice Programme:

I think that is a really good point and certainly when we started off we were thinking: "Well, there is now the grant that was there before for employers" et cetera, so that would have quite a negative outcome. Obviously we work directly with these employers and what sold it to our employers, certainly we have not had really issues with our employers, is this mentor added value really, because, as I say, a lot of ours are small businesses so they are needing someone to just pick up

the phone to and ask a question and for us to be a point of contact and to be directed to somewhere else if necessary. I think that has been of great value to our employers.

Deputy M. Tadier:

What was the former grant scheme? What kind of figures were talking that employers could get for taking somebody on as an added incentive and that has been taken away?

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

Sorry, can I take that? Previously under the previous apprenticeship scheme from Economic Development there was a grant payable to employers around about £8,500 over 4 years. It was front loaded, so there was about £3,200 in the first year, £3,000 in the second but the employer was then responsible for any other payments, payments towards training, et cetera. What we have done with the new scheme is effectively we have taken on the training costs so it is a recognition that the learning, which is really what the whole thing is about, is a responsibility of us within Education. So now Trackers pay all of those **training costs** but there is no other payment to an employer. As you said, I think initially there was some concern expressed really out there saying: "Is this right?" but Penny's experience is because employers are seeing value (a) in the training being paid but (b) in the support to get people through that training. What Penny has not said, but I think is in the paper, is that the **retention rate** during that first year has been exceptional. We were previously talking about a retention through the scheme, in the old apprenticeship scheme of just over 40 per cent. I think it was about there. At the end of the first year ... 58 apprentices were enrolled at the start of the year and at the end of the first year there was still 58. Since then a few people have changed direction but that is still an exceptional statistic. The strength therefore, I think, from an employer ... the incentive is you have someone who continues through the scheme. It does not matter what you give an employer in terms of a financial incentive, if the person is not the right person and does not complete, then they would see that as a waste of time. So they are seeing the value of having that ...

Deputy M. Tadier:

The shift from 40 per cent to 100 per cent is quite a big jump. Is that not just to do with the structure of the scheme insofar as if you leave employment you can still remain on the apprenticeship scheme? So we have changed the definitions.

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

Not ... to some extent, yes, because then you have a situation where if somebody had been made redundant in the previous scheme then they would have gone. That, I think, is a real strength. I do not think we should hide that. The combination with Social Security has been a very good one and that is maintained. But on the other hand you had situations where small instances may lead

to a breakdown in a relationship, either between the apprentice and the employer or between the apprentice and the training provider and there was nobody mediating. I think the strength of this scheme is that there is somebody mediating and therefore often these small situations can then be tempered and dealt with and not become large situations. We also had a considerable number of people who simply left the scheme.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Excuse me if I have not read my papers properly, but where do apprentices get their income from?

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills: They are employed.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

They are employed?

Manager, Trackers - The Apprentice Programme:

Yes.

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

In the main.

Manager, Trackers - The Apprentice Programme:

Bar the 4 that on internships, they are work placement students, but otherwise everybody else.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Everybody else is employed? All 150?

Manager, Trackers - The Apprentice Programme:

Bar the 4. We have just got 4 that are not. They are very much like if you were going to go to college full-time or whatever, this is just another option for them so they have one day in college and 4 days in their work placement.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Are they paid for the work placement?

Manager, Trackers - The Apprentice Programme:

No, it is voluntary.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

So for the 4 days they are working, they are paid by the employer?

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

If they are employed then they are paid by the employer, yes.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

On the fifth day that they may be in education they are paid for by? Or they are not paid?

Manager, Trackers - The Apprentice Programme:

Depending on the contract. Most of them will be paid for their day at college as well if they are under employment.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

By the employer or by the States?

Manager, Trackers - The Apprentice Programme:

By the employer.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

They are paid at the trainee rate?

Manager, Trackers - The Apprentice Programme:

A mixture. The minimum is obviously the trainee rate but quite a number of them are paid right across, £10, £11 an hour, so it is very mixed.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

So where does the £500,000 for the scheme go to?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

In terms of financial, it goes mainly to the administrative costs of the mentors, it goes for some training costs and so on.

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

Yes, split between the 2 largest things, there is the staff costs because if you are putting a support structure in place then you are paying for that support but also the training costs. So all of the training costs are paid for by Trackers. So it is that split: direct training plus staff into support.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Which department are the mentors employed by?

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

By us, by E.S.C. (Education, Sport and Culture).

Deputy M. Tadier:

Education, okay.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

What sort of background do they come from?

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

Mixed. Some with industry experience, some with ... quite a number with industry experience, to be fair but, for instance, in our current batch we have 4, 5 now coming up, 2 have come from an advisor role that they were working with within Social Security, so they have moved across into a different advisory role, somebody has come out of ... their most immediate past employment was the Children's Service, so they have got a background in, if you like, working with people on that one to one basis but many of them have worked in some sort of industry sector before.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

What sort of case load do they have for mentoring young people?

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

About 25.

Manager, Trackers - The Apprentice Programme:

Between 20 and 25.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

So it is a full-time job for the mentor?

Manager, Trackers - The Apprentice Programme:

Yes.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

How many do you have?

Manager, Trackers - The Apprentice Programme:

Five coming up now.

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

We have got 100 and ... yes, the fifth one at the moment is ... we are converting to a full-time. At the moment he is working 3 days a week.

Deputy M. Tadier:

What kind of dovetailing is there with other schemes such as the Advance to Work and also the work shadowing, because there seem to be parallels there?

Manager, Trackers - The Apprentice Programme:

Advance to Work, we have ... obviously I work very closely with all the different areas and Advance to Work particularly because we are looking at that age group again. We have had a couple of students come through having had work placements found, you know, through Advance to Work, been working for 6 months or something on a voluntary basis, have been offered paid work and then have joined us because they have shown their commitment over that period of time. So we have had a couple this year that joined us through that process and that hopefully might increase as time goes on.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

You mentioned with this particular scheme many of the apprentices come with employers, what happens for those who do not already have one?

Manager, Trackers - The Apprentice Programme:

Yes, the 7 that started in summer all have come out of Highlands College one year programme, so they were in the transition. Because we try and catch them before they sort of, you know, go off for the summer and we may lose them because they might go off and do different things, we start working with them quite quickly in June, July time. So they have yet to secure paid work because they are coming straight out of full-time education. For those young people the mentors will empower them to look at ... we are calling them internships because they are doing training and it is slightly different to the work experiences that are out there, and engaging with employers. Like I say, all 7 of them did that, they all found voluntary experience and 3 of those went straight into paid work within the 8 weeks, and of the last 4, 2 of them are looking very likely to go in very soon, and then we have 2 left. So that work done with the support of a mentor. Again, they are motivated and committed individuals through the application criteria and the process that they are going through so they do display those characteristics very well to employers as well.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

The 73 employers, does that include the States and parishes?

Manager, Trackers - The Apprentice Programme:

Not States, no.

Deputy M. Tadier: Is there any reason for that?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I cannot really answer that question. The States run their own apprenticeship schemes generally, I cannot comment as to ...

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

One of the main reasons is that it is the apprentice themselves that goes and gets the employment and we have not had that many come and ask for employment within the States sector but it is something they need to look at.

Deputy M. Tadier:

But there is nothing to stop someone taking on a States role and then getting an apprenticeship or applying for it under this scheme?

