

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION
BY DEPUTY J.M. MAÇON OF ST. SAVIOUR
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 9th APRIL 2018**

Question

Further to the response to Oral Question 48/2018, will the Minister –

- (a) advise whether the matter of the Nursery Education Fund (NEF) has subsequently been raised with the Council of Ministers and, if so, when;
- (b) advise what action, if any, is being taken to address matters surrounding the funding of the NEF and to address any concerns of private sector nurseries in respect of the NEF; and
- (c) if no such action is being taken, explain why not?

Answer

- (a) The Assistant Education Minister and Education Department officers have had discussions with the Treasurer of the States. However, it has not been possible to have any discussions with the Treasury Minister as he has been out of the Island since the last States sitting. The matter has therefore not been raised at the Council of Ministers.
- (b) The Assistant Education Minister and Education Department officers are aware of the issues highlighted by some private nurseries although a number have already signed the Nursery Education Fund agreement.

Following discussions led by the Assistant Minister for Education with the Chief Minister and the Treasury it has been agreed to increase the NEF hourly rate by 2% for the 2018-19 academic year. This will result in a rate rise from £5.15 to £5.25 per hour. This rate increase is in line with the 2017 pay awards for teachers and civil servants.

- (c) Action is being taken, as described above. In addition, a Ministerial Decision has been signed by the Treasury and Resources Minister (that will provide a commitment from the Treasury Minister) to underwrite the significant budget shortfall that will result from rescinding the nursery means-testing saving if it cannot be found from within existing education budgets. It is now hoped the nursery sector will work in partnership with the Education Department to deliver the forthcoming Early Years Strategy and review of Nursery Education for the benefit of children in Jersey.