

The Jersey Chamber of Commerce

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Friday 16th March 2018

TO: Deputy Le Fondre, Chair, Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel
CC: All States Members, Paul Bradbury

Migration Policy (R.134/2017)

Dear Deputy Le Fondre,

Thank you for getting in touch with the Jersey Chamber of Commerce, to understand the implications of this proposition for our members.

There is no doubt that balancing population controls in relation to infrastructure capabilities versus the needs of the business community can be a challenge. However, it is an issue for Jersey that demands urgent attention.

Since the start of the year, Chamber has been made increasingly aware of the challenges that our members were facing with recruitment. In direct response to these concerns, we have for the last two weeks conducted a targeted recruitment survey with members. The results of which have corroborated the anecdotal evidence, that sourcing suitably trained available employees in Jersey has become extremely difficult. It has now become such a major problem, that it is having a negative impact on business growth, profitability and in turn, increasing stress levels for existing employees.

The complete survey results have been published on our website but some topline figures are as follows:

- 191 Responses, of our 550 member companies
- 70% of those who responded are currently recruiting
- 76% have tried to recruit in last 12 months
- 95% said they were recruiting people who'd been in Jsy 5+ years
- Most respondents recruiting between 1 – 2 months, however, 48% recruiting between 3 – 12 months and almost 10% for more than a year
- Almost 100% recruited in Jersey, compared with only 25% in the UK and around 10% in both Europe or globally

- 84% of respondents said their recruitment issues were due to a lack of available candidates, with 71% citing the lack of suitably trained staff as also causing problems when finding employees
- More than half respondents (52%) said recruitment was harder now than in the last 12/24 months
- Almost ¾ (73% of respondents) said full-time permanent staff were the most difficult to recruit

These are some quite alarming results, which must be taken into consideration by the States when new population policies are being developed, specifically with regards the extremely high number of companies currently recruiting versus the length of time it takes to find suitable staff. The net result of which has forced businesses to target existing workers in Jersey, generating organisational churn and wage inflation, none of which are sustainable.

It must be pointed out that Chamber's position on population controls have always been to acknowledge first and foremost that some controls are necessary, Jersey is an island with a finite limit of resources. However, it is imperative the States acknowledge that businesses must have the flexibility to employ the right person and number of people for their organisations to operate and flourish. Restricting recruitment ultimately restricts economic growth, a situation which many of our members now find themselves in.

Whilst Chamber would have preferred changes to Jersey's population policy to be taken in the context of Brexit and the free movement of people, we do, however, acknowledge that lodging the proposition this side of the May general election will make population an election issue and force much-needed debate. Debate on work permits, license restrictions and managing an ageing population.

As initially stated, balancing population controls is a challenge, however, access to suitable employees that allows our member organisations to grow and flourish is absolutely a critical issue. An issue that every single electoral candidate, our new States Chief Executive and future Council of Ministers must address immediately for the sake of both protecting and helping to grow the island's economy.

Yours Sincerely,



Gillian Martindale-Parsons
Chief Executive,
Jersey Chamber of Commerce



Eliot Lincoln
President,
Jersey Chamber of Commerce