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

We have had the discussions, I think the difference is really ... or there is something which we would need to work out, that with our model we are paying for the training so Trackers are paying for all of the training and there is a question we still have to resolve, is if somebody came from the States Department, is it the role of another States Department to pay for that department's training. That is something that we need to resolve. We have had those conversations and we are starting ... Penny mentioned, for instance, the Dental Association, one of the conversations around there is how we can use the dental hospital to assist in the training of dental nurses. So we are starting to have those conversations around liaising with the public sector.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

It is still early days yet.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Is it because of a conflict of interest? Is there a perceived conflict as far as the States ...

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I think we are all trying to work to the same agenda, it is just a question of best use of various budgets that there are in different departments I would say.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

On the Island where there has been a lot of building taking place or about to take place and there are only 2 apprentices, catering one, which means a lot of immigration to do that, yet you have 19 hairdressers. How do you address that balance?

Manager, Trackers - The Apprentice Programme:

As the Minister has said, it is very early days so at the moment these are the demands coming from the industry themselves. Hospitality industry, that is one of the areas that I started to work, had several inquiries from different businesses that are interested in that moving forward. We are working very close with college as well in the catering side, so certainly chefs we need. What were the 2 that you were mentioning there?

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Block and brickers is 2 enrolments, catering is one and hairdressing 19.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

The demand is coming from the employers.

Manager, Trackers - The Apprentice Programme:

No hairdressers are unemployed, they are all ... we have placed all the hairdressers. That is one, from the College's point of view ...

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

But this scheme will run in parallel to the ordinary training courses that go on at Highlands. So for example you can study to be a chef without necessarily being an apprentice, so that does not mean people are not gaining those skills, it just means that they are just not this scheme, is that a correct understanding?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

It is more likely they are going to go through the Highlands Catering Course than an apprenticeship.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

But the Catering Course at Highlands was one of the star offerings from Highlands prior to the advent of Trackers and it remains as a star attraction for training directly at Highlands, is that correct?

Deputy M. Tadier:

There is presumably an element of desirability from the apprentice's point of view as well as to which industry to get into. Some are going to pay more at the end of the day.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

Absolutely, it is not a work placement scheme. When you look at Advance to Work and Advance Plus they are slightly different. They are targeted at a different audience and they have different approach and we are looking to get people into work, so there is an encouragement there to look at a number of opportunities and to go into one of those opportunities. The apprenticeship scheme is about us trying to facilitate a match between an apprentice and a business where the apprentice wants to go into that business and there is a demand from the business for an apprenticeship.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

So staying on that theme, where perhaps you were getting the surges, is that ... well, we are still talking relatively small numbers all the same but as employers there will be to an individual. Is that because there may be some sort of lack of offering at Highlands and therefore has there been any type of analysis to say: "People are coming with these apprenticeships instead of perhaps going on the Highlands Courses or something like that?"

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Highlands can only offer courses when there is enough demand, because they are full-time courses. These are slightly different. An apprenticeship scheme normally would be day release from businesses so ... I mean as we develop the apprenticeship scheme I kind of envisage a situation where you might be offering apprentices 2, 3, maybe even 4 week intensive full-time courses for a period of time and then going to back to the employer. That might develop. We are still at early days as I say for kind of a block release scenario. So we are talking about 2 different markets here. What we are trying to do with Trackers is to address what was previously a weak area, which is young people in employment but being trained properly consistently with proper mentoring, which a lot of small businesses cannot afford to offer. Quite honestly they do not have the administrative resources available to run the old style apprenticeship schemes. So what this is is we are doing that centrally in government for them.

Deputy M. Tadier:

We have talked about the retention rates but the take up rates from employers, has that changed under the previous system? When there was a grant, how many employers did you have in the scheme and now many do you have now?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I do not have that number statistically.

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

I am sorry, I cannot answer from the number of employers, I am sure we can find that out ...

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

But bear in mind that was run from a different department as well.

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

That was run from E.D. (Economic Development).

Deputy M. Tadier:

Sure, they presumably talk to each other now and again.

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

Occasionally, yes. Yes, we do talk to each other. The target for the Trackers scheme was based upon the E.D. numbers. The target for the Trackers scheme was 120 apprentices over 3 years. So that gives you an idea, I suppose that there has been an increased take up because we are now hitting close to 120 at the beginning of the second year of operation. So I think there is some evidence that employers are engaging with this but we would need to do some work to find out how many employers E.D. were working with.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I think we would be grateful for the figures, then we can compare the whole thing in the round.

Manager, Trackers - The Apprentice Programme:

I think, also, it is still such early days as well, the thought that in 2 years you would be able to see more clearly how that developed and changed as well. So the first year it is still getting us known, getting us out there, we are talking all the time out in industry but in 2 years or so you will have more evidence as well.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

It is worth noting that one of the reasons that we developed this scheme was because E.D.D. (Economic Development Department) was running down its scheme. So they were not placing new apprentices and they were concerned themselves about the dropout rate and the engagement with employers. So it was going to finish in any case.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I would love to be in a position because it is the kind of problem that I like to have to cope with, is to be a victim of our own success and to come to the third year of the scheme and find that we have to ask for some extra resources from the Council of Ministers because the constraint really for us is the number of mentors. We are already at nearly 120 after 2 years. It is going to be difficult in the medium term, we have only got so much money in the Medium Term Financial Plan so we could be a position - I hope we are in the position - next year because it will be for all the right reasons, where we need to say: "We need to get some new mentors here from somewhere but we do not have the money for it." So we will see. I will cross the bridge when we come to it.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

You just need to see a drop in the numbers that you have now for internships? So people not being paid rather than being paid, it is different ... to my mind a different sort of ...

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

It is, but I would stress we are in October so what we would hope, and it has already been seen, is that in July there was 7, there are now 4, by the sound of it within the next couple of weeks there will then be 2. So the strength of the scheme is helping people to move into that sustainable employment. I do not think it is necessarily an indication of a drop in demand as such. I think it is firms looking and saying: "Is this person right for me?"

Deputy G.P. Southern:

But when will your next intake be? I have got a picture of when people drop off the end of it, like they have finished the Tracker scheme, we need to recruit some more, when will that be?

Manager, Trackers - The Apprentice Programme:

Every year we will recruit and keep recruiting every year. So March/April time next year we will be looking to recruit read for the September cohorts. We do not miss out on students getting access to their day release situation. At the moment that is the sort of set up. As we move ... at the moment our training is predominantly at Highlands College but obviously as we move into new industry areas, where we are looking at other areas, Highlands College may play a part but so

may other training providers. So it may not have to just be around the September time, there may be other intakes during the year.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

The surprise is probably the other way around because at the outset when we developed the scheme we said that it was not necessary to have a job, you could have a work placement and we were quite surprised by the number who were able to come forward with jobs.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

I think the Devil's Advocate that the Chairman was talking about before is that why should the State pay £500,000 and maybe later on you apply for more money, this is something that employers should be funding themselves apprenticeship wise.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

When you have an Island that has got a substantial number of small to medium sized businesses that can be a real challenge but the benefit, of course, is that overall reviews of 200 or 300 people have been through the scheme and have got sustainable employment and are contributing to the tax take in the Island and not taking away in terms of income support then there is a benefit to the Island.

