

SPECIAL NEEDS EMPLOYMENT SERVICE: ACORN ENTERPRISES LIMITED AND OAKFIELD INDUSTRIES LIMITED

**Lodged au Greffe on 8th February 2000
by the Employment and Social Security Committee**



STATES OF JERSEY

STATES GREFFE

180

2000

P.16

Price code: C

PROPOSITION

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

- (1) to approve, in principle, the setting up of a new Board to co-ordinate action and services for people with special needs currently provided by the Employment and Social Security, Health and Social Services, and Education Committees;
- (2) to agree that the new Board should be constituted by, and be responsible to, the Employment and Social Security Committee as outlined in the report dated 20th January 2000 of the Employment and Social Security Committee;
- (3) to charge the Employment and Social Security Committee to take the necessary action with regard to integrating the existing independent Boards of Acorn Enterprises Ltd. and Oakfield Industries Ltd. into the proposed structure.

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SECURITY COMMITTEE

REPORT

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In 1996 the States of Jersey approved a report and proposition (P.61/96) to co-ordinate the vocational services that are provided for people with disabilities. With a combined budget of £2.5 million, it was agreed that proposals should be developed for a co-ordinated strategy that aimed at improving opportunities for people with disabilities.
- 1.2 The general thrust of the strategy was to improve the services available for this client group, giving as many as possible the dignity of working in real jobs. Previous services had developed in an ad-hoc way under three Committees, and the opportunities for realistic training or progression to real work was available for very few.
- 1.3 Experience elsewhere indicated that employers' expectations of people with disabilities were often very low and that many could do more than they, or others, thought. Jersey was no exception - services tended to be concentrated on people's disabilities rather than their abilities. Clearly, a huge change in culture was needed in the Island. The market place had to be tested to find out what was possible before determining which vocational services were needed and how they could best be co-ordinated.
- 1.4 Key to achieving this ambitious plan was the appointment of a manager in 1997 to develop proposals and lead the change. The first stage was to find out what the local market could offer. The advice of local employers was sought and, as a result, during April 1998, the Employment and Social Security Department launched the Job Coach Initiative. Whereas the States had previously heavily subsidised the salaries of individuals, this initiative requires employers to pay a salary, whilst the Department offers to provide appropriate training and support in the workplace. The support of the "Job Coaches" is gradually reduced once both the client and employer become confident with the arrangements.
- 1.5 At the same time, the Jersey Employers Network on Disability (JEND) was set up to raise awareness and bring together a group of employers who wanted to work in partnership with the Department.
- 1.6 The overall aim of both initiatives was to improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities in open employment. Since their introduction, businesses covering 35 per cent of the working population have become members of JEND and over 130 people have been helped into employment. Barriers are being broken down and employers' attitudes are beginning to change as role models are being established from which others can take inspiration.
- 1.7 Having established that employers are prepared to support this initiative, and by concentrating on abilities rather than disabilities, it has become clear that existing services need to be re-shaped to support the new approach. One of the main barriers to rationalisation of existing services has been the fact that the current schemes do not often offer experience that matches the opportunities available in the local labour market. Equally the location and type of accommodation currently used (often out of the way and out of town) has had a detrimental effect. Key to the strategy is full integration, and if this is to take place then a prime objective will be to establish a centre in the heart of the working community that can provide training opportunities in retail, catering, administration and information technology that will lead to a wider choice of jobs.
- 1.8 The disused workshop situated on Oxford Road, which was bequeathed to the States in 1997, has been identified as being ideal for such a purpose. It would provide good accommodation in a more central location, offering both work experience and training opportunities, and thus enabling some rationalisation of the existing services.

2.0 Summary of the Service Review - 1998

- 2.1 In the light of the developments throughout the different services, and in order to establish an appropriate business structure across all services, the Employment and Social Security Committee commissioned a service review during the summer months of 1998. A presentation was made in December by the consultants who had carried out the review to all those involved, including the Education, Employment and Social Security and Health and Social Services Committees.
- 2.2 A detailed copy of the report is available from the Employment and Social Security Department. The main issues arising were -
- r Supported open employment, through JEND/the Job Coach scheme, was working well and, as described above, was the most effective option for meeting special employment needs.

