

Dear Deputy Bryans

I wanted to drop you a quick email as we will be on holiday on 6 April and won't be able to attend the meeting to discuss the potential cut of nursery benefits in the Royal Square (I think this is likely to be the case for lots of people who will be affected as it's the Easter break and as you will appreciate, the best time for lots of families with children to get off the Island). We didn't want you to think that our non-attendance meant we were ambivalent about the proposals but – we feel very strongly that the cuts are not a good idea and would result in a substantial loss to Jersey.

I'm sure you will have seen there is a petition in circulation which already (in just a few days) has nearly 2,500 people voicing their objections.

If we were able to make the meeting, we would have voiced similar concerns in that the proposals will simply mean that the hard working and tax paying members of society will be prejudiced and in some cases, end up with less choice for their own children than for people who do not to work or work part time.

The bottom line here is that it is people who have worked hard all their lives, through school and university and on to higher education (often, and in my case, paying tens of thousands of pounds to put ourselves through our training), then returned to Jersey to train in their chosen careers (and have perhaps waited until later in their lives to be financially secure before having their children) who will be effected by these proposals.

The reason we work so hard to earn our money (which results in higher taxes) is to give our children the best start in life. These proposals would undermine our work ethic entirely. I hope you saw the feature today on national news about the importance of training toddlers and how children who don't get the proper start to their education before beginning school can be put at a real disadvantage. As you may know, it is widely accepted that 1 – 3 years are arguably the most important years in children's lives. Nursery is absolutely key in providing the best start for our future generation.

All children should have the opportunity to go to nursery and the reality is that the proposals will prevent this being possible for a large number of families in Jersey. At best, the States nurseries will become oversubscribed and private nurseries will go out of business, providing less options for all families.

Whilst hard working families in Jersey are prepared, and have always contributed, to supporting those less fortunate, they simply will not see their own children lose out as a result. Why should those who don't work have better options for their children than those who do? It is very unfair to expect the public to accept this.

The messages I have had from friends (nurses, teachers, people in the trades and those running their own businesses) is that they would rather reduce their hours or leave the island and put less into Jersey's economy than accept this loss for their children. As I'm sure you will agree, all children should be given the best start in life and the parent's choice of nursery is instrumental in this. We are lucky to have an incredible educational offering in Jersey and if these cuts are bought in, people's faith in the protection of that system will be lost.

What I fail to understand is how the proposals will possibly save Jersey any money. If more people reduce their hours and you need to find more staff for what will become overrun States nurseries, this is likely to result in costs far exceeding £250,000 (the proposed saving). People really do feel so incredibly strong about this as (after the mortgage relief cuts), it is seen as one of the only benefits the working class are given.

I have not spoken to one person yet who supports these proposals.

I have put a link below to the petition and would be very grateful if you would take the time to read some of the comments to see just how opposed people are to these plans. On a personal level, we currently both work full time and have saved for a good deposit, bought our family home last year, have a high mortgage and two children under 2.5 years to support.

We currently pay in excess of £25,000 in childcare a year and need to work full time to afford this (which affects how much time we are able to spend with our own children). We have been looking forward to, and budgeting, some relief from these costs in the near future. We would continue to struggle financially for another two years as a result of these proposals which seems incredibly unfair given how much we have contributed to the system over the years.

Please do not scrap this benefit for working families.

Kind regards