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

A skill benefit as well. I think that is why we see it as a learning scheme really, not necessarily as a direct scheme to address unemployment, and there are lots of very good schemes to do that, but the apprentice programme is actually a learning scheme to develop skills.

Deputy M. Tadier:

If we can develop that theme a little. Let us take the electrical, where there is 24 enrolled, who would the typical employers be for that? Would Jersey Electricity figure in that as one of the key stakeholders?

Manager, Trackers - The Apprentice Programme:

We have got an internship at the moment with J.E.C. (Jersey Electric Company).

Deputy M. Tadier:

Is there just the one or is there ...

Manager, Trackers - The Apprentice Programme:

No, that is it. Most of ours are small businesses, under 5 employees, which has been a great surprise. That is probably why it is seen that we are so valuable to them. Like the Minister said,

the timeframe, the being in communication totally with them and their employees has been very helpful.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I think most small businesses would look at: "Okay, I can get a certain amount of money from the Government to run an apprentice in the old style scheme but how much is that worth to me or is continuity of properly skilled young people coming through to bolster and keep my employment fully skilled and consistent for the long term, is that worth more to me than a few bob from the government relatively speaking?" I think the answer to that must be to look at history and there is ample evidence from the previous scheme that giving employers money for apprentices just simply was not working and it would probably drive some ... if you think about it carefully, it might well be driving a kind of situation where you get people taking on apprentices for entirely the wrong reason, because they can get an employment subsidy. I think that is the wrong reason fundamentally to take on an apprentice anyway. You are going to take on an apprentice because you want ... if you are going to be selfish as a business, it is because you want employment and training and quality staff continuity and that is how good businesses build reputations over a period of time. Anybody who knows how to run a small business knows that.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Can I ask, with the apprenticeship scheme are any type of demographics of people who go through this course recorded and analysed at the moment? I appreciate that it is still quite early days but is that even being started to be recorded. For example, the schools that they are coming through or any type of background of them just when you are analysing the source.

Manager, Trackers - The Apprentice Programme:

It is all being recorded and, yes, we are working with our data team to make sure that that is then available for the future as well.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Just one observation, it seems that there are 2 different schemes running in parallel. Not with your department but, for example, if you want to be a plumber you can do the apprenticeship schemes, you do not receive a grant, but if you want to do a bookkeeping ... get taken on as a bookkeeping apprentice you would have to go to a different department, presumably Social Security or E.D. and you get potentially a grant as a employer to take somebody on. Why are there 2 different schemes operating under the States?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Let me take that. As in all government interventions or any kind of scenario of this kind you get inevitably short-term tactical answers or remedies to problems as they crop up and which I suppose you could ... I hope it is short-term with Back to Work and Advance to Work Plus, maybe it is not so short-term that there is that separate discussion to be had. But what we are trying to do with this tracker scheme is a strategy for the long-term to build incrementally better skills, better training for people to have longer, more sustainable, better employment at a higher level and everybody wins. But it is a longer term view than Back to Work or Advance to Work or Advance to Work Plus.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Do those kind of conversations take place at the Council of Ministers?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Yes, they do.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

One final question from me. I wonder if you can just clarify, you said that you have had feedback from employers; can you just clarify perhaps what have been some of the more challenging feedback that you have been having, whether there has been any ... whether it has been expressed that some sort of incentivised system should be incorporated?

Manager, Trackers - The Apprentice Programme:

Not really. Very much when we first started last year, when it was all the quick turnover to get us up and running, I think we had one employer that basically was looking at the grant system but he is very successful and with us now the student is doing is extremely well, they are the ones phoning us up quite regularly to see what else he could be doing with us, you know, is there another course. It turns around really quickly and I have not honestly had any other direct feedback on the negative at the moment, touch wood. Not at all.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Any further questions on this section? No? Thank you very much. We will move on now to discussing the primary schools. I wonder if the Minister can just clarify these ...

Deputy M. Tadier:

Chairman, we can obviously thank Penny as well for coming. Presumably you can be discharged of your duties.

Manager, Trackers - The Apprentice Programme:

Thank you very much.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Thank you. Yes, sorry. Yes, there has been a diversion from what was envisaged in the M.T.F.P. (Medium Term Financial Plan) instead of a new town primary school somewhere, I believe the department has proposed to meet that instead by building on other primary schools. Can you just explain why that stance has been taken, please?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Thank you. Yes, we started looking in the early days for a site for a new primary school. Our demographic projections gave us early warning that we would be likely to need a 2 form of entry primary school in the St. Helier area by 2015, 2016. It became quite difficult, very quickly we found that there was not really a suitable site in public ownership, in States ownership. We started looking in a slightly different manner at how we could cope with it and we have come up with a different option, which has a number of advantages, not least it gives us more flexibility. We can increase capacity, although the majority of the demographic demand will be in St. Helier, there are some demands outside of St. Helier as well. So it gives us the flexibility to tailor what we need in the various parts of the Island. Mario has all the detail in a better way than I do. So I will hand over to Mario.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Can you just clarify though whether the current predictions that you are working one are based on birth rates?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

No, the department has been operating projections for intake of primary schools for many, many years, decades in fact. You can imagine that is one of the key things that a specialist unit within the department does a lot of the time. Generally speaking over the years I think it is true to say that the predictions have been pretty accurate. We had one year which frightened us to death, which was 2011.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

There was an increase in the primary in 2011 that was not predicted.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

That is from people coming to the Island as opposed to birth rates?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Yes, now that is a combination of those. These stats come from a combination of birth rates, they come from a combination of experience over the years, on the number of extra people over and above the birth rate that we are likely to see and there is obviously inward and outward migration affecting the figures.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Have you based your inward migration figures on the figures produced by the Stats Department?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

Yes, we take account of the birth rate records, we take account of technical involvement trends and we take account of the information that comes to us from the Stats Unit and the census information. So it is a model that is built up on that and it has been pretty accurate for many years.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Presumably the shock you got in 2011, that came from the assumptions that were in the old model for projected population compared to the new model?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

No, the difficulty that 2011 created for us was the fact that we did not know a number of the young people who were registering at school were in the system.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

How did that happen?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

Because they were not in the birth predictions.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

They were not in the predictions, so it was the old model which assumed that people did not intend to stay versus the new model where increasingly migrants stayed?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

We always build a factor in, I cannot remember what the percentage is but we always build a factor in for migration and the factor was out in that particular year.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Was that because the stats figures were out or the stats projections were out?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

I could not comment on that. All I can say is that in relation to the figures that we had there were a number of young people that came into the system during the summer term and enrolled mostly in primary schools. We were not aware. Also it was mostly in the town area so the problem that was created was because we could not circulate or distribute the pupil places across all our primary schools. It was concentrated in the town area.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Your current projections are based on what net inward migration figure?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

I would need to check the percentages in the model. It is a mathematical model that we use and, as I say, it is usually quite accurate to within about 1%. What we are looking at this time is an increase of approximately 700 pupils.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

That is based on which of the forward projections of the Stats Department, the population projections? Because there is a whole range in the population projection, which one have you picked on?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

The detail of the model I do not have with me but we can give you that information.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

It is quite important because if it is close to let us 100 net inward migration compared to 350 net inward migration, with family's attached, et cetera, 2.1 or 1.8 or 2.8 dependents, then ... what figure is it?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

I take your point. The model has been reliable, I cannot give you the detail of the model because I am not a statistician at the department but I can get you the detail of the model and, as I say, it has been reliable for us in the past until that particular year and it has been reliable since then.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

So it is your model and it is ...

