

**STATEMENT TO BE MADE BY DEPUTY J.M. MAÇON OF ST. SAVIOUR  
ON BEHALF OF THE EDUCATION AND HOME AFFAIRS SCRUTINY PANEL  
ON TUESDAY 28TH MARCH 2017**

**Tertiary Education: Student Finance (S.R.2/2017)**

When the Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel started this review, nothing was changing in respect of the dire problems being encountered by families of people trying to finance a university course. The grants were inadequate and the Minister of Education had no answers. A report presented by the Minister in May 2016 showed that there were no solutions on the horizon. An ‘in-committee debate’ in the States on 11th October 2016 found no answers and still nothing changed. There had been no input to that debate from the Minister for Treasury and Resources.

Families found themselves either unable to send their children to universities, or perhaps worse, having to choose which one of their children they could send and all based purely on finances. The grant system has proved, and is still, insufficient for the needs of many and a very limited student loan system of up to £1,500 again fails to meet people’s needs.

There has been no political will to look seriously at this for years. During public hearings, the Ministers for Education and Treasury and Resources placed the responsibility for getting something done very clearly at the door of the other. In recognising that, the Panel interviewed the Chief Minister at a public hearing. It was then that we learned that the Chief Minister had created a sub-committee of the Council of Ministers to undertake finding a solution. Suddenly there seems to be the political will to get something done.

The Panel engaged an advisor who has worked in education policy for over 40 years, has influenced the development and passage of the present and the previous U.K. Government’s reform proposals for higher education in England and has been at the heart of almost every major U.K. national policy development in higher education. The report he has provided, which is attached to our report, shows clearly that Jersey spends far too little on higher education and that there are options available for workable solutions.

The Panel has now completed its review and makes the following recommendations:

*“The Minister for Treasury and Resources should phase out Higher Child Allowance from standard rate (20%) tax payers as soon as possible.*

*The Minister for Treasury and Resources should phase out Higher Child Allowance from marginal rate tax payers and redirect money to direct assistance for students once a suitable solution is found.*

*The Chief Minister must ensure that the Council of Ministers Sub-Committee tasked with finding a solution to the problems of financing students through university examines the implications of Income Support when seeking a solution to the problems of financing students through university.*

*The Minister for Education should provide an on-line calculator, that allows families to understand their entitlement and that is flexible enough to change as policy is amended, with immediate effect.*

*The Chief Minister must ensure that the Council of Ministers Sub-Committee is tasked with finding a solution to the problems of financing students through university, must consider some form of student loan system.*

*The Chief Minister must ensure that the Council of Ministers Sub-Committee created to resolve the problems of financing students through university, should publish its terms of reference, specify a deadline for the work to be concluded and present its recommendations to the States in the form of a report.”*

The Panel feels it has cleared what was clearly a political blockage and will be keeping a close watch on the sub-committee to ensure that the work is done.

The Panel’s report, including that of the advisor and reports from workshops held in schools, with students and with parents was published on 15th March 2017.