

STATES OF JERSEY



PROPOSED GOVERNMENT PLAN 2022 - 2025 (P.90/2021): TWENTIETH AMENDMENT (P.90/2021 AMD.(20)) – COMMENTS

DEGREE COURSE FOR PRIVATE NURSERY PRACTITIONERS

**Presented to the States on 9th December 2021
by the Council of Ministers**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Minister for Children and Education does not support this amendment and urges Members to vote against it.

The Children, Education and Home Affairs (CEHA) Scrutiny Panel amendment seeks to increase the Revenue Heads of Expenditure for Children, Young People, Education and Skills (CYPES) by £232,260 to fund the training of degree-level practitioners within private nursery settings.

The Minister agrees that the Panel's amendment is well intentioned, as it seeks to provide funding for an evidenced Early Years Policy Development Board (EYPDB) recommendation. However, the calculation used to assess the amount required, when considering the availability of grants from the Student Finance scheme, is flawed. Additionally, the necessary work recommended in the EYPDB Report has not been completed to fully inform the creation of a Transformation Fund and its funding requirements.

The CYPES Department already provides a funded statutory student finance scheme that is applicable to degree level courses delivered by Highlands College, therefore there is no identified need for ring-fenced additional funding for the amendment as proposed. Providing government support for degree course fees outside of the statutory scheme would create a two-tier system that is neither needed nor desirable.

The Panel notes that one of the key policy areas identified in the work of the Early Years Policy Development Board (EYPDB) is the introduction of a transformation fund to recognise and enable a graduate workforce in private nursery settings providing pedagogical leadership within each setting. The Minister supports the development of this policy area recommendation, in accordance with the EYPDB report and notes the report also details actions for this recommendation copied below:

Achieving pedagogical leadership in private settings through graduate / teacher engagement would require:

- *The establishment of criteria for consideration for funding eligibility, e.g. setting numbers, practitioners working directly with children and levels of quality and inclusive practice.*
- *Creating an early years' workforce working party would facilitate investigation of key requirements for the implementation of the transformation fund ensuring that evaluation and impact of the investment were monitored in relation to outcomes both for children and staff.*
- *Capacity, capability, skill mix of staff and considerations of different providers across government, private, community and voluntary.*
- *Through the validation of the professional and educational achievements of early years professionals, a registry would help raise the status of the profession by promoting a well-trained, educated, supported and fairly compensated workforce.*

The detailed work listed above needs to be completed before the implementation of any specific actions, and this work will also inform any potential funding requirement.

As previously stated, the relevant degree level courses at Highlands are eligible for grant awards under the Education (Grants and Allowances) (Jersey) Order 2018. This provides course fee grants of up to £9,250 for eligible applicants with relevant income less than £110,000. A maximum course fee grant of £8,325 is also available for applicants with a relevant income of £110,000 or more but less than £120,000.

The Minister will ensure this work progresses in 2022 to create the transformation fund on a fully informed and evidenced cost basis.

The Minister does not support the Panel's amendment as it replicates funding already available through a statutory scheme and lacks the information and evidence required, as detailed in the EPYDB Report recommendation.

Financial Implications

The amendment as proposed increases Consolidated Fund expenditure by £232,260 in 2022.

In total it increases expenditure by £928,000 over the period of the Plan. If accepted this amendment will result in lower surpluses in 2023-2025 years of the plan, preventing them being available to be applied to reduce borrowing for Covid.

In respect of 2022 (subject to the outcome of other amendments) this amendment could result in a negative balance on the Consolidated Fund. This would mean the Government Plan could not be approved by the Assembly under Article 14 of the Public Finances Law.

Accordingly, there would be a need to suspend the debate before final approval, to enable an amendment to be prepared in order to balance the Plan for 2022.

Statement under Standing Order 37A [Presentation of comment relating to a proposition]:

These comments were submitted to the States Greffe after the noon deadline as set out in Standing Order 37A due to time constraints from the States Meeting being moved forward to Monday 13th December, which in turn affected the final deadline for Comments, and the requirement to undertake final due diligence and review processes.