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

Our model is a mixture of the information that we get from the stats, the birth trends, enrolment trends that we are aware of because you have to remember that many of the children are already in the school system or they in the nursery education system so that we know that those numbers are coming through. That may not always correlate with the other information. So you can have children who will come into year one reception who were not born on the Island so we have factor all those into our model. So it is a mixture of models.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Just to be clear, that model incorporates one of the projections from the Stats Department for future population growth?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

Yes.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I think I know where you are coming from, Deputy. In the absence of a new debate on population policy and inward migration numbers and all of those things, there is an existing policy which I think is based on 350 ...

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Heads of household.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

... heads of household. So I think all States departments are working to that. There is nothing else that they can work to because it is the existing policy. So I believe that that is one of the key figures. But what I do not want us to get bogged down with in the Education Department is the whole question of whether the 350 is the right number or not. We cannot make a comment on that, we have to work to what we are given just to a large degree. It could be, for example, that in the current economic or the recent economic climate in fact that might even be too high, who knows? I do not know until we get the numbers.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

Regardless of the migration policy at the time, the fact of the matter is that if a child has the right to live in Jersey the Minister has an obligation to provide a place.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Absolutely, and I would not have it any other way.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

The inward migration 350 heads of household per annum, et cetera, that is not the only ... that is nowhere near, that is only one of the criteria.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

We know what that is, that has gone from 944 to 1,125.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

What we are also looking at always is how many children are born, and the Health Department can tell us that. So we know that. We have got that. I think it is interesting to note, though, that prior to 2007 there were ... just taking births alone, there were approximately 950 births per annum going backwards in time.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

We have got those figures.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

You have those numbers and you can see therefore that the between 2007 and 2009 it was fairly consistent at just over 1,000 births per annum, but then we had a jump in 2010 to 1,073 and 2011 about an extra 75 and then we had the jump in 2012 by a further 50 births.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Absolutely, somebody has put something the water.

Deputy M. Tadier:

You have to do something during an economic downturn.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

So you can kind of see the trends that are there over a period of time.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Absolutely, we have no real problem with that.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

The issue is that the department would know that roughly 3 years in advance before, the issue which is obviously of more concern for us and presumably for the department is those which turn up on the Island and then expect that provision on the Island and that is why I think we are so keen on the accuracy of being able to have that forecast.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

The challenge for us is to retain at least 5 per cent vacant capacity so that we have flexibility to sometimes move children around because parents are moving house and so on. So that is a challenge for us. The town area is where we can tag on capacity. So the question that was asked in the feasibility study was: "Will the best solution be to build a new primary school, a new town primary school?" That was going to be quite difficult. To start we did not have a site so when you do not have a site it is somewhat difficult to build a school in the town area, but also whether or not a single school would be the best solution. In considering all the options the favourite option is to expand at some schools in order to provide a breadth of accommodation for the number of places that will give us the flexibility.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

You mentioned the words "gave us flexibility". I can see immediately that not building a new town school gives you flexibility to put a bit here and a bit there and go outside town if you wish to. I can see that element of flexibility in one sense. I suppose the question I have first is what physically does putting 2 classes at X or putting 5 classes at Y on site mean?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

I suppose the biggest ... it manifests itself mostly in the biggest project which would be at D'Auvergne School where are at looking at putting a new form of entry. So literally you would be building a one form entry primary school on to what is already a 2-form entry primary school. As long as you resource that, that is not particularly a problem. As long as the site itself can accommodate it, it is not problem. D'Auvergne is a good site, it is a new school. It lends itself quite readily to expansion so that is effectively a new one-form entry primary school going on to a 2-form entry primary school.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Is that going to affect the ... obviously Les Quennevais we know about but in terms of the playground space, is putting 7 extra classes going to then mean that the footprint is affected for the accounting space.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

The footprint is a generous footprint. It is not going to take the school below that which it should be and the early plans for it mean that can be done quite attractively and in a compact way. For the other schools you are looking at ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Again, we are talking about 7 classrooms, does that all come in one package? Do you build 7 classrooms in the next year or 2 or 3?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Yes, you build 7 classrooms and you enhance things like the gym space and the main hall space and other spaces and facilities of a more general nature within that school all in one go. You just do not put 7 classrooms and leave everything else the same. You enhance all of the other things in the school at the same time.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Will the 7 classrooms go on the end of a block that is already there or go on a separate site?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

They will be integrated into the design of the existing school.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

To what extent does that disrupt the school?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

Building on any school can potentially be disruptive but because of where it is going we should be able to minimise the disruption. Where it becomes difficult it is usually where you are decamping within a school, in order to rebuild a block, for example, you have to move students out. We will not have to do that at all because the students will be there, so I think we will be able to cordon off the site so that it will not be too disruptive to the school.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

There will be some disruption but it is manageable and a lot better than trying to move, build, move back.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

I know you have your formula for working out the youngsters, obviously the births has gone up 123, that is a 2012 figure but those children that is just birth, so we are talking in 4 years hence and any migration as well. I just cannot understand how the remaining schools having one extra classroom or 2 extra classrooms, there is a couple there you mention ... surely you cannot just have an extra entry form because what happens in year 2, where do they go then, the youngsters?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

That is a good question that a lot of people ask because they do not understand the ...

The Connétable of St. Martin:

I do not understand it.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Mario is used to answering that.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

Not that used to answering it. What you find is that the numbers do fluctuate and we have some spare capacity in the schools already. We have some schools with additional buildings that are being used for another purpose at the moment, for example, Trinity school has the portacabins, et cetera, so what we have been trying to do is to put proper classrooms on to enable us to open good facilities for the young people. What you are basically saying is that you are not opening a school that would allow flow through, well you are. Because you will have a flow through at D'Auvergne, you will have a school going right through. That means that a significant number of the increased rolls have been taken care of and what we just need in the other schools is the opportunity to burst through any year group and to be able to provide the flexibility to place children who move around the Island. We think we can do that. We have covered most of the bases of that. It is always difficult to get it absolutely correct but we think we have covered it off and this is the best solution. We are happy to provide you with all the background information that we have done on it and the feasibility study should you wish to go through it.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

It does not put aside, I do not think, in the future - and we do not know what is going to happen in the future - having to build a new school?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

Well, if the numbers materialise the way we expect them to materialise we should not have to do it but, you know, it depends where the population goes in the future.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Precisely.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Yes, that is absolutely right. If increased numbers continue to be born and inward migration then we would of course ... and this is something that we do annually, every year or even more often

than that. As soon as we get the statistics and as soon as we get early warnings that we are going to be in trouble in 3 or 4 years' time, we have to take the necessary action.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does that lead us into the provision at secondary level, we are talking about primary at the moment, is there ... what projections have we got for secondary level?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

We can accommodate this increase in secondary, it may affect our catchment policies, it may affect the way we distribute the children but the places are there in secondary and if we have a new Les Quennevais in 2019 then obviously that will help tremendously as well.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Six or 7 years ago we had a reduced demographic which meant that actually a whole of reduced numbers has travelled through the primary sector through time and is now travelling through the secondary sector.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

We have spare capacity?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

We have capacity at Haute Vallee, we have capacity at Grainville, yes.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I just add presumably there is a demand, irrespective of the future figure, now on some of the schools in terms of space so we do need to take action?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

Are we talking about secondary school?