- r Sheltered workshops varied in their cost effectiveness; total investment in the workshops tended to be underestimated and could be high, while achievement of States' objectives was limited, and skills/opportunities did not always meet the needs of either users or employers.
- r The responsibility for Special Needs Employment was divided between numerous States' Departments, resulting in overlapping responsibilities, duplication of work opportunities, ineffective use of available assets, a diverse range of legal structures, a lack of shared vision and no clear delineation of responsibility for employment, vocational training, day services, therapy or rehabilitation.
- r The current benefits system was a barrier to open employment. This was recognised when the Social Security System was reviewed, and the reforms that are currently underway should eventually ensure that there are no financial disincentives to work.
- r Financial, personnel and marketing approaches were variable and would benefit from standardised practice to enable a sharing of resources and expertise.
- r The lack of a capital investment strategy was a major omission across all schemes and arose because of current States policies: estate costs were centralised and no account was taken of the cost of land and buildings in their existing or best alternate use.
- r The Board of each workshop operated independently and set its own agenda that did not necessarily contribute towards an overall strategic goal compatible with the States' objectives for special needs employment.
- r Individual user needs were not objectively assessed.
- r People with disabilities were not represented on Boards of workshops.
- r States funding to workshops and schemes was not related to performance and accountability to the States was limited.
- r The Special Needs Employment Services should be managed by one overall Board, possibly as a Trust.

3.0 Progress to date

A focus group was established to give detailed consideration to the recommendations of the report, comprising representatives from Employment and Social Security, Health and Social Services, Education, Highlands College, Acorn Enterprises and Oakfield Industries. Agreement was reached on the following points.

3.1 A vision

“To co-ordinate, promote and facilitate the development of appropriate training and employment options for people with special needs and to assist them to obtain appropriate supported open employment.”

3.2 Co-ordinating and improving the services

The co-ordination of services was not considered as easy as was first thought, because many of the work schemes set up by Health and Social Services are used as therapeutic environments. It is not, therefore, a simple matter of transferring functions, but working together to co-ordinate action and services. The group reached a view that Special Needs Employment schemes should be managed by one management board, ensuring that a standardised, co-ordinated and equitable service is provided for all people with special employment needs.

The Service would have a centralised administrative function with a series of satellite units offering a variety of different vocational activities to suit each individual's needs. Each person would receive a training allowance/wage that, although structured, should be flexible according to the individual's performance. People would be able to move between different service areas depending on their individual needs.

3.3 Assessment

The group felt that good assessment of individual's abilities, training needs and potential was essential and that this should be carried out as early as possible. This will be from the age of 14, or an appropriate older age if the

participants are still within the education system, where co-ordinated assessment systems are advanced and are being further developed to ensure appropriate education and training is delivered to meet student needs and aspirations. It was also felt important that early assessment must be available for people who had already departed school. The group, therefore, reached a conclusion that existing assessment services should be co-ordinated to draw on professional expertise in all Departments. This was felt essential to ensure that the most appropriate option is offered, and available, to the individual and that action is co-ordinated across Departments.

Implementing these recommendations would assist the States in meeting its strategic objectives, in relation to developing a higher level of skills amongst the local workforce and thus enabling businesses to compete in an increasingly demanding environment. The group, however, recognised that this recommendation has staffing and resourcing implications for all departments concerned.

3.4 Training

The group agreed that within the current establishments, greater emphasis should be placed on the use of the many different types of accredited vocational training qualifications such as National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) units to assist training, assessment and recognition of achievement. Such qualifications could benefit the client by improving their self esteem and skills, and they could also assist any future employers by making them aware of the level of achievement that a prospective employee has reached. The use of NVQ and other standards would help clients transfer between service areas, collecting specific units as they move, and they could also build on this portfolio once they have entered open employment. Their use would support the vision of equal training opportunities, practices and policies and could provide the benchmark for more appropriate wage rates.

The group recognised that the shift in emphasis towards vocational training was significant and therefore a pilot NVQ programme is currently underway to evaluate the impact and the likely resource implications if NVQs are introduced throughout the special needs employment service.

3.5 Further work opportunities

The group agreed that the development of more work opportunities, such as the Oxford Road workshop, providing additional work and training opportunities in the areas of retail, catering, distribution, administration and data inputting was fundamental to this approach. Other related work opportunities could be considered if the Island's sector base changes, which would ensure that the training is directly related to opportunities in the open market. An application has been submitted for the capital development programme for funds to be available in 2003 (or earlier if possible) with the site becoming operational in 2004 at the latest.

The group also identified a potential additional problem, not identified in the Service Review, due to an apparent increase in the number of students who have, or may have, behavioural problems caused by their complex and difficult social circumstances. The Education Committee has committed significant resources to the provision of new and enhanced services for pupils with difficulties, and staff within the education service along with professional colleagues from other services are being increasingly successful in helping these students recognise and come to terms with their situation.

However, it is recognised that for some, appropriate solutions may not totally be in place by the time they leave the education sector, and there may well be a need to further support some of these youngsters into the world of work.

3.6 The role of the Education Department

The Group, and in particular Highlands College, did not support the recommendation in the Service Review that all training should be located within the education service. It was, however, felt that the College would be key to providing the underpinning knowledge within the vocational services themselves. The College will also continue to provide full and part-time programmes, but it is recognised that prior to developing these services further, the additional resource costs of expanding and enhancing existing services will have to be properly identified and approved.