Deputy M. Tadier:

I am talking about primary specifically.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

Yes.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Can I just ask, I think you touched on it, about the catchment levels in the sense of understandably building the on the sites that you have already got. Are you envisioning having to change the catchment boundaries? So what I mean to say is looking at Plat Douet School, and I declare an interest, it is in my constituency, for example if you were to put on 2 new classrooms in order to facilitate that, does that mean that that school is still going to be oversubscribed and therefore you are going to have to change the catchment area in order to send the children to other areas? What analysis has been done?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

We have done the analysis and that is quite a challenging catchment area but what we would aim to do is operate a place for parents at Plat Douet, St. Clement, Samares or St. Lukes and it is having the number of the schools in the area that gives us the flexibility. The catchment policies over the years have mostly enabled parents to place their child in the local school. Not always. We have had one or 2 occasions where we have had to say, you are going to have to go to the next parish along but we think if we have those options around particularly the St. Clement area you do often get parents who live in the catchment of a particular school but for other reasons what their child to go to another school that is closer by. So there is give and take in that. We think that by doing the work that we said we were going to do around that particular area we will have a greater capacity we will have a greater capacity, we will be able to manage that flexibility without changing the catchment areas. The secondary catchment areas are probably more of a challenge later on.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Is there any thought to changing the maximum class size or class size normals at this stage?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

No.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

None whatsoever?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

None whatsoever. That is the whole point. That is one of the first things I addressed as soon as I started in the department.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

As a ball park figure, what sort of extra staffing are you looking at needing?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

In the primary it is one a class that we are sticking on in terms of teachers. If you are putting on 14 classes the advantage is quite simply 14 teachers because you do not need another head teacher, you do not need another deputy head teacher and then whatever teaching assistance would go along with that.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

You would probably save yourself an extra admin to go with it as well.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

You are certainly saving money on it.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Has there been pressure on the department to save on this? The press release from last November 2012 was for £15 million and now you are talking £10 million.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

That is the difference between building a new town primary school and extending the classrooms. So there is a £5 million capital saving in that as well.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Have you been forced into that?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

No.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Has this option been more attractive in that you have been able to basically do things which otherwise should have been in your capital programme? For example, we have already discussed the issues about Trinity School where you have put some children in portacabins, which are now able to move into a proper classroom?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

It has given us more flexibility and it has also given us an opportunity to improve the facilities at some of the existing schools, with the addition of things like hard placed desks which will be necessary to increase the numbers but will give benefit to the young children who are already there.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

It sounds like a win/win. If you have to go forward with the original plan of building a new school, where would you have got your funding for additional sport spend, do you know?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I know the point you are making. That was certainly not in my mind. If you do not require capital on a capital project the States Finance Law, whatever it is, means that you have to give capital back to the Treasury for other capital projects of one variety or another. Naturally as a separate conversation with the Minister for Treasury and Resources, the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers, you would have been expecting me to have been talking as hard as I possibly can about sport funding. Indeed I was. The Council of Ministers decided to support sport spending in the way that they have and I am very grateful for that. But it was not a deal going on in the background or anything.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

The 2 are in no way linked then?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

No, they were not. In fact I came back off holiday to a very pleasant surprise because I did not know about it, I was on holiday. Some discussions were taking place between the Minister for Treasury and Resources, the Chief Minister and my Assistant Minister in charge of sport. When I came back off holiday it was very welcome news that I was given.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

The plan to expand some school sites was entirely based on the flexibility that it gave us. There were no other factors in play. The fact that it has come in £5 million cheaper is a bonus.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Okay.

HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING OPTIONS

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

The fact you have been able to retain that money is even more of a bonus. Right, any more questions on this section? No? Okay, thank you. We can move on now to Higher Education funding options. Let me just find the relevant section. As we now know, the Minister for Treasury and Resources in his budget has announced the proposals on higher education. But, I wonder if I

could ask more generally: have higher education student numbers from the Island declined as a result of increased tuition fees?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Okay. If I could just make an opening couple of comments and then I will ask Andy Gibb, my lead officer on higher education and lifelong learning and other things, to answer any detailed questions that you would like. So, the first thing to be said is that I am very grateful to the Minister for Treasury and Resources, in that he has agreed to enhance tax reliefs for young adults in further education. So, that has helped enormously. In fact, in the context of the Medium Term Financial Plan, that was probably the best that we could hope for, bearing in mind that the growth bid to address the thresholds for both maintenance and fees did not receive favour either by the Council of Ministers or from the States of Jersey, when we debated the Medium Term Financial Plan. So, we were left with only one option; which was that. I am very grateful that the Minister for Treasury and Resources has included it in the budget. Subject to States approval in early December then most parents will get an advantage that way. So, you were asking about the numbers of young adults in the higher education system. Andrew, I think, has the latest numbers.

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

Yes, the numbers have not declined. There was quite a lot in the national press about applications going down in the U.K. (United Kingdom). In Jersey, our number of first year students that we are funding through higher education has remained at a similar level to the year before. So, the current figures are around about 480, in the first year. There are still some applications in the system, which have not yet been assessed for various reasons.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

As a proportion of that cohort, is it the same as ...

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

Yes, yes, similarly. I mean, the cohort size at year 13 level has marginally come down over the last 2 or 3 years. So, there has certainly not been an increase in the cohort.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Okay.

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

I think one of the things that if you were looking at a movement, one of the things that has happened is there has been a slight increase in the number of people studying degrees locally. That may well be down to financial reasons. It may well be down to other reasons as well. There

may be other students who are accessing it. But, the finance for that anyway, from Student Finance, is similar. So, no, we have not seen a decline, as has been experienced in the U.K.

Deputy M. Tadier:

What about a shift of courses from those which are perhaps more expensive to those which are not?

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

Well, interestingly, that difference does not really exist now, because in the U.K. every course is at the same level. The difference now is that you may go to a university such as Portsmouth and pay £8,200 and go to another university and pay £9,000, whether you are doing English or Chemistry does not make the difference that it did a few years ago.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Is that the same for medicine, et cetera?

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

No, medicine is not, but medicine is protected. The clinical years in medicine are very expensive. At the moment the maximum contribution that parents can make to tuition fees, irrespective of income, is £9,000, which is generally the maximum fee. For medicine it is higher than that, which means that the States is picking up that extra. So, the States has protected that very expensive course.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

You have a bit of tax relief, which works for those families who are taxpayers, has there been any change for those who are not? When you refer to most parents who will benefit, how big is that most and how many people ...?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Okay. Well, that tax relief is linked to people paying the marginal rate. I was quite surprised how many local residents are on the marginal rate. There is a lot. I think, I am talking from memory here and I stand to be corrected, it is somewhere in the region of 84 per cent of parents will get a tax refund. That is a lot. So, if you ...

Deputy M. Tadier:

Well, is it not 84 per cent that pay the marginal rate of taxpayers?

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Yes.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

It may be.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

That 84 per cent of taxpayers who pay marginal rate.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

It is quite difficult for the department to know exactly at this stage, but we are currently working on seeing how that affects matters, of course. Obviously that kind of statistic is available to the Treasury Department, but not to us.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

But, surely you are aware of where the crossover between a grant and the threshold for income tax occurs ...

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Well, different people's income tax circumstances, you know, for the same ... they could have all sorts of other allowances that we do not necessarily know about. It is quite difficult.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

The question is: when you say most parents, have you got a figure for most parents will benefit from this? The rump, who are not taxpayers, who will not benefit from anything, is there anything being done for them at this stage and how many of those are there?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

The threshold is currently 26,730. So, anybody who is earning under that is going to get all the tuition fees paid and is going to get access for a full maintenance grant. Much of the concern that was coming through to the department and I think to the Treasury was around the middle earners and the impact of higher education costs on them, particularly if they did not get access to full tuition fees and a full grant. So, the tax relief is more likely to affect those parents who are not getting full fees paid or getting full maintenance grants.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can you just tell us, as a proportion, how many families then are under this 26,700?

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

The number of student applications, which is different, because obviously we have 2 categories of students, if you like. We have a dependent student and we look at the parental income and we have independent students and we look at their own income. Around about 30 per cent of our applications are under that threshold. But a significant proportion of those will be independent students.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

When you independent, are you talking mature?

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

No, there is a difference between the 2. They are used in different contexts. Mature students under higher education terms are around about what you need to get in entry criteria. So, typically, if an 18 year-old wishes to go to university there will be certain grades, a threshold of entry qualifications which they would need to achieve. If you go at 21 plus, those are relaxed and then you have discretionary entry. That is how we would categorise a mature student. So, without grants policy, we would say in terms of eligibility if you are 21 and under, we would expect you to have a certain minimum level of qualification, but over that we would say a level 3 qualification. So, we recognise, in the same way that a university does, that you can have discretionary entry. An independent student is more to do with the fact that somebody has to demonstrate financial independence. We have certain criteria, mainly linked to age. So, at the moment we are classifying an independent student as 25 and over. Other things as well around married status, have they lived independently for a number of years. There would certainly be things in there which would be against that. But, they are 2 different things.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

The total of those is about a third of that application?

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

Well, a third people are under £26,750. You will find some potentially single parents, et cetera, who will fall into that as well.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I ask, the tax relief will help those parents who already have children at university, but it does not necessarily address certainly fully the issue of parents who may not be eligible for a full grant, but who decide that it is not worth sending their children to university because they cannot afford it, so what steps will be taken to address the shortfall which has been identified in the actual living

costs, which are not keep up with, perhaps, other jurisdictions? Certainly the Isle of Man, which I notice from the grant, seems to pay for tuition cost, is that right?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

The Isle of Man is currently reviewing its support for higher education. How it will materialise it, I do not know. In the past the Isle of Man have paid all the tuition fees and I think they have left the maintenance pretty much up to the ...

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

Yes, it has been a much steeper slope, if you like. So, it cuts off at a lower income level.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Yes, about £33,000, is it not, according to this?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

Obviously the cost of living away is often more than the cost of living at home, but, if a young person applies, for example, to do a degree in Jersey, at any of the providers, Highlands College, for example, then they are treated in exactly the same way as if they were going off to England. So if they did not have the funding they would have their full tuition fees paid and they would have access to the same maintenance grant as a young person going off to England.

Deputy M. Tadier:

What steps are likely to be proposed, if any, to meet that shortfall? It says in our notes in 2001 the assessment was different about the living costs and the parental contribution ...

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

I think you are drawing on a student survey that took place a few years ago by the National Union of Students, which identified that the real maintenance costs might be somewhere in the region of £7,500. Really there is only one way to address that, if you choose to provide a higher maintenance element then you have to fund it. But, it does not have the funding to deliver against that. Many students will take some part-time work.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

That leads me to a point that in the past until now the income above a certain level that a student earns has been added to the total household income before grant calculation, is that right?

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

In certain instances of bursary, yes, and we have addressed that recently.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Except for bursaries. But, that is now going to be disregarded in the tax department. So, students can earn from part-time work now without it reducing grant funding, which before it did potentially reduce grant funding. That is the first point. It is not a major one, but it is nevertheless an added help for some students. I do not think there is any magic answer to your question, Deputy. The fact of the matter is that the department put in growth bids for at least some funding to start to address the thresholds. The next opportunity to do that will be at the next Medium Term Financial Plan. It will be for the next Minister for Education, Sport and Culture to decide whether he wishes to put forward that kind of growth bid in the next ...

Deputy M. Tadier:

Is it fair to say though that the tax relief is a sticking plaster, it seems? There will be some parents who are feeling the pinch. It will reduce the tax yield as well, which means that there is less money in the tax pot to apply for.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

The States decided in their wisdom to approve the Medium Term Financial Plan. The department did its best to increase funding for grants by addressing the shortfall and the changes and the fiscal drag that had taken place with the thresholds. The States supported a Medium Term Financial Plan, which cut that out and did not increase higher education funding in a way that the department wished, for whatever reason. It is pointless going over that. That is what happened. I cannot really make any further comment, yes.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

What I can say is that in 2005 the maintenance grants for students was frozen. It was unfrozen again, I think, in 2009. So, what we do now is the amount of non-staff inflation that is passed on to the department from the Treasury in respect of that grant is passed on to the students.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I would think it would be wrong to describe the tax reliefs as a sticking plaster. I think the Minister for Treasury and Resources, to be fair, has done whatever he can in as fair a way as possible. It is quite a generous tax relief. It helps.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

The fact is that whereas the proportion of States' money going to higher education and grants in 2001 was 54 per cent compared to parental or student contribution of 36 per cent. Those percentages have reversed. I think you can legitimately call a small change in tax assessment as a sticking plaster. The fact is that the States' contribution to higher education as compared to

many of our competitors is now below the Isle of Man, U.K. and Guernsey, for example. So, we have a policy issue here that says we going to invest in the skills base of our young people, yet the figures show we are investing less than any of our rivals.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

Except it is not lower than in England, because there is no contribution from the government towards higher education.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Sorry, yes, I misread the figure.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

So, in actual fact, what has happened over the years is there has always been an evening of opportunity, because students from the E.U. (European Union), take a student from England, would pay about £3,000 towards the cost, it was basically the top up rate, towards the cost of higher education. While our students were paying the overseas rate, which was not far off the £9,000 that they currently pay. So, now English students are now paying the same as Jersey students, but have no grant towards it. They have access to a student loan instead.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I follow on from that? It was said in the White Paper of 2012, which was not published, the living grant had fallen behind and that the maintenance grant was proposed to increase to £7,200. What happened to that proposal?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

That proposal was never funded.

Deputy M. Tadier:

No.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

At the same time you have got to remember the U.K. was a major game changer by giving the universities the freedom to set their own fees and refusing to allow them to work together on it, in other words, preventing them from becoming a cartel. It created some difficulties for us. Now, most universities are charging £9,000. But, the fact that most universities were charging £9,000 affected some of our other students who may have up until then only been paying about £5,000 or £6,000 for a class course.

Deputy M. Tadier:

But, this is the maintenance.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

That is right. But we had to make a bid for additional funding. The majority of that additional funding was used for tuition fees as opposed to maintenance.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I ask the Minister, because this is a political question, about this figure of £7,200, which is still less than the £7,500, which the independent report estimated for minimum living costs? Will you be pursuing that figure to make sure that is met in future?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Well, I cannot make a commitment beyond this current Medium Term Financial Plan. We tried.