4.0 Joint Board

The focus group did not support the recommendation that the Training and Employment Partnership Board should take on responsibility for special employment and training needs. This group was fully supportive of the establishment of a new board to recommend the way forward for the development of the whole service and to help develop consistency throughout the special employment needs initiatives offered by Health and Social Services,

Education, and Employment and Social Security. This will mean that the roles of the existing Boards at Acorn Enterprises and Oakfield Industries will be taken over in the creation of the new structure. The new Board will be accountable to the Employment and Social Security Committee.

4.1 Constitution

The group recommended the following membership -

- one independent Chairman;
- three political representatives, one from each of the three Committees (Education, Employment and Social Security and Health and Social Services);
- a person with a disability;
- two other non-political representatives who could give advice from an employers perspective and who could recommend appropriate training options;
- executive representation, without voting rights, from Education, Employment and Social Security, Health and Social Services, Oakfield Industries, and Acorn Enterprises.

It is anticipated that the board will require the assistance of an executive officer.

4.2 Terms of appointment

It is recommended that -

- the Board is chaired by a person appointed by the Employment and Social Security Committee in consultation with the other interested Committees;
- the respective President from each Committee will nominate a member of their Committee to sit on the Board;
- the remaining Board members will be nominated by the four elected members in consultation with the Employment and Social Security Committee.

Appointments will be for a three-year period with a maximum of two consecutive appointments. Appointments should be rotational to avoid all members having to leave at the same time.

4.3 Main responsibilities

In progression towards the agreed vision (see page 4) the board will be tasked -

- to progress, with the Employment and Social Security Committee, the acquisition and development of training and employment centres, including that proposed at Oxford Road;
- to define and ensure the introduction and utilisation of consistent policies, organisational structures, management systems and employment practices in all training and work provisions under its remit;
- to produce a business plan for the period 2000-2002, in line with States requirements and for presentation to and approval by the Employment and Social Security Committee and the Finance and Economics Committee, indicating short and medium term objectives and targets and any resource implications;
- to produce a report within three years, recommending how the three Committees could best work together and provide recommendations on the future status of the Board and the formal transfer of functions between Employment and Social Security and Health and Social Services;
- with responsibilities for Acorn Enterprises (Ltd) and Oakfield Industries (Ltd).

It is recognised that the transitional arrangements towards a more consistent co-ordinated service will require great co-operation of all three committees involved. This interim recommendation will also allow for procedural changes to be made to the benefit system which will maximise the employment options of clients.

4.4 Meetings

Meetings will be held at least once every three months. Minutes will be circulated within one month of the meeting to the relevant Committees.

A quorum of four members will be required to take decisions. Decisions will be determined by the majority of votes of the members present. The Chairperson will have the casting vote if there is an equal division of votes.

5.0 Resources

5.1 There is acceptance that the current service areas are under-resourced in many areas and the achievement of the vision will require significant investment in terms of both finance and staff.

5.2 Traditionally Acorn and Oakfield have paid wages, the value of which differs dramatically between the services, whilst the health department work schemes provide a therapeutic benefit with incentive payments that are significantly lower. As a large number of the client group will also be in receipt of benefit, the move towards standardised training allowances may need to be phased in over time as the benefit reforms are progressed.

5.3 Staff/client ratios throughout all of the schemes vary considerably, and in the majority of areas it is felt that services are under-resourced considering the nature of the clients' needs. If improvements are to be made within the services, staff/client ratios will need to be addressed and significant investment will be required to ensure that all client needs can be met. This will also include investment in the training facility at Highlands College, particularly if the training support is provided in-house, which is a requirement for NVQs. The proposed NVQ pilot should provide an indication of the staff/client ratios that will be required if the real vision is to be achieved.

5.4 Details of the existing staffing and resource implications received from members of the group are shown in the attached Appendix. This includes projections from Education concerning the number of clients progressing through the education system who may be considered as having a broader special need.

5.5 At this stage the group is not anticipating that there will be any immediate financial implications. Much can be done by continuing to improve the co-ordination of services and by redistributing money from the less effective programmes towards those that achieve better opportunities for the client. It is estimated that there is currently a combined investment of £2.5 million throughout the three Committees. The Board will need to establish how these resources can best be utilised. However, if the reforms are to be fully implemented and effective, the service will require more investment in both money and manpower in the future years. It is anticipated, however, that the injection of resources would help to move at least a further 40-50 clients into employment on an annual basis, bringing ongoing savings in terms of benefits of approximately £70,000 per year and supporting the States Strategic objective of making full use of the resident population.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 This report puts forward recommendations for the next stage in the rationalisation of services for people with special employment needs. The aim is to bring about better co-ordination of services which will benefit the clients and support people with special needs who work in both sheltered and open environments. It is essential that this aim is achieved without delay as existing client needs are not being fully addressed.