Deputy M. Tadier:

If you stay on as Minister in the future, will you pursue that figure of what is the actual cost of living to be met by the maintenance grant?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I think it is a hypothetical question, which I do not think any Minister can be tied to making a commitment for. I think I would have to get elected first.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Put it this way ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

The department works on various issues and they need to be set in motion way before you put bids in for the next Medium Term Financial Plan surely. What proposals are you engaged in? I accept that you might not be there and your Chief Financial Officer will not be there by the time it comes to the next bid, but surely we have to lay the groundwork down.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I cannot start committing a future Minister to a particular course of action. I can have the department which no doubt most of the work or all of the work is already for the last time ... so, it is only going to be a question of updating papers. They will have that information and paperwork ready for the new Minister, whoever he or she is. It will then be up to them. So, all the

background work will have been done, yes, because it has already been done on almost on a rolling constant basis in the department.

Deputy M. Tadier:

As a principle is it right that the maintenance grant for those who need it should cover the actual cost of living as for being a student in the U.K.?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I think you are asking me for a personal view.

Deputy M. Tadier:

The White Paper said in 2012 ... that was presumably the policy being pursued.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

A personal view is that it should, yes. That is a personal view.

Deputy M. Tadier:

That is fine. We appreciate you are part of a coalition.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

You are a Minister. That is a personal view as a Minister?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Yes.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

So, you will or you will not be setting in train initiatives, for example, to make a substantial bid to restore the 2001 parity?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I cannot be putting things like that in train. I can do the necessary work during my tenure as Minister to make sure that the next Minister and the department has all of the information there ready to hand to the next Minister and say: "Look, if you are minded to, this is the situation." I can certainly do that. In fact, I would not be doing my job if I did not.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Good. You assume you were not going to be the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture ever again.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

The grant itself does not change for any part of the country, does it? The cost of living in different parts of the country varies considerably surely.

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

No. No, that is right, it does not. Again, a lot of that is about choice. People can choose to go to go to difficult parts of the country. So, there are elements of choice. If you said: "Should we give a different grant to a place in the north east which is very cheap to live, which is different to a place in the south west, which is more expensive to live?" That is an element in choice. The grant is there and therefore that comes into that decision-making.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

That must be the same then for the universities themselves, the 2 that charge much higher rates, Cambridge and the Imperial College. Again, it is the parent's choice or the student's choice to say: "Well, we are going to pay the higher fees. We are quite happy to pay that."

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

At the moment it is not.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Should there not be a differential? You say there is a choice. But if the best college for your particular subject happens to be London rather than Sheffield, which definitely do have different costs of living, is that not for the department to give it consideration?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

That is currently supported.

Deputy M. Tadier:

It is?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

So, if a young person were to go to Cambridge they would benefit from slightly more financial support.

Deputy M. Tadier:

For the tuition costs, but not for the living costs?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

That is right, not for the living costs, absolutely. The question in this is something that Guernsey have done and I guess the Isle of Man will consider if they change their policy, is they have capped the grant. So, if you apply to a university that charges more than £9,000 then the parents' pick up the cost. That is currently not our position in Jersey.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Thank you. What role does the student role play when you are thinking about going forward? Are you going to review your student loan spend?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

We have had a certain amount of trouble with getting more than one supplier of student loans. We are down to one supplier now of student loans, I think I am right in saying. They are, shall we say, reluctant to increase the size of it. There is a certain amount of reluctance. Because, of course, it is not a government funded student loan system, unlike the U.K. So, we are reliant upon the private sector banks. It is not a huge priority for them. They do not make a lot of money out of it. It is almost just a service that they are giving, because we have asked them to. But, we will keep the level of the student grant under review, if we can increase the availability of it. Bear in mind that government does guarantee that scheme, so there are contingent liabilities on the States balance sheet for underwriting student loans. We do not have a big default rate at the moment, unlike the U.K. system, which has huge problems in its student loan book. I read only this weekend that they are thinking about trying to sell the loan book off to the private sector. But, I am not sure what success that will reach. So, there are big problems with the U.K. student loan system. We will have to wait and see how that plays out. But we will try to increase it if we can and we are currently considering whether we can do that.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

The downside of increasing the student loan locally, as it is privately provided, you are not going to get the repayment terms that you will get from the government scheme in the U.K, which is over the 30 year period, the life of your career. So, if you go up to £5,000, for example, a year then you could have a student coming out with a £20,000 debt and only 5 to 8 years maximum to pay it off; that is quite an ask.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

A Jersey student loan is a completely different creature.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

Absolutely.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

It is useful for some people, particularly those that find difficulty paying the first £1,500 payment, which everybody pays towards.

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

One of the things that is interesting, you say it is hardly worth having, as a parent with 2 children there, I have found it very worthwhile having, to be honest. That meant it was £3,000 a year which I, as a parent, did not have to find, which was very good. From that point of view, what we have seen is an increased proportion of take up. I think as people have recognised - I will paraphrase - it not necessarily a Jersey student loan but a Jersey higher education loan. Parents are seeing it as a way of spreading that cash flow over a longer period, so it is useful and the take up has increased.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Do you have any other questions for this section? Two final ones from me. One just to clarify in our briefing notes it says that only 2 universities, Imperial College London and Cambridge which are charging more than the £9,000. Were there 4 previously? Was it Norwich and ... Warwick and Cardiff.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Warwick and Cardiff.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Can you just tell us when that change happened and why that change happened?

Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills:

Basically representations from the 3 islands, so meetings were held with Warwick university and with Cardiff university. Cardiff, to be fair, was only the science and engineering courses which they were charging higher fees. Warwick, basically we had a communication from them earlier this year which indicated that from 2014 they would treat our students as they did U.K. students. Their reasoning was in recognition of the longstanding relationship that they had had with the Channel Islands. From any universities point of view, what they gain is very little compared to what they stand to lose by our students opting not to go. So, Warwick I think recognised that and have agreed to come down. Cambridge and Imperial have been less flexible. We have had the same discussions with those 2 universities.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Thank you. Finally, Minister, as you know underneath the surface in the U.K. there are rumbles to change the policy of 50 per cent going into graduate courses and to make other courses to be seen as valued as a degree, for example. Can I just ask what discussions have you had as Minister with employers to say that there are other opportunities for people rather than getting a degree when often that is currently perceived as the only route to students, if at all any?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

We are constantly having discussion with employers through the Skills Board, which reports to myself. There is a role in chairmanship of the Skills Board among the 3 Ministers involved. So, that is the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture, the Minister for Social Security and the Minister for Economic Development. It is my turn to chair at the moment. The Skills Board is the executive side, which is made up of members of the private sector, senior people, who advise us generally on skills, requirements and trends throughout. I do not know if this kind of answers your question, but that is our main forum for discussion of higher education and all things to do with skills.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

It is the students who make the choice. While there is a range of other courses students can take in Jersey, obviously further education courses, and there are other providers of higher education courses on Jersey, it is generally the student who makes the choice. The student benefits, not only from the influence of the home, but also from industry, from the influence of the careers service. When I say influence, it is more about letting the students know what opportunities exist for them rather than guiding them in a particular direction. I think we often make a lot more of the fact that we think we can direct students into a particular course of study or a particular mode of further education. In actual fact it is the students themselves that often make the choice.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Any other questions?

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Yes. I have on my briefing notes here: "Education Home Affairs Panel. The panel requested an update for the quarterly hearing on the review of primary schools funding formula." Yes, I have not done my homework. I do not know what that means. So, tell me.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

It has been done. It will be implemented from January. The formula is made up of a number of elements. There are fixed costs around a head teacher's salary or caretaker, et cetera. The biggest challenge for us in the past was because it was formula funded on the basis of the number of pupils. If you say for example there are about 23 students in a class, 23 pupils, pays the teacher's salary. Then if you went up to 26-28 students in the class, then that particular school will get additional funding for each of those pupils. If you have, as we had in the past, some schools where, for whatever reason, in a year group the numbers might go down. If they went down to 15 that school would not have the funding to fund the cost of the teacher. So, we would be funding the additional cost in that school. At the same time we will be giving this school more than it needs. So, we will be double funding the places, effectively. So, what we have done is to review the funding to make sure that once the school has the funding that it requires to pay the cost of the teacher that with additional students they will benefit from additional money, but it will not be the full amount. They will benefit from the additional funding that they require in order to be able to educate those children. So, it is just a tweak to the formula. That has been agreed. Some schools inevitably will lose out, not to a great extent, over a period of time and other schools will gain. The formula will be implemented from January. It is basically a technical way to distribute the funding that we have. It does not affect the level of funding at all.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

So, some will lose and some will gain?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

Yes.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Those who lose, say, are they large schools? Are they town schools or are they country schools? Is there any particular difference?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

It has been a while since I have looked at this, but there are some larger schools that would lose, not a particular amount. I there are only one or 2 schools that lose anything that is significant. So, we would not bring it in immediately for those schools. We would introduce it over a period of time.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Can you just clarify whether the special needs component of some students gets a top up? Is it protected in this formula?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

There is a separate review of inclusion funding. They are on-going at the moment. I cannot say that it would be protected once that review is completed on an individual school basis. It may well be that there would be winners and losers there. What I can say is that the overall level of special needs funding will be protected. That is not affected.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Thank you.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

I have 2 or 3 questions. I will ask the questions that I am asking tomorrow anyway in the House. What evidence do you have on class size and its impact upon learning? I am hearing some strange things about class sizes.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

I would be interested to know what you have heard, but I can tell you what I said. What I said is that there is plenty of evidence to suggest that it is the quality of the teacher and the quality of the teaching in the class that has a bigger impact upon the class than class size.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

That is not to say that class sizes do not have an impact. That is to say that relative to the class sizes it is the quality of teaching that has a bigger impact.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

I think the point that you make about peer review research is inappropriate, because in actual fact there is a wide body of literature on this, much of which has been criticised as being quite poor. It is mixed. There is no dispute that it does have some impact. The dispute is around how much impact and whether or not other things have a bigger impact. What we do know is that it is the quality of teaching that has the biggest impact on the quality of learning in the classroom.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Which is an appropriate time to say: do you believe that equality of teaching is improved by teachers logging 55 or upwards hour weeks, as part of their daily routine?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

I suppose a lot ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

That leads on to what are we going to do about workload in schools?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

Well, that is something that we have been in discussion with the unions about. What we have agreed to do is to have a look at workload and see if there are ways that we can minimise any unnecessary bureaucracy. The fact of the matter is that teachers in Jersey have taken to teacher assessment. In a way I think that is extremely commendable. The passion and the commitment that has gone into primary schools with the introduction of key stage moderation has been tremendous. It is showing through in the learning of pupils. We do appreciate that it requires an extra investment. We have agreed to look into that.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Okay. In terms of the distribution of workload, are you intending to review pupil assessment, which end up with charts like that. One of those boxes says: "Counts reliably up to 3 or 6 everyday objects." There is another box down the line for counting up to 10. Having to fill that in for every student in your class when you are teaching a class of 28 strikes me as: "Yes, well, this is ..."

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

There are different methods of assessment within a classroom. It is important that teachers and pupils themselves know the criteria. Whether a teacher needs to tick the box everyday in every lesson is a moot point. Quite clearly it is important that the criteria is there. We need to explore ways to use the criteria that are still meaningful, but reduce any unnecessary bureaucracy. Now, that is a conversation we are entirely prepared to have with teachers and teachers' unions. We recognise the amount of time and effort that goes into this.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I think teachers also recognise that what we are doing with teacher assessment and moderation, the whole model and details of what we are doing, is not bureaucracy for the sake of bureaucracy. In fact it has big gains and big wins. I do not think it is a case that teachers do not value and see the value in what we are doing. It is more a question of: "How do we manage the extra administration that is involved?"

Deputy G.P. Southern:

There is teacher assessment, which you have gone on to and there is this type of grid ...

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

There are different practices in different schools.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

There are different ways.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

What we need to do is to make sure ... it is the right time. Teacher assessment in Jersey is quite young. We let S.A.T.s (Standard Assessment Task) go around about 2005. For a period of time there was a dearth of evidence to show what standards were like in primary schools and how primary school pupils were progressing. I think we rely a lot more heavily on the professionalism of teachers in Jersey than perhaps in other jurisdictions, such as England, where there is a more intrusive system. I suppose that comes with a price. The price is that if you value teachers' professionalism and you want to engage them in the assessment process and you want to make sure that their judgments have value then teachers have to be able to demonstrate that. There are different ways of doing it. There are some extremely good practices in some schools. In other schools teachers are perhaps struggling to manage the challenge of assessment. What we need to do is to make sure that there is the opportunity to share good practice and if there are things that we can improve that we do improve them. Not just for the teachers, but because it is good for the pupils as well.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Just one question. It is related to education, but it is for the Minister. Is it true that there has been a proposal at Council of Ministers to give Ministers Mandarin lessons?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I cannot remember that.

Deputy M. Tadier:

No, cannot remember?

Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

No.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Would you let us know if that is ever put on the table?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

No, not to my knowledge.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Okay. That is fine. I just heard a rumour.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

No, no, not to my knowledge. I have been to every Council of Ministers meeting and I have not seen it in the minutes anyway.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Okay.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Can I just go back to the previous question? What we have here is a situation where the department has only just been engaged in discussions regarding something which is highlighted at a professional level by all unions and by teachers. The department will get to grips with that problem and deal with it and its track record shows that it is very good at doing that with a whole set of highly regarded and mutual respect between the department and the primary school teachers. I think to have a political involvement at such an early stage in what has been highlighted as a problem. The department has committed to doing something and carrying out the necessary work. This is all good news, because the teachers are saying at the same time: "What we are doing is really good and it is working well and giving good results, but we have this problem and it is quite administratively burdensome." Okay. The department has taken that on board and we will deal with it. Having a political involvement at such an early stage in where a problem is being highlighted frankly, is not helpful. The professionals are dealing with it and the department will deal with it with the teachers. I am very confident that that will take place.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Okay. Thank you. In that case I would like to bring this open session of our hearing to a close. I would like to thank you the Minister and his officers for their discussions with the panel today. In that case I can inform the public that means we will be moving into closed session to discuss the new secondary school at Les Quennevais and review the core curriculum, but in line with our protocols I would ask the Minister, the media and the public to withdraw from the hearing. Thank you.