7.0 Consultation

7.1 The Education, Employment and Social Security, and the Health and Social Services Committees have approved this report. The Boards of Directors of both Acorn Enterprises and Oakfield Industries have been consulted and they also support the key recommendations.

7.2 If the Proposition is approved, the Employment and Social Security Committee will implement the recommendations by working with the Acorn Enterprises and Oakfield Industries Boards of Directors to form a single Board.

20th January 2000

APPENDIX

Service	Budget	Number of staff	Number of clients/students												
Acorn Enterprises Ltd.	270,100	8.5	<table> <tr><td>full-time</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>part-time</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr><td>TWS</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Total</td><td>30</td></tr> </table> <p>Casual staff are employed as and when required</p>	full-time	20	part-time	8	TWS	2	Total	30				
full-time	20														
part-time	8														
TWS	2														
Total	30														
Oakfield Industries Ltd.	261,700	4	<table> <tr><td>full-time</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr><td>part-time</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>TWS</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr><td>Total</td><td>28</td></tr> </table>	full-time	14	part-time	6	TWS	8	Total	28				
full-time	14														
part-time	6														
TWS	8														
Total	28														
Workwise	868,200	12	<table> <tr><td>working</td><td>119</td></tr> <tr><td>pending</td><td>80</td></tr> <tr><td>voluntary work</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>TWS</td><td>206</td></tr> <tr><td>public/private sector</td><td>32</td></tr> <tr><td>Total</td><td>443</td></tr> </table>	working	119	pending	80	voluntary work	6	TWS	206	public/private sector	32	Total	443
working	119														
pending	80														
voluntary work	6														
TWS	206														
public/private sector	32														
Total	443														
Learning Difficulty	239,054	7.5 + existing 'bank' staff	<table> <tr><td>Total</td><td>80</td></tr> </table>	Total	80										
Total	80														
Mental Health	200,318	5	<table> <tr><td>TWS Jobscope</td><td>94</td></tr> <tr><td>Part-time skill base</td><td>22</td></tr> <tr><td>Total</td><td>116</td></tr> </table>	TWS Jobscope	94	Part-time skill base	22	Total	116						
TWS Jobscope	94														
Part-time skill base	22														
Total	116														
Highlands College	263,550	6.8	<table> <tr><td>full-time</td><td>59</td></tr> <tr><td>part-time</td><td>144</td></tr> <tr><td>Total</td><td>203</td></tr> </table>	full-time	59	part-time	144	Total	203						
full-time	59														
part-time	144														
Total	203														

APPENDIX cont'd

Service	Budget	Number of staff	Number of clients/students												
Education Department			<p>Pupils who have an average Cognitive Ability Test (CAT) score of less than 85 -</p> <table> <tr><td>Year 7</td><td>118</td></tr> <tr><td>Year 8</td><td>149</td></tr> <tr><td>Year 9</td><td>121</td></tr> <tr><td>Year 10</td><td>99</td></tr> <tr><td>Year 11</td><td>115</td></tr> <tr><td>Total</td><td>602</td></tr> </table> <p>This low ability score does not necessarily mean that all this group will require assistance with employment.</p> <p>Pupils who have a Statement of</p>	Year 7	118	Year 8	149	Year 9	121	Year 10	99	Year 11	115	Total	602
Year 7	118														
Year 8	149														
Year 9	121														
Year 10	99														
Year 11	115														
Total	602														

		Special Educational Need or who may also require assistance with employment -
		Year 7 14
		Year 8 23
		Year 9 19
		Year 10 12
		Year 11 20
		88
		Secondary pupils at Mont à l'Abbé School -
		Year 7 7
		Year 8 7
		Year 9 9
		Year 10 3
		Year 11 8
		Year 12 4
		38

APPENDIX cont'd

Service	Budget	Number of staff	Number of clients/students
Education Department (cont'd)			<p>Secondary pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties -</p> <p>Year 7 5</p> <p>Year 8 6</p> <p>Year 9 7</p> <p>Year 10 16</p> <p>Year 11 17</p> <p>51</p> <p>Pupils with special needs at schools in the United Kingdom -</p> <p>Year 7 1</p> <p>Year 9 1</p> <p>Year 11 1</p> <p>3</p> <p>Not all pupils listed above will need assistance seeking employment and some pupils will access the Le Geyt Service.</p>
Total	2,102,922	43.8	<p>full-time 489</p> <p>part-time 180</p> <p>TWS 206</p> <p>Total 853</p> <p>These figures do not include the pupils from the Education Department</p>

N.B. Some Therapeutic Work Scheme (TWS) clients will be included more than once in the different service areas.